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**FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT:
THE MUSICAL LIFE OF AN APOSTOLIC PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
IN CHAMPAIGN-URBANA, ILLINOIS**

BY

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M.A., University of Minnesota, 1984**

THESIS

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Music
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1997**

Urbana, Illinois

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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS BY

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**To the memory of my father,
Lawrence O. Ward**

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In this day and time, it's the Holy Ghost-filled church
comin' to the rise again. You all ain't hearin' me.
We're in the time when the Holy Ghost-filled church
is comin' to the top.

--Pastor McGhee (Altar Call, October 27, 1991)

I. Statement of Purpose

In the fall of 1989, I set out to examine the musical life of an Apostolic Pentecostal church, the Alpha and Omega Church of Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, located in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. A "Oneness" Pentecostal church, Alpha and Omega was of moderate size; its predominantly African-American constituency numbered about 300 members. As I learned more about the congregation and its style of worship, the scope of my project began to expand beyond purely musical considerations: I grew more curious about the interrelationship between music and other facets of the congregation's expressive culture, including ritual, language, and church doctrine; I became intrigued by the social and musical change which accompanied the congregation's move to a larger sanctuary across town; and, I was fascinated by the dynamics of the relationship between the congregation and myself, a relationship which was both quite different and more compelling than I had anticipated. These various interests caused the purview of my study to become more expansive than was originally planned; the focus is still on the congregation's

musical life, but a wider net has been cast, in an effort to include aspects of church life that seem clearly relevant to a thorough description of music and music-making at Alpha and Omega. No single thesis is proved in this volume; my study instead throws light upon four areas of concern to musical ethnographers: (1) it provides a holistic description of a church and its worship, with particular emphasis upon music and music-making; (2) it studies the relationship between music and other aspects of culture; (3) it examines the effect which social and economic change had upon the musical and ritual life of the congregation; and (4) it sheds light upon the relationship between the investigator and the institution being studied.

Because musical behavior and repertoire are intricately interwoven with other facets of expressive culture, music is here treated not as an isolated aspect of the congregation's life, but rather in its relation to speech, ritual, and doctrine. Jeff Todd Titon has urged researchers to employ a more holistic approach in their study of American religious music:

Scholars of American religious folksong must... learn to go beyond mere tune analysis and cultural history. They need to examine the singers' religious beliefs and the relationship between those beliefs and musical behavior (1985:20).

By examining the musical life of Alpha and Omega in the context of Pentecostal belief, language, and ritual, my study not only explores the relationship between Pentecostal doctrine and musical behavior, but also attempts to convey the congregation's sense of religious purpose, as well as the vibrant oral

traditions, both musical and linguistic, which characterize this particular strain of Pentecostalism.

My study presents a musical ethnography of a single congregation. The word "ethnography"--literally, "a people" (or "tribe") + "writing"--connotes a descriptive account of a people or culture, while the adjective, "musical," narrows the focus to the music or musical life of that group or culture. In this study, I conceive of "music" in the broadest sense, and endeavor to provide a description not only of the congregation's music and musical behavior, but also of concepts and ideas that church members have about music.¹ Ethnographic description is usually the result of extensive observation, and my own study is no exception: my account of Alpha and Omega's musical life is predicated upon extended observation of the congregation's worship, as well as upon analysis of audio recordings of many services, and upon interviews with the pastor, musicians, and congregants. During the course of research, I have become keenly aware that my account of Alpha and Omega's musical life is just that: *my* account--for better or worse, the result of my own unique perspective. Because any ethnographer's description is necessarily filtered by his experience and perceptions, the variety of ethnographic approaches is at least as boundless as the number of researchers.

This musical ethnography of a single congregation

¹This tripartite model of music (concept, behavior, and sound) is that of Alan P. Merriam (1964:32-33).

contributes to the current state of research in at least three scholarly areas: geographical, cultural, and conceptual. First, as the study of a small religious community located in the twin cities of Champaign-Urbana, a community with a population of about 100,000, my study contributes to the field of geographical studies. By studying a small religious community within this larger urban environment, my work enhances our understanding of the musical and religious life of Champaign-Urbana, and by extension, of the midwestern United States. Because the pastor, choir, and many members of Alpha and Omega have strong ties to churches in Chicago, and because the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, the religious body to which the church belongs, is a thriving denomination on the south and west sides of Chicago, this study helps to document the influence of the Chicago gospel style on a smaller satellite community. The value of the present study, however, is in no way limited to the domain of geographical studies.

The findings of my study are particularly relevant to a second scholarly area, that concerned with the study of culture. With its broad scope, which encompasses music, ritual, and belief, this ethnography contributes to our understanding of culture in several different ways. Through its examination of musical style, repertory, oral tradition, and improvisation, it enhances our knowledge of music and its uses in a spiritual context. It also advances our understanding of expressive culture more generally, by exploring the relationship which

exists between music and other forms of expression, like language, ritual, and dance. The attention devoted to the formulaic character of Pentecostal language and its relation to the church's musical repertoire contributes, in particular, to the ethnography of speaking.

My study also advances our understanding of African-American culture and of religion and religious experience in the United States. By documenting the musical life of a small African-American religious community, it contributes to our knowledge of both music and religion in African-American culture. This work further examines the considerable value attached to musical and verbal performance among members of this community, and seeks to communicate the church's rich oral traditions through frequent quotations drawn from worship, thereby enabling the pastor and church members to speak for themselves. In addition to these frequent quotations, musical transcriptions and worship service analyses help to document the character and fluidity, as well as the musical and linguistic vitality of one African-American congregation's style of worship. Detailed examination of a community like Alpha and Omega not only reveals more about African-American music, religion, and culture, but also advances our understanding of a particular brand of Pentecostalism.

By examining a single congregation, this study enhances our knowledge of that church's denomination (the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World), of Pentecostalism more generally, and by extension, of religious belief and behavior in the United

States. With extensive data on the music, doctrine, language, and worship of a single Pentecostal church, my study contributes to the literature which examines Pentecostalism; and it also complements the various studies which have examined the music, folklife, community, or language of a single, small religious community. Examination of church doctrine and its relation to the congregation's musical and ritual life is an important theme of this work. In order to arrive at an emic description of belief, the tenets of church doctrine are here delineated through the use of statements made by the pastor, worship leaders, and congregants during worship. This study's thorough treatment of church doctrine, combined with the approach used to explicate that doctrine, contributes to our understanding of Pentecostalism, and in particular, to the manner in which Pentecostal doctrine is transmitted orally to visitors and church members.

In its approach to ethnographic method, its examination of the dynamics of ritual and musical change, and its investigation of the homologous relationship between music and Pentecostal doctrine, the present study contributes to a third area of scholarship, the field concerned with conceptual models and approaches. A detailed graphic analysis of twelve worship services constitutes the keystone of the present ethnography (see Appendix A). Using a timeline, each chart (1) details the duration, placement, and title (if applicable) of the service's constituent elements, as for example, the sermon, the choir

selections, and the congregational songs; (2) documents the presence of keyboard and drum accompaniment, as well as of episodes of spirit-filled dancing; and (3) by means of selected quotes, suggests the character of both the service and its larger constituent parts. These twelve carefully devised charts, which represent services from three successive years, provide a sample of the many services observed, convey the character of each worship service analyzed, and introduce a wealth of data which serves as the point of departure for several of this study's principal themes. It is hoped that this unique conceptual approach will contribute to ethnographic methodology in some small way.

The study of ritual and musical change is a second conceptual issue which the present work examines. My research fortuitously caught Alpha and Omega during a period of great social change, as I followed the congregation during its final months in a small, crowded storefront location; through its move across town; and during two years of its residence in a "real" church edifice, with a sanctuary much larger and more attractive than that of the storefront location. This period of social change was accompanied by dramatic changes in the ritual and musical character of worship. These changes are documented in this study, and several hypothetical explanations are offered. A third major conceptual issue examined in my study is the homologous relationship which exists between Pentecostal doctrine and musical and ritual flexibility. The pastor and members of

Alpha and Omega often underscored the need to remain "flexible" and ever ready to follow the direction of the Holy Ghost. My study examines the correspondence between this doctrinal emphasis on flexibility and both the spontaneous character of musical behavior and the flexible openness of musical forms.

Although a primary goal of my study has been to document the musical life of one African-American Pentecostal church, this ethnography examines music not as an isolated phenomenon, but rather as an integral part of the church's expressive culture. Music clearly plays a vital and central role in the religious life of Alpha and Omega, and this study is predicated upon the assumption that the value ascribed to music in this community can be best identified by studying music in its relation to belief, ritual, and language. In an effort to breathe life into these pages, frequent quotations have been drawn from worship, and these serve to communicate not only the style of worship, but also the vibrant character of oral traditions at Alpha and Omega. While the present study seeks to contribute to the current state of geographical, cultural, and conceptual scholarship, it also endeavors to relate the church's "story" in an understanding yet accurate way, explaining, in the process, the religious convictions which animate the congregation and its music.

II. Description of Fieldwork

My study was first conceived on a smaller scale, as a research project for Bruno Nettl's seminar in musical ethnography

at the University of Illinois in the fall of 1989. The initial seminar project proposed to study the musical life of a local African-American church and to write an ethnography of that congregation. After some preliminary research on the varieties of African-American religious experience, which included inquiries of local African-American students, I decided to visit the Alpha and Omega Church of Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith. A member of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, this Apostolic Pentecostal church was only a mile from campus, and one of my preliminary informants had assured me that the church had very lively worship services and the "hottest" choir in town. The success of the seminar project, as well as the interest and enthusiasm it generated, led to continued research and ultimately to the decision to make Alpha and Omega the focus of this doctoral dissertation.

The first contact with Alpha and Omega was established during the Sunday morning worship service on October 8, 1989. Because the pastor had been ushered away at the close of the service, I asked a worship leader about how I might obtain permission to make Alpha and Omega the focus of my project for a university music seminar. It became evident that any such permission could only be granted by Pastor McGhee, and I was led to the pastor's study. After several knocks at the door, the pastor appeared, and though the door was never opened wide, introductions were made and permission to study Alpha and Omega and record church events was granted through the door's narrow

opening. This marked the beginning of the initial, and most intensive phase of research, which continued through mid-December. Thereafter, periodic contact with the congregation was maintained, until, in the fall of 1990, research was resumed on a regular basis. This second phase of research began in September of 1990, and continued through August of 1992, at which time I moved out of state. Since that time, I have visited the church on several further occasions.

The research can therefore be divided into two main phases, the first of which covered about two months, with the second lasting approximately two years. The primary focus of research was always the weekly Sunday morning worship service, the central event around which all other events at Alpha and Omega revolved. The Sunday morning service began at 11:15 a.m., and its duration varied from about two hours and forty-five minutes to three and one half hours. During the two phases of research, about sixty-five Sunday morning worship services were observed and recorded. Many other church events were also attended; these included the Sunday evening worship service, which was broadcast live as the "Voice of Pentecost" from 6:00-7:00 p.m.²; Sunday school, which began at 9:30 a.m., immediately before Sunday morning worship; the weekly prayer meeting and the choir rehearsal, both of which

²This service began shortly before the congregation went on the air at 6:00 p.m. Though the live broadcast always concluded at 7:00 p.m., the worship service usually continued afterwards, sometimes until 9:00 p.m. From 1989 to 1991, the services were broadcast on WVLJ (105.5 FM) in Monticello; in the summer of 1991, WBCP (1580 AM) in Champaign continued broadcasting these live, Sunday evening services.

were held on Monday evenings; the Wednesday evening bible study; and many special events, which included choir concerts, the New Year's Watch Service, a talent show, and two week-long annual events--Founder's Week, a July celebration in honor of the church's founder, Pastor Edward T. McGhee, and the Church Anniversary and Bible Conference, which were held concurrently in late October and early November.³

This project has been based upon participant observation of the aforementioned events, coupled with interviews of the pastor, the minister of music, choir directors, musicians, and selected congregants. In this volume, Pastor Edward T. McGhee, the church's founder and sole pastor, is the only individual identified by name; although titles like "deacon" and "minister of music" are employed, the names of no other individuals are given. Nearly 300 hours of cassette recordings, most of which were recordings of worship services, were made during the course of research. A small Marantz tape recorder, Model PMD 201, was used to record these services, and the act of recording was always quite unobtrusive, with the recorder positioned beneath my seat⁴ or alongside me on the pew, after the church's move.

The fieldwork for this project was conducted during a period in which Alpha and Omega experienced a great deal of social

³Alpha and Omega sponsored its first annual Bible Conference in the fall of 1990.

⁴Before the church's move on December 31, 1989, all available seats in the warehouse sanctuary were customarily filled during Sunday morning worship services.

change. During the first phase of research, the congregation met in what might be classified as a "storefront" location--a small warehouse space which had been made to function as a sanctuary. The second phase of research was conducted after the congregation moved to a much larger and more attractive sanctuary. In the year following the move, the nature of worship at Alpha and Omega changed significantly, seemingly as a result of the move and the church's apparent change in social status. These changes in the ritual and musical character of worship were quite dramatic, and became an important focus of this study.⁵

Although this study focuses upon the musical and ritual life of a single congregation, the worship services of several other Pentecostal, Apostolic, and African-American congregations were observed in an effort to better understand the variety of religious experience, particularly in Champaign-Urbana. Observation included attendance at both white and other black Pentecostal churches, as well as at African-American Apostolic and Baptist churches in town. Although Alpha and Omega was the only Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (P. A. W.) congregation in Champaign-Urbana, P. A. W. churches in Decatur, Illinois, and St. Louis, Missouri, were also observed, the former much smaller and the latter much larger than the congregation at Alpha and Omega. Finally, local events celebrating African-American identity, such as gospel concerts and the town's 'Black Expo,'

⁵This move and its significance are considered in some detail in Chapters 2 and 7.

were also attended.

III. Method, Procedures, and Related Research

An almost infinite variety of strategies might be brought to bear upon the study of an African-American congregation and its musical culture. In examining African-American religious music, for example, many scholars have chosen to investigate the historical dimensions of the music (Boyer 1988; Burnim 1980; DjeDje 1989; Jackson-Brown 1990; Maultsby 1975, 1981; Southern 1977; Tallmadge 1968; Williams-Jones 1970; 1975); to focus upon musical genres, like gospel music or spirituals (Booker 1988; Boyer 1985, 1979; Burnim 1985; DjeDje 1983; Maultsby 1976; Waterman 1951); or to address the issue of African retention (Bourguignon 1970; Maultsby 1985; Waterman 1952; Wilson 1974). While traces of each of these approaches are evident here, this study presents a comprehensive examination of the musical life of a single African-American Pentecostal church, providing the reader with an expansive description of one church's music--a description which not only examines the nature of that music, but situates it within the context of the congregation's ideology and ritual behavior. Implicit in this design is Merriam's theoretical approach to ethnomusicological study, which calls for an examination of concept, behavior, and sound: the concepts which underlie musical production, the behavior which generates and surrounds that production, and the actual musical product itself (1964:32-33).

A recent but growing literature has begun to explore the varieties of American religious experience, as found in individual churches like Alpha and Omega. These studies have shed light upon different aspects of religious life--including the nature of religious community, church doctrine and worldview, communication and specialized language in worship, gender issues, musical behavior and repertory, and folklife generally. Many of these works, though only tangentially concerned with music, have contributed importantly to our understanding of religious expression in the United States, and have laid the groundwork for musical studies such as this. In his anthropological study of community in an African-American Pentecostal church in Pittsburgh, for example, Melvin D. Williams explored the church's social relations and the manner in which communal bonds were forged and maintained (1974). Though focusing upon the nature of religious community, his study also delineated many aspects of Pentecostal religious practice, and, in passing, mentioned the importance of music in worship: "so important that it often competes with the significance of the preaching" (150). A similar, but more recent study is Frances Kostarelos' anthropological examination of the social and cultural context of a Missionary Baptist storefront church in Chicago (1989). The work of both Williams and Kostarelos focuses upon community and social organization in two different African-American churches, each located within an urban ghetto. Even if music is examined only peripherally in each work, these studies provide an

important source of information on contemporary African-American religious practice.

Though music is not the primary focus of the ethnographies written by Elaine J. Lawless and Jeff Todd Titon, the methodology of these two authors, particularly the emphasis that each has placed upon the role of language in worship, has had a significant influence upon the present study (Lawless 1988; Titon 1988). One theoretical assumption of the present work is that the study of music at Alpha and Omega can not be divorced from a consideration of language in worship. Songs and testimonies, for example, are closely aligned facets of Alpha and Omega's expressive culture, not only because they share a specialized language and many of the same verbal formulas, but also because they are both performance-based modes of communication. Lawless and Titon have each been concerned with the importance of language in a single, small religious community. In her work with a Oneness Pentecostal church in southern Indiana, Lawless has examined the various types of verbal communication employed in worship--such as praying, testifying, singing, and preaching--and has drawn attention to the specialized and formulaic character of this communication (1980; 1983; 1988). Focusing upon women's voices and the role of women in the Pentecostal church, Lawless has also drawn attention to the important but often subsidiary role of women in the church (1988). In Titon's very expansive treatment of a single church, he sought to present a comprehensive survey of the folklife of the Fellowship

Independent Baptist Church, located near Stanley, Virginia (1988). His ethnography includes a detailed description of one worship service, an examination of the congregation's geographical and cultural context, a description of church doctrine, as well as of the historical religious context, and a biography of the church's pastor, Brother John Sherfey. The focus of his project, however, is the language of religious practice. Like Lawless, he treats music in worship as one facet of a broader, performance-based system of communication which includes song, prayer, preaching, teaching, and testimony.

At Alpha and Omega, the verbal arts are highly valued, and members begin to acquire verbal competence at a very early age, sometimes delivering brief testimonies before the congregation by the age of five. In his examination of verbal art as performance, Richard Bauman has suggested that different communities place greater or lesser value upon both speaking and verbal performance (1977:13; 1972:330). He explained that,

...the role of speaking in culture and society is cross-culturally variable and diverse. For some peoples, speaking will be the focus of a high degree of interest, elaboration, and evaluation, while in other groups it will receive relatively little conscious attention (1972:330).

With their rich verbal tradition, Pentecostals constitute one social group which places a high value upon speaking, and this accounts in large part for the number of studies devoted to Pentecostal ways of speaking (see Clements 1980; Lawless 1988, 1980; Malpezzi and Clements 1985). At Alpha and Omega, verbal competence, whether it takes the form of a sermon, a testimony,

or a song leader's improvised text in a holiness shout, is highly esteemed, and there can be no doubt that Pastor McGhee's very intense and dramatic sermons are partly responsible for his very devoted following. Because the musical life of Alpha and Omega is so intricately intertwined with ritual, language, dance, and other aspects of expressive culture, this study examines the church's musical life in relation to these other elements, with particular emphasis upon music in its relation to language and ritual.

While the aforementioned ethnographies examine music as one of several forms of expressive culture, Paul McIntyre's study of an African-American Pentecostal church in Windsor, Ontario, focuses on music, exploring musical repertoire and behavior, as well as other related, but non-musical, aspects of Pentecostal worship (1976). Its scope, therefore, is more analogous to that of the present study than the previous ethnographies mentioned. Although concerned generally with the Mount Zion churches in Windsor and the surrounding area, his research focused upon the "Mother Church"--Mount Zion, located in Windsor. With a congregation of about 200 (McIntyre: 24), Mount Zion is a member of the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). Alpha and Omega and Mount Zion, therefore, share a common musical tradition, that of African-American Pentecostals; and despite doctrinal differences (COGIC is Trinitarian, while Alpha and Omega belongs to a "Oneness" denomination, the P. A. W.), a remarkable number of similarities can be discerned in the worship of these two

churches. McIntyre's detailed account of worship at Mount Zion, including a discussion of three worship services (with titles of all songs performed), provides data for valuable comparison with worship at Alpha and Omega. Throughout this study, therefore, periodic comparisons are drawn between the musical life of Mount Zion and that of Alpha and Omega.

Other recent studies have focused upon various aspects of the music of a single African-American church or denomination. In her study of the music at a Missionary Baptist church in Clear Creek, Mississippi, for example, Thérèse Smith examined the manner in which the congregation's worldview is articulated through music and other forms of expressive culture (1988). Sara M. Stone has explored the musical style, composition, and transmission of songs in a single urban, African-American denomination, the Church of God and Saints of Christ (1985). In this denomination, it is the choir members who create or "receive" the majority of songs employed in worship; the songs are sung in four-part harmony by the choir; and, though the congregation can sing along with the choir, there exists no independent congregational singing (1985:8-9).

The larger church body to which Alpha and Omega belongs, the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, has already been the subject of some scholarly attention. Two African-American scholars, Rose C. Jackson and Mellonee Burnim, both experienced church musicians, have studied music in P. A. W. churches. Jackson, who chose to study the P. A. W. because of its "massive presence" on

the south and west sides of Chicago (1986:4), examined the role of gospel music in worship at six African-American Apostolic Pentecostal churches in Chicago (1986). She explained that the theology of Apostolic Pentecostal churches is an "oral theology" --one in which social and theological values are transmitted orally from one generation to the next, communicated through songs, stories, testimonies, and parables:

The Black Apostolic Pentecostal churches have developed their own theology, church organization and liturgy, whose future outlines one can only guess at. But one thing is certain, for them the medium of communication, just as in biblical times, is not the definition but the description, not the statement but the story, not the doctrine but the testimony, not the book but the parable, not systematic theology but a song, not the treatise but the television programme, not the articulation of concepts but the celebration of banquets (1986:145).

This observation of a cultural insider helps to explain why I found the language of worship at Alpha and Omega not only linguistically richer but also more informative than the language of interviews. The language of worship is therefore cited liberally throughout this study, allowing Pastor McGhee and church members to describe and explain their religious convictions, worship practices, church history, behavior, and opinions in the language of worship--a language which is for them more familiar and comfortable than the language of interviews. Burnim, having also conducted fieldwork at P. A. W. churches (two churches, located in Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana), explored the dynamics of fieldwork as an insider or "culture bearer," a pianist and choir director in the gospel music tradition, who was also perceived as an outsider in her capacity

as researcher and Methodist (1985:435,445). Like Alpha and Omega, all of the P. A. W. congregations studied by Jackson and Burnim are within a 200 mile radius of the organization's national headquarters, located in Indianapolis.

Each of the aforementioned researchers has been concerned with the manner in which a vibrant religious tradition is passed along orally from one generation to the next. Although the individual studies have examined regionally and culturally diverse congregations and have focused upon different aspects of religious life, together they serve to illuminate a shared heritage, a heritage that can be gleaned from the appearance of common threads of religious practice--common behaviors, verbal formulas, and musical repertory. Because of the numerous similarities which exist between religious practice at Alpha and Omega and that at each of the above-mentioned churches, it is clear that Alpha and Omega is part of the same lineage of oral tradition and "oral theology."

Researchers like Lawless, McIntyre, and Jackson have pointed to the importance of language, song, testimony, and ritual in Pentecostal worship. At churches like Alpha and Omega, worship experience appears to be the keystone around which many members' lives are constructed, with congregants often spending between six and ten hours per week in attendance at worship services. Members of Alpha and Omega sometimes describe the church as a "filling station," where they come to be "gassed up," filled with the spirit of the Holy Ghost, to receive a fuel supply that will

last until the next church meeting. This metaphor helps to communicate the prominent and vital role which worship plays in the lives of church members. Acknowledging the significance of worship, the present study includes a detailed analysis of twelve worship services, an analysis inspired by the work of Alan P. Merriam.

Ethnographers have long recognized the value of describing an event or ritual in great detail. Maintaining "that simple observation leads the ethnographer into many avenues of exploration," Merriam provided a narrative account of the Basongye's ten day process of constructing a drum (1969:74). Using a timeline, Merriam outlined the drum's construction in painstaking detail, often including minute-by-minute observations on the stages of construction, from locating, shaping, and hollowing the log, to the preparation of the goatskin membrane and the carving of decorative patterns on the drum. Similarly, R. Gordon Wasson, by means of sound recordings, photographs, musical transcriptions, translations, and ethnographic and musicological commentary, sought to thoroughly document a single ceremony in a Mexican village, the Mazatec mushroom velada, a shamanic consultation of the Sacred Mushroom (1974). Wasson strove to document this ritual with an unprecedented thoroughness. "Never before," he wrote, "has a shamanic performance in the New World been presented with anything like the completeness of this one" (1974:ix).

The attention to detailed description which characterizes

the work of both Merriam and Wasson provided the inspiration for the detailed graphs of twelve Sunday morning services which appear in Appendix A, "Graphic Analysis of Twelve Sunday Morning Services." These charts clearly show the influence of Merriam's timeline approach, and the data and information contained in them serve as the basis for the discussion of numerous topics throughout this volume--topics like the flexibility of worship order, the musical and ritual change which occurred after the church's move across town, and the nature and extent of music-making at Alpha and Omega. Each of the graphic analyses contained in Appendix A documents a single event, a worship service, but the analysis of twelve such services permits a comparison over time, since the appendix examines four services each from the fall of 1989, 1990, and 1991. While a detailed examination of a single event is informative and may suggest new paths of investigation, Merriam himself warned against the danger of generalizing from a single event (1969:96). This danger is minimized in the present work through the extensive analysis of twelve different services. These twelve charts present information concerning the length of each service and its various components; the extent of keyboard and drum activity; the amount of spirit-filled dancing; the titles and duration of all congregational songs and choir selections; and, through the use of selected quotes, the character and direction of each worship service.

As noted above, the detailed graphs of twelve worship

services facilitate discussion of various issues--in particular, the issue of the musical and ritual change which accompanied Alpha and Omega's move from the warehouse location to a more spacious and elegant sanctuary. These graphs also aid in the discussion of the role which spontaneity and ritual flexibility play in worship. While scholars of Pentecostal worship usually allude to the importance of flexibility or spontaneity in worship (see McIntyre 1976:30 and Lawless 1980:4), none has explored this aspect of worship in any great depth. My study therefore examines the extent of musical and ritual flexibility in worship, as well as the homologous relationship which exists between Pentecostal doctrine and ritual flexibility.

The musical transcriptions which appear in the second appendix, "Appendix B: Transcription and Analysis of Congregational Songs," require a word of explanation. These are transcriptions of songs which are sung by the congregation--songs which have been passed along in oral tradition for years, some for nearly a century. Congregational performance of these songs results in a complex web of sound that includes many layers of simultaneous variants--as well as organ, synthesizer, and drum accompaniment, with occasional shouting and vocal interjections. Many of these songs are also highly syncopated, and the simultaneous variants are characterized by both melodic and rhythmic differences. For these reasons, musical transcription poses a host of problems. My objective in these transcriptions has been to extract the tune. In performance of congregational

songs at Alpha and Omega, one voice was usually foregrounded by that singer's proximity to a microphone. In a number of songs, the foregrounded singer performed a version which I recognized as *the* tune; on other occasions, however, when it proved difficult or impossible to determine *the* tune, a verse, and sometimes one or two variants, of the lead singer's melody was transcribed instead.⁶ The transcriptions contained in Appendix B are meant to provide the reader with a profile of the melodic and rhythmic character of Alpha and Omega's congregational song repertoire.

Transcripts of verbal performance--including preaching, testifying, and praying--appear throughout this study, and the method employed in rendering these transcriptions requires a word of explanation. Religious testimonies, prayers, and sermons are often characterized by the use of heightened or dramatic speech, a mode of speaking which simple textual transcripts cannot communicate. In an effort to suggest this dramatic speech, I have, when appropriate, opted for a detail of transcription somewhere between that of a bare, undifferentiated reproduction of the words and the very complex "ethnopoetic" transcriptions of Titon (1970).⁷

⁶The absence of a verse number on any of the musical transcriptions in Appendix B suggests that I believe the transcription to be a fairly accurate representation of the song, while the presence of a verse number indicates that the transcription merely represents the melody sung by the foregrounded singer.

⁷In early "ethnopoetic" transcriptions, Titon utilized four types of print (roman, boldface, italic, and half tone grey type) to suggest differences in volume and intonation. He further ascribed meaning to four variants of spacing in his

In the system devised for this study, I employ capital letters to denote a dynamic emphasis⁸; underlining to indicate an agogic accent (one created by sustaining a word or syllable); and lower case roman type to show the standard discourse style against which the emphatic words are foregrounded. This "standard discourse style," of course, varies in intensity from one speaker to the next and often varies even within a single testimony. Each new line indicates the resumption of speech after some slight pause. The following testimony excerpt demonstrates the usefulness of this approach:

Amazing grace,
how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me.
I said, amAZing grace,
how SWEET the sound
that saved a wretch like me.
Pray for me. [C: applause]
(Testimony; October 15, 1989)

Though the song text was repeated word for word, the speaker's use of dynamic and agogic emphasis helped to transform a familiar text into a very personal statement. This method of transcription, which at least begins to suggest the dramatic intensity of a speaker's delivery, is not employed in every transcription throughout this volume, but only when deemed appropriate. As the above transcription illustrates, prominent congregational response is included in brackets; the

transcriptions (1978:70).

⁸By "dynamic" emphasis, I mean one that is created in speaking, by making a syllable, word, or group of words louder and more emphatic than the surrounding text.

abbreviations C:, F:, and M: indicate that the response is provided either by a substantial number of congregants (C:), or by a female (F:) or male congregant (M:). Because it would be impossible to provide all congregational expression, these should be taken only as a sample of the most prominent responses. Clearly, there exists a great deal of subjectivity in all the transcriptional parameters discussed above.

IV. Outline of Chapters

Chapter 2, "'He's a True Prophet of God': Pastor McGhee and the Alpha and Omega Community in Their Historical Context," provides general background information on Pastor McGhee, the church community, and the larger urban environment in which the church is located. In addition, it situates the church's belief system in a historical context, examining the tenets and history of both Pentecostalism and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, the church body to which Alpha and Omega belongs. This chapter includes a short biography of Pastor McGhee as well as a brief history of Alpha and Omega. The chapter's final section, on church community, examines the church's constituency, church hierarchy and personnel, the issue of gender, the importance of the church choir, and the pastor's charismatic authority. Positions of musical authority, as, for example, the chief musician, the minister of music, and choir directors, are described in the context of church personnel.

The belief system at Alpha and Omega is transmitted orally,

and Chapter 3, "'It's Not But One Way': Doctrine at Alpha and Omega," examines church doctrine as it is extemporaneously espoused during worship services. This chapter includes a discussion of six key concepts or themes which pervade almost every worship service: Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the devil, baptism, power, and death. Chapter 3 also examines the importance of song as a means of communicating basic religious convictions at Alpha and Omega.

The fourth chapter, "'Let's Go Higher in the Lord': Worship at Alpha and Omega," examines the nature of worship. In an effort to better convey the linguistic and emotional character of worship, it employs numerous excerpts from actual worship services, frequently invoking the voices of Pastor McGhee and other worship leaders. After a detailed examination of the components of a "routine" worship service, this chapter explores the processual character of worship at Alpha and Omega. Worship leaders often admonish the congregation to become actively involved in worship and thereby to help take the service "higher in the Lord." Members also believe that the Holy Spirit can play a very active role in worship, and this chapter examines several manifestations of the Holy Ghost's presence: glossolalia, healing, and spirit-filled dancing.

Chapter 5, "'A Joyful Noise': Music at Alpha and Omega," considers the vocal and instrumental repertoire at the church. After exploring the issue of musical taxonomy, the style and character of the congregation's principal musical genres are

examined: congregational songs, choir selections, hymns, and instrumental shout music. This chapter also inquires as to whether a tune family resemblance exists among tunes within the congregational song repertoire--a repertoire with a lengthy oral tradition. Because Alpha and Omega has a youthful image, cultivated by church leaders who have asserted that the congregation is "ninety percent young people," the final section of this chapter ascertains whether there is a correspondence between the church's youthful constituency and its musical repertoire.

The Pentecostal tradition places a high value upon oral performance, especially on preaching, testifying, and praying. Chapter 6, "'But Wake Me Up': Language at Alpha and Omega," therefore examines the value attached to language and the verbal arts at Alpha and Omega. Beginning with a general description of the specialized and formulaic character of Pentecostal speech, the chapter continues with an examination of the role of verbal performance in worship, the emphasis placed upon congregational involvement, the style and character of Pastor McGhee's sermons, and the relationship between song texts and spoken formulas.

When Alpha and Omega moved from its warehouse sanctuary to a "real" church edifice, the character of its worship services changed significantly. Chapter 7, "'We're Goin' Places!': Ritual Transformation after the Church's Move from the Storefront Sanctuary," reviews the significance of this move in light of the church's history, examines the ritual and musical transformation

which took place after the move, and explores a variety of interpretations which help to account for these changes.

Chapter 8, "'Have Your Way Lord': Musical and Ritual Flexibility at Alpha and Omega," examines the relationship between Pentecostal doctrine and the flexibility which characterizes much of the church's musical and ritual behavior. The pastor and worship leaders often advocated the need to be flexible and ready to follow the direction of the Holy Spirit. This flexibility manifested itself in highly variable worship order, spontaneous musical behavior, and flexible and open-ended musical forms. Chapter 8 examines the doctrinal basis for this emphasis upon flexibility, and presents evidence of flexibility in ritual and musical behavior, as well as in musical form.

In recent years, ethnomusicologists have begun to reflect upon this enterprise called ethnography, and to argue that the act of writing about culture is "properly experimental and ethical" (Clifford 1986:2). Chapter 9, "'We'll Even Take Professor Ward Today': On Ethnography and Salvation," considers the one variable of the ethnographic formula which is largely avoided in the previous eight chapters: me. This chapter provided an opportunity for me to examine my project more reflexively; to describe the relationship which existed between myself and the community of Pentecostal believers; and to reflect more generally upon the fieldwork experience and the writing of this ethnography. A number of things in this dissertation may cause the reader to wonder about the relationship between me and

the Alpha and Omega community. Although I chose to place the issue of reflexivity at the end of my study, I might alternately have addressed this matter at the outset. If curious, the reader may skip ahead to Chapter 9, and learn more about the dynamics of the relationship between myself and the church. The final chapter, Chapter 10, presents a brief summary of the findings and conclusions of each of the preceding chapters.

Chapter 2

"He's a True Prophet of God": Pastor McGhee and the Alpha and Omega Community in Their Historical Context

The scripture has said, 'how can you hear unless you have the preacher; how can he preach unless he has been assisted.'
This has been revealed in the person of our pastor and founder.
He is the spokesman for the King of Kings....
--a church brother (introducing Pastor McGhee
during a radio broadcast, March 17, 1991)

I. The Historical Context: Pentecostalism and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World

While many mainstream churches are witnessing declining membership, Pentecostal churches are experiencing phenomenal growth worldwide. Harvey Cox estimates that world membership in Pentecostal churches now totals 410 million and is increasing by 20 million members each year (1995:xv). A similar growth is evident among African-American Pentecostal denominations; Lincoln and Mamiya assert that "the Pentecostals are widely acknowledged to be the fastest-growing segment of the black religious family" (1990:77).

The story of one African-American church in Champaign, Illinois, the Alpha and Omega Temple of Jesus Christ, is a case in point. After outgrowing its storefront location in 1989, Alpha and Omega moved to a much expanded quarters, intent upon filling that sanctuary until it too could no longer accommodate the congregation's size. Alpha and Omega's rapid growth thus

parallels the swift national and international spread of Pentecostalism. Alpha and Omega is a member of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (P. A. W.). While only a fraction of the size of the largest African-American Pentecostal group, the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), the P. A. W. is nonetheless one of the five largest African-American Pentecostal denominations (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990:77-78).

A detailed discussion of Alpha and Omega requires first that the congregation's particular brand of Pentecostalism be situated within its historical context. A brief exploration of the history and doctrine of American Pentecostalism--its antecedents, origin, and subsequent permutations--will provide a basis for understanding the belief system held at Alpha and Omega. It should be noted that the pastor and congregation at Alpha and Omega consider the church to be both Pentecostal and Apostolic. Since founded by Pastor McGhee in 1979, Alpha and Omega has operated under the auspices of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World. The word "Apostolic," however, had long appeared in its name, as it did in 1989, when the congregation called itself "The Alpha and Omega Church of Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith." Alpha and Omega, moreover, was regularly listed in the Champaign-Urbana Yellow Pages under Apostolic, rather than Pentecostal denominations. Because Pentecostal, Apostolic, and Holiness churches all emphasize the experience of Spirit baptism (Sanders 1996:5), they are often treated collectively, as in Payne's *Directory of African American Religious Bodies* (1991). African-

American Pentecostals and Apostolics are further united (and separated from Holiness adherents) by their belief that speaking in tongues is "necessary evidence of Spirit Baptism" (Turner 1991:253).

Because the two most important antecedents of Pentecostalism were Methodism and the Holiness Movement, the story of Pentecostalism can properly be said to begin with the founder of Methodism, John Wesley (1703-1791), whom Vinson Synan calls "the spiritual and intellectual father of the modern holiness and pentecostal movements" (1971:13). A reaction to Calvinism, which taught that salvation was available only to the elect, Methodism taught that anyone could be saved. Methodist teaching emphasized the individual's religious experience, and as Synan observes, "this *empirical evidence of salvation* is what Wesley and his followers have since offered to the world..." (1971:14; emphasis added).

For Wesley, salvation entailed two stages. The first stage is conversion or justification. "Inward sanctification," wrote Wesley, begins "the moment a man is justified. (Yet sin remains in him; yea, the seed of all sin, till he is *sanctified throughout*.) From that time a believer gradually dies to sin, and grows in grace" (Wesley 1968:33). Wesley taught that a "residue" of sin remains after conversion; therefore, a second stage or "second blessing," called Christian perfection or entire sanctification, is required. Although this "second blessing" might occur in an instant, "it was usually preceded and followed

by a gradual 'growth in grace'" (Synan 1971:19).

Wesley's belief in a two-fold religious experience was carried to colonial America, and later, after the official organization of the American Methodist Church in Baltimore (1784), was preached by Francis Asbury, whom Wesley had charged with the supervision of American Methodism (Synan 1971:19-20). Because the worship of Methodists was more personalized, independent, and emotional than that of other American denominations, Methodism was especially well-suited to the character of the frontiersmen (Synan 1971:22-23). This religious emotionalism found an important outlet in the camp meeting phenomenon at the beginning of the nineteenth century. These interdenominational revivals attracted both whites and blacks--Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists--and were characterized by very emotional religious behavior, which including dancing, jerking, falling into trance, and even isolated instances of speaking in unknown tongues (Synan 1971:24-25; Simpson 1974:203).

During the course of the nineteenth century, many Methodists, convinced that too little attention was being given to Wesley's doctrine of sanctification (the "second blessing"), began to place a new emphasis on this doctrine of Christian perfection and holiness. Their emphasis on Christian perfection paralleled a larger trend toward perfectionism within American society, a trend which resulted in "many reform movements designed to perfect American life, such as women's rights, the abolition of slavery, antimasonry, and prohibition" (Synan

1971:28).

The movement to promote holiness and Christian perfection began in the decades immediately preceding the Civil War, but was squelched by the onset of civil strife. After the war, however, religious leaders began to use camp meetings as a vehicle for promoting holiness and the doctrine of sanctification. The first of these, the National Camp Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness, was held in Vineland, New Jersey, in July 1867, and according to Synan, can "be considered the beginning of the modern holiness movement in the United States" (Synan 1971:37).

Fifty-two National Camp Meetings were held during the next sixteen years (Synan 1971:37). Though interdenominational in character, the holiness movement was dominated by the Methodists. Indeed, the doctrine of holiness stemmed from Wesley's teaching on sanctification. By about 1900, the holiness movement had caused an irreparable schism within the Methodist church. During the 1880s and early 1890s, a small number of Methodist ministers, concerned that the Methodist Church was more tolerant of various forms of worldliness and less committed to sanctification, left the church to establish independent churches and sects (Synan 1971:46-50). These defections were minimal until 1894, when the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at its General Conference, denounced the activities of those involved with the holiness movement (Synan 1971:50-51). This pronouncement drove large numbers of holiness advocates from the church and was the catalyst responsible for the formation of dozens of new holiness

denominations during the next decade. The Church of God in Christ, which later adopted tenets of Pentecostalism and is now the largest African-American Pentecostal denomination in the United States, and the Church of the Nazarene were among these new denominations.

Around the turn of the century, Pentecostalism arose from the midst of these holiness denominations, and two individuals-- Charles Fox Parham, a white preacher, and William J. Seymour, a black preacher--are credited with having made the most important contributions to its early development. Born in Iowa in 1873, Charles Fox Parham became a licensed Methodist preacher in Kansas by the age of 18 (Anderson 1979:49). Soon Parham began preaching against Methodist doctrine, a stance which resulted in conflicts with his supervisors and his eventual departure from the Methodist Church in 1894 (Anderson 1979:49). In the following years, he became an evangelistic Holiness preacher, operated a Bible School and mission, and published a periodical, *The Apostolic Faith* (Anderson 1979:49-50). In October, 1900, Parham opened the Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas. It was there that Parham and his students, through Bible study, concluded that evidence of baptism with the Holy Spirit is to be found in the gift of speaking in tongues. Shortly thereafter, during a Watch Service in the early morning hours of January 1, 1901, one of Parham's students, Agnes N. Ozman, was baptized with the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues (Synan 1971:101). Parham noted that "a halo seemed to surround her head and face, and she began

speaking in the Chinese language [a language of which she had no prior knowledge], and was unable to speak English for three days" (quoted in Nichol 1966:28). Parham and many of his other students were later baptized with the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues. Moreover, he began to preach that salvation required a "third experience," in addition to the two which Wesley had espoused (namely, conversion and sanctification). This "third experience" was the baptism with the Holy Ghost, proof of which, he maintained, would be revealed through glossolalia.

While there had been isolated incidents of glossolalia in the previous decades, as well as throughout church history, this event carried special significance. "The importance of these events in Topeka," writes John T. Nichol,

is that for the first time the concept of being baptized (or filled) with the Holy Spirit was linked to an outward sign--speaking in tongues. Henceforth, for the Pentecostals the evidence that one has been 'filled with the Holy Spirit' is that he will have spoken in tongues (Nichol 1966:28).

Synan too regards this event "as the beginning of the modern Pentecostal movement in America" (Synan 1971:101-102). Yet, to underscore both the importance of this event and Parham's involvement is not to diminish the contribution of another man, William J. Seymour.

Citing decisive contributions of these two figures--Parham, a white man, and Seymour, a black man--scholars have generally concluded that the origin of the Pentecostal movement was interracial in character (Anderson 1979:69; Cox 1995:58; Golder 1973:28), though some, emphasizing the Seymour's Azusa Mission

revivals, have insisted upon a black origin (Lovett 1975; Tinney 1971; Hollenweger 1972). William J. Seymour was born in Louisiana in 1870, moved to Indianapolis at the age of twenty-five, and lived in Cincinnati before finally arriving in Houston, Texas, where in 1905, he came under the influence of Parham (MacRobert 1988:48-50). While in Indianapolis, Seymour had joined the Methodist Episcopal Church,¹ but when the gulf between the Methodist Church and the Holiness movement widened, he left, becoming an advocate of the latter. His commitment to the movement continued after his move to Cincinnati, where he joined the Evening Light Saints, an interracial holiness organization (MacRobert 1988:50-51). After arriving in Houston, Seymour met a holiness minister, Mrs. Lucy Farrow, who was also the Parham family governess. Farrow told Seymour of having received the gift of tongues while at Parham's house (MacRobert 1988:50). Excited by Farrow's testimony and eager for religious instruction, Seymour decided to pursue bible study with Parham.

Parham had closed his Topeka Bible School and spent the last several years as an itinerant minister conducting revivals throughout Kansas and Missouri. By 1905, he had moved to Houston and started another bible school (Synan 1971:103). Though Parham enforced rigid racial segregation at his school, Seymour was allowed to enroll, but according to Nelson, he was "segregated

¹Others contend that Seymour had been a Baptist minister before becoming involved in the Holiness movement (See Synan 1971: 103; Bloch-Hoell 1964:34). Nelson's more recent dissertation on Seymour suggests that his background was Methodist (MacRobert 1988:48-51).

outside the classroom beside the door carefully left ajar by Parham" (quoted by MacRobert 1988:51). It is at this school that Seymour learned more about Parham's belief in a "third experience"--baptism with the Holy Ghost and the resultant glossolalia. Although Parham's theology was complex, entailing eight "steps of grace," Seymour remained at Parham's school a relatively short period of time--"several months" according to Synan, and "at most a few weeks" according to Anderson--and his own theology was simpler and more accessible than Parham's (Synan 1971:103; Anderson 1979:88-89). Like Parham, Seymour maintained that the baptism with the Holy Ghost, as evidenced by glossolalia, was mandated in the New Testament.

In the beginning of April, 1906, Seymour arrived in Los Angeles, having been invited there to pastor a small Holiness congregation. In his first sermon, based on Acts 2:4, he declared that anyone who had not spoken in tongues had not yet been truly baptized in the Holy Spirit (Anderson 1979:65). This message, doubly disturbing on account of the fact that Seymour had not yet spoken in tongues, angered church leaders, who placed a padlock on the church doors, locking him out of the next service (Synan 1971:106). Seymour resorted to preaching in homes, and on one occasion, shortly thereafter, he received the gift of tongues. By mid-April, he had rented a warehouse space at 312 Azusa Street, in Los Angeles, an address that has become recognized as the birthplace of Pentecostalism (Hollenweger 1972:22). At first, only a small number of believers attended

Seymour's revivals, but by late summer the numbers began to swell (Anderson 1979:67). During the next three years, the Azusa Street revivals attracted large crowds, some from distant parts of the United States and abroad. Many of these visitors were converted and went home to evangelize, thereby disseminating the Pentecostal experience and message--with its emphasis upon Spirit baptism and the subsequent evidence of tongues--throughout the world.

The early Pentecostal experience was also one of interracial, and even international fellowship, and--in an apparent suspension of racial prejudice--whites, blacks, and persons of different nationalities gathered to hear Seymour preach. The periodical published by the Azusa Mission claimed that, "God makes no difference in nationality. Ethiopian, Chinese, Indians, Mexicans and other nationalities worship together" (quoted in Anderson 1972:69). Moreover, black church leaders sometimes held authority to ordain white preachers. Because few of the early Pentecostal groups were legally incorporated, organizations like the black Church of God in Christ were responsible for the licensure of many white Pentecostal preachers (Anderson 1979:189). Harmonious fellowship, seemingly oblivious to the racial and economic barriers which usually separated people, prevailed for a time (Golder 1973:28)

Throughout his life, Seymour was deeply committed to the idea of interracial harmony. Douglas T. Nelson, Seymour's

biographer, has suggested that Seymour's commitment to pursue "interracial reconciliation" was already evident in his decision to join the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Evening Light Saints, both of which were interracial organizations (quoted in MacRobert 1988:49). Later in his life, Seymour would contend that the "real evidence" of baptism with the Holy Ghost is not limited to speaking in tongues, but that the Spirit baptism should manifest itself in that "Divine love which is charity.... the love of God for souls increasing in our hearts" (quoted in Anderson 1979:162). If a person is truly baptized in the Spirit, Seymour believed, that baptism will be manifested in a charity, tolerance, and acceptance of others, regardless of their color.

A brief history of the P. A. W., the church organization to which Alpha and Omega belongs, will not only situate the Alpha and Omega congregation in its historical context, but will also provide an explanation of some of the religious tenets which distinguish the congregation from others in Champaign-Urbana. There is much disagreement concerning the early history of the P. A. W., and particularly the date of its founding. In its current informational pamphlet, the organization lays claim to being "the oldest pentecostal organization" (n.d.:1). Bishop Morris E. Golder, a church historian and former bishop who was commissioned by the organization to write its history, traced the P. A. W.'s beginnings to 1906, the year which most scholars designate as the beginning of the Pentecostal movement (1973:31). Golder cites Garfield Thomas Haywood, a black preacher and one of the

organization's founders, who asserted that the P. A. W. "was started in 1906 in Los Angeles, California" (quoted in Golder 1973:31). Synan and Nichol contend that the P. A. W. was formed in 1916, when a large group of "oneness" preachers withdrew from the Assemblies of God (Synan 1971:157-8; Nichol 1966:117), while Anderson claims that it was founded in 1913 (1979:177,191). All four authors, as well as the P. A. W.'s informational pamphlet, acknowledge that G. T. Haywood was a key figure in the organization of the P. A. W. Synan asserts that Haywood was an important figure in the Assemblies of God, until, as a member of a faction which contested the group's trinitarian doctrine, he withdrew and helped to organize the P. A. W. in 1916 (1971:155-158). According to Nichol,

The "Oneness" faction [within the Assemblies of God organization] withdrew and formed the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, locating their headquarters in Indianapolis, where G. T. Haywood, one of the leading Negro evangelists, had a powerful "Jesus Only" congregation (1966:117).

Despite these claims, Haywood, writing in 1921, stated that he had "never been connected with the Assemblies of God as a movement since its organization at Hot Springs, Arkansas, in 1914, but has carried P. A. of W. credentials since 1911" (quoted in Golder 1973:36).

Less controversial is the fact that Haywood became a leading exponent of the "New Issue," "Oneness," or "Jesus Only" doctrine, which held not only that baptism ought to be performed "in the name of Jesus," but also that baptism "in the name of the Father,

the Son, and the Holy Ghost" was *invalid*.² This issue can be traced to 1913, when a Canadian evangelist, referring to Acts 2:38, preached that the Apostles were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and not using the more popular trinitarian formula found in Matthew 28:19 (Reed 1975:145-147). In the 1990s, this belief continues to be a central tenet of the P. A. W., and the words "Jesus Only" appear prominently on the organization's logo.

In the early years of the pentecostal movement, as mentioned above, whites and blacks worshiped side by side, but racial tensions soon began to develop. "The interracial period of the movement," according to Lovett, lasted from 1906 to 1924 (1975:138), but others claim that interracial strife had been present almost from the movement's outset. Golder asserts that the P. A. W. was at first mostly made up of whites, but as the organization became increasingly more integrated, "the unrest among the white brethren, especially of the South, grew in proportion" (1973:70). Though the P. A. W. was one of the most racially integrated of the early Pentecostal denominations, it was split by racial conflict in 1924. Until that year, according to Synan, the P. A. W. "operated as a completely interracial church with roughly equal numbers of Negroes and whites serving as both officers and members" (1971:172). At the church's General Conference in 1924, however, the white preachers, most of

²This tenet is crucial in differentiating Alpha and Omega from most other African-American religious denominations in Champaign-Urbana.

whom were from the south, withdrew from the church, leaving a predominantly black membership (Synan 1971:172-173).

Although the P. A. W. is now racially mixed, its member churches appear to be either predominantly white or predominantly black, with the majority of its congregations falling into the latter category. In 1989, its total U. S. membership included approximately 500,000 individuals in 1,005 churches, with an additional 850 missionary churches in foreign countries (Payne 1981:109).

II. Pastor McGhee, Alpha and Omega's History, and the Local Community

Pastor Edward T. McGhee, the founder, pastor, and spiritual leader of Alpha and Omega, came to Champaign-Urbana in 1979, to establish a church under the auspices of the P. A. W. At that time, McGhee was in his middle to late twenties.³ He had been raised in Alabama, in a household which "accepted Christ," but one which he characterized as "not strong[ly] religious" (I.11.15.89). Anecdotes from the pulpit indicate that his family was poor. He was saved--"born again"--at the age of fourteen, and thereafter became very involved in the church. Though not ordained, he soon began to assume the responsibilities of a deacon. Between the ages of seventeen and nineteen, he served as the assistant pastor of a church in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. In

³Although Pastor McGhee, when recounting his life story, preferred not to give his age, he gave certain dates which indicate that he was born between 1951 and 1953.

order for him to hold this position, it was necessary that he be ordained by the Light of the World Apostolic Church. He attributed his unusually early ordination to the fact that the church was newly established, explaining that in older, more well-established churches, "you would be a long time comin' up" through the ranks (I:11.15.89).

McGhee moved north to Chicago about 1975, became involved with the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (P. A. W.), and was ordained by that organization. In Chicago, he served first as the assistant pastor of a church, and later, after the pastor's departure, as pastor. While there, he took courses at the Moody Bible Institute and DePaul University, and also completed a home study course with the Aenon Bible College, the P. A. W.-affiliated school in Indianapolis.

Though still in his twenties when he moved to Champaign-Urbana, intent upon founding a church, McGhee had acquired a wealth of experience with Apostolic and Pentecostal churches, having served as deacon, assistant pastor, and pastor. In Champaign-Urbana, he continued his education at Parkland College, aspiring ultimately, he said, to attend Aenon Bible College as a commuter and earn a degree in theology.⁴ McGhee founded Alpha and Omega in October of 1979; before moving to the warehouse sanctuary at 905 W. Fairview in Urbana, church members had met in a small rented space in Champaign.

⁴Located in Indianapolis, Aenon Bible College is only about 125 miles from Champaign-Urbana.

When this study began in the fall of 1989, the congregation, which then went by the title of "The Alpha and Omega Church of Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith," was about to celebrate its ten year anniversary. The church's membership had grown rapidly in recent years, until the congregation had clearly outgrown its rented warehouse space in Urbana. By the fall of 1989, the small rectangular warehouse sanctuary was filled to capacity every Sunday, with about 125 adult worshipers gathering in a room only twenty by fifty feet in size (see Figure 7-1 for floor plan). Every Sunday, it was so crowded that members who arrived too late were unable to get a chair, and often peered in from the doorway which led to the church lobby. Sometimes, inhibited by the cramped quarters, members carried their spirit-filled dancing through the sanctuary's other door to the alleyway beyond. With its low, flat ceiling of acoustic tile, its cinder block walls, tile floors, stacking chairs, and almost total absence of outside light, this warehouse space bore little resemblance to a traditional church sanctuary.

Despite the unpretentious surroundings, however, the mood was one of great excitement. There was an electrifying sense that Alpha and Omega, a "oneness" church preaching baptism "in the name of Jesus," was making great headway in Champaign-Urbana, bringing the "one true plan of salvation" to many who had been misled by "false prophets."⁵ The conviction that Alpha and

⁵The pastor and members of Alpha and Omega preach that the trinitarian baptismal formula, baptizing individuals "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew

Omega had prospered against great odds helped to fuel the congregation to very joyous, spirit-filled worship during its last months in this crowded warehouse space. During one Sunday sermon, Pastor McGhee attributed the church's growth to his "dream":

I wanna tell ya, when I came to this city +HAH+
I had people that said we wouldn't make it this far, +HAH+
but because I'm a dreamer, +HAH+
here we are sittin' here packed behind these walls. +HAH+
And we gonna build somethin' to the glory of God, because
I'm a dreamer. (Service 4; November 5, 1989)

A portion of that dream was realized on December 31, 1989, when the congregation, having assumed the mortgage on a vacant church across town, left its rented warehouse space to celebrate its first service--the New Year's Watch Service--in a newer and larger sanctuary. The long-awaited move was complete; Alpha and Omega's new home was a handsome contemporary brick church edifice of A-frame design. Previously occupied by a white Pentecostal church with a declining membership, the congregation's new sanctuary at 400 West Bradley Avenue, in Champaign, was quite different from the rented warehouse space. With an approximately 350 person capacity, stained glass windows, a lofty wooden ceiling with attractive hanging light fixtures, wooden pews, Hammond organ, choir stand, and baptismal pool, this sanctuary was not only far more spacious, but also more elegant and

28:19), is invalid and will not result in salvation. This message was promulgated locally during the church's live radio broadcast, and resulted in significant friction between Pastor McGhee and other local African-American preachers. This issue is considered at greater length in the chapter on church doctrine.

respectable than the church's former warehouse sanctuary. Beyond the sanctuary was the pastor's office, a corridor, a spacious fellowship hall with cafeteria, and a lower level divided into smaller classrooms for Sunday School use. After the move, members clearly felt a great sense of satisfaction and accomplishment.

The story of Alpha and Omega's decade-long history was frequently recounted by Pastor McGhee in the context of worship services. Embroidered and dramatized, that history had become an important part of Alpha and Omega's oral tradition in late 1989, when the warehouse sanctuary was almost bursting at its seams, and the history was retold often in early 1990, after the church's move. By means of these narrations, new church members were able to identify--during the course of several services--some basic themes in Alpha and Omega's oral history: its growth from a single member to over three hundred members; its history as an object of ridicule and derision by others in the community; its move from a crowded storefront location to its present spacious sanctuary; and its ownership of four and one-half acres located further east on Bradley Avenue, which the church has targeted for a new, even larger sanctuary.

After the move, on the occasion of the church's eleventh anniversary, Pastor McGhee recounted Alpha and Omega's history:

...We thank God for how far He's brought us as a church. [clapping] Some eleven years ago, we started with one member. He's not here tonight. And God has blessed us to come to this point. [I] checked the record and it's over three hundred on the roll. Amen. [clapping and keyboard response] And I don't believe there's any church in town

that has accomplished what we have in eleven years. Amen. [clapping; keyboard and drum response] We've been able to purchase a church partially--appraised of over a hundred some thousand dollars. Four and a half acres of land, down that way on Bradley. [clapping] Amen somebody. When they said we were goin' down, but God say you're goin' up. Glory! My God! Hallelujah! When they said we were the tail, God said I'll make you the head. [clapping; keyboard and drum response]. Hallelujah! Thank you Jesus! And we're sittin' right here: 400 West Bradley Avenue. They can't help from seein' us, 'cause every road, everywhere, in Urbana and Champaign comes this way.... [clapping; keyboard and drum response]

What a mighty God we serve. [We] came from a place. We had it measured off, two hundred and fifty square feet.⁶ Worshipin', I don't know, don't ask me how we got all those peoples in there. Don't ask me. And we had about sixty in the choir. They was standin' everywhere, outside, in the alley; but we worshiped God and praised God, wait a minute [to hold off clapping which had just begun spontaneously], while other folk was laughing at us. Tell me you all got a choir, and got all them people, where is your church? See, one thing about God, God don't have to prove Himself to nobody. All He want is a few folks that's with Him and wait till He work it out. Hey! Glory to God, Hallelujah! We came from two hundred and fifty square feet to over twelve thousand square feet, and praise God for it. Hallelujah! Hey! Hallelujah! [loud, spontaneous outburst of clapping, exclamations; keyboard and drum flourishes]. (Wednesday night, October 31, 1990)

During a sermon three months later, Pastor McGhee summarized the church's history in a similar but much more condensed version:

God said to me some eleven years ago, says, 'I'll build a work through you.' And many of you know when the odds was against us, in a little storefront, two hundred and fifty square feet. [one phrase spoken in tongues] Hey! They laughed at us, but I heard God say, 'It's not over!'... Devil said to me when we got over here: 'and you know the bills gonna be high and the expenses gonna be greater than they were at 905 West Fairview.' I told the devil, 'this battle is not mine, but it is the Lord's.' (January 27,

⁶When explaining the size of the warehouse sanctuary, Pastor McGhee regularly described it as 250 square feet. Though the space was indeed very small considering the congregation's size, it was actually about 1000 square feet, much larger than his estimate indicates. This exaggeration, however, became an important part of Alpha and Omega's oral history.

1991)

Although both accounts include reference to community members ridiculing or "laughing" at the church, Pastor McGhee and his congregation acknowledge this criticism with a sense of satisfaction, secure in the belief that God's elect will often be misunderstood. In the eyes of the pastor and congregation, the move to 400 West Bradley was clear evidence that God had blessed Alpha and Omega, and had great things in store for the church. The move to this much improved facility reinforced Pastor McGhee's assertion that Alpha and Omega was "going places"; and the church's location at the intersection of two major roads-- Bradley and Bloomington--was evidence to the larger religious community of Champaign-Urbana that Alpha and Omega was a prosperous and upwardly mobile church.

The church's move generated much enthusiasm at Alpha and Omega, and the year 1990 was a pivotal one in the church's short history. In previous years, the overcrowded conditions at the warehouse sanctuary had forced Alpha and Omega to hold its annual choir concert at other churches, but since its newly acquired sanctuary could hold several hundred, Alpha and Omega was able to invite the community to attend its annual concert in the fall of 1990. Concurrent with its eleventh anniversary celebration, the church also held its first annual bible conference, from Monday, October 29, to Saturday, November 3, 1990, inviting speakers from Indiana, Michigan, Mississippi, and New York. In 1990, Pastor McGhee was also appointed district elder of the P. A. W., a

position which appeared to be largely honorary, since there was only one other church in his district (I.03.12.92).⁷

The relationship of Alpha and Omega to the larger community of Champaign-Urbana underwent considerable change during the course of my research. In its final months at the warehouse sanctuary, Alpha and Omega appeared to be quite isolated from the outside world--from the local religious community, as well as from the larger social environment. Members of the local religious community had been critical of Alpha and Omega's detachment; as one member explained, "people say that Alpha and Omega doesn't fellowship" (I.07.10.92).⁸ When Alpha and Omega sought to increase its membership after the move, this isolationism began to erode, but the process was quite slow--in part, because the plan of salvation preached at Alpha and Omega was at odds with the doctrines of all but a few churches in Champaign-Urbana. After the move, Alpha and Omega made an effort to become more involved with the local community. For example, the pastor became a member of the local Black Ministers' Alliance; the church invited the University of Illinois Black Chorus to its twelfth anniversary celebration (November 2, 1991); and the church choir participated in Parkland College's third annual gospel concert (February 1, 1992). Through efforts such as these, Alpha and Omega gradually became a much more visible

⁷This other church, Pastor McGhee explained, was a small church with a white membership.

⁸This charge was still being leveled against the church in 1996.

presence in the twin cities of Champaign and Urbana.

In 1992, Alpha and Omega was one of about 136 churches in Champaign-Urbana (*The News Gazette* [Champaign] 14 August 1992; "The Answer Book":37). The membership of approximately twenty-five of those churches was predominantly African-American. Of the eleven churches listed in the Yellow Pages under "Apostolic" or "Pentecostal" (Ameritech PagesPlus 1991-1992 [Champaign-Urbana], November, 1991), eight were African-American congregations.⁹ In 1990, the combined population of Champaign and Urbana was 99,846, 13,165 (13.2 percent) of which were black. The ethnic make-up of each city was similar, although Champaign had a slightly greater percentage of African Americans. Of Champaign's 63,502 residents, 80.7 percent were white, 14.2 percent were black, and 4.1 percent were Asian; of Urbana's 36,344 residents, 75.7 percent were white, 11.4 percent were black, and 11.7 percent were Asian (1990 U. S. Census).

The reader may wonder how the socio-economic status of Alpha and Omega's membership compared with that of other African-American congregations in Champaign-Urbana. While it is difficult to make assertions about the congregation's economic status without statistical data, it appears that the membership of Alpha and Omega, like that of other local Apostolic and Pentecostal churches, was of a predominantly lower to lower-middle class background. While I attended Alpha and Omega, for

⁹Alpha and Omega appeared under both Apostolic and Pentecostal headings. The community also supported two Assemblies of God and two Church of God in Christ congregations.

example, the church's roster included no doctors, dentists, or professors, and it seemed that many of the Champaign-Urbana's African-American professionals were drawn to either of two local Baptist churches. Having observed worship at several local churches, I noted that a congregation's socio-economic status appeared to be inversely proportional to the degree of unrestrained emotion permitted in worship. Alpha and Omega provided a case in point; its lower socio-economic status was paired with a manner of worship which was, especially before the move, more animated and emotional than that of any other African-American church which I visited.

Housing and religious worship were both quite segregated in Champaign-Urbana, where the majority of African Americans lived and worshiped on the north side of town. Both sanctuaries occupied by Alpha and Omega were located on the north end: 905 West Fairview in Urbana, and 400 West Bradley in Champaign. Although *The News Gazette* described Champaign-Urbana as a community of great "religious diversity," the paper also contended that religious life was characterized by "a separateness" (14 August, 1992, *The Answer Book*:37). Reverend William Salzman, Pastor of Champaign's Westminster Presbyterian Church, whose membership included "two or three" black families, observed that, "the churches [in Champaign-Urbana] are not particularly well-integrated.... There are separate black and white ministerial associations, and that doesn't seem likely to change soon" (Ibid.). This pattern of "separateness" extended to

Alpha and Omega. The church welcomed whites, hispanics, and asians, but while these other races were often represented in worship, African-Americans usually constituted about 98 to 99 percent of the congregation.

III. Church Community at Alpha and Omega: Membership, Authority, Personnel, and Gender

In his anthropological study of community in an African-American Pentecostal church in Pittsburgh, Melvin D. Williams concluded that, in this urban setting, it was not neighborhood connections but rather church involvement that provided most church members with their greatest sense of community (1974:4). A similar conclusion can be drawn at Alpha and Omega, where many members often spend more than ten hours per week at church, usually in the company of their friends and extended family, and where a very powerful sense of community is forged. Williams defines community as "patterned interactions among a delineated group of individuals who seek security, support, identity, and significance from their group" (1974:16). Alpha and Omega's ability to retain current members, while attracting new members, attests to its ability to fulfill these communal needs.

The ways in which Alpha and Omega meets its members' needs for significance, identity, and security are too numerous to detail here, but some aspects of this relationship can be briefly outlined. Significance, identity, and security inhere in the very concept of a church, which Emile Durkheim defined as,

A society whose members are united by the fact that they think in the same way in regard to the sacred world and its relations with the profane world, and that they translate these common ideas into common practices (1965:59)

At Alpha and Omega, the fellowship of believers considers itself to be among the handful of God's elect, even maintaining that the great majority of "Christians" will not enter Heaven.¹⁰ In this way, a group identity is constructed which not only distinguishes members from sinners, but also from the bulk of Christian believers. Members derive security from the conviction that they are among God's elect few, as well as from the belief that their pastor is a "true prophet"--a "spokesman for the King of Kings." Members receive support not only from the pastor and from other congregants, but also from the close personal relationship that they have with Jesus, their friend, companion, and savior.¹¹

Between 1989 and 1992, when most of the fieldwork for this study was conducted, the congregation at Alpha and Omega numbered about 300 to 350. The church's constituency was among the youngest of any African-American church in Champaign-Urbana, and Pastor McGhee regularly claimed that the Alpha and Omega's membership was "ninety percent young people" (I.11.15.89). Although the number of children, youths, and young adults did account for a large percentage of the congregation, the figure of

¹⁰Members believe that the verbal formula used in baptism is crucial in determining who will be saved. This issue is explored at length in the following chapter.

¹¹The texts of Alpha and Omega's congregational songs underscore this very personal relationship with Jesus (see Chapter 5).

ninety percent seems to be somewhat inflated. It is difficult, with a congregation of this size, to give precise figures, but estimates, made during Sunday morning worship services, suggest that about 20-25% of church members were age thirty and older; 30-35% were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine; and the balance of the membership was under eighteen. Although the issue of gender is considered later in this chapter, it should be noted that the majority of the adult members at Alpha and Omega were women. My estimates indicate that the adult constituency (members eighteen and older) was about two-thirds women.

A large number of church members had family ties, both immediate and extended, with others at Alpha and Omega. During testimonies, members occasionally spoke of parents and siblings-- of those who had been baptized and joined the church, and of others who were skeptical or critical of the member's involvement with the church. While most members had relatives who were "in the world" or who had backslidden, they could also usually count several relatives among the community of saints at Alpha and Omega.

One sample constellation will help to illustrate that family relations constituted an important subset of the larger church "family." A woman in her early forties joined Alpha and Omega in 1989, in part because her daughter and younger sister had tried the church and were "crazy about McGhee" (I.06.11.92). She had been a member of a local Apostolic church, and tried another where her uncle preached, before finally settling at Alpha and

Omega. By 1992, her daughter and only child, her three young grandchildren, her sister, her sister's daughter and grandchild, and her mother were all regular members of Alpha and Omega. Her daughter sang in the choir and sometimes served as a testimony leader, and her mother was a church nurse. Only three other close family members living in Champaign-Urbana had not joined the church--her father, brother, and son-in-law. Her father, who occasionally attended Alpha and Omega but belonged to another local Apostolic church, liked Pastor McGhee but sought a style of worship more "sacred" than that found at Alpha and Omega. Her brother had married a Jehovah's Witness, but refused to go to any church; and neither had her son-in-law been moved to attend church.¹² This portrait of an extended family's involvement in Alpha and Omega is quite representative, and the congregation included many similar family networks, all of which helped to strengthen community bonds.

All earthly authority at Alpha and Omega was seen to derive from the church's pastor and founder, Edward T. McGhee. Of the approximately sixty-five Sunday morning worship services which form the core of this study, Pastor McGhee presided over every service: no substitute preacher was ever observed on a Sunday morning. Even when, on special occasions, guest pastors were invited to preach during evening services, Pastor McGhee always oversaw these events.

¹²By 1996, this son-in law had been baptized, had spoken in tongues, and had become an active member of Alpha and Omega.

There are several reasons why Pastor McGhee's authority appears to have been unquestioned at Alpha and Omega, but the most important of these is that church members believed him to be a prophet. Max Weber argued that an individual is considered a prophet by virtue of "personal revelation and charisma" (1965:440). The authority which Pastor McGhee commanded at Alpha and Omega is what Weber called "charismatic authority," and it was this "charisma," as defined by Weber below, which attracted congregants and held them in thrall of his leadership:

The term 'charisma' will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a 'leader' (1965:241).

The manner in which Pastor McGhee was introduced to the radio audience during one Sunday evening broadcast helps to illustrate the congregation's perception of their leader as one who has been granted divine "assistance":

...The scripture has said, 'how can you hear unless you have the preacher; how can he preach unless he has been assisted.' This has been revealed in the person of our pastor and founder. He is the spokesman for the King of Kings. We present to you now the founder and pastor of the Alpha and Omega Temple of Jesus Christ, the honorable District Elder, Edward T. McGhee. The next speaking voice that you hear will be that of Pastor McGhee (March 17, 1991).

It was common for members of Alpha and Omega to describe Pastor McGhee as a prophet. During the offertory of Service No. 7, for example, one member gave a lengthy personal testimony, the objective of which was to procure a generous offering for the

church, and in the course of her speech, she testified that Pastor McGhee is "a true prophet of God":

Many times, you know, I'd look at Pastor like he's crazy: he's coming off the wall. But he is a watchman. On the watch, on the watch for our souls. He is sittin' on the wall watchin'. And the thing about him is: I just know he's a true prophet of God (October 28, 1990).

In personal conversations, members also spoke of the pastor's gift of prophecy, and gave that as an important reason for their joining the Alpha and Omega community. When asked why people choose Alpha and Omega over the other churches in town, the minister of music cited "the pastor's gift of prophecy," adding that the "majority" of church members are "there because of pastor" (I.01.26.91). Another member said that Alpha and Omega is the best Apostolic church in town, and credited that to the "leadership of a man who can get a word from God" (I.07.10.92).

Pastor McGhee is Alpha and Omega's founder, and was the church's only ordained elder. By virtue of this, as well as his charismatic authority, he was the congregation's unquestioned leader. There were, however, a multitude of other leadership roles within the Alpha and Omega community; an incomplete list included deacons, ministers, evangelists, nurses, ushers, choir directors, the church secretary, the minister of music, and the chief musician. In fact, when asked about the very democratic workings of the choir, where there were several choir directors and where many choir members were given the opportunity to sing solo lead, Pastor McGhee explained that if Alpha and Omega creates a way for members to become more active in the church,

then that involvement will enable both them and the church to grow:

This is what we try to work around--the talent--and show the versatility there.... I feel it's very important for growth in anything. Where you got one person doing everything, there's a block. It's because people do not want to get involved. It's just like gettin' a job; if they don't feel that there's any potential for them to move up the ladder, they just don't have the initiative to work with it. So we findin' that we've gotten a lot of good, young people to work in it [the choir], and they really show their dedication... (I.11.15.89).

The pastor encouraged all members to become actively involved in some aspect of Alpha and Omega, implicitly suggesting that when they have demonstrated their commitment, they will be entrusted with greater responsibilities.

The church deacons--second in rank after Pastor McGhee--grew in number from two in 1989, to four in 1992. Like the pastor, the deacons have been ordained by the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World. The deacons, Pastor McGhee explained, "serve with me in the capacity that I serve. When I'm not there, they can do the things that I can do, you see, because of their ordination" (I.11.15.89). Pastor McGhee alluded to the qualifications for deacon set forth in I Timothy 3:[10-13], noting that it is imperative to examine the "lifestyle" of anyone seeking to become a deacon--"how they get along with people, and how they serve people." As stipulated in I Timothy 3, deacons must be married. The deacons' presence is most evident at Alpha and Omega during the offertory, when the collected offering is entrusted to them, and at baptisms, when they assist the pastor by preparing and

immersing the candidates.¹³

Other church officials included the ministers and evangelists, church mothers, nurses, and ushers. Ministers and evangelists had the authority to preach special services, and they also assisted with the altar call, anointing those who had come for prayer and determining whether any of the penitents had come in search of baptism. Although any layman could lead testimony services, the ministers and evangelists were often given this responsibility, since they were among the church's most active members. Several older women at Alpha and Omega were designated as "church mothers," and while this title appeared to be partly honorary, they helped to advise young people seeking guidance, and they also visited the sick. The church nurse, usually dressed in a traditional white nurse's uniform, ministered to the needs of the pastor during worship, providing juice for his parched throat and clean handkerchiefs with which he could wipe the perspiration from his brow. Though one of Alpha and Omega's nurses was a certified nurse's assistant, no official nursing credentials were required, only the ability to minister well to the needs of another. The ushers had several responsibilities. They helped congregants, particularly late arrivals, to their seats; during the offertory they directed the orderly flow of congregants from their pews, past the offering plates at the altar, and back to their seats; and the ushers also

¹³The pastor customarily pronounced the baptismal formula from the area near the pulpit, while the deacon, situated at a distance from the pastor, immersed the candidate.

helped to guard against injury in moments of spirit-filled dancing, when they gathered around a member whose motion or swinging arms might otherwise have resulted in injury.

The church choir, The Voices of Pentecost,¹⁴ played a very prominent role in the church and provided one of the most important outlets for membership involvement at Alpha and Omega. Reputed to be "the choir in town," the choir was characterized by church leaders as a large group of dedicated "young people" singing the most contemporary gospel repertoire.¹⁵ With the minimum age for choir membership set at thirteen, and with only a few members over the age of thirty-five, the choir did indeed have a youthful image, and the majority of its members were in their late teens and twenties. The pastor and minister of music estimated the choir's membership to be "almost sixty" and "between seventy-five and eighty, including [instrumental] musicians" respectively (First Spring Concert: May 2, 1992; I.1.26.91). If the official choir roster was ever that large, regular active participation was decidedly less extensive. Between the fall of 1989 and the summer of 1992, the average choir size during Sunday morning worship services was about twenty-seven. At special events, however, the choir was much larger. At the choir's annual concert on November 22, 1991, for

¹⁴Both printed and oral sources sometimes referred to the choir using the singular, "Voice" of Pentecost, but the plural was more common.

¹⁵This image of the choir is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

example, choir personnel, as listed in the printed program, numbered fifty individuals, including five instrumental musicians.

Although the choir's members were almost all "young people," any church member could theoretically join the choir, since repentance and water baptism in Jesus' name were cited as the only prerequisites for choir membership. Asked "Who can be in the choir?," one choir director responded,

It's almost like a requirement that you must belong to the church. And the way of membership is obtained through repentance and water baptism, and that would... allow a person to become a member of the choir. (I.11.03.89)

While repentance and baptism in Jesus' name were given as requirements for choir membership, this rule was once waived, when a young woman with a COGIC background (and therefore trinitarian baptism) was permitted to join the choir.¹⁶

The instrumental musicians at Alpha and Omega constituted what was sometimes referred to as the "church band," and membership in this group provided yet another form of active involvement. Much more loosely organized than the word "band" would suggest, it was an ad hoc group, consisting of whomever participated. On Sunday mornings, the accompanying instrumentalists varied in number from three to seven. Although the total number of instrumentalists present was variable, a

¹⁶Although some church members objected to this, Pastor McGhee, confident that her continued presence would result in baptism in Jesus' name, allowed her to sing in the choir. Several months later, she did in fact request baptism in the name of Jesus. This story is recounted in some detail in Chapter 9.

keyboardist--whether playing synthesizer, Hammond organ, or piano--and a drummer with trap set were present at every Sunday morning worship service observed. In fact, two (and sometimes three) keyboardists were simultaneously active in these services. The primary musicians, like the chief musician and the principal drummer,¹⁷ usually arrived about twenty to thirty minutes after the Sunday morning service had begun, with other, generally less experienced musicians filling in until their arrival. In practice, drums appear to have been considered an optional component at the start of worship, while keyboard accompaniment was deemed essential. The analysis of twelve services in Appendix A, for example, indicates that a keyboardist was missing at the start of only one service (Service No. 5), and even then for only one minute, while drums were absent for more than twenty minutes at the start of Service Nos. 5 and 9, and for over ten minutes at the start of Service No. 12. The presence of other supporting instruments, though sometimes consistent from week to week, varied significantly during the course of this research. These backup instruments sometimes included electric guitar, bass guitar, saxophone, flute, and trumpet. It was noted above that a democratic attitude prevailed in choosing the choir's soloists.

¹⁷The title "chief musician" was one which members and church leaders conferred upon the principal keyboardist. The identity of the chief musician, along with this title, always appeared prominently on the announcements and programs of choir concerts. No similar prestige was accorded the principal drummer, and I use the term "principal drummer" simply to signify the individual who accounted for about eighty to ninety percent of all drummed accompaniment.

Similarly, young instrumentalists were encouraged to perform, and this was most evident at the drum set, where younger, less experienced drummers were given an opportunity to play at the beginning of Sunday morning worship services, and at other less critical times, like during the Bible Study service. On one, albeit unusual, occasion, five drummers performed in a single worship service.

The choir and church band presented a variety of leadership opportunities for interested members. Choir officials included three officers--the choir president, treasurer, and secretary--and often as many as six or seven directors and directresses.¹⁸ As mentioned above, many choir members were periodically given the chance to sing solo lead in the choir's selections. By not limiting participation to one or two directors and solo vocalists, Alpha and Omega provided many individuals with opportunities for greater involvement. As Pastor McGhee explained, members are given the chance to "move up the ladder," and to occupy positions of greater responsibility and visibility.

Musically, the positions of greatest authority were those of the minister of music and the chief musician. The chief musician was the keyboardist who presided at the synthesizer or organ throughout the majority of every service, and it was the chief musician who responded to the pastor's preaching when the pastor's mode of delivery changed to chant during the sermons.

¹⁸The term "directresses" appeared on concert posters and in the printed program.

In addition to being the primary keyboardist, the chief musician, together with one or two of the choir directors, chose the choir selections and rehearsed the choir, teaching the selections by aurally introducing each choir section--soprano, alto, and tenor --to its part. The exact responsibilities of the minister of music were somewhat more difficult to determine. One of the most active choir directors explained his duties as follows:

his job function... is to sing and to minister to the people. Inasmuch as music being a ministry, the minister of music is to come forth and... to tell the songs that we're¹⁹ about to sing and who's gonna lead them... and then a lot of times, he'll have something to say.²⁰ If the title of the song was "I will bless the Lord at all times," he will begin to elaborate and to minister to the congregation... before they sing (I.11.03.89).

In fact, the job of introducing choir selections was more often performed by others, usually choir members and directors, but because the minister of music was a strong singer and a skilled worship leader, he often functioned as worship or testimony leader.

Other researchers have observed that while Holiness-Pentecostal congregations are composed mostly of women, it is the men who hold the key positions of authority (Gilkes 1986; Lawless 1988). "If one looks beyond the [male-dominated] pulpit," Cheryl

¹⁹The speaker is here referring to the choir, and the title which he subsequently cites is that of a choir selection.

²⁰It was common for the minister of music, the pastor, and other church leaders to have "something to say" either before or after most songs, and these transitions leading to or from choir selections and congregational songs were usually inspired by the songs' text. These transitions, which served to bridge the realms of speech and song, are discussed in a later chapter on language at Alpha and Omega.

Townsend Gilkes claims, "it is possible to view the Sanctified Church as a women's movement" (1986:33). She has noted that some Holiness-Pentecostal congregations are "over ninety percent female" (1986:33), and Lawless has even observed a small rural congregation in Indiana, which, though led by male preachers, consisted totally of women (1988:xiii). Though women constituted a clear majority of the members at Alpha and Omega, the percentage of adult males was somewhat higher than that reported by either Gilkes or Lawless. My estimates indicated that males made up between one-fourth and one-third of the adult population at Alpha and Omega.²¹

Pastor McGhee was certainly aware of this imbalance, and would occasionally address the issue in his sermons, as he did in Service 6:

Now , if it's ever a time we need men dedicated to the will of God, it's right now. I said, 'right now.' We really need mens, I mean men, in the church that's dedicated to the will of God.... When you talk about brothers coming to church, you see people that's in the world, they frown on that. They think that's only for ladies to come to church.... Now listen here, I know the devil is sayin' that the church is washed out of men (October 21, 1990).

During his Father's Day sermon, in 1991, he again acknowledged the shortage of dedicated men:

We need some fathers, +HAH+
that knows how +HAH+
to come to prayer meeting. +HAH+
Can I get some help here? {?}
Hey, we need some daddies, +HAH+
that don't mind gettin' up +HAH+

²¹Adults were those judged to be at least eighteen years of age. This estimated percentage includes the male deacons, male musicians, and male choir members as a part of the congregation.

at seven o'clock in the morning, +HAH+
comin' to prayer meeting. +HAH+
We need some daddies, +HAH+
that don't {need no mind?} +HAH+
comin' to Bible class. +HAH+
We need some daddies, +HAH+
that don't mind standin' up, +HAH+
and testifyin' +HAH+
about the goodness +HAH+
of Jesus. +HAH+
I heard somebody say, +HAH+
'you can't tell it,' +HAH+
'let me tell it.' +HAH+ [these two lines are repeated twice]
'what the Lord has done.' +HAH+
Put your hand together and praise Him.
(June 16, 1991; there was shouting and applause throughout
this entire excerpt)

Though the adult male constituency at Alpha and Omega was probably greater than that found in most Pentecostal churches, Pastor McGhee was still clearly concerned about the small number of men in the church.

While the membership of most Pentecostal congregations is predominantly female, it is the males who tend to hold the positions of greatest authority. Pentecostals usually cite Biblical scripture as the basis for this pattern of male dominance. As Lawless has explained,

The Pentecostal community operates on a Bible-inspired hierarchy, based on Paul's letters to the Corinthians, which places women in a position subservient not only to God but to men as well.... Men generally maintain the positions of authority in this religion (1988:76-77).

This asymmetrical distribution of authority according to gender was clearly evident at Alpha and Omega, where the pastor, the four deacons, the minister of music, and the chief musician were all male. It is true that women held some respected church positions. In 1991, for example, the three choir officers--

president, treasurer, and secretary--the church secretary, the usher president, and the educational director were all women. Women were also regularly given control of the worship service, when acting as worship and testimony leaders, but such leadership always occurred at the beginning of worship, and always in the pastor's absence. Though women held many important positions and exercised considerable authority, it was the men who occupied the church's most respected positions.

Since the P. A. W., unlike many Pentecostal denominations, has traditionally allowed women to be ordained and accepted them as pastors (Payne 1991:109), the congregation at Alpha and Omega is occasionally exposed to female pastors. On some special occasions, like the annual choir concert or the church anniversary, women pastors from Chicago and Kankakee have been invited to preach at Alpha and Omega. But while some P. A. W. congregations may experience female leadership, authority at Alpha and Omega rests squarely on the shoulders of Pastor McGhee and his four male deacons.

With choir membership varying from about sixty-five to seventy-five percent female, the choir's constituency, like that of the church, was mostly female. The choir also provided many opportunities for female congregants to assume roles of leadership and greater responsibility: the choir's three officers were all female; though the number of choir directors was continually changing, at the choir's concert in 1991, six of the seven choir directors were female (November 22, 1991); and the

choir's solo lead singers were also usually female. While the choir and its governance was largely a female domain, the accompanying instrumental music at Alpha and Omega was provided almost exclusively by males, and women were not usually seen playing musical instruments (except for the tambourine).²² Despite this imbalance, it appears that women were in no way barred from instrumental performance. In fact, three women, a drummer and a two keyboardists, did appear on a variety of occasions, but none ever performed as regularly as the male musicians. Sometimes, these women "stood in" for other musicians who were absent, or who had not yet arrived. As one female keyboardist explained, "I just play long enough till the real people [come]" (I.08.18.92). Although women held pastorates at other P.A.W. churches, and though one woman later joined the core of instrumental musicians at Alpha and Omega, positions of authority were clearly male-dominated during the course of this research, and the pastor, the four deacons, the chief musician, and the minister of music were all male.

²²This pattern, I am told, is no longer so clear in 1996, since one of the church's principal keyboardists is a woman. This new keyboardist performs mostly with the choir, while a man, the chief musician at the time of this study, still accompanies the pastor during his sermons and also plays most of the congregation's shout music.

Chapter 3

"It's Not But One Way": Doctrine at Alpha and Omega

I'm talkin' about what the Bible says.
It's not but one way.... All I want you to do
is get the plan of salvation so you can go to Heaven.
How many understand that there ain't but one God?
And how many understand that one God
doesn't have two or three plans?"
--Pastor McGhee (October 27, 1991)

I. Church Doctrine at Alpha and Omega

The foregoing discussion of Pentecostalism and the P. A. W. sought to place Alpha and Omega in its historical context. No treatment of church doctrine, however, would be complete without a consideration of the belief system as espoused by Pastor McGhee and church members. Like the musical repertory at Alpha and Omega, church doctrine was nearly all passed along in oral tradition, learned and perpetuated in worship services and other events sponsored by the church. Except for hymnals and printed worship programs, the Bible was the only printed matter regularly seen at the church. Occasionally, information about church doctrine appeared in the printed programs, but generally the belief system was transmitted orally.

The two principal sources of church doctrine at Alpha and Omega were the Bible and Pastor McGhee, who was often referred to as God's spokesman. Great emphasis was placed on the Bible, and Pastor McGhee stressed that the plan of salvation taught at Alpha and Omega is clearly outlined in the Bible, regularly telling

members, "You don't have to take my word; the Bible backs up [what I'm saying]" (October 15, 1989). He encouraged his congregation and radio audience to read their Bibles: "You need to open your Bibles. The problem is that many of you are going to church or goin' to churches and you have not read your Bible-- what God has to say" (Sunday evening broadcast, March 8, 1992).

As God's spokesman, Pastor McGhee functioned as the church's authoritative interpreter of the Bible, and there were many occasions during the week which either required or permitted Biblical interpretation: Bible Study, which was led by Pastor McGhee; the sermons, wherein the pastor amplified upon selected scriptural passages; and also any other scripture-based lessons that the pastor might deliver during worship. Because Pastor McGhee and members of Alpha and Omega believe that there is only one way to salvation, a path which is documented in the Bible, Biblical interpretation generally underscored the principal tenets of the church's doctrine.

Aspects of church doctrine were regularly espoused in worship services: during the sermons and other scripture-based lessons, as mentioned above; at the altar call, when the pastor often summarized Alpha and Omega's commitment to the one plan of salvation; and during the live radio broadcasts, when an appeal was made to all radio listeners who had not yet been baptized in the name of Jesus. Although members of Alpha and Omega learned about church doctrine in a number of ways--as, for example, by attending the adult Sunday School and Wednesday evening Bible

Study, the two Sunday services were the primary occasions for teaching and disseminating church doctrine. Discussion of church doctrine constituted a vital portion of nearly every event held at the church, but was particularly conspicuous during the Sunday morning and evening worship services. Whereas Sunday School, Bible Study, and the Monday evening prayer meeting attracted audiences comprised almost entirely of church members who had been saved, the two Sunday services were more likely to reach persons not so familiar with the doctrine preached at Alpha and Omega. As many as six to eight first-time visitors occasionally attended Sunday morning worship; and on Sunday evenings, when a one-hour segment of the service was broadcast live on a local radio station, the audience was composed of the larger community, a group much less familiar with Alpha and Omega's message. Perhaps this explains the attention given to church doctrine, and particularly the "plan of salvation," during these services. As a result, the belief system was almost inevitably summarized during these services, and sometimes the greater part of a service was devoted to a statement and amplification of that system. Because of the limited air time, Pastor McGhee's remarks during the Sunday evening radio broadcast often provided the most concise statements of church doctrine.

The following discussion explores the ways in which church doctrine was communicated during worship services, beginning with a sermon delivered during the Sunday evening radio broadcast on March 8, 1992. Because the pastor's sermon that night was

devoted to "false prophets," the issue of doctrine surfaced repeatedly. For this reason, the basic beliefs of the pastor and congregation can be found in microcosm in that evening's sermon. The sermon begins with a woman minister lining out the text of I John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." The pastor preached for the next one-half hour, amplifying upon the first couple verses of I John 4.

In this sermon, Pastor McGhee emphasized that there is only one true plan of salvation; and though there are many different churches and religions, only a small minority preach the "truth." Near the start of his sermon, he observed,

Many of you go to churches [where you] feel good in.
Feelin' good and goin' to Heaven is two different things.
You not only need to get a church where you feel good in,
you need to get a church that's on the way to Heaven.

Referring to the scripture reading, the pastor emphasized that there are, "'many false prophets!' 'many false prophets!'" That's why you got so many different kinds of religion. That's why people don't know who is right." Pastor McGhee's assertion that there is only one true plan of salvation had already generated a considerable degree of controversy in the Champaign-Urbana African-American religious community, and it was that debate which precipitated much of the pastor's following remarks:

I find people everyday that stop me along the way and ask me, 'do you have to belong to Alpha and Omega to be saved?' No you do not have to belong here to be saved, but you need to be in a church--not a church of your choice--but you need to be in a church where the gospel of Jesus Christ is preached. Amen. No, you can be saved anyplace where the gospel is preached: anyplace where they preach to you

repentance of your sins, get baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ, and live a holy life. Amen. Anywhere! It doesn't make any difference where they might be, and they may have the name of Baptist on their door. It doesn't make any difference. They may have the name of Church of God in Christ. It doesn't make any difference, if they preach to you the gospel of Jesus Christ. If they preach to you that you must repent of your sin, and get baptized in water in Jesus' name, and get the Holy Ghost, you can be saved there. Now notice you don't have to ask me what's wrong and who ain't right. You hear what I'm sayin' tonight? If they're not preachin' the repentance of sin in the name of Jesus Christ, and you get the Holy Ghost speakin' in tongues, and live a holy life, you don't need to spend another day in that church! You oughta get up and runnin' now. Somebody say, 'Hallelujah'" (emphasis added).

The "true plan of salvation," preached at Alpha and Omega, can be extracted from this segment of Pastor McGhee's sermon. In order to be saved, an individual must (1) repent of his/her sins; (2) be baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ; (3) receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and speak in tongues; and (4) lead a holy life.

Although the pastor frequently enumerated these four prerequisites of salvation, the real emphasis at Alpha and Omega was placed on baptism in water in the name of Jesus Christ. Deferring to the Bible and insisting that one must obey the Word of God, Pastor McGhee resolutely maintained that only one baptismal formula--that advocated by Peter in Acts 2:38--would result in salvation:

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:38)

He further contended that the more commonly used formula, which baptizes believers "in the name of the Father, and of the Son,

and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19), would not result in salvation.

For Pastor McGhee and the members of Alpha and Omega, there is only one true plan of salvation, and the only "right church" is one which preaches that plan. During the Altar Call on October 27, 1991, Pastor McGhee emphasized that there is only one plan of salvation laid out in the Bible:

...I'm not talkin' the way my mamma brought me up. I'm talkin' about what the Bible says. It's not but one way. ...Do you get this in your mind that I'm tryin' to get everybody to come to this church? 'Cause if I tried to get everybody to come here--if they did--we wouldn't have room for everybody in Champaign. That ain't the issue. All I want you to do is get the plan of salvation so you can go to Heaven. How many understand that there ain't but one God? And how many understand that one God doesn't have two or three plans? If He had two and three plans, you would have a bunch of confusion.

On another occasion, Pastor McGhee explained that when he spoke of "the church," he was referring to any church that preaches the true plan of salvation:

When I talk about 'the church'...
I'm talkin' 'bout the church that is water baptized in
Jesus' names and got the Holy Ghost speakin' in tongues.
I don't know anything about another one.
And if it's another, it's gotta be false. (November 4, 1990)

The various doctrines of other denominations seemed to pose no serious issue for believers at Alpha and Omega. Pastor McGhee frequently addressed the existence of other denominations, steadfast in his conviction that there is but one true plan of salvation, and certain that only a handful of elect Christians will see Heaven. While sometimes very critical of other denominations, Pastor McGhee adopted a more inventive and

humorous approach in discussing denominational multiplicity during the Altar Call on Sunday, October 29, 1991. On this occasion, he insisted that the key to salvation is being born again: baptized in the name of Jesus and filled with the spirit of the Holy Ghost. If you've been born again, you can be a Catholic, Methodist, or Baptist; "you can go to heaven from anywhere in the world":

Is anybody else here ...that has not been baptized in the name? I said in the name of Jesus Christ. I ain't talkin' about joining no church now. We got some people up here wanta join the church [that is, Alpha and Omega]; ...that's irrelevant. That's not the real key. The real key is to get born again. That's the real key. 'Cause [if] you get born again you can go to heaven from anywhere in the world. But if you ain't born again, you can go to hell from anywhere in the world too....

And to be born of the water and the [Pastor pauses while the congregation supplies the missing word: 'Spirit'].... And you get baptized in water in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the only name. That is the only way to be immersed in the water correctly.... Call amen somebody. If you here, you don't have to join this church to get baptized in Jesus' name.... You don't have to stay here....

Somebody say, 'can I remain a Baptist if I get baptized in Jesus' name.' I'm gonna tell 'em, brother M-----, 'you just got to be a Baptist if you got baptized in the name of Jesus.'

Somebody say, 'can I be a Methodist?' Yes, because you got the right method when you get baptized in water in Jesus' name.

'Can I be a Catholic?' Catholic means the universal church. Because when you get baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ and get the Holy Ghost, you is in the universal church.

Somebody say, 'can I be a Seventh Day Adventist and get baptized in Jesus' name and get the Holy Ghost?' You just came to be the real Seventh Day Adventist, once you get baptized in water in Jesus' name and get the Holy Ghost, because you not only keep one day holy but you keep every day holy.

These are the real Baptists you see comin' to get baptized in Jesus' name....

Somebody say, 'well, I wanta be a Church of God in Christ; can I be baptized in Jesus' name and still be?' You

just got to be the real Church of God in Christ.

Now who else you want a name? Just name 'em. Who else you want a be, after you get baptized in Jesus' name and get the Holy Ghost? 'Cause whatever you want a be, I want a show you how you can be, but you can't be unless you're born again.

You want a be a real Lutheran? Here it is. You want a be a real Presbyterian, being laying on hands? Here it is. Everything you hear all these other folks talkin' about doing out of the book, they got it out of the book of Acts, but they left the plan in Acts.

Somebody say, 'I want a be a Jehovah Witness.' Yeah, you are the real Jehovah Witness when you get baptized in water in Jesus' name and get the Holy Ghost. We are the real witnesses. The Bible says, 'after the Holy Ghost has come, ye shall be my witnesses.'

Anybody else ya want a be?

In general, Alpha and Omega was no different than most other Pentecostal and Christian churches in preaching that salvation is granted only to those who have fulfilled certain requirements. For most Pentecostals, the central requirement of salvation is being filled with the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues. This requirement is what Arthur E. Paris has called "the litmus test of the vernacular" for most Pentecostals: "'Unless you get it like in Acts 2:4, you ain't been saved'" (1982: 24). In addition to this fundamental requirement, though, Alpha and Omega maintained, unlike some other Pentecostal denominations, that one must be baptized "in the name of Jesus." This second requirement reflected the fact that Alpha and Omega is a "Oneness" church, believing in "Jesus Only," instead of a trinitarian God. Although Pastor McGhee cited additional requirements for salvation (listed above), these two conditions--being baptized in the name of Jesus and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is demonstrated by speaking in tongues--were the focus of Alpha

and Omega's efforts to win others to Jesus.

While the foregoing discussion of doctrine has centered around Alpha and Omega's belief in a single plan of salvation, other tenets of church doctrine were also espoused in worship and passed along in oral tradition. The twofold Wesleyan doctrine of conversion and sanctification, discussed earlier, was an implicit part of church doctrine. Thus, during his sermon on Sunday, October 21, 1990, Pastor McGhee asked his congregation, "This is a sanctified church, isn't that right?" It was because of the doctrine of sanctification that congregants considered themselves 'Saints' of God; and members, particularly during testimonies, addressed the congregation as 'Saints'--as in the common salutation, "Praise the Lord, Saints."

The pastor espoused another Wesleyan belief--that the 'double cure' of conversion and sanctification does not mean 'sinless perfection' (Synan: 18):

And don't you go runnin' and givin' people the impression that because we are saved and sanctified that we [are] infallible people. You're NOT. But on the other hand, let them know until you get [it] like this here,¹ honey, you're headed nowhere. (November 4, 1990)

In other words, in addition to repentance, baptism in the name of Jesus, and being filled with the Holy Ghost--all of which are absolutely essential conditions of salvation--one must lead a holy life. As Pastor McGhee declared on October 15, 1989, "You ain't gonna go to Heaven if you don't live right."

¹ Pastor McGhee was referring to the need to find the true plan of salvation.

The content of sermons and testimonies provided additional instruction on the important point that Alpha and Omega was not a trinitarian church, but rather one that believed in "Jesus Only." For example, the pastor, declaring that Alpha and Omega is an Apostolic Church in the midst of a "faithless generation," preached,

That's why I gotta talk to folks that are water baptized in Jesus' name. I wouldn't take this sermon and go to a three god church and try to preach this here. It wouldn't fit in there.... They ain't got the name; they believe in the three (October 15, 1989).

One of Pastor McGhee's favorite anecdotes--a story about avoiding an almost certain collision with a semitruck on the highway by invoking the name of Jesus--corroborated this doctrine of "Jesus Only":

It was a time I was riding with a friend of mine and some of you have heard this. And we was travelling off of the expressway onto this highway we was on. A large semitruck came off of the express[way], speed was still high. We couldn't get over; another car there. Glory to God! And the same, when I hollered, 'Jesus!' You all ain't hearin' me. Whew, glory! I didn't let my buddy call on him, because I know he was kinda mixed up, you know. He had too many he knew. And I, there wasn't no time to call on three. [F: I know that's right.] Hey, Jesus, Hallelujah. Wasn't no time to Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost. It was time to call on Jesus, because God has given him a name above everything... the name of Jesus. [speaking in tongues] I said, 'Jesus.' Hey, hey, hey. Yes, immediately the semi stopped; immediately the semi stopped. We got out and I said, 'thank you, Jesus.' We looked at the semi and the car that I was ridin' in. You couldn't get a piece of paper, hallelujah, between the car [and the semi]. Somebody say, 'what was here; tell me what happened.' I said, 'My God.' I told my buddy, I said, 'my angel is hovering in there.' He said, 'I can't see him.' I said, 'well when you know Jesus; I told you, when you know Jesus, and He is God, and He is invisible'.... When you get filled with Jesus, He'll protect you. (October 22, 1989)

With an element of humor, this anecdote reaffirmed Alpha and

Omega's belief in "Jesus Only," and also helped to teach visitors and new members about the congregation's belief system.

Of course, the manner in which this belief system was embraced and espoused is more complex than the foregoing discussion suggests. Songs and choir selections, for example, provided a more subtle but very important means of teaching congregants about church doctrine, and their role in expressing these beliefs is discussed in the final section of this chapter. Much of the oral communication at Alpha and Omega revolved around a handful of recurring themes, or principal concepts, that drive the belief system. Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the devil, baptism, power, and death were among the most important of these key concepts.

II. Key Doctrinal Concepts: Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Devil, Baptism, Power, and Death

This section explores six principal concepts of church doctrine at Alpha and Omega. While the number of concepts chosen is arbitrary, these six have been selected because of the attention that was devoted to them in worship services. In a "Oneness" Pentecostal church, it is quite logical that Jesus and the Holy Ghost would be the two most important recurring themes in worship. Repeated exposure to sermons, testimonies, and lessons, however, revealed that some other concepts were also very important. Four of these other recurrent themes--the devil, baptism, power, and death, all issues which were addressed with

great frequency and urgency at Alpha and Omega--are examined in the following discussion.

Jesus

A "Oneness" church preaching the doctrine of "Jesus Only," Alpha and Omega devoted a great portion of its worship services to speaking, singing, and shouting the praises of Jesus. Although members and church leaders used a number of terms to refer to the godhead--Jesus, God, Lord, Father, Savior, Holy Ghost, Holy Spirit--all were understood to signify Jesus. For Pastor McGhee and members of Alpha and Omega, 'Jesus' was God's name; the other terms were seen either as titles, as with 'Father' or 'Lord,' or as descriptions of a feature of Jesus, as for example, his Spirit. Through sermons, testimonies, and lessons, Pastor McGhee and other church leaders disavowed the trinity and proclaimed their belief in Jesus only. During one sermon, for example, Pastor McGhee asked, "What's God's name?" and immediately responded, "Say, 'Jesus'" (October 15, 1989). During another sermon, he clarified a theological point for his congregation. After reading a portion of John 11:41,² Pastor McGhee, apparently concerned that his audience might interpret this passage as partial evidence of a trinity, offered this explanation:

Jesus is all God, and He's all man. Somebody say,
'hallelujah'.... Ain't no God outside of Jesus. Ain't none

²"And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me."

before Him; ain't none comin' after Him. Jesus is all you want. (November 10, 1991)

Though two or three of the above-mentioned terms for the deity were sometimes used in the same sentence, for members of Alpha and Omega, they were all means of signifying Jesus, even when usage suggested that they might refer to different entities, as follows:

In the name of Jesus, I pray Father that you would let your Spirit saturate this place right now. (Pastor McGhee, October 21, 1990)

Let God have His way, in Jesus' name. (Worship Leader, October 7, 1990)

How many believe the Lord is here right now? Yeah! Lift your hand up and say, 'thank you, Jesus.' (Pastor McGhee, October, 28, 1990)

At Alpha and Omega, the name of Jesus, "the name above all others," carried spiritual weight. Testimonies, sermons, lessons, and songs taught not only that there is power in the blood of Jesus, but also that there is power, healing, and strength in the name of Jesus. Near the beginning of one Sunday morning service, immediately following the congregational song, "In the Name of Jesus, We Have a Victory," the worship leader expounded both on the song's text, as well as on the power that can be tapped by calling on "the precious name of Jesus":

Truly, this morning we have a victory in the name of Jesus Christ. Whatever we need this morning, it is all in the precious name of Jesus Christ. If we're lookin' for healing this morning, it's in Jesus' name. If you're lookin' for salvation, it's in Jesus' name. If you need power or strength in your body, it's in Jesus' name. Whatever we need this morning, it is all in the name of Jesus Christ. (November 4, 1990)

Pastor McGhee often preached about the power that resides in the "authoritative" name of Jesus. As the following sermon excerpts

indicate, he asserted not only that there is power and healing in the name of Jesus, but also that this is the name before which every demon will tremble:

There's power in the name of Jesus.
There's healing in the name of Jesus. (November 5, 1989)

We got the authoritative name, somebody say, 'Hallelujah,' where every demon and devil trembles. Whew, Hallelujah! That['s] the name of Jesus. Who can stand before us when we call on the name of Jesus? (October 15, 1989)

Another sermon taught more about the way in which Jesus works in the lives of saints. The sermon on Sunday, November 4, 1990, was based upon Mark 4:35-41, and the subject was salvation and deliverance. In this passage of Scripture, a storm assails the ship in which Jesus and his disciples are travelling. Though Jesus is aboard, asleep in the back of the ship, the disciples are terrified by the storm's fury; only when the disciples awaken Jesus does he quell the sea. Pastor McGhee preached that even though members have accepted Jesus into their lives, been water baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost, that will not prevent them from being afflicted with life's problems:

The Bible says, 'Jesus was in the hinder part.' Somebody reach behind you, say, 'Are you back there Jesus?' [C: Are you back there Jesus].... Now I wanta tell you something else. He didn't stop the storm from coming. You can have the Holy Ghost [speaking in tongues]; it don't stop the storm from comin'. You can have the Holy Ghost. It won't stop the bills from being billed. You can have the Holy Ghost. It won't stop sickness from comin' to your door. ...I heard the songwriter say, 'He may not come when you call Him, but He'll be on time.' ...How many understand that Jesus was on the ship? How many could understand that He could be with you, but He ain't doin' nothing till you wake him up? ...How you wake Him up? You wake Him up with faith.

For Pastor McGhee and the congregation at Alpha and Omega,

the name of the Godhead is 'Jesus.' Through Jesus, believers could receive salvation, healing, power, and strength.

The Holy Ghost

The P. A. W. believes that there is one God and that His name is Jesus. The Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit, then, is seen as one aspect of Jesus. In a pamphlet published by the P. A. W., the church body has explained that, "God... is 'Holy Ghost' in His sanctifying and preserving the indwelt believer; but His name is One--Jesus" (n.d.:7). The plan of salvation advocated at Alpha and Omega teaches that the penitent believer, after repenting and being baptized in the name of Jesus, will receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Members further believe that the gift (or indwelling) of the Holy Ghost is "evidenced" by the speaking in tongues. Oral communication at Alpha and Omega corroborated these fundamental beliefs and amplified on the concept of the Holy Ghost.

Through sermons, testimonies, and lessons, church leaders taught (1) that one must receive the gift of the Holy Ghost in order to be saved; and (2) that the gift of the Holy Ghost would necessarily result in glossolalia. These basic tenets are illustrated in the following excerpts from sermons and testimonies:

According to the Word, you're not filled with the Holy Ghost if you haven't spoke in tongues. (Testimony, October 15, 1989)

...You need to be filled with the Holy Ghost. After you have repented of your sins, the Bible declares, ye shall

receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. And the Holy Ghost, when you get it, you are going to speak in tongues. (Sermon, October 22, 1989)

You don't get the Holy Ghost without speaking in tongues.... The gift of healing--everybody don't have that. Everybody don't have the gift of layin' on of hands. But every child of God that is born of God, must have the Holy Ghpst. Must have it! ...So don't listen to Reverend Dolittle³ [laughter], talkin' about the Holy Ghost without speakin' in tongues.... You got to have the spirit which is the Holy Ghost, which is the gift that God gives you. And once you get this gift, you talk back to God [i.e., speak in tongues]. (Sermon, October 27, 1991)

The Holy Ghost is nothing that you oughta be afraid of. Wait a minute [as if asking the musicians to hold back]. The Holy Ghost is intelligent. Because you don't lose your mind when you get the Holy Ghost. You get the mind of God, Hallelujah. (Altar Call, October 21, 1990)

According to Pastor McGhee, every "Child of God" must be filled with the Holy Ghost, and the indwelling of this spirit will be demonstrated by glossolalia. Receiving the Holy Ghost not only enables an individual to communicate with God--"talk back to God"--but also gives the believer "the mind of God."

Testimonies, sermons, and other forms of oral communication at Alpha and Omega provide further instruction on the nature of the Holy Ghost. While Alpha and Omega teaches that believers must be filled with the Holy Spirit, congregants further believe that both the church and its services are Holy-Ghost filled. Members believe that the Holy Ghost sometimes descends upon the congregation and influences the course of worship services, and this is how members explained particularly animated worship

³This reference to "Reverend Dolittle" was perhaps an allusion to a local pastor who, while claiming that his church was the "Holy Ghost Headquarters," did not preach the necessity of speaking in tongues.

services. On October 22, 1989, shouting over the very loud, uptempo music that was accompanying spirit-filled dancing, Pastor McGhee declared, "We're gonna have a Holy Ghost time here." He meant that the service would be characterized by shouting, clapping, praising, and foot-stomping. On another Sunday, he explained the activities which define a "Holy Ghost-filled place":

Thank you God today, that we are in a Holy Ghost-filled place, amen. Where we can feel the Holy Ghost moving, moving, moving. You don't have to be ashamed to throw your hands up and praise Him. You don't have to be afraid to shout, if you want to, amen. You don't have to sit there and [be] wonderin' can I clap my hand, you can clap your hands here. Somebody say, Hallelujah. (October 27, 1991)

On another occasion, the pastor sought to inspire members: "Wake up, [you] folks that gots the Holy Ghost. Use the Holy Ghost to moan and shout" (October 15, 1989).

In Pentecostal churches, being filled with the Holy Ghost is often likened to drunken behavior, as it is in Acts 2:15: "For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day." When Pastor McGhee spoke of getting drunk or high off of Jesus or God, he was likewise referring to the quality of being Holy Ghost-filled:

There's a lot of people today that are behind bars who just went to church, but never got filled with the presence of God. Never got a drink of God. Never got high offa God. When you see people rejoicin' and jumpin' up and down, it's because somebody have gotten a high off of Jesus.... When you get drunk off of Jesus, you don't care what folks say about you.... All I need is an overdose of the Holy Ghost. (October 22, 1989)

Some scholars of Pentecostalism refer to the speaking, shouting, and dancing as "ecstatic" behavior (see, for example, Cox

1995:15, 86-87; Bloch-Hoell 1964:37; Sanders 1996:61). Because Pastor McGhee, however, preferred the term "spirit filled," I have adopted that terminology in this volume.⁴

On several occasions I heard the church referred to metaphorically as a "filling station," where members come to receive a source of power for the ensuing week. Thus, one woman testified that she came to church to "gas up":

Praise the Lord, Saints [C: Praise the Lord]
Praise the Lord, Saints [C: Praise the Lord]
Praise the Lord, everybody [C: Praise the Lord]
This morning I came to gas up, hallelujah.
I came to put the nozzle into the gas tank, because I need a
{fill?} for the Holy Ghost.
This morning I came to gas up, and excuse me while I praise
Him.
[She immediately began dancing; the musicians provided
accompaniment; and her enthusiasm precipitated about a
minute of spirit-filled dancing.] (October 29, 1989)

On that same Sunday, another woman testified that she was thankful for the opportunity to "come to the filling station and get filled up." Thus, members believed that a spirit-filled worship service, one filled with impassioned rejoicing, has the power to regenerate participants.

As mentioned above, Pastor McGhee and his congregation maintained that there is only one plan of salvation--a plan which involves water baptism in Jesus' name and becoming filled with the Holy Spirit. Becoming Holy-Ghost filled constituted an essential part of the plan, and Pastor McGhee and members felt

⁴A second reason for avoiding the term "ecstatic" is offered in the next chapter, where Rouget's distinction between ecstasy and trance is adopted. By his definition, the behavior encountered at Alpha and Omega is trance-like, but not ecstatic.

that those individuals who were not a part of a Holy-Ghost filled church were doomed. This conviction was expressed during the Altar Call on October 27, 1991:

In this day and time, it's the Holy Ghost filled church comin' to the rise again. You all ain't hearin' me. We're in the time when the Holy Ghost-filled church is comin' to the top. And if you're not in one of them, you're gonna be destroyed--and your whole family.

The Devil

Clearly, in the worldview of Pastor McGhee and congregants at Alpha and Omega, the devil and demons constituted a serious and formidable force in the universe. Indeed, the pastor taught that "the devil is real." Almost every mention of the devil, however, was accompanied by a reference to Jesus: although the devil seeks to destroy people--and especially saints--Jesus provides the means by which believers can be victorious over the temptations of the devil. The text of a favorite song at Alpha and Omega encapsulated this basic belief:

In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus, we have a victory.
In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus, satan will have to flee.
Oh, tell me who can go before us, when we call on his great name.
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, we have a victory.

A sampling of some of the numerous references to the devil provides some indication of the very significant role that the devil plays in the church's theology:

Think about what the devil wanted to do, hey! But God did not allow the devil to do what he wanted to do. It was the devil's will to destroy you. It was the devil's will to steal your joy and your peace of mind. But thanks be to

God. God gave you a victory. (Pastor McGhee, November 4, 1990)

Listen, it's time you realize that the devil is out to get us, and he's for real. I said the devil is for real.... And, you know, as long as the devil can keep us focused on nothing, we'll never become anything. Do you not know in order to get your act together and really get on with the business of the Lord and do something that you have wanted to do and be successful in life, you got to get your eyes on Jesus. (from Pastor McGhee's sermon, November 4, 1990)

The devil does not care who he uses.... You and anybody else the devil will use.... He don't want to visit folks' houses that got whiskey in there. He'll visit the saints house, if you'll not pray it up.... Anybody know that the devil is real, they know they got to stay prayed up to keep the devil off their back. (from Pastor McGhee's sermon, October 15, 1989)

How many know that the devil is out to get you? He'll set something up for you.... The devil always makes you feel that you can't live without his stuff.... The devil always wants these young men and young sisters to believe that you can't enjoy life unless you're boogieing down. The devil wants you to feel that you can't enjoy life unless you're somewhere half-crazed and drunk out of your mind--drugged out.... Do you hear the devil talkin'? ...He's saying that... if you don't act like the world, you're not gonna get accepted. If you don't do the things of the world, your peers will not like you.... (from Pastor McGhee's sermon, October 21, 1990)

The devil tried to take my life on this year, hallelujah. I was layin' in my bed, and the death demon came through the window, [F: Oh!] and sat up on my body. [F: Yeah.] And I began to repeat, 'the blood of Jesus Christ.' I says, 'devil, it's not time for me to die; I'm not gonna die, devil.' Hallelujah! [F: Thank you, Jesus] Hallelujah! [clapping] ...You know, if you stand up for God, [F: Yeah] the devil don't like it. [F: Oh yeah]. (from a woman's testimony, October 15, 1989)

When God loves ya...

Hallelujah, ain't no demon in hell can stop the love of God
+HAH+

Ain't no demon nowhere can stop God from lovin' ya +HAH+
Hallelujah to God, ain't no demon nowhere can put me down
when God lifts me up +HAH+

Ain't no devil nowhere can stop me when God say go +HAH+
Ain't no devil nowhere can hold me when God say get up +HAH+
Ain't no devil nowhere can pull me down when God lifts me

up; come on and praise Him. [clapping]
(from Pastor McGhee's sermon, November 10, 1991)

Such references to the devil and demons were very common in worship services at Alpha and Omega. Except for references to Jesus and the Holy Ghost, no topic was more frequently addressed at Alpha and Omega than that of the devil.

Mention of the devil almost inevitably accompanied every offering at Alpha and Omega. The devil was usually charged with preventing members from giving as much as they should:

The devil seems to be tryin' to hold up the finances of the saints. [F: I know that's right.]... Now take your right foot and put it on the devil. Say, 'I put you under my foot.' [C: I put you under my foot.] (November 24, 1991)

[You're] allowin'... that old devil [to] jump on you and say, 'let's hurry up with the offering.' (November 4, 1990)

Bind the forces of the devil right now. Satan, God rebuke you in the name of Jesus. Loose your hold off of these folks right now. Somebody wanted to give, but the devil had him bound. We bind that spirit right now, in the name of Jesus. (October 22, 1989)

While the devil was a theme which surfaced in virtually every offering and sermon, one event was particularly memorable.

When the congregation was still meeting in the warehouse sanctuary, a ritual casting out of the devil⁵ took place during one Sunday morning worship service (October 15, 1989).⁶ In the

⁵Uncomfortable with the term "exorcism," the pastor and church members preferred to describe this event as a "casting out" of the devil or of evil spirits.

⁶Because this was only the second service that I had attended, I assumed that such events were not unusual. However, during the following two years of fieldwork, I never witnessed a similar event. This is perhaps attributable to the dramatic changes in worship style which took place after the congregation's move (see Chapter 7).

middle of this Sunday morning service, the children were ushered out of the sanctuary, except for a young girl about ten years old, who was led by her mother to an area near the altar. The girl was placed on the floor, and the pastor and members of the church gathered around her. For the next half hour they sought to cast out the demon which was said to possess her--by the laying on of hands and by repeated exhortations. Gathered around the prostrate girl, members were clapping, moaning, and sobbing; they independently and spontaneously called out, with exclamations such as, "In the name of Jesus," "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus," "Hallelujah," "Thank you, Jesus," and "The Blood of Jesus." Amidst the dense web of sound, the Pastor ordered the demon to "Come Out!" and a woman commanded, "loose your hold... in the name of Jesus." After about half an hour, the Pastor concluded, admonishing the congregation with the following words: "I want you to pray. It's not over yet; just keep prayin'."

Immediately thereafter, he launched into his sermon which sought to provide Biblical justification for the event which had just taken place. At the beginning of the sermon, Pastor McGhee acknowledged that some members of the congregation didn't approve of the way in which the young girl was treated, and instead felt sorry for her. He explained, however, that in order for the church to cast out the devil which was believed to possess this young girl, the wholehearted cooperation of the congregation was essential:

When we go against the devil, we need full prayin'--people that believe that God's got a force over every demon and

devil. We don't need nobody standing around [saying or thinking], 'Oh, that poor little girl, poor little child.' (October 15, 1989)

Basing his sermon on the parable of the man who asked Jesus to cast out the evil spirit which possessed his son (St. Mark 9:16-27), Pastor McGhee insisted that the devil is real. Though the devil has power, however, Alpha and Omega has the "authoritative name"--the name of Jesus--before which "every demon and devil trembles." An excerpt from the sermon reveals more about the way in which the devil is perceived at Alpha and Omega:

There's no point in my tryin' to cast out somethin' and all you all don't believe it is.

[F: 'alright'; F: 'You're preachin' now'; M: 'Preach Pastor']

Come on somebody.

Hallelujah, the DEVil is REal.

He's got POWer, but GOD's got ALL the power.

Everybody say, 'God's got ALL the power.'

[C: God's got all the power.]

What's God's name? Say, 'JESus'....

You've got to have the right NAME!

That's why we don't mind (the) devil showin' up here because we got the authoritative name to cast him out.

...We got the authoriTative name. Somebody say, 'Hallelujah.'

Where every demon and DEVil trembles.

WHEW! Hallelujah! That['s] the NAME of JESUS.

WHO CAN STAND BEFORE US WHEN WE CALL ON THE NAME OF JESUS?

It is noteworthy that this event occurred before the church's move from the warehouse sanctuary. Immediately after the move, the emotionalism, the holy dancing, and the falling out nearly vanished from worship services--at least for a time. The effects of this move are considered in a later chapter. The foregoing discussion suggests that worshippers at Alpha and Omega saw the devil as a formidable power in the universe. On the other hand, they also believed that the power of Jesus was greater, and that

faith and alliance with Jesus were the only means of overcoming the devil's control.

Baptism

As explained earlier, Pastor McGhee and members of Alpha and Omega believe that there is but one plan of salvation, a plan which requires immersion baptism "in the name of Jesus." This belief and its corollary--that those who have been baptized in any other way ("in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," for example,) have not received a proper baptism, are not among God's elect, and will not be saved--functioned to bind Alpha and Omega together as a community and set it apart from the larger Christian community in Champaign-Urbana. Before exploring this issue, however, this section will first examine some of the church's basic beliefs concerning baptism.

During baptisms at Alpha and Omega, a deacon immersed the individual in a pool of water while Pastor McGhee performed the baptism, employing a standard verbal formula. On September 29, 1991, for example, Pastor McGhee used the following statement to baptize a Brother "in the name of Jesus":

My beloved Brother [full name], according to your faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, according to the faith that God has invested in us as ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we come now to baptize you in water in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The church maintained that individuals should not be baptized as infants, but rather at an age of accountability--about twelve or

thirteen years of age. Both the P. A. W. and Alpha and Omega believe that baptism in the name of Jesus is an essential part of being "born again." During the sermon on November 4, 1990, for example, Pastor McGhee explained what is required to be born again:

Now listen to me. If you have repented of your sins, been baptized in water in Jesus' name, and received the Holy Ghost, you are born again.

To be "born again" is "to be born of the water and the spirit" (October 27, 1991)

On October 27, 1991, Pastor McGhee amplified upon his conviction that the Bible authorizes only one type of baptism--baptism "in the name of Jesus":

You don't find nowhere in the whole Bible... where anybody was ever baptized using the term 'Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost.' ...You don't find that term but one time; that's in Matthew 28:19. And He only spoke to those people that He had chosen--the twelve disciples, or the eleven.... And I don't find where a one of those disciples ever baptized anybody any other way {in water?} other than in the name of the Lord Jesus [Pastor McGhee pauses, and the congregation supplies the word 'Christ.']

While this conviction was of crucial importance in the belief system held at Alpha and Omega, the resoluteness with which Pastor McGhee preached this doctrine--teaching that any Christian believer not baptized "in the name of Jesus" will not be saved--disturbed other members of the local African-American religious community.

Because Pastor McGhee preached this doctrine to the community at large, on radio broadcasts and at every other opportunity he had, pastors of some other churches in Champaign-

Urbana became upset, contending that their authority was being undermined by Pastor McGhee's message. The controversy became so heated that a debate between Pastor McGhee and the Reverend W. B. Keaton, host of The Minister's Hour and Pastor of the Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church, was scheduled for Sunday, April 26, 1992, to be aired on community radio on The Ministers' Hour (8-9 am; WEFT 90.1). Although interrupted in mid-sentence, Reverend Keaton quickly made it clear that he did not approve of Pastor McGhee's message:

All I'm sayin' is, well, I don't have no problem with your doctrine and your contention, Reverend, but all I'm sayin' is: to tell my people or anybody else's people that they goin' to hell unless they baptized in the name of Jesus. I think that's [wrong]...

Both preachers agreed that "Father," "Son," and "Holy Ghost" are *titles*, while "Jesus" is the *name* of their savior, but Reverend Keaton was troubled by the emphasis which Pastor McGhee placed on the *name* of Jesus. Reverend Keaton summarized his argument as follows:

All I'm sayin' is, names don't save ya.... Jesus saved me; not the name. That name didn't die on the cross; Jesus did.... My point is, you don't get hung up on the expression "name"; just get hung up on Jesus!

But Pastor McGhee didn't yield to this line of reasoning; in his closing remarks, he concluded:

My contention is that there is no other name given among men whereby we might be saved, other than the name of Jesus. There is no record in the whole Bible where anybody ever used the title Father, Son and the Holy Ghost. There's only records of water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in... the book of Acts [and] thereafter in the beginning of the new church. So my belief is that if we gonna obey what Jesus said, we must have an understanding of what He said. And Peter, being one of the Apostles of Jesus

Christ, had an understanding of the plan of salvation. And so Peter, being a spokesman at that hour, stood up and said, 'repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of your sin, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' ...Nowhere do you find where anybody was ever baptized using the title 'Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,' because everybody who had the commission had the understanding that the name of the Father is Jesus, the name of the Son is Jesus, and the name of the Holy Ghost is Jesus, and you call His name if you gonna carry out his commission. You call His name.

And we pray that those of you who are listenin' will come to the understandin' that there is no other name given among men whereby we might be saved, other than the name of Jesus. And it doesn't make any difference if you're Baptist, or what have you, you must do the same thing. Now there's no way we gonna be in heaven one sayin' I'm baptized this way, and another one sayin' he baptized the other way.

This radio debate was scheduled in the hope that a public forum would help to allay tensions between Alpha and Omega and other local denominations. While the debate gave Pastors McGhee and Keaton an opportunity to address each other concerning baptismal doctrine, it appeared to do little to ease tensions between the pastors or their congregations. In fact, in his concluding remarks, Pastor McGhee once again managed to suggest that only those baptized in the name of Jesus would be saved. For, if "there is no other name given among men whereby we might be saved, other than the name of Jesus," and if "there's no way we gonna be in heaven one sayin' I'm baptized this way, and another one sayin' he baptized the other way," then those persons not baptized "in the name of Jesus" will not be permitted into heaven.

Alpha and Omega's doctrine concerning baptism served to delineate the religious community in a very clear way, marking boundaries between God's chosen few, the saints of God, and all

others. These rather clear boundaries not only reinforced a sense of community, but also identified 'the other'--those who stand in need of the one true plan of salvation.

Power

The issue of power, a topic frequently addressed at Alpha and Omega, usually arose in conjunction with the subject of the Holy Ghost or Jesus, though it was acknowledged that the devil too has power. Orally-communicated doctrine suggested that individuals need power for a variety of reasons: for physical and mental healing, for strength against the temptation and control of the devil, and for casting out an evil spirit. Pastor McGhee was critical of churches that did not preach the necessity of becoming Holy-Ghost filled, claiming that those churches lacked the power of the Holy Ghost:

[At some churches] Folks come up and the preachers have 'em come up and they come up and throw their hands up and they go through a little ritual and they'll go on back [and] say, 'I'm a born again Christian.' No power of the Holy Ghost in your [i.e. their] life. Come on somebody, hallelujah. The Bible says after the Holy Ghost comes, ye shall receive power. (Sermon, October 22, 1989)

At Alpha and Omega, Jesus is considered to be the primary source of all power. Selected excerpts drawn from sermons, testimonies, and other oral communication yield further information on the nature and sources of power:⁷

⁷Because Alpha and Omega believes in "Jesus Only," all of the following references to God and the Holy Ghost are references to Jesus--"Holy Ghost" being a title that signifies the Spirit of Jesus.

The Devil is real. He's got power, but God's got all the power. (Sermon, October 15, 1989)

This ain't about black power, white power, or green power; it's about the Holy Ghost power. (Sermon, October 21, 1990)

But I do know one thing: there's power in the blood of Jesus, Hallelujah. (Pastor McGhee, October 28, 1990)

Let somebody say, 'there's power in the name of Jesus.' (Testimony Leader, October 7, 1990)

If you need power or strength in your body, it's in Jesus' name. (Worship Leader, November 4, 1990)

The Devil is out there, but I heard somebody say, 'there is power +HAH+ pow-, power in the name of Jesus.' (Pastor McGhee, October 15, 1989)

Members were taught that all the strength they need resides in Jesus and the Holy Ghost.

While this power can be used for different purposes, the power to heal was an important recurrent theme, particularly in testimonials. During the Testimony or Praise Service, which constituted one segment of the Sunday morning worship service, members were given the opportunity to praise and give thanks to the Lord for what He has done in their lives. Pastor McGhee observed that, "there have been people right in the midst of Testimony Service that have been healed of diseases or so many things" (I.11.15.89). The Testimony Service provided a chance for members to witness to God's healing power in their lives. The following statement, excerpted from a testimony, provides an example of the healing power that members attributed to Jesus:

Truly my soul rejoices in the Lord for the things He has done for me. I thank and praise the Lord for one day healing me of high blood pressure. I thank and praise Him for healing me of diabetes. Truly God is a healer. (Testimony Leader, October 28, 1990)

On another Sunday, a woman recounted the story of how she, despite the criticism of her brothers and the skepticism of her mother, anointed and prayed for her mother, who was suffering debilitating back pain. Because her testimony was rather lengthy, lasting over three minutes, the following excerpts constitute only a portion of the full testimony:

I had an experience on yesterday in my home.... My mother had been sick and she was talkin' about her back, how her back was botherin' her, and how... she couldn't hardly bend over.... So the Lord spoke to me and told me, 'YOU pray for your mother. You, YOU been baptized in Jesus' name; YOU been filled with the Holy Ghost; YOU pray for your mother.... And so... I had brought the anointed oil into the kitchen. And she looked back and she seen it, and I didn't know how she was gonna react, but I told her, I said, 'I'm gettin' ready to PRAY for you.' And I anointed her; I prayed, and I said, 'Father, in the name of Jesus.' I said, 'I come to you because you say by YOUR stripes we are healed.' Hallelujah. [F: Yeah; that's right; exclamations] I said, 'you put it in her heart, to make her believe that You are a healer. You created her and you know all about her.' I said, I said when SHE get up--'cause she said she was gonna go lay down--I said, when she get up, Hallelujah, I said everything is gonna be alright. [clapping; exclamations; F: Alright; Thank you Jesus; Hallelujah] Me and Sister E----- went to a service on last night.... So, when I got back from the service on last night, this morning, she got up, Hallelujah, and she said she feel much better; she said the devil kept tellin' [her], 'no, you know this pain in your back; you ain't goin' to church.' But she said, 'Hallelujah. I'm gettin' up and I'm goin' to church. I feel much better, Hallelujah.' [clapping; exclamations] And I praise God, [Hallelujah; clapping and exclamations] Hallelujah! [F: Hallelujah] (October 15, 1989)

Members regularly acknowledged that there is healing power in Jesus, but that faith is also required to release that power. This correspondence between faith and healing was addressed in the following testimony excerpt:

I know for myself: He's healed this body many times. The reason He's not healing it today is because my faith is weak; but I know one thing: He can heal. (October 15, 1989)

At Alpha and Omega, healing was perceived as both a benefit and evidence of Jesus' power.

Pastor McGhee and church leaders at Alpha and Omega taught that the power of Jesus is effective not only in curing physical ailments, but also in dealing with mental anguish, temptation, and lack of control. In Pastor McGhee's sermon which followed the "casting out" discussed above, the issue of power was raised repeatedly. Members of Alpha and Omega believe that the devil is "real," and that various kinds of mental problems--like depression, suicidal tendencies, alcoholism, drug addiction, and asocial behavior--are evidence of demonic possession. During the sermon devoted to the topic of "casting out," Pastor McGhee said, "There's a lot of these kids on these tranquilizers and all that stuff. Ain't nothing but the devil that need to come out" (October 15, 1989). Church members also believe that this demonic power, however threatening, pales when compared to the power of Jesus. As Pastor McGhee explained after the casting out, "The devil is real. He's got power, but God's got all the power" (October 15, 1989).

Death

At Alpha and Omega, frequent references to death seemed to serve as a reminder that, in this world, nothing should be taken for granted. Testimonies and sermons often stressed the fact that members "coulda been dead," as well as the conviction that they should be thankful to count themselves among the living.

The following excerpts suggest some of the variations to which this recurrent theme was subject:

Are you grateful for where you are right now? Are you happy to be able to be sittin' in here where you are right now? You coulda been dead! You coulda been dead on drugs right now--could have taken an overdose this morning before you got here. Are you glad about being here now? (Sermon, October 28, 1990)

Has the Lord done anything for you? Come on, everybody oughta get on your feet. You know God's done something for everybody in here. You got something to be thankful for, if it's no more than the breath in your body today. You could be layin' six feet underground. (Testimony Leader, October 22, 1989)

I thank God for what He is to me on this morning. Because truly somebody went to sleep last night and didn't wake up this morning. But God gave us the activity of our limbs to come and worship Him this morning. (guest evangelist, November 24, 1991)

We thank God that we're still in the land of the living, Hallelujah. (Pastor McGhee, October 29, 1989)

I was in my house on the other night, and a tree fell on my house and I just said, 'Lord, I thank you,' because, you know, I coulda been DEAD! And I just thank God, Hallelujah.... If you filled with the Holy Ghost, you got something to talk about. But you know you coulda been dead. A tree limb coulda fell on you [F: That's right], and you coulda been dead. (Testimony Leader, February 18, 1990, the first Sunday after Champaign-Urbana experienced a particularly destructive ice storm)

At a Talent Show held at Alpha and Omega on February 18, 1991, the subject of death was particularly noticeable. Although ostensibly a talent show, the event began like all worship services--with prayer, songs, a scripture reading, and a testimony service. The worship leader's introductory remarks included the following observations:

You know God's been good to us. He's been real good.... [Some] got up this morning, on their way to work. And when they got on the expressways, probably didn't get off the

expressways. Then there were some who didn't get up this morning. And there were some who got up and got out, but didn't come back. And so, we have a lot to be thankful about this evening.

About fifteen minutes later, a Sister led the congregation in song, and delivered a testimony immediately thereafter. Her extended testimony touched briefly on the same theme:

I thank the Lord for waking me up this morning, 'cause somebody's alarm went off this morning and they did not get up. But it was God truly that woke us up this morning, what started us on our way.

Later in the service, the Minister of Music, while announcing the Talent Show, also extemporized on this basic theme:

I came to have church; I don't know about you.... I realize it's a talent show. I'm truly happy about it. And it's another time that God has spared our lives--brought us together once again. And somebody could have died last night. You didn't have to get up this mornin'. It was not promised that you were going to see another sunrise. You ought to be grateful; you ought to be thankful that God spared your life another day. Amen? [C: yes] Come on give God some praise. [C: clapping]

These frequent references to death underscored life's uncertainty, while reminding members that everyone had something for which to be thankful--even "if it's no more than the breath in your body."

III. Theology in Song

At Alpha and Omega, where a significant portion of every service was devoted to congregational singing, as well as to singing by the church choir, song was a very important means of communicating basic religious convictions. While songs functioned to raise the level of spiritual involvement, to help

those gathered "go higher in the Lord" and to "get excited," they also served as a way of teaching the fundamental tenets of church doctrine. In distinguishing between fundamentalists and Pentecostals, Harvey Cox has observed that Pentecostals are more comfortable "singing their theology":

Fundamentalists attach such unique authority to the letter of the verbally inspired Scripture that they are suspicious of the pentecostals' stress on the immediate experience of the Spirit of God. ...While the beliefs of the fundamentalists, and of many other religious groups, are enshrined in formal theological systems, those of pentecostalism are imbedded in testimonies, ecstatic speech, and bodily movements. But it is a theology, a full-blown religious cosmos, an intricate system of symbols that respond to the perennial questions of human meaning and value. The difference is that, historically, pentecostals have felt more at home singing their theology, or putting it in pamphlets for distribution on street corners. Only recently have they begun writing books about it. (Cox 1995:15)

The intent here is not to suggest that *only* Pentecostals sing their theology, but rather that this activity is particularly important for Pentecostals. Thérèse Smith, in her study of a Missionary Baptist Church in rural Mississippi, emphasized the important contribution that music makes in the establishment of community identity, worldview, and belief system (1988). Indeed, Merriam suggested that one of the ten major functions of music is to provide "validation of social institutions and religious rituals" (1964:224). Song texts, by articulating the belief system and outlining religious precepts, not only validated the church and its teachings, but also made an important "contribution to the continuity and stability of culture," another of Merriam's functions (1964:225).

At Alpha and Omega song was one of the most important means by which the church's youth came to understand and internalize the convictions of the community, and the great respect given to music and singing at Alpha and Omega served to make song an especially powerful way of communicating church doctrine. At Alpha and Omega, the impact of song texts extended well beyond the songs themselves, since lengthy transitions to and from songs were often used to emphasize the meaning of texts and to preach the doctrine contained therein. In addition, song texts were frequently quoted in testimonies and sermons. Both of these phenomena are discussed in a later chapter on religious language.

The following discussion examines the ways in which song texts were used to teach and to underscore various aspects of Alpha and Omega's belief system. One of the most basic messages preached at Alpha and Omega is the need to be born again. In the choir selection, "Born Again," that message is reiterated dozens of times. Highly repetitious, this selection is constructed around one line of text: "You must be born again." With exhortations like "You must be/ you must be/ you must be born again" and "You gotta/ you gotta/ you gotta/ you gotta be born again," the selection's lyrics left congregants with one simple but urgent message.

If the ultimate necessity was to be born again, a congregational song, "I'm Runnin' for My Life," detailed the components of salvation, almost precisely the way Pastor McGhee preached it. The one plan of salvation, as taught at Alpha and

Omega and discussed above, requires repentance, water baptism (in the name of Jesus), receiving the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues, and leading a holy life. The entire text of "I'm Runnin' for My Life," repeated for each stanza sung, was as follows:

I'm runnin' for my life; I'm runnin' for my life.
I'm runnin' for my life; I'm runnin' for my life.
If anybody asks you, what's the matter with me.
Just tell 'em I'm saved, sanctified,
Holy Ghost filled, and water baptized.
I've got Jesus on my side, runnin' for my life.

The text of this song not only enumerates the blessings experienced by a saint of God, but also suggests a theology centered on Jesus--the type of theology espoused at Alpha and Omega. Like the foregoing text, the texts of other congregational songs provide further indication that the theology of Alpha and Omega was focused on Jesus. The importance of Jesus is evident when scanning the titles of congregational songs, a significant percentage of which employ the word "Jesus": "My Soul Loves Jesus," "In the Name of Jesus, We Have a Victory," "When I Think of the Goodness of Jesus," "Can't Nobody Do Me Like Jesus," "I'm So Glad that Jesus Lifted Me," "I Want To Be More and More Like Jesus," "Jesus Gettin' Us Ready for that Great Day," "If You Call on Jesus," and "Jesus on the Mainline."

Pentecostals believe that it is necessary to be filled with the Holy Ghost and also that the presence of the Holy Ghost will manifest itself in glossolalia, and it is this belief that sets them apart from most other denominations. Pastor McGhee and members often referred to Alpha and Omega as "a Holy Ghost-filled

church," and the importance of the Spirit was also evident in song. One congregational song, "Send Down the Rain," is about Pentecostal eschatology. The "latter rain" mentioned in the song refers to the descent of the Spirit which Pentecostals believe will fall immediately before the second coming of Christ. Pentecostals, referring to a prophecy in Joel 2:23-25, believe that the "former rain" fell on the day of Pentecost, when the 120 disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues (Acts 2); the latter rain, they believe, began to "pour" during the Azusa Street revivals, when, for the first time in nearly two millennia, speaking in tongues flourished (Anderson 1979:80ff; Lovett 1973:36-37). The "latter rain," then, refers to the eschatological descent of the Holy Spirit, and the widespread glossolalia which Pentecostals believe will accompany that event. The text of the first, and most often repeated, verse in this strophic song is as follows:

Send down the Rain; send down the Rain.
Send down the Latter Rain.
Send down the Rain; send down the Rain.
Send down the Latter Rain. [see transcription; Appendix B]

The song's other verses are similarly repetitive and each enumerates an element present in the rain: "Holy Ghost in the Rain," "There's power/peace/joy/love in the Rain." Just as the text of "Send Down the Rain" describes the outpouring of the Holy Ghost which Pentecostals believe signals the imminent return of Christ, other song texts tell of the Pentecostal preference for emotional, spirit-filled praise and worship.

The text of the choir selection, "Dancin' in the Spirit,"

provides a good example of the value attached to spirit-filled worship and praise at Alpha and Omega. When filled with the Spirit, Pentecostals may demonstrate the Holy Ghost's presence in a variety of ways. "Slain in the spirit," they may fall to the floor; they may run down the aisles; or, "dancing in the Spirit," they may perform a type of stylized dance, called "holy dance" by some. The text of "Dancin' in the Spirit" describes the Pentecostal fondness for spirit-filled worship and praise:

L: I'll be,	R: I'll be dancin' in the Spirit.
L: Why don't ya help me praise Him.	
	R: Praise Him with the Spirit.
L: I'll be,	R: I'll be dancin' in the Spirit.
L: You should praise Him.	
	R: Praise Him with the Spirit.
L: When I look what the Lord his done, look where God's brought me from, I can hardly hold my feet, and I sure can't keep my seat. You better give me some room to run, just as long as the anointing comes.	

The basic conviction that members ought to praise God and be thankful for what He has done is evident in the sheer number of choir selections with text devoted to this subject. Several titles provide some indication of the emphasis placed upon praise: "Give Him the Praise," "I'm Gonna Lift My Savior Up ('cause He is worthy)," "He's Worthy," "Thank You Lord," and "Oh Lord, We Praise You."

Other key concepts and tenets of doctrine were present in song texts, and many of these song texts were used as formulaic building blocks in testimonies and sermons. Although this relationship between song texts and spoken communication is explored in a later chapter on religious language, one final

example will serve both to conclude the present discussion, as well as anticipate this later chapter. It was suggested above that death is a recurring theme in worship at Alpha and Omega. Many of the frequent references to death employ a verbal formula contained in a congregational song, "He didn't have to do it but He did." The words of this song express an important conviction of church members. Although the subject is death, the song is also one of praise, and would most likely be sung during the Testimony Service, as it was on October 21, 1990. The text of the first verse is as follows:

He didn't have to do it but He did,
[Lord], He didn't have to do it but he did,
Oh, He woke me up this morning, started me on my way,
[Lord] He didn't have to do it but He did.

On October 21, 1990, this stanza of text was repeated for verses two and four as well, while other verses expanded on the goodness of Jesus: "He didn't have to love me but He did" (verse 3); "He didn't have to die but He did" (verse 5); and "He didn't have to save me but He did" (verse 6) [see song transcription: Appendix B].

The message expressed in this text--the believer's thankfulness to God for allowing him/her to see another day--was a recurring theme at Alpha and Omega, and portions of this song's text surfaced in spoken testimonies and praise. Sometimes the words of the song appeared virtually unaltered in testimonies. A portion of the song's text, for example, was located in the middle of a two and one-half minute testimony by a church Mother:

...I just thank and praise the Lord
for all that He is to me.
I just praise God. I praise Him.
And I THANK and praise Him.
He is so good to me.
He woke me up this mornin'
and started me on my way.
He didn't have to do it,
but He did.... (October 15, 1989)

Testimonies given by other members also implied a familiarity
with this song, as the following two excerpts suggest:

...I thank and praise God that *he woke me up and started me
on my way.* I thank and praise God for all the blessings
that he's bestowing on me.... (Brother; Sunday, January 27,
1991)

I thank the Lord for *waking me up this morning,* 'cause
somebody's alarm went off this morning and they did not get
up. But it was God truly that *woke us up this morning, what
started us on our way.*

As the foregoing examples indicate, there exists a rich and
varied relationship between song texts and the belief system of
members of Alpha and Omega. This relationship is considered in
greater detail in Chapter 6.

Chapter 4

"Let's Go Higher in the Lord": Worship at Alpha and Omega

Let's Go Higher in the Lord,
let's Go Higher in the Lord.
Higher and higher, deeper and deeper,
let's Go Higher in the Lord.
--song text

I. Introduction

Although the character of one Sunday morning worship service could be dramatically different from that of the next, there was nonetheless an unexpected sameness to all church events at Alpha and Omega. Whether a Sunday morning service, a Sunday evening radio broadcast, a Wednesday Bible Study, or even the annual choir concert, all church events seemed to have the same basic structure in common. All events, even the Bible Study and choir concerts, began with a chance for members to "go higher in the Lord," a "warming-up" period, characterized by prayer and the singing of congregational songs, and no event was complete without an altar appeal, wherein Pastor McGhee gave someone the opportunity to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus.

Though one might have expected Alpha and Omega's Bible Study to be a lively, informal discussion held in the church's fellowship hall,¹ it was in fact held in the church sanctuary; like Sunday morning worship, it began in the pastor's absence

¹This was *my* expectation upon attending my first Bible Study.

with a "warming-up" period; it included a lesson not unlike the Sunday morning sermon; and though it appeared to be attended by only the most devout members, an altar call was made near the service's end. Certain elements, then, were present in nearly all church events. The Sunday morning worship service was clearly the most important of these events, and its basic structure appeared to be reproduced in a variety of other church events--in prayer meetings, Bible study, choir concerts, and even a church talent show. The two most indispensable components of worship--the warming-up period and the altar appeal--seemed to frame not only the Sunday morning worship service, but all church events. Because these components reflect the two most basic tenets of Alpha and Omega's mission, that is, to "praise the Lord" and "win souls to Christ," their ubiquitous presence reinforces the church's most fundamental goals.

The Sunday morning worship service, then, was not only the most important event of the church week, but also served as a model for all other church events. A thorough understanding of the Sunday morning worship service--its ritual components, character, and structure--will both provide a context for the material in the following chapters and reveal a great deal about the expressive culture of this religious community. The present chapter focuses on the nature of worship at Alpha and Omega, beginning with a discussion of the components of a "routine" service, then exploring the processual character of worship, and finally, examining three very important manifestations of the

Holy Ghost--glossolalia, healing, and spirit-filled dancing.

II. Components of a "Routine" Service

Because members of Alpha and Omega believed the Holy Ghost to be present and actively participating in worship, no worship service was truly "routine." Yet, some services--those in which the Holy Ghost was less "prevalent"--were more routine than others. Pastor McGhee himself differentiated between services which were routine and others which were more heavily infused with the Holy Spirit:

I try to make a distinction that though we have services, there are times when we just really go through a routine. The Lord [accepts] that, because we doin' it to His glory, but there are times.... that he shows Himself more prevalent, you know, and we have to adhere to that and take advantage of it (I.11.15.89; emphasis added).

This flexibility of ritual procedure, so common at Alpha and Omega, is characteristic of Pentecostal worship in general. As Elaine Lawless has observed, "Pentecostals assert that 'anything' can happen at any time in a church service" (1988:59). The emphasis upon ritual flexibility stems from some basic tenets of Pentecostal doctrine and is explored in much greater detail in Chapter 8.

Rather than describe one service in great detail, the following discussion draws upon material from a number of worship services, in order to better illustrate the several components that comprised worship at Alpha and Omega. The present discussion provides a general account of the regular service order at Alpha and Omega. The inclusion of numerous

transcriptions of spoken or chanted praise, prayer, testimony, or preaching will enable Pastor McGhee and church members to speak for themselves, and at the same time, will give the reader a more accurate picture of the character of worship and communication at Alpha and Omega. Material drawn from the twelve services analyzed in Appendix A will provide a point of departure for the following discussion.

Although worship bulletins were introduced only after the church's move to 400 West Bradley, the standard order of worship remained more or less constant during the course of the fieldwork. Table 4-1 gives the order of worship as it was printed in April 1990, shortly after the move and the introduction of bulletins:

Table 4-1
Order of Worship (April, 1990)

Call to Worship
Congregational Song
Prayer Requests/Mass Prayer
Congregational Song
Scripture Reading
Testimony/Praise Service
OFFERTORY
Choral Selection.....Voice of Pentecost
SERMON
ALTAR APPEAL
Acknowledgement of Visitors
Church Announcements
BENEDICTION

Within a few months, some minor changes had appeared in the worship order. By June 1990, the printed order of worship indicated three additions: a processional for both the pastor and choir, a second choir selection, and a hymn, to be sung before

the sermon. By this time, the announcements and acknowledgement of visitors were made before, rather than after, the sermon and altar appeal. Table 4-2 reproduces the order of worship as it was given in the bulletin for Sunday, June 3, 1990, with the newly added components here italicized:

Table 4-2
Order of Worship (June 3, 1990)

Call to Worship
Congregational Song
Prayer Requests/Mass Prayer
Congregational Song
Scripture Reading
Testimony/Praise Service
Pastor/Choir Processional
Choir Selection (Voice of Pentecost)
TITHE/OFFERING
Choral Selection (Voice of Pentecost)
Announcements
Acknowledgement of Visitors
Hymnal (Song Book)
SERMON
ALTAR APPEAL
BENEDICTION

Because this order of worship was still in use over two years later, it will serve as the basis for the following discussion.² It should be noted that at Alpha and Omega the order of worship was merely an outline or a guide, and that the order of some particularly spirit-filled services departed significantly from this suggested program (see, for example, Appendix A, Service Nos. 3, 9, and 10). This variability is addressed in Chapter 8.

² The order of worship employed at Alpha and Omega is very similar to that of other Pentecostal churches I have attended, and is nearly identical with that of the "archetypal service" cited by Arthur E. Paris in his study of three black Pentecostal congregations in Boston (1974:72).

The order of worship given in Tables 4-1 and 4-2 can be divided into three segments of roughly equal duration. First, the opening portion of the service, which includes prayer, scripture, song, and testimony, provides the congregation an opportunity to give praise and thanks; this segment concludes after the testimony service with the entrance of the pastor and the choir. Second, in the middle portion of the worship service, the pastor and choir rouse the congregation to higher levels of praise and thanksgiving. And third, the final segment contains the message and the altar appeal, and concludes with a very brief benediction.

The opening segment of Sunday morning worship was always marked by the absence of Pastor McGhee, who prepared himself for worship in his office adjacent to the sanctuary.³ Other studies of African-American Pentecostalism have similarly reported the pastor's delayed entry (see Paris 1982:61; Williams 1974:103). On the average,⁴ Sunday morning worship services lasted about three hours and six minutes, and Pastor McGhee entered the sanctuary after the service had been underway for about forty-seven minutes. In the pastor's absence, others led the devotion service. Three members usually presided over this initial segment of the worship service. A church minister opened and

³ The same can be said for all other weekly services--the Sunday evening broadcast, the Monday evening prayer service, and the Wednesday evening Bible study.

⁴This average is based upon the twelve services analyzed in Appendix A.

directed the worship service until the Testimony or Praise Service, at which time authority was passed to two testimony leaders.

When the typical Sunday morning service began, at 11:15 a.m., there were seldom more than twelve or fifteen congregants present. Other members continued to arrive after the service had begun, and by the time of the pastor and choir's entrance, most of those who would attend were present. Attendance at Sunday morning worship usually varied from about 100 to 175 adults and children. The arrival of the church musicians was similarly flexible, with rarely more than one or two musicians present at the service's outset. In practice, it appeared that one keyboardist must be present for the service to begin, though this keyboardist was almost never as experienced or as comfortable at the keyboard as either of church's two main keyboardists, one or both of whom generally arrived during the first half hour of the service to replace the stand-in keyboardist. While a drummer was usually also present at the beginning of the service, worship was sometimes begun without a drummer. On October 7, 1990 and September 29, 1991, for example, the services had been underway for about twenty minutes before a drummer arrived (See Appendix A).⁵ The beginning of the service was also a time during which younger and less experienced drummers were given an opportunity, under the supervision of the main drummer, to accompany songs and

⁵ The graphs in Appendix A indicate when musical accompaniment--whether keyboard or drum set--is present during each of the twelve services analyzed.

to gain experience playing in front of the congregation.

The Call to Worship which opened the Sunday morning worship service was very brief, often nothing more than an introduction to the first congregational song. On November 5, 1989, for example, the presiding minister began the service with the following words, after which he began to lead the congregation in song:

This morning we're gonna open our service up with a song called, "Jesus on the Mainline, Tell Him What You Want."

Though the printed order of worship indicated that a single congregational song was to precede the prayer, in practice, two or three songs were often sung. After the congregational song/s, the minister in charge usually asked if congregants had any "prayer requests--spoken or unspoken." A spoken prayer request usually consisted of a member asking the congregation to pray for her or a loved one, while an unspoken prayer request--when called for by the minister in charge--was indicated by the raising of a hand. Before calling members to the altar for the "mass prayer," the minister sometimes offered her own prayer. The following text was excerpted from such one such prayer:

When we ask God to do something, we should have faith.... Just keep on believing God, and He will do what you want Him to do. Everywhere, let's remember the president. Remember our leaders in office--you know, the HIGH people--'cause that's where the weakness begun. Like in our president and all that, let's pray for them, because you know they don't have God in their lives, and they need help, hallelujah. And the saints of God is the only one that's holdin' the world together here now. So let's pray because the saints do have power, to pray, and God can do anything (October 22, 1989).

At some point, usually about five or ten minutes into the

service, the minister in charge usually invited congregants to the altar for the "mass prayer." Although rarely more than twenty-five members were present during this prayer, it is noteworthy for at least two reasons. After inviting congregants to the altar, the minister usually led a slow, unmetered congregational song, while congregants approached the altar. This was generally the only place in worship where these slow, unmetered congregational songs were employed. The mass prayer is also noteworthy because it constituted one of the most truly cacophonous moments during worship, as all those gathered at the altar offered their individual prayers aloud simultaneously. With the praying, clapping, and shouting, as well as the drum flourishes and sustained chords and improvisation of the keyboardist, the result was virtually impossible to transcribe, and even the prayer of the leader, often spoken into a microphone, could only be caught in bits and pieces. The mass prayer was usually the first suggestion of emotional, spirit-filled behavior in the worship service.

Although the printed worship order indicated that a congregational song was to follow the mass prayer, the mass prayer was immediately followed by the reading of the scripture in seven of the twelve services analyzed in Appendix A (see Service Nos. 1, 2, 4, 9, 10, 11, and 12). As suggested above, many other liberties were routinely taken in relation to the printed program. Though the order of worship indicated that only two congregational songs were to be sung before the testimony

service, an average of four congregational songs were sung before the testimony service in the twelve services examined in Appendix A. And whereas the printed program indicated that the Testimony Service was to begin immediately after the scripture reading, one or more songs separated these two components in ten of the twelve services considered in Appendix A. As these examples suggest, flexibility of worship--which members ascribe to the presence of the Holy Spirit--plays an important role in worship at Alpha and Omega (see Chapter 8).

The next, and final component of the opening segment of the Sunday morning worship service was the Testimony or Praise Service, at which time the minister in charge called upon two, usually preselected members to direct the service. The Testimony Service was one of the most important components of Sunday morning worship, and it will therefore be considered here in some detail. On the average, Testimony Services lasted about twenty-seven minutes, half of which time was devoted to the singing of congregational songs.⁶ One of Alpha and Omega's several choir directors described the nature and function of this service within a service. In the Testimony service, he explained, we

ask the saints of God to testify to the goodness of the Lord, things that He has done, and to sing songs.... By praising the Lord, ...we know that blessings come, deliverance comes, healings come. There have been people right in the midst of testimony service that have been healed of diseases or so many things (I.11.3.89).

⁶ Shortly after the move to 400 West Bradley, the duration of the Testimony Service decreased significantly. This and other changes which corresponded with the move will be explored in Chapter 7.

As the alternate titles of this service suggest, testimony and praise were the two primary ingredients, and either could take the form of song. Based on the data from Appendix A, the average Testimony Service contained about eleven testimonies and four congregational songs. Pastor McGhee explained the importance of testimonies, as follows:

We allow, in our church, testimonies of personal experience, and these testimonies should be to glorify God, or what He has done in your life. And also during that time, it builds the faith of whoever's there, who might be going through a dilemma, and need to hear this.... [When] I testify the things that God has done for me, it builds the hope of that person that they too can overcome or they can go through those things (I.11.15.89).

When asked about his absence during the first part of the service, Pastor McGhee observed that this initial segment of the service (up to and including the Testimony service) should promote congregational involvement:

I think we do need [congregational involvement]. I don't think a person should come to a worship service and not get involved to the point that they're looking to be entertained; I don't like that (I.11.15.89).

As one testimony leader suggested in the concluding remarks of her testimony, opening the praise service to those present, the Testimony Service is a time of praise, of congregational involvement, and a time to raise the spiritual intensity of the worship before the Pastor's entrance:

Let's GET INTO the testimony service. Let's have a GOOD TIME in the LORD, so when the Pastor comes out he will not have to [brow?] us up. If you FILLED with the Holy Ghost, you got something to talk about. But you know you coulda been dead. A TREE LIMB coulda fell on you. And you coulda been DEAD. Let's GET INTO the service saints and let's praise God. Who'll be the first? (February 18, 1990)

The Testimony Service usually began with each of the two testimony leaders giving her own testimony; afterwards, the congregation was invited to participate, often with a formulaic statement, like the one used on November 10, 1991:

Testimony Service is open to each and every one of you to sing your own song and testify to the glory of God.

Testimonies were sometimes very short, lasting no more than five or ten seconds, but they could also last as long as four or five minutes. Because of the intense interaction that often characterized testimonies at Alpha and Omega, it was not uncommon for three or more aural events to coincide: a spoken testimony; simultaneous verbal encouragement from other members of the congregation; and accompaniment played by the keyboardist. This complex layering also often included multiple shouts, intense clapping, and occasional loud drumming. These sounds sometimes overpowered the person testifying and made the text completely inaudible or else unclear. Testimonies could also precipitate spirit-filled dance, also called "dancing in the Spirit" or "holy dance." This ritualized dancing was almost always found in conjunction with very fast, ostinato-based instrumental accompaniment. The graphs in Appendix A indicate the presence and extent of spirit-filled dancing in twelve sample Sunday morning worship services.⁷ These charts show that spirit-filled dancing was present in all twelve services, and while never present before the Testimony Service, it was employed in five of

⁷ Each horizontal crosshatch indicates about one minute of this activity.

the twelve Testimony Services considered.

Several different types of testimonies were encountered at Alpha and Omega. Some testimonies were highly formulaic. The following testimony, for example, began and ended with common formulas, and quoted from the text of a well-known song. During this testimony, one musician improvised on the synthesizer in the background.

Praise the Lord [C: Praise the Lord]
Praise the Lord [C: Praise the Lord]
Praise the Lord EVerybody [C: Praise the Lord]
Amazing Grace,
how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me.
I said, aMAZing grace,
how SWEET the sound
that SAVED a wretch like me.
Pray for me. [clapping]
(female congregant; October 15, 1989)

Other testimonies, while including some common formulas, were basically anecdotal in character, as is the case with the following testimony:

I want to first give honor to God, who's the head of my life. Ah, last Monday, I was anointed here in this sanctuary with my family, and, Tuesday I went to Chicago. And Tuesday night when I came back from Chicago, I had a accident with my car. And, ah, I hit. It was icy and slick. And there were two cars slammed on the brakes, and they, hit the right side, and I went to the left and hit a, ah, ah, you know, like a wall type, you know, [a barrier]. And, I just said, 'oh my car,' but what I should have said was, 'praise God,' because, I didn't have on no seat belt. I didn't crack my windshield, and only the front part of my car was messed up. I made it to Kankakee, called my house, and, ah, I made it home and I called the state patrol, and he said, 'well, 'mam, if you hit that [barrier?] the way you said you hit, then you're not the [person?].' I said, 'why.' He said, 'because your car should have went through, and over.' And I say, '[hey,] ah, what do you mean?' He said, 'because where you hit, your car should have went straight through like on the TV show, and went down.' [quiet response from congregation] And I said, 'oh, so you're

sayin' I should be dead, huh?' And he said, 'yeah.' I said, 'well.' I, I got off the phone and I started screamin' [and] praisin' God there because I was here. [kybd response] And I had big scratches on [-----?] I don't have anything wrong with me. [F: Thank you Jesus; M: Thank the Lord] So, I just want to say, I thank and praise God because Pastor had anointed my head Monday, and said, you know, you're gonna, you don't have to move anywhere. I guess that was my signal when I got it Tuesday. So I just want to say, praise God, and I thank my family sittin' here, yeah, and I thank them for their strength in the Lord for me, and help me brought me through this. And I just praise God. Praise the Lord for everything, and for my life. And I won't take anything for granted anymore [F: Amen; clapping] (female congregant; February 18, 1990).

Although relatively rare, some members testified in a very rhythmic and chant-like manner, a style characterized by many dynamic and agogic accents:

Praise the Lord, saints. [C: Praise the Lord.]
PRAISE the Lord, saints. [C: Praise the Lord.]
well, there's joy to be found in my soul this morning.
[exclamations follow]
You know my soul is glad this morning. [exclamations]
I just want to STAND up and TALK about JESUS. [exclamations]
You know I LOVE to talk about my SA^Vior. [exclamations]
Hallelujah!
I give Him ALL the PRAISE and GLOry this morning.
[exclamations; F: Thank you Jesus]
Because I KNOW what God is in MY LIFE. [exclamations]
I THANK and PRAISE God for where He's brought me from.
[exclamations]
I THANK and PRAISE the Lord where He's takin' me to.
[exclamations]
I THANK and PRAISE God because He IS God. [exclamations]
Just PRAY my STRENGTH in the LORD. [clapping; exclamations;
drum]
Hallelujah! [clapping continues]
(male congregant; October 15, 1989)

The very animated delivery style of this testimony precipitated much congregational response, as well as instrumental commentary on the synthesizer, drums, and cymbals.

As mentioned above, an average of four congregational songs were sung in each Testimony or Praise Service, and these songs

accounted for about half of the Testimony Service's duration. While some of the congregational songs performed during the Testimony Service were begun by one of the Testimony Leaders, any congregant could stand and testify in song. Those who wished to testify or sing indicated that desire by raising their hand. When called upon by a Testimony Leader, a congregant would stand and begin to testify or sing. The act was almost entirely spontaneous. While the member clearly knew what song she would sing, the musicians and Testimony Leaders knew nothing in advance--neither the song title nor the key. Although the congregant usually began singing alone, others quickly joined in and the drummer picked up the beat. The keyboardist was usually the last to enter, and his attempt to locate the tonic was often quite audible. If the congregant leading the song exerted sufficient vocal authority, she could continue to lead, but if her unamplified voice was too soft to be heard above the congregation and musicians, one of the testimony leaders usually assumed the lead. Some of the congregational tunes were personal favorites and likely to be heard only when begun by certain individuals. Although "Send Down the Rain," for example, was sung in five of twelve services considered in Appendix A, its performance was always initiated by the same Brother, a minister at Alpha and Omega who plays a very active role in the church and its services. In this way, active members exerted a strong influence on the repertory of songs sung at Alpha and Omega.

When the Testimony Service was either over or nearly

completed, Pastor McGhee entered the sanctuary. After the church's move to 400 West Bradley, the choir, like the pastor, remained isolated from the congregation until this point. Before the move, choir members sat scattered throughout the sanctuary with other congregants, and were directed by the testimony leaders to take the chairs behind the pulpit as seats were required by those members still arriving. While the sanctuary at 905 West Fairview was too congested and overcrowded to accommodate a choir processional, a formal processional was instituted shortly after the move to the more spacious sanctuary. Although the choir, after the move, was officially isolated from the rest of the congregation during the opening segment of worship, in practice some of the more active choir members were present for the opening segment of the worship service and often acted as testimony leaders.

The entrance of the pastor and choir marked the beginning of the middle segment of Sunday morning worship. In the opening portion of the service, the presiding minister and the testimony leaders sought to raise the spiritual intensity and to actively involve members in worship. The objective of the middle portion was very similar, but the pastor and the choir became the agents of praise and thanksgiving. On the average, this middle portion of the service lasted sixty-six minutes,⁸ and the contents of

⁸ Based on the data from nine of the twelve services analyzed in Appendix A. Because Services 3, 9, and 10 departed significantly from the standard order of service, data from those services was not considered.

this segment were listed in the bulletin as follows:

Pastor/Choir Processional
Choir Selection (Voice of Pentecost)
TITHE/OFFERING
Choir Selection (Voice of Pentecost)
Announcements
Acknowledgement of Visitors
Hymnal (Song Book)

Because all choir selections were sung during this portion of the service, the choir played a very prominent role in the middle segment of Sunday morning worship--more important, in fact, than the worship order indicates. During the course of my research, both the number of choir selections sung and the time devoted to performance by the Voices of Pentecost increased--at the same time that the Sunday morning service was being gradually shortened. The choir processional was instituted after the move to 400 West Bradley, and it gradually became standard practice for the choir to sing a processional selection after the instrumental procession. By the fall of 1991, when an additional choir selection was usually sung in place of the hymn, the Voices of Pentecost sang an average of over twenty-five minutes during this segment of the service. When my research project began in 1989, the church clearly took great satisfaction in the size and quality of its choir, but the move to 400 West Bradley provided the church a much greater opportunity to showcase the choir during worship. Because of the many changes in worship from 1989 to 1992, the following discussion describes the role of the choir in 1991 and 1992, by which time it had assumed its new prominence in worship.

Dressed in robes of maroon with gray trim, the Voices of Pentecost made their entrance immediately after that of the pastor. Lasting several minutes, the choir processional often featured choreographed steps and sometimes syncopated handclapping. All eyes usually turned to the back of the sanctuary as the choir began its processional, usually walking down the center aisle of the church, splitting into two files at the altar, and entering the elevated choir loft from short stairways on either side of the sanctuary (see Figure 7-2). The instrumental music performed during the choir's entrance provided an introduction to the processional selection, which was sung unannounced after all choir members had reached the choir stand.

After the choir's processional selection, the pastor typically admonished the congregation to give praise and thanks. Although this activity played an important role throughout the middle segment of the service, the printed order of worship gave no indication of this practice. Urging congregants to get on their feet, clap their hands, shout, and repeat after him, Pastor McGhee often brought the worship to a very fervent height which sometimes included spirit-filled dancing. Rarely delivered in a normal speaking voice, the pastor's entreaties were very animated, and full of dynamic and agogic emphases. The following excerpt provides one such example of the pastor admonishing the congregation to give praise and thanks:

I want ya to get up
and put your hands together and praise Him.
Hallelujah.
Come on and put your hands together and praise Him....

Say, 'can't nobody do me like the Lord.' [C: Can't nobody do
 me like the Lord.]
 [say], 'you don't know like I know,' [C: You don't know like
 I know]
 'what the Lord has done' [C: What the Lord has done]
 say, 'you don't know like I know,' [C: You don't know like I
 know]
 'what the LORD has done for ME.' [C: What the LORD has done
 for ME]
 say, 'you don't know like I know,' [C: You don't know like I
 know]
 'what the Lord has done for me.'...
 COM'on here, PUT your HAND TOGETHER and PRAISE Him,
 'Cause, CAN't noBODY
 DO me like the Lord can do me.
 And you don't know like I know what the Lord
 has done for me.
 It's TIME to GIVE GOD PRAISE here, HEY! HEY!
 Hallelujah.
 Let ALL things be SILENT before the LORD.
 We oughta give Him PRAISE because of His GOODness
 unto us today, Hallelujah.
 Tell somebody, excuse me,
 I CAME to GIVE Him PRAISE HERE, HEY! GLORY! GLORY! HEY!
 Glory!....
 The REASON why FOLKS don't HAVE no STRENGTH,
 HEAR me,
 The REASON why YOU CAN't FACE the DEVIL,
 and PUT him in his PLACE,
 YOU don't HAVE NO STRENGTH!
 And, BECAUSE you don't have JOY!
 you don't HAVE no STRENGTH.
 The JOY of the LORD,
 IS YOUR STRENGTH.
 GET ON YOUR FEET +HAH+
 AND PUT YOUR HANDS together and praise Him.
 I'm not TALKin' about,
 I'm not talkin' about, you know, Wendy's hamburger now to
 get you all -----
 I'm not talkin' about gettin' no McDonald hamburger.
 I'm not talkin' about goin' to Burger King, now.
 I'm talkin' about you need STRENGTH
 and the JOY of the LORD
 is your strength.
 PUT YOUR HANDS TOGETHER and praise Him. [much clapping and
 shouting]
 (October 15, 1989)

This type of verbal rousing to praise could occur at virtually
 any time when the pastor was present, though it was most likely

to occur immediately after his entrance, after the choir selections (often as commentary upon the song text), and near the climax of the sermon.

On September 29, 1991, for example, Pastor McGhee, expounding on the text of the choir's selection, roused the congregation to a state of spirit-filled excitement which culminated in about three minutes of holy dancing. After the processional selection, entitled "I've Got Joy, Great Joy, In My Soul," he commented upon the subject of joy. The following text has been excerpted from that commentary:

From the sound of it, they got great joy
that the world did not give.
How many got joy?
Put your hands together and say, 'joy.' [C: Joy]
Everybody say, 'I got joy.' [C: I got joy.]
...I came to tell somebody, I got joy.
I came to tell the devil, I got joy.
Hallelujah, I've been a little down, but I got: [C: joy.]⁹
I've had some hard times, but I got: [C: joy.]
The devil tried to stop me, but I got: [C: joy.]
The devil done lied on me, but I got: [C: joy.]
The devil don't like me, but I got: [C: joy.]
The devil tried to hold me, but I got: [C: joy.]
Friends have left me, but I got: [C: joy.]
...I don't know if you heard what I said.
I don't have a whole lot of money, but I got: [C: joy.]
I don't live in a penthouse today, but I got: [C: joy.]
I haven't even been to the Whitehouse, but I got: [C: joy.]
Hallelujah, that's what it's all about,
that havin' joy--unspeakable....

By the end of the pastor's reflections on the subject of joy, the congregation had been raised to an emotional, spirit-filled level of worship, with clapping, shouting, and moaning. As the instrumental responses accompanying the pastor's preaching

⁹At the end of each line the pastor omitted the final word and paused, thereby cuing the congregation to complete the idea.

yielded to ostinato-based music with a fast, steady beat, several members began to dance in the aisles. Some such exhortation to praise usually followed the choir processional, though it did not necessarily result in spirit-filled dance, as it did on this particular Sunday.

After Pastor McGhee's commentary, the choir sang its A Selection. Although as many as four choir selections were sometimes sung, the only selections that actually appeared in the printed bulletin were Selections A and B, positioned immediately before and after the offertory. Each of these selections received a formal announcement. On November 4, 1990, for example, the pastor introduced the choir with the following words:

At this time will you now receive the Voices of Pentecost as they come with their A Selection on this morning. Pray for them, in the name of the Lord.

After this introduction, a choir member announced the title, "Give Him Praise," as well as the names of the choir director and the lead singer. Although there was a great amount of flexibility in the performance and duration of the choir selections, they averaged six or seven minutes in length. Other aspects of the choir, the choir selections, and musical flexibility are considered in ensuing chapters.

After the choir's A Selection, the pastor sometimes urged the congregation to give praise and thanks, but in most cases he moved directly to the offertory. Pastor McGhee often remarked that the offertory was "the most important part" of the service,

and certainly the amount of time devoted to the collection of an offering underscored that importance. While the offerings lasted an average of about seventeen minutes, three of the twelve services analyzed in Appendix A had offertories that were twenty-five minutes or longer, one lasting thirty-four minutes.

When Pastor McGhee announced that it was time to collect an offering, he usually mentioned that this is a portion of the service in which everyone, member and non-member alike, could participate. On November 10, 1991, for example, he said,

Now I'm going to ask each and every one of you this morning: every pew, every adult, every visitor, every friend, every saint, every hope-to-be-saved, ain't-saved, don't-know-whether-I'm-saved-or-not. I want you to respond in this offering. Amen? [C: Amen.]

Pastor McGhee preached that members should tithe ten percent of their income to Alpha and Omega, and in addition, make sacrificial offerings to the church.

As the following short excerpts indicate, Pastor McGhee regularly promised that "there is a blessing in giving":

'Cause I wanta tell you somethin'. If you would pay your tithes and your offerin' like God says, there ain't nothing out there that God won't give you. There ain't no door that he won't open for you. Somebody say, 'Amen.' [C: Amen.] November 4, 1990)

Everybody say, 'Amen to tithe-payers': [C: Amen to tithe-payers] people that knows that there's a blessing in paying tithes. He said He would pull ya out a blessin' that you wouldn't have room enough to receive. Why walk around cursed, when you can be blessed. Somebody reach over and tell somebody, 'I can't afford to be cursed'.... (October 27, 1991)

The last excerpt hints at a topic that was addressed in an earlier chapter--the role of the devil in worship. As mentioned,

references to the devil abounded at offering time, when the devil was accused of tying up finances of church members. Often, the devil was charged with standing in the way of the members' blessings:

Now father, I know that it is a blessing in giving.... Now devil, I rebuke you--[speaking in tongues] that you get outa here and let the spirit of giving flow free, in the name of Jesus. (October 21, 1990)

This is offering time. Lean over and tell somebody, say, 'I'm going to be blessed.' [C: I'm going to be blessed.].... Say, the devil can't do nothin' about it.... Devil ain't nothin' but an old whipped dog anyway, just an old whipped dog. I said the devil is nothin' but an old whipped dog, and you need to treat him just that way. Tell him to loose your finances. Say, loose my joy, hey! [tongues: hay sha ga bo tah] Tell the devil, 'loose me and let me go here.' (November 5, 1989)

Pastor McGhee employed several different strategies in obtaining an offering. Before the church's move, he regularly sought "ten people to give us fifty dollars," each giver standing in turn until the entire sum was collected. The process of securing five hundred dollars sometimes went quickly and other times very slowly. After five hundred dollars had been secured, the balance of the offering was placed "in God's hands," though the pastor would urge, "those of you that can, to get [out] twenty dollars" (October 15, 1989). After the church's move across town, Pastor McGhee sometimes sought a gift of twenty dollars from "every adult," or, "as many people as can, to give ten dollars" (October 21, 1990; October 27, 1991). This manner of collecting an offering seems to have a lengthy oral tradition, since Williams described a very similar practice over twenty years ago (1974:93). The pastor sometimes also conducted "seed

offerings," wherein members were asked to "be a blessing" to other members, giving them, for example, ten dollars to be placed in the offering. During one offering, Pastor McGhee explained the philosophy behind these seed offerings:

I would like to have you to stand all over this place. You gonna help somebody else stand. We're gonna plant seeds in here for people.... Somebody you want to save, somebody you want to heal, let's plant a seed for 'em with ten dollars today. Amen, Amen. You want somebody to be baptized in water in Jesus' name, let's plant a seed.¹⁰ How many know you gotta plant a seed in order to get apples? (October 27, 1991)

The type of music performed during the offertory varied from one Sunday to the next. On some occasions, Pastor McGhee asked a church member to come to the altar and sing a solo for the congregation. In two of the services described in Appendix A, for example, a Brother from the church was asked to render a number for the congregation. On October 5, 1990 (Service No. 5), one brother sang "When the Praises Go Up," and on November 10, 1991 (Service No. 11), another brother sang "His Eye Is On the Sparrow." The first of these songs was encountered only in conjunction with the offertory. The text of the song--a threefold statement of "when the praises go up, the blessings come down" followed by a threefold "hallelujah"--reinforced the pastor's conviction that God will bless those who tithe and make sacrificial offerings, since giving is itself a form of praise.

On most occasions, though, a special selection was not requested, and the musical component of the offertory proceeded

¹⁰Seed offerings ranging from ten to fifty dollars were planted for this unsaved author on several occasions.

as follows. One or two keyboardists usually played more or less continuously throughout the offering, and the drummer, generally silent during the initial appeal to give, entered later.¹¹ During most Sunday offerings, the keyboard music was at first intermittent, unmetered, and quite improvisatory, performed in response to the phrases of the pastor's appeal. At some point, however, a melody and pulse became evident. More often than not, the piece played was drawn from the repertory of choir selections. The choir, usually without formal direction, began to sing along, and this music continued softly in the background as ushers, moving from pew to pew, directed the congregants to the altar.¹² Worshipers filed down the side aisles, placed their offering in baskets at the altar, and returned to their pews via the center aisle, while the musicians provided walking music in the background. The offertory concluded with the pastor blessing the offering. This prayer was usually quiet, formulaic, and contained a responsorial section wherein congregants repeated phrases after the pastor, as follows:

Father, in the name of Jesus, we wanta thank you for this offerin'. Thank you for the gift and the giver. Bless, in the name of Jesus, and give back one-hundred-fold. Lord, we thank you right now, that we was able to give. We ask that you bless each and every one today, in the name of Jesus. And everybody say, 'Amen.' [C: Amen.] Lift your voice, say, 'In the name of Jesus,' [C: In the name of Jesus,] 'I

¹¹The charts in Appendix A indicate activity on the part of the keyboardist/s and drummer.

¹²In the fall of 1989, the overcrowded and very congested worship space at 905 West Fairview did not permit a procession to the altar. Instead, the ushers passed offering baskets down each row of chairs.

receive my blessing,' [C: I receive my blessing,] 'that makes me rich,' [C: that makes me rich,]--touch yourself, [and say] 'that makes me rich,' [C: that makes me rich,] touch yourself again, say, 'that makes me rich,' [C: that makes me rich,]--'and adds no sorrow,' [C: and adds no sorrow,] 'in Jesus' name,' [C: in Jesus' name,] 'Amen.' [C: Amen.] Put your hand together. [C: clapping]

In this final prayer, congregants again received the message that giving is a type of investment which will yield formidable returns.

After the offertory, the choir rendered a B selection, which, like the A Selection, was always preceded by a formal announcement. This selection was usually followed by the announcement of weekly church activities and the acknowledgement of visitors. Afterwards, according to the printed program, a hymn was to be sung. Appendix A, however, shows that of eight services which occurred after the move, and hence after the inclusion of the hymn in the printed order of worship, only two services actually included a congregational hymn, only one of which was actually sung from the hymnal (See Appendix A: Service Nos. 6 and 8). The frequent omission of the programmed hymn is addressed in a later chapter which explores musical change at Alpha and Omega. By the fall of 1991, the hymn was often replaced with a fourth choir selection. With as many as four selections, the choir, then, whose charge it was "to minister in song," clearly performed a vital role in this middle portion of the service.

The final segment of Sunday morning worship included only three components in the printed program--the sermon, the altar

appeal, and the benediction. While the pastor was absent during the first segment of worship and shared leadership with the Voices of Pentecost during the middle portion, he single-handedly directed the final third of Sunday morning worship. Lasting an average of approximately seventy-four minutes,¹³ this final segment of worship was longer than either of the other major parts; and since the benediction was very brief, usually less than one minute in duration, this third segment of worship was devoted almost exclusively to the sermon and the altar call. In fact, the sermon and altar call lasted an average of forty-eight and fifteen minutes respectively, accounting for sixty-three of the average seventy-four minutes.¹⁴ The remaining eleven minutes were filled with the benediction, as well as other components which varied markedly from one Sunday to the next, components which were not mentioned in the printed program--announcements, a second offering, a "praise break,"¹⁵ or an occasional song.

With an average length of forty-eight minutes, the sermon was the longest single component of Sunday morning worship.

¹³This average was calculated from the data in Appendix A. Because three of the twelve analyzed services (Service Nos. 3, 9, and 10) contained no sermon and were therefore not "routine," the average was based upon the nine remaining services.

¹⁴Again, these figures are based upon information gathered in Appendix A, omitting data for Service Nos. 3, 9, and 10.

¹⁵"Praise break" is a term the pastor used to signify a bout of very spirited and emotional praise. The term "break" seems to have arisen from the fact that they sometimes erupted during the middle of a scheduled component of worship, like the offering or sermon.

Sermons at Alpha and Omega were based upon scripture passages which could vary in length from two to about twenty verses. Though sermons might include praise breaks, the substance or core of every sermon consists of Pastor McGhee's elaboration and annotation on lined-out phrases and verses from the Bible. At the sermon's outset, he encouraged members to get their Bibles and follow along: "I want you to open your Bibles with me" (October 22, 1989).

Sermons at Alpha and Omega were almost always lined out. One active church member, usually the same from week to week, sat near a microphone and read the scripture, one phrase or verse at a time, while the pastor amplified and commented upon the text, sometimes at great length. When ready to expound upon the next bit of text, Pastor McGhee often employed verbal cues to summon the reading of the next phrase or verse. "And the Bible says this," or simply the word "And" with an upward vocal inflection, were cues for the reader to proceed with the next segment of text (November 24, 1991). This manner of delivery continued throughout the sermon, though the reader's services were sometimes not required for extended periods of time.

The first fifteen to twenty-five minutes of the sermon were almost always characterized by the absence of instrumental accompaniment, though there were some rare exceptions, as on October 22, 1989 (see Appendix A: Service No. 2), when the keyboardist played more or less continuously throughout the sermon. The beginning of the sermon constituted the only

prolonged period of time during the entire worship service when the musicians were predictably silent. This lack of musical accompaniment corresponded with that segment of the sermon during which the pastor's speech was least animated. In the course of almost every sermon, the pastor's voice underwent a transformation. Beginning the sermon in a normal speaking voice, the pastor gradually became more animated, employing a type of heightened speech, which eventually yielded to chanting. Shortly after the pastor began chanting and the delivery had begun to employ a clear tonal center, the main keyboardist returned to the organ and began to respond to the pastor's phrases. At some later point in the sermon, the drummer often returned to his drum set and contributed to the call and response patterns already underway. This overall pattern, however, was subject to a myriad of variations. For example, the pastor could employ a chanted delivery style early in the sermon; or the sermon might contain a lengthy praise break, sometimes resulting in spirit-filled dancing.

Perhaps the most invariable feature of sermons at Alpha and Omega, however, was the ebb and flow which characterized the delivery style. Particularly as the climax of the sermon approached--when the pastor's voice became louder and more percussive, its timbre more hoarse, punctuating lines with a guttural +HAH+--the intensity became almost too great to be sustained without momentary lulls. The climaxes of Pastor McGhee's sermons were invariably characterized by waves of

intensity, and these "waves" were usually framed by clapping and other congregational responses. On Sunday, November 10, 1991, some of these stronger "waves" occurred unusually early in the sermon. Though he would return to a normal speaking voice periodically later in the sermon, Pastor McGhee had begun to chant after preaching only eight minutes. The following is a transcription of one such "wave" which occurred near the beginning of this fifty-two minute sermon. Lasting slightly more than one minute, this chanted excerpt was also characterized by a microtonal rising of the tonal center, nearly a whole step.

[clapping in response to previous material]

It does not mean that the Lord is not in love with you.

+HAH+

And so the Bible says, +HAH+

that, that, that the Lord came, and ah, He was a little late gettin' there. +HAH+ [referring to John 11]

But see the Bible says the Lord loved +HAH+

Mary and Martha. +HAH+

And ya see, when, when God loves ya, +HAH+

He doesn't have to run, +HAH+

and He doesn't have to rip. +HAH+

He doesn't have to make Himself known every time you cry or yell at Him. +HAH+

He does not have to run up every time you get in a dilemma.

+HAH+

He doesn't have to run around, and pat you on the back, and say, 'go ahead' every time. +HAH+

But then when the love of God is there, +HAH+

Hallelujah, ain't no demon in hell can stop the love of God. +HAH+ [clapping begins midway through this line, but does not slow the pastor's delivery]

Ain't no demon nowhere can stop God from lovin' ya. +HAH+

Hallelujah to God, ain't no devil nowhere +HAH+

can put me down when God lifts me up. +HAH+

Ain't no devil nowhere can stop me when God said go. +HAH+

Ain't no devil nowhere can stop me when God said get up.

+HAH+

Ain't no devil nowhere +HAH+

can pull me down when God lifts me up, come on and praise Him. [clapping begins again at the start of this line]

Actually, this ebb and flow of intensity characterized not only

the sermon, but much of the service as well. As most of the charts in Appendix A indicate, waves of great spiritual intensity, often characterized by the presence of spirit-filled dancing, occurred intermittently through most worship services.

Many sermons were characterized by the use of some recurring motive. A short bit of text which might occur dozens of times in the course of a sermon, the motive helped to unify the sermon, and gave congregants a catchphrase which could help them better understand, and later recollect, the sermon's message. On October 7, 1990, Pastor McGhee introduced the recurring motive in the opening minutes of the sermon. This motive, "I believe in miracles," helped the pastor not only to interpret the scripture but also to relate it to the lives of congregants and to the history of Alpha and Omega. The following excerpt, which occurred at the very beginning of the sermon, demonstrates how Pastor McGhee used this motive in a larger context; it also illustrates the aforementioned interaction between the pastor and the person lining out text from the Bible:

Pastor: The Bible declares here, [II Kings 6:1]
Reader: 'And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha,'
Pastor: 'And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha-
-Elisha,' [pause]
Reader: 'Behold now,'
Pastor: 'Behold now,'
Reader: 'The place where we dwell with thee is too strait
for us.'
Pastor: [interrupting before the reader has completed the
verse.] Now, they said, the place where we are dwelling
is--what?
Reader: 'too strait for us.'
Pastor: 'too strait for us.' [pause] But I believe in
miracles.
Though it might be tight now, but I believe in miracles.
Though the situation may look out of hand now, I believe in

miracles.
Though the thing may seem to be far out of my reach, I believe in miracles.
I know that the odds are stacked against me, but I believe in miracles.
I know that when I view myself in the eyes of society, I'm a failure, but I believe in miracles.
When we look back, and we was talking about our eleven year anniversary here for this church and our first year of Bible conference. When you look back over those eleven years, and if you would have asked somebody, 'would we have continued and stood until this point?', they would have said 'no!' Because the odds were, were against us. It didn't look right because when we started we only had one person--and he's not here this morning--and after that we had a number of young people that was still in high school and grammar school. And the other community of, of churches, of churches and ministers, they just said, 'well, he won't be around long.' No way he will survive with those people, young people that are just in high school. Nobody could give anything [i.e., in terms of offerings], but I believed in miracles. [F: That's right; and other muffled congregational responses]

Other recurring motives employed in different sermons include the following: 'What about now?,' 'Refuse to eat the king's meat,' and 'I'm goin' over on the other side.'

The final major component of every service was the Altar Call, or Altar Appeal, at which time an individual could repent of his or her sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus. In a sense, the altar call was the most important element of every service, since, as Pastor McGhee explained, "the whole background of our comin' together is to win peoples to Christ" (I.11.15.89). After the move to 400 West Bradley, most altar calls began to include a prayer line as well. The prayer line provided congregants an opportunity to come to the altar, be anointed with oil, and prayed over--either individually or collectively. Everyone was welcome in the prayer line: those already saved and

baptized, as well as those contemplating but not quite prepared for baptism.

Considering only the data from the nine "routine" services in Appendix A, the altar call at Alpha and Omega lasted an average of about fifteen minutes. It should be noted, however, that the duration of the altar call was much longer in the three particularly spirit-filled services analyzed in Appendix A (services which were not "routine"); in these services--Service Nos. 3, 9, and 10--the altar call lasted an average of nearly forty minutes, its extended length compensating for the omitted sermon. Curiously, no baptism occurred in any of the nine routine services discussed in Appendix A, while each of the not-so-routine services included at least one baptism. Regardless of this fact, every altar call--whether in a routine or spirit-filled service--was characterized by an earnest appeal to win souls to Christ.

The tone at the beginning of the altar call was usually soft and serene--a dramatic contrast with the very loud and emphatic delivery of the sermon's climax which occurred just moments earlier. The pastor's voice, suddenly gentle and intimate, was matched by slow, quiet music performed by the musicians. Pastor McGhee began his altar appeals with an invitation to those who had not been baptized in the name of Jesus, after which he often opened the invitation to all those seeking prayer. As the following excerpts indicate, the initial appeal was generally very similar from one Sunday to the next, though it often employed a

reference to the sermon's recurring motive (*italicized*):

While we're prayin', there may be somebody here that's not saved. Somebody here want to be a part of this family, you get up and come down here now... (October 15, 1989).

Lift your hand, say, '*I'm a dreamer.*' I wanta give somebody a chance right now that know you're a dreamer. You see yourself farther up the road to where you are. You see yourself living a better life than you're livin' right now. You're not saved. You might just want prayer to help your dream. I want you to come (November 5, 1989).

What about now? Somebody right now, you here because God has ordained you. I'm gonna give you some time... time here for you to come. [Speaking in tongues:] E bo sha na. Come for prayer. However you come, you just walk down the aisles, and tell these altar workers how you comin'. Whatever your needs are, get up from where you are and come. Let's do this quickly. You know what you stand in need of. You know whether you're saved or not. You know whether you want to be a part of this family. You get up and come, 'cause God knows your heart today.... We got men and women here gonna pray with you. Somebody, you hear what I'm sayin'. Hallelujah, *what about now?* [Sings:] Ah-oh. [Spoken delivery resumes:] Somebody say, 'well, I wanta be a part of this church.' Get in line, come on. You know [if] you're not water-baptized in Jesus' name. Get in line, come on. Oh Lord, hallelujah. Somebody here, you know what God can do. [Sings:] You know how far God has brought you (October 28, 1990).

Somebody is here, do you hear, *come on the other side?* If you here today, not water-baptized in Jesus' name, you can come. You can have the spirit, and yet you need to be water-baptized in Jesus' name. You wanta come and be a part, come for prayer, come for whatever, this is your time. Right now, this is your time. Get up and come (November 4, 1990).

After the appeal had been made, the principal keyboardist usually settled into a soft and familiar musical strain--often a choir selection or a well-known hymn. During the altar call on October 28, 1990, for example, the chorus of a familiar hymn, "Pass Me Not," was played very slowly and repeatedly for about twenty minutes, while the choir softly intoned the text--"Savior,

Savior, hear my humble cry. While on others Thou art calling, do not pass me by."

Like other components of the worship service, the character of the altar call could vary considerably from one Sunday to the next. While the minister of music felt that the music performed during the altar call should be quiet and serene, he acknowledged that the music was sometimes loud and upbeat, and in his opinion, "totally inappropriate" (I.1.26.91). The charts in Appendix A reveal that spirit-filled dancing, with its loud volume and very rapid tempos, sometimes occurred in the midst of an altar call, not only in the very spirit-filled services but also in routine ones (see Service Nos. 2, 7, 8, 9, and 10).

The objective of every altar call was to baptize at least one soul in water "in the name of Jesus." While most services concluded without a baptism, some services resulted in several; during one rather unusual service on February 16, 1992, seventeen individuals were baptized.¹⁶ After the move to 400 West Bradley, the baptismal pool was located at the front center of the church, behind the choir loft (see Figure 7-2). The pool itself was hidden by wooden paneling, leaving only the head and torso of the supplicant visible.

When many people came forward during the altar call, it was the job of the altar workers to ascertain which congregants were

¹⁶This service, however, was not "routine." Pastor McGhee, aware that the spirit was working in their midst, omitted the sermon and even the choir's B selection. He attributed the seventeen baptisms to "the Holy Ghost cleanin' house."

seeking baptism and which were seeking prayer. If any individual wanted to be baptized, the congregation was informed and a brief episode of rejoicing generally ensued, after which the individual was led to the church basement to change. During the absence of those being prepared for baptism, Pastor McGhee directed his attention to the prayer line, though he usually continued to ask if any others sought baptism. The prayer line, as mentioned above, was an opportunity for those seeking prayer and support to come to the altar and have Pastor McGhee pray for them. The nature of the prayer line and the number seeking prayer varied markedly from one service to the next. If the service was already running late and no congregant had requested baptism, the pastor's invitation to prayer tended to be somewhat subdued, and only a handful of members came forth for prayer. On other occasions, however, more than three-quarters of the congregation lined up in the aisles seeking prayer. Sometimes, the congregants filed toward the altar, and the pastor laid hands on each one individually, and at other times, Pastor McGhee said one prayer for everyone in line.

The prayer line, along with intermittent supplications to congregants not yet baptized, constituted the majority of the altar call. Pastor McGhee could easily extend the time devoted to the prayer line until those seeking baptism had changed into white baptismal gowns and returned. Upon their return to the sanctuary, the proceedings of the prayer line were momentarily suspended, since saving people through baptism is the ultimate

goal of all church activity. Individuals seeking baptism were led, one at a time, to the pool and immersed in water by a church deacon, while Pastor McGhee recited the baptismal formula:

My beloved Brother [full name], according to your faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, according to the faith that God has invested in us as ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we come now to baptize you in water in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ [immersion occurs during those last words] (September 29, 1991).

The musicians were usually silent for the duration of the pastor's statement, but resumed playing immediately afterwards.

After the altar call, Pastor McGhee and the Voices of Pentecost made their exit to walking music played by the church musicians, leaving the minister in charge to close the service. The benediction, usually given by the same minister who opened the service, was customarily as inauspicious as the initial call to worship, both of which were rendered in the pastor's absence. On October 7, 1990, the minister in charge, asking the congregation to repeat after him, closed with the following words:

Lord, [C: Lord,]
I receive my miracle, [C: I receive my miracle,]
in Jesus' name, [C: in Jesus' name,]
on this day, [C: on this day,]
in Jesus' name, [C: in Jesus' name,]
Amen. [C: Amen.]

III. The Processual Character of Worship at Alpha and Omega

Every worship service at Alpha and Omega, whether routine or not, seems to exhibit a processual character. Worship leaders,

as well as congregants, regularly addressed the need for every worship service to progress to a higher spiritual level, and this was particularly true at the outset of each service. While "height" was the prevailing metaphor used to describe this intensified spirituality, other metaphors--like depth and drunkenness--were also employed.

In song, the belief that each worship service ought to progress to a higher spiritual plateau was expressed most clearly in the text of "Let's go higher in the Lord." A favorite congregational song, it was sung in five of the twelve services analyzed in Appendix A¹⁷--always appearing very near the beginning of the service. "Let's Go Higher in the Lord" has only one stanza of text, which is repeated as many times as desired:

Let's go higher in the Lord;
let's go higher in the Lord.
Higher and higher, deeper and deeper,
let's Go Higher in the Lord.

This need to "go higher" was regularly emphasized by worship and testimony leaders during the opening third of Sunday morning worship services. Announcing the start of the Testimony Service on November 4, 1990, for example, the worship leader said, "We're gonna go higher in our service this morning."

Active congregational involvement, moreover, was essential to this goal of going "higher in the Lord." Worship and testimony leaders regularly stressed the importance of active participation on the part of congregants--of getting involved in

¹⁷Service Nos. 1, 5, 8, 10, and 12.

the service, praising God, and letting the Lord have his way:

Come on, let's put our hands together and praise God. And let's get into the service this morning and let God have His way, in Jesus' name. [worship leader; October 7, 1990]

We're here today to have a good time and to uplift the name of the Lord. We ask that whatever problems that you have on your mind, we ask that you just let it go. Let God come in and let God have His way. Amen? [C: Amen.] Amen. You won't get anything out of this service unless you put something in. We ask that you put in the service what you wanta get out. God will richly reward you and he will richly bless you. [worship leader; October 28, 1990]

When these worship leaders admonished congregants to "let God have His way," they were alluding to their belief that the Holy Ghost has the power to descend upon the congregation and actually direct the course of worship. While this topic is addressed in greater detail in a later chapter on musical and ritual flexibility, the belief in the active presence of the Holy Ghost is fundamental to understanding the processual character of the worship ceremony.

Members believe that active participation in the service, by praising God and uplifting the name of the Lord, is the surest way to induce the Holy Spirit to fall upon the congregation. As the words of a favorite song at Alpha and Omega testify, "When the praises go up, the blessings come down." Members believe that the blessings of the Holy Spirit, from glossolalia and spirit-filled dancing to healing and joy, are bestowed in response to congregational praise. Going "higher in the Lord," then, signifies the greater presence of the Holy Spirit.

During the opening third of the service, worship and testimony leaders sometimes implied that it was their

responsibility to induce congregants to "lively praise," thereby raising the spiritual level of the congregation before the pastor's entry. On October 27, 1991, for example, the testimony leader chastised the congregation for not getting actively involved in worship:

You all know what? From up here, look like the devil already got us {goin'}. You all know that? From up here, it look like he got the victory and we're just sittin' here. [F: Amen.] Amen? [C: Amen.] Amen? [C: Amen.] [Speaking to the keyboardist:] Give me some music Brother K-----. Give me some good, shoutin' music. We got to loosen up in here. [M: That's right, hallelujah.] We came [for] no other [reason] than to praise {God in here, hallelujah?!} When our pastor comes out--he's been in there¹⁸ prayin' and askin' God to anoint this service, and some of you all's looking like we {already been beat?}. We came to have church!!.... [clapping and instrumental response]

"To have church" is an expression that was used frequently at Alpha and Omega. It refers to having a spirit-filled, good time in the Lord, or as Pastor McGhee once said, a "knock-down time" in the Lord. Usage made it clear that the congregation doesn't "have church" every Sunday. "Havin' church" is a reference not to the routine weekly services, but to those particularly spirit-filled occasions when "the Lord... shows Himself more prevalent" (I.11.15.89). This expression "havin' church" was used repeatedly during the service on Sunday, October 29, 1989, the most emotional of the twelve services analyzed in Appendix A. Near the beginning of the service, one of the testimony leaders, seeking to rouse the congregation, shouted,

How many folks come to have church this morning? [clapping and instrumental response] I said, how many people come to

¹⁸That is, in his study.

have church this morning?

Much later, near the conclusion of this service which included approximately sixty-six minutes of spirit-filled dancing, Pastor McGhee observed,

This is what you call havin' church. Ah, reach over and tell somebody, 'we churchin' in here.' [C: We churchin' in here.]

Though realized only occasionally, "havin' church" was the target of worship at Alpha and Omega. While every service should transport congregants to a higher spiritual level, some rare services, members believe, reach such a high spiritual plane that the Holy Ghost actually influences the order of worship. When the Holy Ghost's presence resulted not only in the altered sequence of church ritual but also in a large number of baptisms, Pastor McGhee and members would refer to that particular Sunday for months in the future. Such a memorable service occurred on February 16, 1992, when, without the benefit of the choir's B Selection or the pastor's sermon, seventeen persons were baptized, and the pastor announced that the Holy Ghost was "cleanin' house."

The goal of every Sunday service, then, was to reach a higher spiritual plane and have a spirit-filled time in the Lord, but once in awhile, there were services which attained an unusually high level of spirit--services in which "the Lord... shows Himself more prevalent." The process of going "higher in the Lord" was therefore encountered in every service, but some services resulted in extraordinary, spirit-filled worship--in

"havin' church." The process of taking the congregation "higher in the Lord" was initiated by the worship and testimony leaders in the pastor's absence during the opening segment of worship. During the middle and final segments of worship, this process was continued, but it was the Voices of Pentecost and Pastor McGhee who roused the congregation to higher levels of praise and thanksgiving.

The location of spirit-filled dancing further indicates that each service is a process. Because members believe that the course of worship is influenced by the presence of the Holy Spirit, this process was seen as ultimately unpredictable. The placement of Spirit-filled dancing within the services helped to support this belief. The graphs in Appendix A clearly demonstrate that the extent and placement of dancing in worship was highly unpredictable. Table 4-3 summarizes this data, indicating the total number of minutes of spirit-filled dancing in each of twelve services, as well as its placement in the opening, middle, and final segments of worship.¹⁹ The data presented in Table 4-3 clearly suggest the variable extent of spirit-filled dance in worship. Two of the services contained only one minute of spirit-filled dance, while two others averaged over one hour of this activity.

¹⁹Because the tripartite division of worship cannot be applied to those three very emotional services which lacked a sermon, a two-part division has been used for Service Nos. 3, 9, and 10. The opening segment of these extraordinary services corresponds to worship conducted in the pastor's absence, while the final segment corresponds to that portion of the service over which he officiates.

Table 4-3:
The Extent and Placement of Spirit-Filled Dancing in Worship
(A Summary of Data from Appendix A)
(time given in minutes)

Service:	Portion of Service:			Total:
	opening	middle	final	
Service No. 1	6	4	4	14
Service No. 2	0	6	13	19
Service No. 3	4	--	62	66
Service No. 4	7	10	0	17
Service No. 5	0	2	0	2
Service No. 6	0	3	9	12
Service No. 7	0	5	1	6
Service No. 8	0	0	1	1
Service No. 9	0	--	31	31
Service No. 10	5	--	51	56
Service No. 11	0	0	1	1
Service No. 12	0	5	16	21
Service averages: ²⁰				
"routine" services:	1.4	3.9	5	10.3
"spirit-filled" services:	3	---	48	51

The data from Table 4-3 also indicate that while certain broad patterns in the placement of spirit-filled dancing were evident, the distribution of this activity in worship was nonetheless highly variable. The variable placement of spirit-filled dancing during worship is best shown if the data from the three very spirit-filled services is momentarily disregarded-- since those services were by nature unpredictable and because it was not possible to apply the tripartite division to these. Using only the data from the nine "routine" services, then, it is impossible to predict which segment of worship will contain the greatest concentration of spirit-filled dancing. Any one of

²⁰"Routine" services included all except Service Nos. 3, 9, and 10, while the "spirit-filled" services included only those three.

these three segments might include the greatest amount of spirit-filled dance. In Service No. 1, for example, the greatest concentration of spirit-filled dancing occurred in the opening segment of worship. In three other services (Nos. 4, 5, and 7), the middle portion of worship was the most emotional, while in the remaining five, the concluding segment of worship contained the greatest amount of spirit-filled dancing.

Although the extent and placement of spirit-filled dancing was highly variable and unpredictable, at least one generalization can be made about patterns of spirit-filled dance--namely, this dancing tended to appear in greatest concentration nearer the end of worship services. The data on routine services in Table 4-3 corroborate this assertion. On the average, the opening, middle, and final segments of worship in the routine services contained increasingly greater amounts of dance--1.4, 3.9, and 5.0 minutes respectively. Moreover, this tendency for spirit-filled dancing to be concentrated toward the middle or end of each service was consistent with the congregation's desire to "go higher in the Lord," and contributed importantly to the processual character of worship.

While Pastor McGhee and the Voices of Pentecost shared responsibility for urging the congregation to higher levels of praise during the middle portion of worship, Pastor McGhee alone directed the final segment of worship--the sermon and the altar call. In the pastor's hands, the process--a gradual buildup--continued, albeit with a momentary lull at the start of the

sermon. After his entrance, which marks the start of the middle segment of worship, the pastor's style of delivery was usually quite animated and his entreaties to the congregation were generally loud and usually in a type of heightened speech, sometimes chant. At the outset of the sermon, though, he almost always assumed a normal speaking voice, making it appear that the process of gradual spiritual accretion had been abandoned. The sermon, however, provides one of the clearest examples of process.

As described earlier, Pastor McGhee generally began his sermons in a normal speaking voice, only gradually assuming a louder and more animated style of delivery, which eventually yielded to chant, at which point the keyboardist usually returned to the organ and began responding to the pastor's comments. As the climax of the sermon approached, the pastor's voice became louder and increasingly more hoarse. Because of very loud amplification, it was during the sermon's climax that the service's highest decibel readings were likely to occur. Like the service itself, the sermon traversed a path to a higher spiritual plane. The pastor's voice, so human at the start of the sermon, underwent a change, becoming powerful and otherworldly; and it was the sermon's climax which elicited the greatest and most impassioned response of congregants.

The process of gradual accretion, then, experienced only a momentary setback at the sermon's outset, and the goal of the entire ritual process appears to have been reached with the altar

call, at which time the bottom dropped out, and the character of worship underwent a sudden and very dramatic change. At this point, the pastor appealed to the congregation in little more than a whisper, often using the following words to ask if there was one soul in the crowd in need of salvation: "Just one today, is there one?"

Virtually every worship service at Alpha and Omega demonstrated a process of gradual accretion--a steady buildup in volume, spiritual excitement, and congregational involvement. In the overcrowded and emotionally-charged environment of the warehouse sanctuary, the temperature in the room actually rose appreciably during the course of every worship service. Moreover, this process of spiritual accretion was evident not only in worship services, but also in other church events, like choir concerts, and to a lesser extent, Bible Study.

Roger D. Abrahams has noted that the anthropology of experience is concerned not with "the chartering legislation that puts a social group into business and keeps it there through the exercise of authority," but rather with,

the techniques by which the individuals in some sort of collectivity develop ways of acting that will authenticate both the actors and the group simultaneously (1986:45).

The ritual process at Alpha and Omega demonstrates one such "way of acting." The spiritual buildup during worship requires not only inspired performances by the pastor, worship leaders, choir, and musicians, but also active congregational participation.

"Havin' church" occurred at Alpha and Omega only when both the

principal actors and the group became vigorously involved in the spiritual process. Because church members believe that this gradual buildup represents the increased influence of the Holy Spirit, the process of accretion serves to authenticate both the pastor and his congregation.

The replication of this process in miniature during the sermon likewise authenticates the pastor as "God's spokesman," since the change in his delivery style symbolizes a heightened presence of the Spirit. The normal speaking voice employed at the beginning of the sermon signifies that the congregants are hearing the words of a man, while the vocal transformation which evolves as the pastor delves more deeply into the scripture suggests that his human words have been filled with the Spirit and become the Word of God. According to one member, the shift in the pastor's vocal style signifies that "he's allowed the Spirit to take over." Admitting that she is sometimes "not totally interested" at the beginning of the sermon when the pastor preaches with his normal voice, this member explained that she invariably becomes "more involved" when his voice changes (I.7.10.92). The processual character of worship, then, helps to corroborate the conviction of both Pastor McGhee and members that this is a Holy Ghost-filled church, since the buildup in service and sermon alike attest to the presence of the Holy Ghost.

IV. The Power of the Holy Ghost: Glossolalia, Healing, and Spirit-filled Dancing

As explained in an earlier chapter, Pastor McGhee and members of Alpha and Omega believe that there is but one "true plan of salvation," and that the gift of the Holy Ghost is an essential component of that plan. While the indwelling of the Holy Spirit might manifest itself in a variety of ways, for the members of Alpha and Omega speaking in tongues is clearly the most critical sign of the Holy Ghost's presence. During a testimony, for example, one member asserted, "according to the Word, you're not filled with the Holy Ghost if you haven't spoke in tongues" (October 15, 1989). Similarly, Pastor McGhee regularly insisted on this basic tenet of church doctrine: "You don't get the Holy Ghost without speaking in tongues" (October 27, 1991). The pastor and church members perceive glossolalia as "evidence" of Spirit baptism: if an individual is truly filled with the Holy Spirit, he *will* speak in tongues. According to Harvey Cox, this conviction was much more prevalent among early Pentecostals than it is among Pentecostals today:

In the early days when tongue speaking was taken to be the only sure-fire "evidence" of Spirit baptism, there was no question about it. If you spoke in tongues, you were baptized by the Spirit, if you did not you were not. Now, however, most pentecostals consider the gift of tongues only one gift of the Spirit among many (1995: 87-88).

Congregants at Alpha and Omega, however, are undaunted by being different from "most Pentecostals," since they hold other convictions--like their belief in "Jesus Only," and their belief that baptism is ineffectual unless performed "in the name of

Jesus"--which also serve to set them apart from the Pentecostal mainstream.

During one Sunday evening broadcast, Pastor McGhee, seeking to correct misconceptions about glossolalia, devoted his entire sermon to the subject of speaking in tongues. In this sermon, he addressed the necessity of speaking in tongues, maintaining that everyone who has been filled with the spirit of the Holy Ghost will speak in tongues:

And I wanta talk about the tongue-talkin' here. ...And I want to just hopefully teach a little bit...because there are many people with the wrong concept about tongue-talking. ...Everybody that gets the Holy Ghost speaks in tongues as the Spirit of God give utterance. We don't have any record of anybody receiving the Holy Ghost in the New Testament church that didn't talk in tongues. ...Don't let nobody deceive you, talkin' about everybody don't speak in tongues. If you get the Holy Ghost, it's not but one way to get the Holy Ghost, and once you get it, you speak in tongues as the Spirit of God give utterance. Hallelujah, there's a lot of good people deceived--includin' preachers. No preacher without the Holy Ghost is ordained by God. And I'll say it again, if you have a preacher and he tells you that you don't have to have the Holy Ghost speaking in tongues, you should hurry up, get your bag, run out of that church, because one thing, he's not called of God and you know you won't be saved. This is heavy today--heavy. But the Bible backs us up, Hallelujah.... You got preachers livin' mighty good, but they don't have the Holy Ghost. They livin' without power (June 2, 1991).

Beyond providing an assurance that one has been filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues provides a line of communication with God and helps to energize the believer. As Pastor McGhee continued his sermon, he became increasingly more animated, gradually changing to a chanted style of delivery:

Now don't tell me you don't need to speak in tongues, because there is nobody in the body of Christ that does not need to be edified. There is nobody saved that don't need to be edified sometime. It's just like a car; you can have

a new battery; it's not gonna stay new forever. Sometime or another, you gonna need to be built up, HEY [speaking in tongues: ah mo sha ta] You gonna need to be built up, and I want you to know that God can't build you up; I want you to know a solo singer can't build you up; I want you to know even coming to church every Sunday won't build you up. You gonna have to spend some time talkin' in tongues to the Lord. [clapping and congregational response] There's nobody know nothing about it but you and the Lord. The devil can't touch this, Hallelujah....

If you don't have an interpretation, it is not a blessing for the church; it is only edification for you. And you can't tell me you don't need edification. You need to be filled up, just like a car who's been run down and the battery won't start. You got to charge that battery or get a new one. Somebody say, hallelujah [C: hallelujah] And so when you are speaking in an unknown TONGUE, and you speak unto GOD, it edIFIES ya; it builds you UP +HAH+
It gets ya READY to FACE your TESTS +HAH+
It gets ya READY to MEET the DEVil head-on +HAH+
It gets READY to reSIST the DEVil +HAH+
It prepares you to stand strong +HAH+
It prepares you to HOLD your head up +HAH+
and say I've got nothin' +HAH+
[to] separate me from the love of God +HAH+...
It builds you UP +HAH+
that you can TELL the DEVil +HAH+
YOU CAN'T TOUCH THIS +HAH+
IT BUILDS YOU UP +HAH+
THAT YOU CAN STAND +HAH+
AND SAY, I LOVE THE LORD +HAH+
BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED ME +HAH+
You CAN'T STAND the STORMS +HAH+
IF YOU'RE NOT FILLED +HAH+
YOU CAN'T RESIST THE DEVIL +HAH+
IF YOU ARE NOT FILLED +HAH+
SOMEBODY LIFT YOUR HAND +HAH+
SAY, 'THANK GOD FOR TONGUE-TALKIN'' +HAH+
LIFT YOUR HAND AND SAY, 'THANK GOD' +HAH+
'THAT I'M A TONGUE-TALKER'
Reach over and tell somebody, 'don't bother me' [C: Don't bother me.]
Tell 'em, 'I gotta have communication' [C: I gotta have communication]
and tell 'em, 'talkin' in tongues' +HAH+ [Pastor hurries up, not really giving the congregation a chance to respond]
keeps me in touch +HAH+
with the Lord +HAH+
(June 2, 1991)

Pastor McGhee maintained that tongue-talking, or communication

with God, has the power to energize and edify. The metaphor which he employed--that of charging up a run-down battery--is reminiscent of another metaphor considered earlier, that of the church as "filling station," a place where members can come to "gas up"--to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Talking to God, he asserted, functions to "build up," "charge," and "edify" the believer.

The above excerpt suggests that there are times when tongue talking is interpreted and other times when interpretation is unnecessary. When asked in an interview to address the issue of interpretation, Pastor McGhee again implied that speaking in tongues can function in two different domains--analogous to the public and private. On public occasions, interpretations, when sought, can enlighten congregants and provide "a blessing for the church." On the other hand, the translation or interpretation of tongues appears to be superfluous in the private domain, where tongue talking works to "build up" the believer. Pastor McGhee explained these two functions of glossolalia as follows:

As the Bible says, the spirit of God give utterance: as it sees fit, it utters. Now sometime there is a message--there's an interpretation--and sometime it's a build-up of the person who's speaking. Because, as anything, like a car who needs gas oil, and if you're puttin' out or if you're being used, then the source that's usin' you have to supply the energy. So the Holy Ghost supplies the energy by speakin' in that unknown tongue, in that language, of some-called language, and it builds up the believer. Builds me up, or whoever. And then there is times when speakin' in tongues, there is a message that is given. And sometime we do bring it across that sometime people don't get it because I think sometime they focusing on the speakin' in tongues, but then usually I try to ask for an interpretation of it in the midst of my speaking, [for] ...somebody who's in the congregation that don't understand, that they can be

fruitful, they can enjoy (I.11.15.89).

If Pastor McGhee sought interpretation of glossolalia on public occasions, then his requests must have been quite surreptitious, for I can recall no public requests for interpretation. Perhaps the English which followed his glossolalia was sometimes an interpretation of words spoken in tongues.

Pastor McGhee spoke in tongues quite often, usually in the form of short exclamations which peppered the more animated sections of his discourse or sermons. Certain stock phrases, and variants thereof, were encountered quite regularly. When asked about an interpretation for one such recurrent phrase--"E sha ga bo ta," he explained that it,

usually... comes forth during the time of a praise, in the midst of a high praise. And this is sayin' that God inhabits the praises of these people--and that we should provoke the inhabitation of Him by praising Him (I.11.15.89).

While the pastor's speech regularly included bits of glossolalia, the speech of church members, at least that which was delivered solo in public, usually did not include speaking in tongues.

The pastor's speaking in tongues was often public, while that of congregants was more private. The testimonies of some very active members would occasionally include bits of glossolalia, but it was rare for the congregation's attention to be focused upon a single individual speaking in tongues. Public demonstration of glossolalia by congregants was more common when many were simultaneously filled with the spirit, and often occurred amidst shouting and dancing. In this way, there was a

more private dimension to congregational glossolalia, and the speaking in tongues of members was rarely exposed to group evaluation.

When members explained the practice of speaking in tongues, they generally acknowledged that private dimension, describing it as a very personal experience in which one establishes a direct line of communication with God. As Pastor McGhee explained, "there's nobody know nothing about it but you and the Lord" (June 2, 1991). One member described the experience as

the most beautiful thing. It's like a totally different language. Speaking in tongues is like talking to the Lord direct [about] those things in your heart (I.8.18.92).

When speaking in tongues, another member explained, you "clear your mind; draw your mind in; get your mind off of surroundings; and concentrate on you and the Lord and let Him do His thing" (I.7.10.92)

Though glossolalia is but one of several "gifts of the Holy Spirit," the gift of tongues carried critical importance for the members of Alpha and Omega, since they viewed it as confirmation of baptism with the Holy Ghost. Another important gift of the Spirit is the gift of healing--the laying on of hands. As Pastor McGhee made clear during his sermon on October 27, 1991, however, this gift of healing is unlike the gift of tongues--in that not everyone who has been filled with the Holy Ghost will have the power to heal others. He explained,

You don't get the Holy Ghost without speaking in tongues.... The gift of healing--everybody don't have that. Everybody don't have the gift of layin' on of hands. But every child of God that is born of God, must have the Holy Ghost.

Members believe that the indwelling of the Holy Ghost can manifest itself in a variety of ways, including dancing, falling out, speaking in tongues, prophecy, and healing. While some of these gifts--glossolalia, prophecy, and healing--could occur at any time during worship, certain other behaviors, like dancing and falling out, seemed always to be linked with music, and specifically, with the very fast, repetitive shout music which occurs during worship. This shout music erupted spontaneously in each of the twelve services analyzed in Appendix A; in some services it lasted for no more than a couple minutes, but in two services (Service Nos. 3 and 10), which members acknowledged as particularly spirit-filled, it comprised a major component of worship, occupying approximately one hour of the service. The term "trance" has been used by Gilbert Rouget to describe this type of spirit-filled behavior.

In his examination of music and trance, Rouget developed a language for describing and classifying trance behavior, and a discussion of this terminology can aid in the explication of trance behavior at Alpha and Omega. While the terms "ecstasy" and "trance" have often been used interchangeably, Rouget proposed that these two concepts stand in polar opposition to one another, connected by a continuum of behavioral possibilities. Using a list of terms to delineate each state, he explained that ecstasy is characterized by "immobility, silence, solitude, no crisis, sensory deprivation, recollection, and hallucinations," while trance is characterized by "movement, noise, [occurrence]

in company, crisis, sensory overstimulation, amnesia, and no hallucinations" (1985:11). When all of the component traits are present--"a completeness [which] is not always realized"--the state in question is considered to be "the full form of either ecstasy or trance" (1985:11).

Because the spirit-filled dancing encountered at Alpha and Omega included movement, noise, the company of many others, sensory overstimulation, and a sense of crisis, the term "trance" is clearly appropriate. The literature on Pentecostal ritual sometimes uses the term "ecstatic" to refer to spirit-filled dance or speech (see, for example, Cox 1995:15, 86-87; Bloch-Hoell 1964:37; Sanders 1996:61), but to use the term in that way is to confuse the basic opposition of these two states as described by Rouget. Another reason for avoiding the expression "ecstatic" dance was given by the pastor and members of Alpha and Omega, who admitted that they found the term quite foreign and instead preferred the expressions "spirit-filled" or "holy" dance (I.3.12.92; I.7.10.92). For these reasons, the term "ecstatic" dance is here avoided and the somewhat more cumbersome, but more emically correct, "spirit-filled" dance will be used instead.

The type of trance experienced at Alpha and Omega is one which falls within a category which Rouget has identified as "inspiration" trance. Rouget stated that the issue of trance and spirit possession can be clarified by distinguishing among at least three varieties of trance--possession, inspiration, and communion. As juxtaposed to shamanic trance, these three types

of trance share a common relation to the invisible spiritual realm, since in each case the subject is visited by an inhabitant of that invisible realm (1985:19). In possession trance, "a different personality: that of a god, spirit, genius, or ancestor... has taken possession of the subject, substituted itself for him, and is now acting in that subject's place" (1985:26). In inspiration trance, the category relevant to trance behavior at Alpha and Omega,

rather than having switched personalities, the subject is thought to have been invested by the deity, or by a force emanating from it, which then coexists in some way with the subject but nevertheless controls him and causes him to act and speak in its name. The most frequent example of this relationship is that found in trances attributed to the Holy Ghost (1985:26).

Communion trance is distinguished from both of these in that it "does not involve embodiment of any kind," but rather "a communion, a revelation, or an illumination" which takes place between the subject and the divinity (1985:26).

A variety of trance behavior--shouting, dancing, speaking in tongues, and falling out--occurred at Alpha and Omega, and members believed that these several behaviors were the result of being filled with the Holy Ghost, or of the Spirit taking control. While shouting, dancing, and falling out were usually associated with fast, repetitive musical accompaniment, instances of glossolalia occurred quite independently of those animated musical episodes.

The terms "shout" and "dance" (also "holy dance" and "spirit-filled dancing") were often used interchangeably at Alpha

and Omega. Spirit-filled dancing takes the form of a stylized dance with small, rapid steps. Most often the dancing is performed in place, with little or no distance traversed. Keeping time to the rapid beat, each foot, in alternation, is shuffled or kicked backwards, then returned to its original position on the floor. As a rule, the steps are quite compact, without any crossing of the feet or stepping to the side. Most dancers keep upper body movement to a minimum, though some swing their arms rhythmically as they dance. The style of spirit-filled dancing at Alpha and Omega--with its shuffle step and feet remaining nearly in contact with the floor--is reminiscent of nineteenth-century descriptions of shouts and ring shouts in churches and at camp meetings (see Allen 1929:xiv; and Southern 1983:87-88;169-71). Because the Spirit moves individuals in different ways, shouting can encompass a variety of other behaviors as well. Certain church members, for example, were sometimes overtaken by an energetic twisting and reeling, while others ran laps down the church aisles when filled with the Spirit.

Shouting, or spirit-filled dancing, was generally accepted as a sign that an individual was filled with the Holy Spirit, but as one member explained, "you can shout without the Holy Ghost; a lot of 'em shout with the Holy Ghost [at Alpha and Omega], but not all" (I.6.10.92). Though reluctant to judge, this member recalled an individual who couldn't do the holy dance, but rather did a style which she described as "street dancing"; to her, this

was a sign that the individual was not acting under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

"Falling out," also referred to as being "slain in the Spirit," usually left a congregant prostrate on the floor. One member described this as "one of the most serene feelings you would ever experience" (I.8.18.92). Another, who admitted "fighting" the Holy Ghost because she always wanted "to be in control" of her mind, explained that she had never fallen out and did not "totally understand why people hit the floor" (I.07.10.92). It was common for individuals to be "slain in the spirit" when the congregation still worshiped in the crowded warehouse space, and sometimes several individuals would lie sprawled on the sanctuary floor at once. After the move across town, services became much less animated, and this sort of activity was virtually curtailed.

The relationship between shout music and the trance behavior which it seems to evoke is a complex one. While Rouget acknowledges "a disconcerting variability of the relationship between music and the onset of trance," he contends that the relationship between music and trance, when the latter is considered "in its fullest form," is "quite stable":

In its fullest form, by which I mean the form it displays during public possession ceremonies, trance most often consists in dancing to the sound of music that belongs to the possessing divinity or, if there are several persons, to the sound of music that corresponds collectively to all the divinities present. Here the function of the music is obvious. It is due to the music, and because he is supported by the music, that the possessed person publicly lives out, by means of dance, his identification with the divinity he embodies. The music at this point is thus

neither emotional, nor invocatory, nor incantatory; it is essentially identificatory (1985:323; emphasis added).

As the expression "spirit-filled dancing" suggests, members of Alpha and Omega, when overcome by dance, live out their identification with and embodiment of the Holy Ghost. Testifying to the power of the Holy Ghost, one church member, who almost never danced, explained, "when I get up and shout, I have no other choice. I get real weak inside; my knees get real weak [from] trying to fight it" (I.07.10.92).

The relationship between music and the onset of dancing and other spirit-filled activities is particularly complex at Alpha and Omega. While shout music usually precipitated dancing, sometimes it was spirit-filled dance, begun spontaneously, which triggered the shout music. For example, on October 29, 1989, a congregant concluded her testimony with the words, "and excuse me while I praise Him," after which she immediately began a very animated dance. The drummer and keyboardists responded with an episode of shout music. Similarly, a single congregant, reeling and twisting, suddenly overcome with the spirit, could precipitate long bouts of shout music and spirit-filled dance. The principal musicians at Alpha and Omega, the keyboardists and drummer, rarely experienced trance during worship.

Occasional comments made by Pastor McGhee during worship concerning the relationship between music and shouting further seem to complicate this issue. He was often critical of the state of the contemporary church, and alluded disparagingly to the plethora of songs which are needed to "pump us up and get us

emotionalized," suggesting rather that the Word of God alone should be sufficient to make people shout. During one such invective, he suggested that jumping, shouting and animated praise should be the natural consequence of reading, knowing, and being filled with the Word of God:

I want you to know, if you don't get some Word in you, shoutin' won't do it. [If] you don't get some Bible in your spirit, shoutin' won't do it. If you don't get some Word in your spirit, the rock to the music won't do it. Amen, somebody? [C:Amen.] What's wrong with the church today--the reason why people have to sing do many songs and they have to kinda pump us up and get us emotionalized--is because we don't have enough Word. So we gotta do somethin' so those people comin', they'll know we're alive. But if you get enough Word inside of you, somebody say Hallelujah, I tell you, if you get enough Word in your spirit, you'll jump and just by bein' here you'll throw your hands up and shout anyway (Sermon, November 24, 1991).

Other aspects of shout music and spirit-filled behavior are considered in later chapters: the character of shout music, in Chapter 5; dramatic contrasts in the amount of spirit-filled activity encountered from one Sunday to the next, in Chapter 8; and the marked decrease of spirit-filled behavior after the church's move from its warehouse sanctuary, in Chapter 7.

Chapter 5

"A Joyful Noise": Music at Alpha and Omega

Sometimes people don't come to church for the Word,
but for the music. Song, music, is what draws [some] people....

A lot of people have joined the church that way--
through the choir.

--a choir member (1.8.18.92)

I. An Overview: Vocal and Instrumental Music at Alpha and Omega

The pastor and congregation at Alpha and Omega regularly spoke of three types of music: congregational songs, hymns, and choir selections. Although hymns were neither sung nor mentioned during the fall of 1989, a single hymn, placed immediately before the sermon, began to appear in the order of worship on the printed bulletins which were introduced early in 1990. At Alpha and Omega, the most obvious emic taxonomy of music appeared to recognize only these three vocal genres. Although a more complete taxonomy is proposed in the following pages, this chapter focuses primarily upon those two musical genres which were clearly foremost in the minds of the pastor and congregation: congregational songs and choir selections. After a more complete examination of musical genres, as well as a detailed discussion of congregational songs, the church choir, and its choir selections, this chapter concludes with an examination of the relationship between Alpha and Omega's musical program and its youthful constituency, a relationship to which members often point.

While congregational songs, hymns, and choir selections were the only musical genres that the pastor and congregants routinely labelled, other types of music were employed at Alpha and Omega, and worship leaders and members, if questioned, would acknowledge some of these other types of music. When asked about the types of music encountered at Alpha and Omega, for example, a choir director included two other types of music--shout music, that is, the music that accompanies spirit-filled dancing, and "altar call music" (I.11.3.89). In describing altar call music, however, he explained that it varied in nature from one service to the next, depending upon the character of each worship service. While observing that altar call music was usually slower music, he noted that "sometimes [a service] may call for something that is more up-tempo." He further explained that the church musicians, "have to discern; [they] have to look and see what's happening in the service.... This type of song would be appropriate for this altar call, because the way the service has gone" (November 3, 1989).

Emic accounts of musical taxonomy always seemed to invoke this notion of appropriateness. For example, in a presentation on church music, Alpha and Omega's minister of music explained that musicians need to be mindful of the direction in which the Holy Spirit is leading:

The spirit may be calling for something at a certain time, and if the musician and if the music is not tuned to that, you could alter, or you could offset, what the Spirit is trying to do. This is why it's so important that the music and the musicians in the church be anointed and that they be in tune to what the spirit is doing (May 29, 1991).

He explained to the congregation, "sometimes... we categorize all the songs together in one lump sum, but they all have different meanings, and they all have different effect on our services." For this reason, he detailed the varieties of religious music encountered at Alpha and Omega, explaining the function of each.

The taxonomy given by the minister of music included three basic types of music, all vocal: (1) hymns; (2) congregational and praise songs; and (3) worship and devotional songs. In his classification, tempo played a key role; congregational songs were fast, while hymns and devotional songs were described as slower. Comparing hymns with congregational songs, he described hymns as, "more inspirational and more thought-provoking, than emotional," and further noted that the hymn is "a time for settling down." The hymn's placement in the order of worship certainly confirmed this, since it occurred immediately before the sermon, the beginning of which usually marked the most serious and emotionally reserved segment of worship. His second category consisted of congregational and praise songs--"the type of songs that just repeat back and forth, such as 'Have you tried Jesus, He's alright.'" Whereas hymns were seen to have a calming effect on the congregation, these congregational songs were thought to prompt "a more physical, emotional response.... They get you fired up." It is this type of song, he claimed, that "sparks dancing and shouting... [and] throwing of your hands." He described the third type of song--worship and devotional songs--as "slower praise songs," but seemed to have difficulty

differentiating this style from the hymn. The example he cited, "When the praises go up," is a song which was sometimes sung during the offering; it was performed quite slowly and was usually unmetered (that is, without evidence of a steady, underlying pulse). About this song, he commented, "that's not a hymn, but it is a devotional type of song. It's not one that's gonna necessarily charge you, but it's like a slow type of a praise... song."

The significance of tempo in his taxonomy became even more evident when he remarked that a hymn,

can be done as a congregational or a praise type of a song; it can be done in a fast way. But if you're gonna do it as a hymn, then the tempo automatically comes down, and the style is just a little different (May 29, 1991).

He emphasized that all three styles of music need to be incorporated into worship services, but it seemed clear, during the question and answer session that followed his presentation, that some members disagreed, suggesting instead that slower music ought to be avoided in a Sanctified Church. One woman, for example, contended that,

a Sanctified service and a Baptist service is totally different.... When you come into the sanctified service... [there] is a spirit-lifting type of music. And singing slow, kind of draggy-like songs... has a tendency to bring the Spirit down instead of giving that kind of boost that you're looking for (May 29, 1991)

Similarly, another woman explained that church music should be spirited and joyful, noting that "the scripture said that the cheerful, or the merry, sing songs, and the ones that be afflicted pray." Clearly, the value which the minister of music

ascribed to slow worship music would have been contested by many at Alpha and Omega, and it should be noted that he represented the church's more conservative attitudes about music.

The congregation's common sense musical taxonomy, given above, was probably the most straightforward: hymns were those tunes sung from the hymnal or from a hymnal page which had been photocopied and placed in the bulletin; choir selections were sung by the choir; and congregational songs constituted most of the balance of Alpha and Omega's vocal repertoire. Because members rarely described instrumental music by name, "shout music," the fast instrumental music which accompanied dancing in the spirit, must be added to this taxonomy. The following discussion, explores the nature and role of each of these four basic types of music: (1) congregational songs; (2) hymns; (3) choir selections; and (4) shout music. Because "altar call music," which one choir director described as one of the fundamental types of music employed at Alpha and Omega, does not appear in this taxonomy, a brief explanation will be provided before detailing the four genres of the taxonomy.

The appropriate character of altar call music seemed to be a matter of some contention among music directors at Alpha and Omega. As noted above, one choir director observed that what is "appropriate" for the altar call in one service might not be appropriate in another. He maintained that altar call music, while sometimes "up-tempo," was usually slow. Though the minister of music also believed that it was important to match an

occasion with appropriate music, he contended that the altar call should be "a serene time." He was not usually the person who determined the direction which altar call music took, but he believed that the music which accompanied the altar call at Alpha and Omega was very often inappropriate. "Some things we do for altar call," he said, "are totally inappropriate" (I.1.26.91).

A survey of some of the service outlines in Appendix A indicates that the music used for altar call at Alpha and Omega was indeed highly variable. On occasion, the music which accompanied the altar call was the spirited shout music. In Service Nos. 2, 9, and 10, for example, large segments of the altar calls were composed of this very fast and loud instrumental music, to be discussed below. More often, though, the music which accompanied the altar call was slow and soft, background music against which the pastor could make his appeal. This type of altar call music was often derived from hymns or choir selections. In Service No. 7, for example, the organist initiated, and the choir softly intoned, the chorus of a familiar hymn, "Pass Me Not" (Church Hymnal: 373). No tune was announced and no hymnals were opened, but the choir sang this chorus twenty-four times over a period of eighteen minutes. On other occasions, the music employed at altar call was a softer, slower rendition of a choir selection. During the altar appeal of Service 12, for example, the chief musician began to play "The Potter's House," and the choir sang softly in the background. While the music heard at altar call was sometimes the very fast

instrumental music which induced members to dance, it could also be slow, pensive, and "serene." This musical variety probably helps to explain the choir director's difficulty in describing the exact nature of altar call music.

II. Congregational Songs and Hymns

Along with hymns, congregational songs constituted the older, more traditional stratum of Alpha and Omega's musical repertoire, while choir selections and shout music formed the newer, more contemporary stratum. With the aid of a song leader, usually positioned at a microphone, congregational songs and hymns were both sung by the congregation. At Alpha and Omega, congregational songs played a much more important role than hymns, and will therefore be considered in much greater detail.

Because Alpha and Omega's approach to its musical repertoire was characterized by great flexibility, a musical taxonomy which boasts clear and inviolable boundaries is not possible. The boundaries between hymns and congregational songs were sometimes difficult to establish. When the congregation sang the chorus of "I need Thee ev'ry hour" on October 27, 1991, no hymn was announced and no hymnals opened, no regular beat was discernible, and the melody of the chorus was embellished with slides and ornamentation, while the harmony was improvised. Should the congregation's performance of two very slow, unmetred statements of this popular hymn's chorus be classified as a hymn or a congregational song? It seems more appropriate to classify this

as a congregational song, and in Table 5-1 it is listed as "I need thee ev'ry hour," an instance of one of the few unmetered congregational songs. The hymn's relatively simple chorus appears to have become a part of the church's oral tradition, while the more extensive text of the verses was abandoned. This truncation of the hymn's verses is analogous to what Nettl has called "The 'Top of Old Smoky' Effect" (1983:108).

Despite some occasional such confusion with respect to boundaries, congregational songs and hymns could, for the most part, be easily distinguished. Hymns were usually announced and sung with the hymnal or photocopied hymnal page in hand, while congregational songs were usually unannounced, and much more repetitive, both textually and musically. When the minister of music explained the difference between congregational songs and hymns, he noted that the former tended to be more "emotional," while the latter were more "inspirational" (May 29, 1991). Both he and Pastor McGhee observed that congregational songs were characterized by faster tempos and greater repetition than was found in hymns (May 29, 1991; I.3.12.92). Pastor McGhee, for example, described the congregational songs as "repetitious," and "more on the up note"--that is, more up-beat, when compared with the hymns (I.3.12.92).

Characterized by simple strophic tunes and repetitive, often improvised texts, congregational songs were ones which had been passed along through oral tradition. The origin of some, those which are here labelled call-and-response shouts, or simply

'shouts,'¹ can be traced to the beginning of the twentieth century (Williams-Jones 1970:206), while others, like 'Jesus on the Mainline,' appear to have originated somewhat later, becoming popular by mid-century (Lomax 1959:liner notes).

Congregational songs at Alpha and Omega were sung by the congregation during the opening or warming-up segment of worship. On Sunday mornings, they usually occurred only during the first forty-five to sixty minutes of the worship service--that is, before the pastor and Voices of Pentecost had entered the sanctuary. Pastor McGhee perceived this opening segment of worship as an opportunity for "congregation involvement," which he considered an essential part of worship. "I don't think a person should come to a worship service and not get involved," he explained, "to the point that they're looking to be entertained" (I.11.15.89). Before the pastor's arrival, then, the worship and testimony leaders employed congregational songs as a form of praise, as well as a means of taking the members gathered "higher in the Lord." Whereas hymns functioned, in the words of the minister of music, as "a time for settling down," congregational songs served to get the congregation "fired up" (May 29, 1991).

¹The terms "shout music," "shouting," and "shout/s," as used here, have three distinct meanings. "Shout music" is the very fast instrumental music which accompanies spirit-filled dancing. "Shouting" refers to a spectrum of very emotional, spirit-filled behavior which includes spirit-filled dancing. Alternately, the term "shouting" is used to refer to the dancing itself. Members of Alpha and Omega use the terms "shout music" and "shouting" in these various ways. The final term--the noun "shout/s"--is one which I've adopted, independently of church usage, to designate a particular type of congregational song (Type B, considered below).

A survey of the twelve worship service outlines in Appendix A indicates that congregational songs [designated by song and shout] were concentrated near the beginning of the each service, both before and during the Testimony or Praise Service. From the start of the worship service until the Testimony Service, congregational songs were usually introduced by the worship leader, or minister in charge. During the Testimony Service, however, they could be initiated by either of the testimony leaders or by any other person present. Particularly during the Testimony Service, a member--with or without cue from the testimony leaders--could stand and begin singing a familiar song. The congregation joined in and the drummer picked up the beat, while the organist usually searched for the tonal center by trial and error.

More often than not, congregational songs began in this manner, without prior announcement. Because these songs don't appear in print and were usually not announced, the song "titles" given here are derived from the first line of text.² When songs were announced, the title given was generally drawn from the first line of text. For example, the worship service on Sunday, November 5, 1989, began with the minister in charge saying a few introductory remarks before announcing a congregational song:

We're gonna open up our morning service. Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ. We welcome you to the Alpha and Omega Church. Today is the day the Lord has made and we shall

²This is the convention which McIntyre adopted in his list of approximately seventy-five congregational songs (1976:105-107).

rejoice and be glad in it. This morning we're gonna open our service up with a song, "Jesus on the Mainline, Tell Him what You Want."

Positioned at the microphone, the minister began singing, while the handful of members present, the drummer, and the pianist joined in respectively. Even when a congregational song has a generally recognized title, as with "When I Lay My Burden Down," members might still use the text's opening words to identify that song. On February 18, 1991, for example, the worship leader introduced this song as "Glory, Hallelujah," also describing it as a congregational song:

...And so we're gonna open up our service this evening, with a congregational song, "Glory, Hallelujah."

Although a song's opening line was generally given as the title, this was not always the case. After the scripture reading on October 29, 1989, for example, the worship leader announced that the service would continue with the singing of the shout which had been begun before the scripture. She said, "we're gonna ask the Voices of Pentecost to please come and take the choir stand as we continue to sing, 'My God's alright.'" The shout, however, had not started with those words, but with the line, "What do you know about Jesus?" When the worship leader resumed this call-and-response shout, she sang only the word, "alright," and the congregation responded in kind; after a while, she began to lead with the text, "my God's alright." It can therefore be concluded that in practice, some flexibility is employed in designating song titles. For this reason, and because most congregational songs were usually not announced, the

Table 5-1
Congregational Song Repertory at Alpha and Omega
 (based upon the twelve services analyzed in Appendix A)

Song	Service:												Total No. Services sung
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
TYPE A:													
In the name of Jesus, we have a victory*					x		x	x	x	2x		x	6
Send down the rain*					x			x	x	x		x	5
Let's go higher in the Lord*	x				x			x		x		x	5
Victory, victory shall be mine*	x								x	x		x	4
Thank you, thank you, Jesus	x		x									x	3
There's power, power, wondrous workin' power*						2x		2x				x	3
I want to be more and more like Jesus		2x								x		x	3
God is great, He's greatly to be praised	x			x									2
Jesus gettin' us ready for that great day		x									x		2
I love the Lord and I won't take it back				x			x						2
Can't nobody do me like Jesus				x							x		2
Since I lay my burden down					x				x				2
When I think of the goodness of Jesus*					x	x							2
Let us go into the house of the Lord (I was glad when they said unto me)								x				2x	2
Jesus is mine		x											1
Bless that wonderful name of Jesus		x											1
I'm so glad that the Lord saved me		x											1
Just another day that the Lord has kept me		x											1
Look where He brought me from		x											1
We have come into His house			x										1
In that great gettin'-up mornin' Jesus on the mainline*			x										1
Jesus said, 'if you go, I'll go with you				x									1

* An asterisk indicates that a transcription of that song appears in Appendix B.

Table 5-1 (continued)
Congregational Song Repertory at Alpha and Omega

Song	Service:												Services sung
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
TYPE A (continued):													
I'm runnin' for my life				x									1
Because He lives					x								1
He's been so good to me					x								1
I'm so glad that He lifted me						x							1
I praise Him, I praise Him, for what He's done for me							x						1
He didn't have to do it, but He did*						x							1
O come and magnify the Lord							2x						1
I shall not be moved							x						1
I feel like goin' on									x				1
I've come to glorify His name										x			1
O what a mighty God we serve										x			1
We come with [?]											x		1
Hallelujah, hallelujah, I love to praise His name												2x	1
Victory is mine												x	1
TYPE B:													
I get joy when I think about what He's done for me*	x					x					x	x	4
If you call on Jesus*						x						x	2
Praise the Lord everybody*								x		x			2
Praise Him	x												1
Come on, praise His name		x											1
He's worthy		x											1
What do you know about Jesus				2x									1
Power					x								1
I'm a soldier									x				1
God is a good God									2x				1
Have you tried Jesus?												x	1
TYPE C:													
My soul loves Jesus*	x		x		x	x	x	x		x	x		8
When the praises go up					x								1
I need Thee ev'ry hour										x			1

* An asterisk indicates that a transcription of that song appears in Appendix B.

songs listed in Table 5-1 are identified by the first line of text.

Table 5-1 suggests the breadth of Alpha and Omega's congregational song repertoire. Although the information presented in this Table includes only data obtained from the twelve services analyzed in Appendix A, the chart nonetheless suggests the extent of Alpha and Omega's congregational song repertoire, from 1989 to 1991. Table 5-1 shows that fifty-one different congregational songs were sung in the course of those twelve worship services.³ Thirty-three of those fifty-one songs, almost 65 percent, were sung in just one of the twelve Sunday services analyzed. While the eighteen remaining songs were sung on multiple Sundays, only six were sung on four or more Sundays. Because such a large percentage of the songs listed in Table 5-1 were sung on only one occasion, the data suggest that Alpha and Omega's congregational song repertoire is actually far more extensive than these fifty-one songs. The nature of these congregational songs--their simple, often sequential melodies and repetitive texts--is conducive to congregational involvement, even when only a few congregants know the tune. In fact, the church repertoire might be viewed as the sum total of every

³At Mount Zion, an African-American Pentecostal church in Windsor, Ontario, McIntyre reported seventy-five to eighty songs being sung in just three services, a number which seems quite high (1976:55). It is noteworthy that several of the more popular congregational songs at Alpha and Omega also appear in McIntyre's list of songs performed at Mount Zion: "Victory, victory shall be mine," "My soul loves Jesus," "Glory, glory, Hallelujah, since I laid my burden down," and "I was glad when they said unto me" (1976:105-107).

member's collective memory, since any congregant could stand during the testimony service and "sing" his or her testimony, thereby introducing new songs to the repertoire. It should also be noted that certain congregational songs almost always appeared to be introduced by the same individuals. In this way, the favorite songs of the most active congregants (e.g., the worship and testimony leaders) became an important part of the church's core repertoire.

The most popular songs in the church's repertoire were "My soul loves Jesus," sung in eight of twelve services analyzed; "In the name of Jesus, we have a victory," sung in half of the services; "Send down the rain" and "Let's go higher in the Lord," each sung in five of twelve services; and "Victory, victory shall be mine" and "I get joy when I think about," both of which were sung in four different services.⁴ Since Service Nos. 1-4, 5-8, and 9-12 were drawn from the autumn months of 1989, 1990, and 1991 respectively, Table 5-1 also provides some indication of which songs appeared to be an essential part of the church's repertoire year after year. Only three of the fifty-one songs-- "Let's go higher in the Lord," "I get joy when I think about," and "My soul loves Jesus"--occurred in at least one of the four sample services from each successive year.

The texts, and even the titles of these songs, reveal a great deal about the shared beliefs which help to unify the Alpha

⁴Appendix B contains musical transcriptions of various congregational songs, including all of these more popular tunes.

and Omega community. In an examination of the rhetoric of Sankey and Bliss's *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs*, Sandra S. Sizer maintained that the "primary import [of these gospel hymns] is the way they function to create a sacred community articulated in terms of shared emotions" (1978:127). The language of Alpha and Omega's congregational songs fulfills a similar function. By magnifying Jesus and testifying to His goodness, the congregational songs help to establish a sacred community--a community with a victory over death, satan, and worldly trials, a community in which all members cherish Jesus as their personal savior, friend, and companion.

The rhetoric of the congregational songs at Alpha and Omega is one which magnifies and praises Jesus⁵:

"Oh come and magnify the Lord, for He is worthy to be praised"

"God is great; He's greatly to be praised"

"Hallelujah, Hallelujah, I love to praise His name"

"I've come to glorify His name"

The language of these congregational songs also attests to God's goodness:

"When I think of the goodness of Jesus, and all he has done for me,..."

L: "God is a good God." C: "Yes He is."

"He's been so good to me"

L: "I get joy when I think about," C: "what He's done for me."

Two of Alpha and Omega's most popular congregational songs declare a "victory," and the text of these and other songs make

⁵As explained in Chapter 3, Alpha and Omega is a "oneness" congregation, and terms such as "God" and "Lord" are all references to Jesus.

it clear that this victory is one over satan, worldly trials, and death:

"In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus, we have a victory.//In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus, satan will have to flee.//Oh, tell me who can go before us, when we call on His great name.//Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, we have a victory."

"Victory, victory shall be mine.//Victory, victory shall be mine.//If I hold my feet, let the Lord fight my battles.//Victory, victory shall be mine."

"He didn't have to do it, but He did.//He didn't have to do it, but He did.//He woke me up this morning, started me on my way,//He didn't have to do it, but He did."

The most important theme in these congregational songs, however, is the image of a loving and close personal relationship with Jesus, wherein Jesus is friend, companion, and savior:

"Can't nobody do me like Jesus. (x3)//He's my friend."

"Jesus on the mainline, tell Him what you want. (x3)//Just call Him up and tell Him what you want."

L: "Have you tried Jesus?" C: "He's alright."

"My soul loves Jesus. (x3)//Praise His name."

"Jesus is mine.//Jesus is mine.//Everywhere I go; everything I do,//Jesus is mine."

"Jesus said, 'if you go, I'll go with you...'"

"When I think of the goodness of Jesus,//and all He has done for me,//my soul cries out, 'Hallelujah,// praise God for saving me.'"

Sizer asserts that the nineteenth-century gospel hymns helped to "create a sacred community, raising the group and its members above the lesser beings which inhabit the world" (1978:19).

Through congregational songs which proclaim a loving and personal relationship with their savior Jesus, the members of Alpha and Omega affirm the basic tenets which both unite their religious community and separate them from the outside world.

The congregational songs were almost always accompanied by a keyboard synthesizer and/or an organ, as well as by a drum set;

and this accompaniment, particularly the snare and bass drums, was usually quite loud. At the beginning of each congregational song, the drummer typically emphasized the first and third beats of each measure with the bass drum, adding syncopated bass drum patterns in between, while sharply accenting the eighth notes between the beats with the snare drum. As a song progressed, the drum patterns became increasingly more syncopated and unpredictable. The keyboardist improvised chordal accompaniment which had a free and independent character; indeed, sometimes the accompaniment, with its chromaticism and a harmonic vocabulary which included seventh chords, secondary dominants, and added sixth chords, bore only a very distant relationship to the melody sung by the congregation. This keyboard and drum accompaniment which supports congregational songs was perceived by members as very stylish and contemporary. Against this accompaniment, the congregation sang the tune. Though one vocal melody normally prevailed, the effect was that of heterophony, with many congregants simultaneously singing melodic and rhythmic variants of the tune. With the vocal heterophony, loud percussion, keyboard accompaniment, handclapping, and other instruments sometimes added to the mix (lead guitar, bass guitar, saxophone, flute, trumpet, and tambourine), the overall impression was that of a very dense web of sound.

Although the Pastor, choir directors, and members did not seem to differentiate among types of congregational songs, performance practice, together with the formal organization of

songs, indicates that this repertoire can be classified into three basic types, which will here be designated as types A, B, and C. As can be seen from Table 5-1, Type A songs constitute the bulk of the repertoire. Tempo figured importantly in emic classification of songs, and while the following taxonomy is not strictly emic, tempo provides a means of differentiating among Type A, B, and C congregational songs. The spirited call-and-response shouts (Type B) were the fastest in the congregational song repertoire, while the free, unmetered Type C songs were the slowest. With moderately fast tempos, Type A songs fell between those two poles. The following discussion explores this taxonomy in more detail, considering representative examples of each type of congregational song.

Congregational Songs: Type A

Most of the congregational songs that were sung at Alpha and Omega are here classified as Type A Congregational Songs. These songs are metered; almost always in a major key; usually consist of four phrases, though sometimes include only two; are typically eight or sixteen measures in length; and are textually repetitious and "up-beat" (that is, of moderate to fast tempo). Each of the Type A congregational songs mentioned in the following discussion has been transcribed and analyzed, and this information is located in Appendix B.

The melodies of Type A congregational songs usually encompass a small range--often as little as a perfect fifth or major sixth, as for example, in "Send down the rain" and "Let's

go higher in the Lord," respectively. Melodically, the tunes are memorable and quite singable, and this appears to be the result of the compact range; the use of much conjunct melodic movement (e.g., "Send down the rain"); the extensive use of melodic sequences (e.g., "In the name of Jesus"); and an emphasis upon the notes of the tonic triad (e.g., "Victory, Victory shall be mine"). Textual repetition also facilitates quick retention and active congregational involvement. The most common textual repetition occurs when three lines of a four line stanza are repeated--AABA or AAAB--as illustrated in the following two songs respectively:

He didn't have to do it, but He did.
He didn't have to do it, but He did.
He woke me up this mornin', started me on my way.
He didn't have to do it, but He did.

Jesus on the mainline, tell Him what you want.
Jesus on the mainline, tell Him what you want.
Jesus on the mainline, tell Him what you want.
Just call Him up and tell Him what you want.

Though the melodies of Type A congregational songs are usually in a major mode, it is rare that they employ all the pitches of the heptatonic scale. More often, the melodies utilize five or six pitches from this scale. Sometimes, as in "Send down the rain," the five pitches are simply those from the tonic to the dominant, but one anhemitonic pentatonic scale--c-d-e-g-a--is frequently encountered (see "Victory, victory shall be mine" and "Let's go higher in the Lord").

Although Type A songs sometimes feature patterns of solo call and congregational response, call and response does not

appear to be an essential element of these songs, as it is with Type B songs. For example, performance of "Jesus on the mainline," a Type A song, usually began with a song leader singing the words "Jesus on the mainline"; he then paused, allowing the congregation to respond, "tell Him what you want." However, the distinction between the roles of the leader and congregation in "Jesus on the mainline" was not so well-defined as it was in the shouts (Type B congregational songs), and soon many congregants began singing the entire text, while still others continued singing only the response.

The meter of Type A congregational songs is almost always simple quadruple. In the six Type A songs transcribed in Appendix B, the tempos range from 84 to 98 quarter note beats per minute. Handclapping, usually on the eighth notes between the beats, is a common feature of performance.

Congregational Songs: Type B (Shouts)

Type B songs are characterized by call and response organization, highly repetitive texts, and very short stanzas, usually only four measures in length. Call and response alternation between a solo song leader and the congregation is the defining characteristic of the congregational songs here classified as Type B. While call and response is sometimes employed in Type A congregational songs, it is an essential feature in the Type B songs. Like the Type A congregational songs, the Type B songs are strophic and in duple meter, but the four-measure stanzas of Type B songs are shorter and more vamp-

like in character.

The four measure stanza of the Type B congregational song is divided into two phrases of equal length, an antecedent and a consequent phrase--each of which contains a solo call and a congregational response (see, for example, "I get joy" and "If you call on Jesus" in Appendix B). The key structural pitches of the congregational responses help to define antecedent and consequent phrases. Outlining an ascending third from tonic to mediant, the response of the antecedent phrase creates a sense of openendedness, while the descending third of the response in the consequent phrase provides a feeling of closure. The brevity and improvisatory character of these shouts resulted in continuous repetition and variation. In the process of continuous variation, the leader often shortened the call, and the distance between call and response was reduced from four to two beats, thereby making the shout more animated and intense. This type of variation is illustrated in the transcriptions of "I get joy" and "Praise the Lord everybody," located in Appendix B. In practice, these shouts could last from about one minute to as long as ten minutes, and the flexibility of their form was conducive to great ritual flexibility, since they could be interrupted and resumed, almost without missing a beat.

Type B congregational songs generally caused the congregation to become more animated and fervent than the Type A songs. Although the sheer repetitiveness of these songs seemed partially responsible for this increased energy, it was the

faster tempos of the Type B songs that appeared to generate most of this excitement. The tempos of the three Type B congregational songs transcribed in Appendix B range from 104 to 106, and handclapping between the beats is a common feature of these songs. Although the minister of music used the terms "praise" and "congregational" songs interchangeably,⁶ when he cited an example of a praise song, he chose a Type B song: "Have you tried Jesus, He's alright." "These are the type of songs," he said,

that just repeat back and forth.... They're emotionally, motivational charged songs. They get you fired up, just by thinking what God has done for you, and it fires up your emotions. You get excited about what God has done, and then it sparks dancing and shouting, whatever have you, throwing of your hands.... It provokes a more physical, emotional response, rather than just a inspirational type of response [as is the case with hymns] (May 29, 1991).

Whereas almost all of the Type A songs that were sung at Alpha and Omega were in a major mode, Type B congregational songs were in a minor mode. The third and seventh scale degrees were generally flatted in these Type B songs, and the sixth scale degree was usually omitted (see, for example, "I get joy," "If you call on Jesus," and "Praise the Lord everybody" in Appendix B). The range of the congregational responses was always quite compact, and this small range--usually only a minor third or a perfect fourth, moving from the tonic or the flatted subtonic up through the flatted mediant--facilitated congregational singing.

There is clear evidence that these call-and-response shouts

⁶All congregational songs might be described as "praise songs."

have a lengthy oral tradition. For example, a shout can be heard on a commercial release of a sermon that was recorded in Chicago in 1927.⁷ The sermon, "God's Mercy to Colonel Lindbergh," delivered by Rev. Leora Ross, with singing by the Church of the Living God Jubilee Singers, is flanked and twice interrupted by a call-and-response shout, one which is almost identical to those sung at Alpha and Omega (see below, Figure 5-5). Pearl Williams-Jones published a transcription of one such song, labelling it a "call-and-response," and claimed that it is "based on a holiness shout from approximately 1910," adding that it is "characteristically accompanied by hand-clapping and the holy dance" (1970:206). At Alpha and Omega these songs were not usually accompanied by spirit-filled dancing. Alluding to the term 'holiness shout,' the term "shout" is here used to designate these Type B songs.⁸ In the twelve service outlines of Appendix A, these highly repetitive "call-and-responses" have thus been labelled as "shouts," thereby differentiating them from the balance of the congregational song repertoire.

Congregational Songs: Type C

Although Type C congregational songs were encountered less frequently at Alpha and Omega than the two aforementioned types,

⁷This sermon has been reissued on Paul Oliver's recorded collection, *Songsters and Saints: Vocal Traditions on Race Records*. A transcription of this shout appears later in this chapter, in conjunction with a discussion of tune families (see Figure 5-5d).

⁸As noted above, the term "shout music" is used to designate the *instrumental* music which accompanies spirit-filled dancing.

their leisurely tempo and free manner of performance made them perhaps the most easily recognized type of congregational song. Unlike all other congregational songs, they were slow and unmetered, and the manner of performance was free and unhurried, without a sense of regular pulsation. These Type C congregational songs, with their slow and very free style of performance, appear to be a vestige of what is called "the Old Way of Singing." Tracing this performance style back to colonial America and ultimately to the English parish church, Nicholas Temperley suggests that this style has a tendency to develop "in places where congregations are left to sing hymns without musical direction for long periods" (1981:511). Eventually, he writes,

the tempo becomes extremely slow; the sense of rhythm is weakened; extraneous pitches appear, sometimes coinciding with those of the hymn tune, sometimes inserted between them; the total effect may be dissonant (1981:511).

Temperley explains that this way of singing can still be found in parts of Appalachia (1981:512), and Jeff Todd Titon, in particular, has noted its survival at the Fellowship Independent Baptist Church, in Stanley, Virginia (1988:226-227).

As the transcription of "My soul loves Jesus" illustrates (see Appendix B), the singing style of Type C congregational songs is quite different than that used in the singing of Type A and B congregational songs. Although this song is not a hymn and is not "lined out" in the tradition of lined hymnody, the style of singing is nonetheless analogous to that of lined hymnody. The text of "My soul loves Jesus" is simpler and more repetitive than that found in hymns. Moreover, this song was sung

frequently at Alpha and Omega, and the congregation knew its text quite well. For these reasons, the lead singer did not need to remind congregants of the words; rather, her role was simply to get the congregation started and to determine the pace. The transcription's timeline shows that this style of singing is extremely slow, with many notes held for as long as two or three seconds.

Despite the freedom of this style, the placement of Type C congregational songs in worship appears to have been very closely prescribed, for they almost always appeared immediately before the mass prayer near the beginning of the service. Much slower than both the Type A and B congregational songs, Type C songs were clearly employed in such a way as to render the congregation more pensive and prayerful. On the rare occasion when an unmetered congregational song was employed elsewhere in the service, it almost invariably occurred during the offertory, another more serene and solemn moment in the service.

Hymns

The function of the hymns, already addressed in the previous chapter, is analogous to that of the Type C congregational songs. The hymn was added to Alpha and Omega's order of worship after the move from the warehouse sanctuary, and its placement immediately before the sermon was apparently designed to render the congregation more sober and tranquil, ready to receive the pastor's message. As noted above, the minister of music considered the hymns to be more "inspirational" and less

emotional than the congregational songs.

Hymns constituted only a marginal portion of Alpha and Omega's music-making. I witnessed no performance of hymns during the congregation's last few months at the warehouse sanctuary. Several months after the church's move, a hymn appeared in the bulletin's printed "Order of Worship." Despite its inclusion in the order of worship, however, the hymn was regularly omitted. Of the services analyzed in Appendix A, eight occurred after the move, and therefore after the hymn had become a part of the official order of Worship. In only two of those eight services, however, was a hymn actually performed, and the hymn was more commonly replaced with an added choir selection. The flexible and openended performance of hymns is addressed in a later chapter dealing with musical and ritual flexibility.

III. Choir Selections and Instrumental Shout Music

Whereas congregational songs and hymns constituted an older, more traditional musical stratum at Alpha and Omega, the choir selections and instrumental shout music formed a more contemporary stratum. During the fall of 1989, before the church's move and the introduction of the printed bulletins, two choir selections were generally sung during Sunday morning worship services. The Voices of Pentecost performed both before and after the offering, and the two numbers were always referred to as Choir "Selections": Selection A and Selection B. After the move and the introduction of programs, the printed order of

worship indicated two choir selections, placed exactly where they had been performed all along--on either side of the offering. Selection A, then, occurred shortly after the entrance of both the pastor and the choir.

In the fall of 1989 most services included only two choir selections (only one of the four services from 1989 examined in Appendix A contained a third selection). With the church's move to a new sanctuary, however, the number of choir selections increased, as the choir began to play an even more prominent role in worship. After the move to Bradley Avenue in January, 1990, an instrumental choir processional was introduced, and the choir gradually began to sing a third selection in conjunction with this processional. Unlike the two main choir selections, this third selection was not announced.⁹ Although congregational songs, as noted above, were usually begun without introduction, Choir Selections A and B were always announced, and these introductions were sometimes rather elaborate. A typical introduction might include some preliminary remarks by the pastor, as well as more specific information provided by a choir member--for example, the title, the director, and the lead singer (if applicable). On Sunday, October 22, 1989, for example, Pastor McGhee and the minister of music both helped to introduce the Choir's B Selection:

Pastor: Now at this time the Voices will come with a B Selection, and I know you gonna pray for them. Put your

⁹In the service outlines which appear in Appendix A, these are labeled as "processional selections."

hand[s] together for them as they come [applause]; come on give it to them as they come [clapping continues]. The Voices of Pentecost: will you receive them in Jesus' name, and let 'em sing under the unction of the Holy Ghost. God bless 'em, in the name of Jesus. [pause] At this time we want you to give them another hand as they come: the Voices of Pentecost.

Minister of Music: Praise the Lord, Saints. [C: Praise the Lord.] Praise the Lord again. [C: Praise the Lord.] The Voices of Pentecost are coming to you at this time, ministering in song, [with] "He's Worthy," led by Sister E----- . Pray our strength in the Lord.

Because the minister of music directed this selection himself, no director was identified.

A more recent development was the occasional introduction of a fourth Choir Selection, as on September 29, 1991 (Service #9). An examination of the outlines in Appendix A indicates that the Voices of Pentecost played an increasingly more prominent role in Sunday morning services during the time period considered.¹⁰ With the gradual addition of a Processional Selection and an occasional fourth selection, total choir performances sometimes exceeded one half hour (e.g., 31'45" on September 29, 1991).

Alpha and Omega's minister of music characterized the church's Choir Selections as "contemporary black gospel," thereby differentiating the repertoire from the hymns and congregational songs (I.1.26.91) The chief musician, the individual who was largely responsible for the selection and instruction of new choir numbers, emphasized that the choir repertoire at Alpha and Omega was "very contemporary." He noted that, while the repertoire of some other local choirs was "about twenty years

¹⁰These changes will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7.

old," that of Alpha and Omega was more contemporary, because of the church's younger congregation (personal communication: March 3, 1991). In this respect, he explained, the choir repertoire at Alpha and Omega is on the cutting edge of gospel, like that of church choirs in Chicago. Some of Alpha and Omega's most popular choir selections included covers of the following recordings:

"Guess You're Wondering," Reverend Milton Brunson and the Thompson Community Singers. *if I be lifted* (Rejoice WR 8369), 1987.

"Oh Lord We Praise You," "Walk in the Light," and "You Must Be Born Again," Hezekiah Walker and the Love Fellowship Crusade Choir. "Oh Lord We Praise You" (Sweet Rain SR-01254), 1990.

"Who's On the Lord's Side," Reverend Timothy Wright. *Rev. Timothy Wright Live!* (Savoy SAV 14795), 1989.

"Hold Up the Light," BeBe and CeCe Winans. *Heaven* (Capital C4-90959), 1988.

"More Abundantly," Ricky Dillard's New Generation Chorale. *The Promise* (Muscle Shoals Sound Gospel MSSC 8008), 1990.

"The Potter's House," Tramaine Hawkins. *Tramaine Hawkins Live* (Sparrow SPC 1246), 1990.

As the copyright dates indicate, the Voices of Pentecost were covering some of the most recently released gospel recordings. Interestingly, however, no reference was ever made in worship to any of these recording artists. In fact, when the selections were announced during worship, the titles given are often somewhat different than those found on the recordings. For example, on November 24, 1991, the choir's cover of Rev. Timothy Wright's "Who's on the Lord's Side" was introduced as "Get Up, If You're on the Lord's Side," and Ricky Dillard's "More Abundantly" was listed on a choir concert program as "Abundant Life" (November 22, 1991). Alpha and Omega's soloists were usually unaware of recording information for the songs on which they

soloed, and, if questioned, they commonly referred me to the chief musician. It seems, therefore, that although the choir selections were derived from contemporary releases, little importance was attached to a familiarity with the original recordings.

Both the minister of music and the chief musician characterized the music at Alpha and Omega as "upbeat," and this was particularly true of the Choir Selections. While watching several local choirs compete at Champaign-Urbana's Black Expo '91, the chief musician pointed out that one choir's selection was "too depressing," and explained that he chooses lighter, more uplifting songs--i.e., more "upbeat" numbers (personal communication: March 3, 1991). In addition to his role as principal keyboardist, the chief musician, assisted by the choir directors, helped preside over the Monday evening choir rehearsals. He was almost singlehandedly responsible for choosing the choir selections and teaching them to the choir. Having learned the selections from cassette recordings, he taught the parts--soprano, alto, and tenor--while at the keyboard, customarily singing and playing a vocal line, then asking the respective section to sing along. In teaching a new selection, he sometimes referred the cassette's J-card, as a reminder of the song's text, and although he occasionally wrote out a selection's text and/or dubbed a number for a choir member or soloist, no written musical transcriptions were ever employed. In this respect, the choir selections, like the congregational songs,

were communicated orally.

As concerns formal organization, these choir selections were longer and much more complex than the congregational songs. Unlike the congregational songs, the choir selections tended to be multisectional in form, employed prescribed vocal harmony (soprano, alto, and tenor), and sometimes modulated. Choir Selections and congregational songs, however, shared some important traits. Both tended to be open-ended in character; both could employ vamps; and both were regularly accompanied by keyboard, drums, and handclapping. Like congregational songs, some choir selections featured a vocal soloist, while others did not.

The accompaniment of the Choir Selections was similar to that of the congregational songs. Because the Choir Selections were rehearsed and the congregational songs were not, the keyboard and drum accompaniment sounded less improvised in the Choir Selections. Although the harmonic vocabulary varied significantly from one Selection to the next, it was generally more complex than that found in the congregational songs. The keyboardist regularly employed chromaticism, secondary dominants, and altered dominants, as well as seventh, ninth, diminished, and added-sixth chords. The drum accompaniment was characterized by heavy snare and bass drum throughout. The bass drum was "busier" than its counterpart in the style of popular music: it not only stressed beats one and three, but also added syncopated patterns and often accented the rhythms of the text. The snare drum, on

the other hand, usually accented the "back beats"--beats two and four.

The flexible and improvisatory character of choir selections can best be illustrated by examining multiple performances of a single selection. The following discussion considers three performances of "Yes, Jesus Loves Me."¹¹ In a later discussion of musical and ritual flexibility, five performances of another choir selection will be analyzed (see Chapter 8). As performed by the Voices of Pentecost, "Yes Jesus Loves Me" featured a female lead singer (alto), and was sung during at least three Sunday morning worship services in 1991: June 30; September 29; and November 11. Certain formal elements of this Selection--for example, three principal sections (here labelled A, B, and C) and a 4mm vamp--were present in each of the performances. The placement and number of these formal elements, in each of these performances, is illustrated in Table 5-2. As Table 5-2 indicates, every performance began with Section A, a slow and metrically free introduction, sung by the soloist without vocal backup; the melody and text of this section were based upon the chorus of "Jesus Loves Me," the well-known nineteenth century hymn by William B. Bradbury. After this unmetered introduction, the remainder of the Choir Selection was metered (in common time), and stylistically much closer to the "contemporary gospel" sound.

¹¹This selection was performed in two of the twelve services analyzed in Appendix A (Service Nos. 9 and 11).

Table 5-2
A Comparison of Three Choir Performances of
"Yes, Jesus Loves Me"

<i>Date</i>	<i>Form:</i>	<i>Duration:</i>
<i>June 30:</i>	A A B C 2x C 25x B [rit]* 8x B [rit]	<i>8'55"+1'50"</i>
<i>Sept. 29:</i>	A A A B C C 25x B 16x B [rit]	<i>12'55"</i>
<i>Nov. 11:</i>	A A B C C 31x B [rit]	<i>9'20"</i>

*[rit] or ritardando indicates a point of closure; on June 30th the choir selection came to a close, but was resumed moments later, a relatively common practice at Alpha and Omega.

In each of the three performances considered, Section A was repeated at least once, and was followed by a single statement of a contrasting B Section, which was fourteen measures long and featured both soloist and choir. After only one statement of Section B, every performance continued with a third element--Section C, which, like Section B, featured both soloist and choir and was also fourteen measures long. Unlike Section B, however, Section C incorporated two statements of the four measure vamp (x), which figured prominently in the balance of the Choir Selection (Section C = 6mm + 4mm + 4mm). The vamp is transcribed below in Figure 5-1.

Although each performance proceeded similarly through the first statement of C, greater variability characterized the rest of the Selection. Consider the form of each performance as diagrammed in Table 5-2. The constituent elements--Sections A, B, C, and the four measure vamp--can be seen as building blocks, and although there are clearly rules of order which must be followed in performance, there are certain points at which the

Figure 5-1
The Additive Vamp from "Yes, Jesus Loves Me"

♩ = 106

S
Yes Je-sus loves me for the Bi-ble tells me so -

A
They are weak but He is strong. They are weak but He is strong.

T
-ble tells me so - for the Bi-ble tells me so - For the Bi-

musical form can be "stretched." Thus, for example, only the June 30th performance featured two statements of the vamp before Section C was restated. Because Section C incorporates the vamp, the choir director, with a rolling motion of her hands, could indicate to the choir that the vamp was to be continued. Later in that same performance, after the selection had seemingly ended and while the congregation was still applauding, the instrumental musicians revitalized their accompaniment, and the choir resumed the Selection, starting with the vamp. This resumption of an apparently concluded selection is yet another way of "stretching" a choir selection.

Further evidence of musical flexibility, not suggested in the above diagram, can be found in the vamp sections of this Selection. The vamp sections feature what Horace Clarence Boyer has called an "additive vamp" (1985:137). Thus, the vamp sections were not only characterized by variable length (that is,

a variable number of statements of the vamp, as indicated in the above diagram), but also by variable building blocks (not evident from the above diagram). The four measure vamp is heard first at the end of Section C, with the text, "They are weak but He is strong" (x2). In the vamp segment of Section C, this melody and text become identified with the altos. In the actual vamp (x), all three parts sing different melodies and texts: the altos sing, "They are weak but He is strong" (x2), while the sopranos sing, "Yes, Jesus loves me, for the Bible tells me so," and the tenors declaim, "For the Bible tells me so" (x2) (see Figure 5-1). In all three performances, the altos began the vamp section, continuing their two-measure ostinato figure, heard twice in each statement of the vamp. Soon, the choir director signaled the sopranos, and then the tenors, to sing their respective parts alone. Eventually, the three contrapuntal lines were joined, to the enthusiastic response of the congregation. This "additive vamp" entails the dissecting of the counterpoint, featuring individual lines alone, in pairs, and altogether; in this fashion, the vamp may be repeated and varied at the will of the choir director. The practice of isolating and combining parts was a common feature of choir selections at Alpha and Omega, and added another dimension of flexibility to these selections.

As suggested above, some rules of order clearly govern each choir selection, and presumably some formal relationships are invariable. In the case of "Yes Jesus Loves Me," for example,

the selection will apparently always begin with Section A, end with Section B, and contain no more than two statements of Section C. It further appears that multiple statements of the vamp will precede all but the first statement of Section B. Yet, the selection is conceived in such a way that it can be "stretched" or "compacted" at will. When asked about musical flexibility in the choir selections, one choir member and frequent lead singer explained,

"you can do it [i.e., a vamp or section] as many or few times [as you like]. You don't never do it [the Selection] totally the same way. If the Spirit comes in and takes control, [we take] one part and we do it over and over again." (I.8.18.92)

Nowhere was this variable repetition so apparent as in the vamp sections.

During the performance of choir selections, it was the choir director who took charge of the vocal and the instrumental musicians, and determined the course of improvisation. With numerous cues, the director could indicate that a modulation would take place, that a vamp was to be prolonged, or that the sopranos, for example, would sing alone or in combination with another part. A rolling of the director's hands was a signal to prolong a vamp or repeat a section. Often, with arm outstretched and fingers counting down with the passage of each vamp--4-3-2-1--the director counted out the number of vamp statements left before movement to the next section. When the director wished to isolate the individual vocal sections of a harmonized vamp, one finger was used to indicate that the sopranos were to sing their

line alone, while two or three fingers indicated that the altos or tenors respectively were to sing their parts alone. Using these signals, the director was able to signal her intentions to the choir and musicians, thereby controlling the direction that a selection would take. Thus, improvisation within the overall structure of a choir selection was in the hands of the choir director.

The sound of Alpha and Omega's instrumental shout music, like that of the choir selections, was contemporary and upbeat. Shout music was the very fast, ostinato-based instrumental music which accompanied spirit-filled dancing and occasional trance-like states. This music invariably featured both keyboard/s and drums, was quite loud, and was characterized by tempos ranging from about 160 to 184 beats per minute, as well as by rapid handclapping between the beats. A survey of the twelve services analyzed in Appendix A indicates that some services contained as little as one or two minutes of this Spirit-filled activity (see Service Nos. 5, 8, and 11), while others featured approximately an hour of this music (Service Nos. 3 and 10).

The chief musician, from his position at the organ or keyboard synthesizer, always appeared to lead this shout music, though the drummer played a very essential role as well. Many different keyboard ostinatos were employed in this shout music, and sometimes the motives had a distinctly secular character. On one occasion, the minister of music, for example, criticized "the worldly spirit" that sometimes invaded worship in the form of

secular musical scraps:

A lot of times... in our churches, there's a lot of worldly spirit that comes out in our music, and it comes from the musicians,... because that's what's in them.... And a lot of times you're not aware of that.... A classic example of that is... that we could be in... maybe the height of the service, and somebody [would] stop playing the music and start playing "Mickey Mouse" in a fast tempo, and you never catch it and people shouting all across the church on "Mickey Mouse," or something that simple (May 29, 1991).

Though I found no evidence of "Mickey Mouse" scraps being played in worship, Figure 5-2 illustrates two ostinatos that were briefly employed by the keyboardist on November 24, 1991. The first provides some idea of the short, repetitive scraps that usually characterized shout music, while the second, longer ostinato gives some example of the "worldly spirit" to which the minister of music was alluding.¹² When questioned about the

Figure 5-2
Two Keyboard Ostinatos Employed in Shout Music
(November 24, 1991)



different types of music employed in worship, shout music was generally the last type of music which congregants thought about,

¹²A variant of this second ostinato is recognized by the name of "Tequila" and carries a clearly secular connotation.

but, as the aforementioned data clearly indicate, it constituted a very important component of some worship services at Alpha and Omega.

IV. The Possibility of Tune Families: Three Samples

In classifying Alpha and Omega's congregational songs, I observed that some songs are almost melodically identical to others in the repertoire. In certain cases, this similarity is so striking as to prompt questions concerning the nature of the "piece." For example, are Alpha and Omega's shouts, the aforementioned Type B congregational songs, to be considered discrete pieces, or are they really just different texts sung to a single tune? When these songs were identified in worship, they were described as "congregational songs," and like other songs in that repertoire (Type A and C songs), they were given distinct titles, usually derived from the first line of the song's text. Church members and musicians, therefore, seemed to view these songs as discrete works.

When confronted with a group of tunes that evidence clear melodic and structural similarity, scholars have speculated about the possibility of a family of related tunes and a common genetic origin (see, for example, Bayard 1950; Nettl 1983; Cowdery 1984, 1990). Focusing on tunes separated from their texts, Samuel P. Bayard contended that the British-American oral song tradition is based upon "a limited number of tunes," and that the wealth of existing variants is the result of "oral transmission and re-

creation" (1950:4-5). In positing a common genetic origin which can account for a large number of variants, Bayard used the concept of a "tune family," which he defined as,

a group of melodies showing basic interrelation by means of constant melodic correspondence, and presumably owing their mutual likeness to descent from a single air that has assumed multiple forms through processes of variation, imitation, and assimilation (1950:33).

More recently, James R. Cowdery has used this concept to account for tune resemblance in Irish traditional music (1984; 1990).

The tune family hypothesis provides a plausible explanation for the melodic similarities found among certain congregational songs sung at Alpha and Omega. The following discussion does not attempt to demonstrate possible tune family origin for *all* of Alpha and Omega's congregational songs, but only to provide evidence that remarkable melodic similarity exists between parts of the song repertoire. Three tune families from the Alpha and Omega congregational song repertoire will be proposed and examined in the following pages. Two are drawn from the Type A congregational song repertoire. The third is probably the repertoire's largest tune family, since it appears to include all of the Alpha and Omega's Type B congregational songs--shouts which are characterized by a uniform structure and close melodic correspondence. Together, these three tune families can be seen to account for many of the congregation's most frequently sung tunes. Curiously, the church's most popular Type A

congregational songs¹³ appeared much more likely to exhibit melodic correspondence with other songs in that repertoire than did those Type A songs which were performed less often. Though a partial explanation might be found in the investigator's greater familiarity with these tunes, another possible explanation is that their melodic similarity actually contributed to their popularity, by reminding members of similar tunes.

In any given worship service, there was a tendency for individuals to introduce tunes with a family resemblance to one which had already been sung in that service. The most common such pairing of related tunes was found with the songs "In the name of Jesus, we have a victory" and "Send down the rain," two of Alpha and Omega's most popular congregational songs. Table 5-1 indicates that the former was sung in six of the twelve services surveyed, while the latter was sung in five. More importantly, the five services were a subset of the six. In other words, in the larger set of twelve services, "Send down the rain" was sung only in those services in which the related tune, "In the name of Jesus, we have a victory," was also performed. A similar, but less striking pairing can be observed between two other related tunes which were also among Alpha and Omega's most popular congregational songs: "Let's go higher in the Lord" and "Victory, victory shall be mine." As Table 5-1 shows, the first was sung in five of the twelve services, while the second was

¹³Table 5-1 indicates which songs were performed most often, at least in the twelve services analyzed.

performed in four, but three services included both songs. Therefore, in the sample of twelve services, "Victory, victory shall be mine" was performed in only one service which did not also contain "Let's go higher in the Lord." The most plausible explanation, it seems, is that members, having sung one song, were reminded of the related tune as the result of melodic similarities between the two songs.

Nettl has used the concept of "density" to describe the extent to which pieces in a repertoire, or variants in a tune family, resemble one another (1983:195). If the correspondence between units or variants is quite close, the repertoire or family can be described as "dense." A dense tune family, Nettl explains, "has variants that are very similar to each other, and its closest neighbor-variants are almost identical" (1983:195). Using this concept, each of the three tune families that are here examined might be described as dense, since the variants in each family are nearly identical.

Tune Family No. 1

Tune Family No. 1 includes at least three of the congregational songs that were most popular at Alpha and Omega. The three variants were clearly viewed by church members as three different songs: "Let's go higher in the Lord," "Victory, victory shall be mine," and "He didn't have to do it, but He did." The first two songs were favorites of the congregation, sung respectively at five and four of the twelve services surveyed (see Table 5-1). Though the text of the third song was a very

common source of formulaic expressions at Alpha and Omega, present in almost every service, the song itself was sung in only one of the twelve services analyzed in Appendix A.

Transcriptions of these three congregational songs are contained in Appendix A, and Figure 5-3 provides a phrase by phrase comparison of the three melodies. The "tune," as

Figure 5-3
Tune Family No. 1: Melodic Correspondence among Three Variants
a. "Let's go higher in the Lord"
b. "Victory, victory shall be mine"
c. "He didn't have to do it but He did"

a. Let's go higher in the Lord...

b. Victory Victory shall be mine...

c. He didn't have to do it but He did...

represented in each of these three variants, has four two-measure phrases in common time, a range of a major sixth (from the dominant up to the mediant), and is pentatonic, using the pitches c, d, e, g, and a. In each variant, the first, second, and fourth phrases cadence on the downbeat after a single measure, while the third phrase is textually more expansive and does not cadence until the third or fourth beat of the next measure. The final of each respective phrase is constant from one variant to the next. The first, third, and fourth phrases of each variant cadence on the tonic, while the second phrase always cadences on the supertonic. As Figure 5-3 shows, the first half of the tune (i.e., phrases one and two) is almost identical in each of the three variants, and though some variation can be seen in phrases three and four of the different variants, the key structural pitches remain the same, with both phrases always moving from the mediant down to the tonic.

The melodic correspondence among these three congregational songs is too striking to be ignored, and the tune family hypothesis provides a credible explanation. These three different songs can be viewed as variants of a single melody. Presumably at one time there was a single tune which, through oral transmission and re-creation, spawned these three variants. It is entirely possible, moreover, that this hypothetical tune was not associated with any of the texts from the above three songs.

Tune Family No. 2

Melodic correspondence was noted among other Type A congregational songs as well. One of the most obvious cases is that found between the tunes of "Send down the rain" and "In the name of Jesus... we have a victory." Though the first of these songs is only half as long as the second, its melody can be found embedded in that of the second (see Figure 5-4). The first six measures, together with the final two measure cadence of "In the name of Jesus..." correspond very closely to the melody of "Send down the rain." As described above, the phenomenon is very similar to what Nettl has dubbed "The 'Top of Old Smoky' Effect" (1983:108). The longer of these songs, "In the name of Jesus...", consists of four phrases (A A' B B'), and "Send down the rain" is a variant of its truncated first half with a cadence affixed (A'' A'''). The foregoing examples illustrate that several of the most frequently sung Type A congregational songs at Alpha and Omega can be viewed as variants of two basic tune families.

Tune Family No. 3

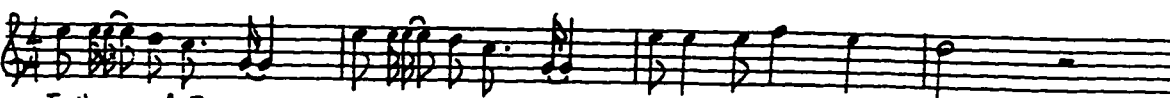
A third tune family can account for an even greater segment of Alpha and Omega's congregational song repertoire, since all of the Type B congregational songs appear to be variants of a single tune--a call-and-response "shout." The basic structure of this shout (the Type B congregational song), although examined earlier in this chapter, will be reviewed here. The four measure shout consists of two phrases of equal length, each containing a solo

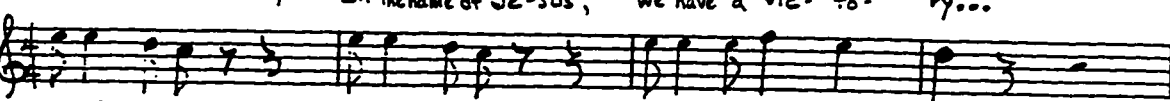
Figure 5-4

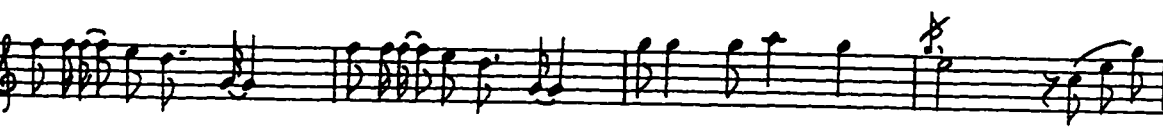
Tune Family No. 2: Melodic Correspondence between Two Variants

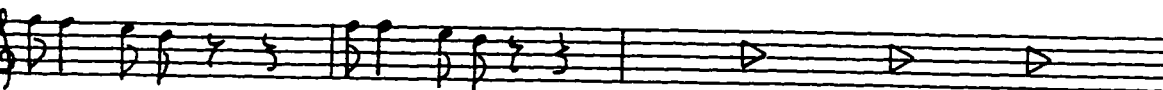
a. "In the name of Jesus... we have a victory"

b. "Send down the rain"

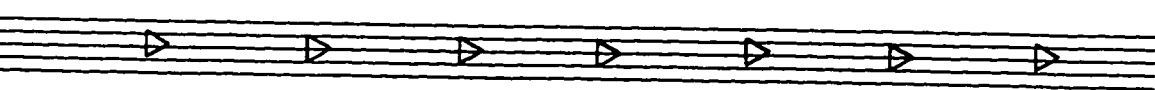
a.  In the name of Je-sus, In the name of Je-sus, we have a vic-to-ry...

b.  Send down the rain, Send down the rain, Send down the lat-ter rain...

a. 

b. 

a. 

b. 

a. 

b. 

call and group response. The melodic direction of the congregational response, which ascends to the mediant at the close of the first phrase and descends to the tonic at the end of the second, imparts an antecedent and consequent character to the two phrases. Unlike other congregational songs, which usually employed the major mode, the call-and-response shouts at Alpha and Omega always utilized the minor mode. The analysis in Figure 5-5 compares four call-and-response shouts: three of the most frequently sung Type B congregational songs from Alpha and Omega --"I get joy," "If you call on Jesus," and "Praise the Lord, everybody"--and a call-and-response shout that was recorded by Rev. Leora Ross and the Church of the Living God Jubilee Singers in 1927.¹⁴

Each of these tunes is characterized by a four-measure stanza, use of the minor mode, call-and-response alternation, and organization into antecedent and consequent phrases. Beyond this basic correspondence, the most striking similarity is that found among the response patterns. The congregational responses in each of these four tunes employ only two important structural pitches: the tonic and the mediant. The response of the antecedent phrases is always characterized by movement from the tonic to the mediant, while that of the consequent phrase is distinguished by movement from the mediant to the tonic. The range of the response is always quite narrow, usually traversing

¹⁴This transcription was made from a recorded reissue on *Songsters and Saints: Vocal Traditions on Race Records*, Vol. 1 (Matchbox Records, MSEX 2001/2002).

Figure 5-5

Tune Family No. 3: Melodic Correspondence among Four Variants

- a. "I get joy" (Alpha and Omega)
- b. "If you call on Jesus" (Alpha and Omega)
- c. "Praise the Lord, everybody" (Alpha and Omega)
- d. "He's a prayer hearin' Savior" (recorded in 1927)

The image displays four musical systems, each representing a different variant of a tune family. Each system consists of two staves: a vocal line (labeled 'L') and a piano accompaniment line (labeled 'C').

- Variant a:** The vocal line begins with the lyrics "I get joy when I think about" and continues with "what He's done for me." The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes.
- Variant b:** The vocal line begins with "If you call on Je- sus-," followed by "He will answer prayer." The piano accompaniment is simpler, using quarter and eighth notes.
- Variant c:** The vocal line begins with "Praise the Lord ev-ery bo- dy," followed by "Praise the Lord." The piano accompaniment is very simple, using quarter notes.
- Variant d:** The vocal line begins with "He'll hear you when you're calling" followed by "He will answer prayer." The piano accompaniment is more complex, featuring sixteenth and thirty-second notes.

only a minor third, though sometimes, when the tonic is preceded by the flatted subtonic, as in "I get joy," covering a perfect fourth. Rhythmically, all of the responses begin either exactly

on the downbeat or with a slight anticipation of the downbeat. In these several ways, the congregational responses of all four tunes exhibit a great degree of melodic and structural consistency.

Although the resemblance among the solo call patterns is not nearly so evident as that among the congregational responses, some structural likeness does exist among the calls. All four calls begin with a long anacrusis, between a quarter note and a dotted quarter note in length. Except for "If you call on Jesus," each solo call exhibits a descending melodic contour, and even "If you call on Jesus" descends until the penultimate note. The pitches of the tonic triad, moreover, constitute key structural pitches in each solo call of all four tunes, and the tonic pitch itself figures importantly in every cadence. In considering both the calls and responses of each tune, it is clear that there exists a strong melodic and structural coherence among these several tunes.

The similarities among these four variants seem to indicate a common genetic origin. The three Alpha and Omega variants, each of which was subjected to great variation even within a single performance, are indeed so similar that one might wonder whether they are not in fact the same tune. The inclusion of a 1920s shout in this comparison, moreover, adds a historical dimension to the analysis, suggesting that the three shouts from Alpha and Omega are clearly related to this much earlier variant.

Structural and melodic similarities among tunes in the

congregational song repertoire at Alpha and Omega suggest that the large number of songs in the repertoire are in fact reducible to a much smaller number of melodic types. The foregoing discussion has outlined three such groups of tunes which evidence clear tune family resemblance. Because of the striking similarities among certain congregational songs, it is logical to suppose that these groups of tunes might have each evolved from a single parent tune. The hypothesis that there exists a number of tune families within Alpha and Omega's congregational song repertoire is therefore clearly supported by the present data.

V. Links Between Music and Church Constituency

Since its founding in 1979, Alpha and Omega has been perceived by the local religious community as a church with an unusually young constituency. Pastor McGhee and his congregation were not only content with this image, but actively cultivated it. The pastor, for example, regularly described Alpha and Omega as a church which is "ninety percent young people" (I.11.15.89; I.3.12.92). During worship, he sometimes told the story of Alpha and Omega's evolution from a group of "young people" who persisted against almost insurmountable odds:

we had a number of young people that was still in high school and grammar school. And the other community... of churches and ministers, they just said, 'well, he won't be around long.' No way he will survive with those people, young people that are just in high school. Nobody could give anything... (October 7, 1990).

According to Pastor McGhee and church members, the local religious community had long seen Alpha and Omega as "a bunch of

kids playing rock and roll," and had described its style of worship as "a little too worldly" (I.6.11.92; I.8.18.92). The congregation seemed almost to delight in this image, and took pride in its ability to attract young people, especially in an age when, as one member explained, "a lot of young people aren't into the church" (I.8.18.92). Members often acknowledged that the pastor had a special commitment to the church's youth. Young people appear to have been drawn to Alpha and Omega not only by the pastor's concern, but also by his youthful, stylish, and hip persona.

Alpha and Omega promoted itself as a vibrant and youthful community, and the church choir, the Voices of Pentecost, was one of the primary means of advancing this image. The youthfulness of the choir conveyed the message that Alpha and Omega was a church with a young constituency, and when Pastor McGhee introduced or applauded the Voices of Pentecost, he often referred to them collectively as "these wonderful young people" (Service No. 9; September 29, 1991). When my research began in 1989, the choir contained several members over the age of forty, but by 1992, its constituency had become much more homogenous--almost entirely young people between the ages of thirteen and thirty-five. One member observed that, "there used to be older people in the choir," but these members left voluntarily, having decided to "let 'em [the young people] have their time" (I.7.10.92). In February, 1992, the Voices of Pentecost and several other local African-American church choirs sang at

Parkland College's Third Annual Gospel Concert. While some of the other choirs included young children, as well as individuals in their sixties and seventies, Alpha and Omega's choir was uniformly young and conspicuously homogeneous. The youthful image conveyed by the Voices of Pentecost strengthened Alpha and Omega's reputation as a church with a special appeal to young people, and the choir's repertoire reinforced the image of a church which is vibrant and upbeat--"the happening church."

One member described Alpha and Omega as "a young church, more upbeat, more modernized" than others in town (I.8.18.92), and acknowledged that music had played a key role in establishing that reputation. As mentioned earlier, the chief musician observed that Alpha and Omega's choir was "more like Chicago choirs," performing a much more contemporary repertoire than that of other local churches. He further noted that when the choir performed in Chicago, the Chicago choirs were surprised that Alpha and Omega's repertoire was so current (March 3, 1991).

Church members asserted that Alpha and Omega's youthful choir and its contemporary repertoire were responsible for attracting people to the church, and therefore believed that the choir was an important missionary tool with great potential for community outreach. One lead singer explained that a particular selection, "Just when I need Him most," which the Voices of Pentecost sang at Parkland College's Gospel Concert, actually drew a woman to the church. This same individual spoke of the power of music, and the choir in particular, to attract new

members:

Sometimes people don't come to church for the Word, but for the music. Song, music, is what draws [some] people. They're not coming for the Word. It was the choir that drew them to the church. A lot of people have joined the church that way--through the choir (I.8.18.92).

Similarly, Pastor McGhee explained that music played a very important role in the contemporary church and acknowledged the importance of "a good choir":

You know music is a universal tool... that just about everybody can relate too. It's a setting that relaxes people, gets 'em involved, regardless of their race, regardless of their financial status. All that's gone. They get involved.... When the music is goin', everybody's just flowin' with that. I found that... many people who've come have just forgotten about their problems, for that given time at least, while they was involved with the music. Music, it's a ministry that's so unique that it just doesn't stop to look at financial status, racial status; it just doesn't look at that; it just goes right to the heart of that person, and they begin to flow.... *I can recall years back where the music was not, I should say, the dominant factor. It wasn't. But now, years gone by, almost now if you don't have that music goin' or if you don't have a good choir per se, peoples just don't seem to flow in. And when I say 'flow in,' [I mean] to get involved and feel that they've been lifted when they come. And I've found that to be a very important factor, especially in our church. You know, it's one of the key things there. And that's why I work with it as I do. I make a special effort to get to the rehearsals or what have you, because I know it's an important factor, and being an important factor, things could take place and people could be discouraged along that line if it's not monitored correctly, you see. So I'm seeing, in my day that the music is playing a very very important role, throughout the services and our worship (I.11.15.89; emphasis added).*

Pastor McGhee and church members were thus clearly aware of the potential of music to both attract new members and to retain the church's existing members.

It was suggested above that Alpha and Omega's musical repertoire was composed of two main strata: (1) the older, more

traditional music which was exemplified by the congregational songs and hymns, and (2) the modern, contemporary repertoire, represented by the choir selections and shout music. Conscious of this historical variety within Alpha and Omega's repertoire, church officials strove to appeal to a broad base of musical tastes. The reasons for this apparently deliberate attempt to both satisfy and attract a membership with diverse musical tastes are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7, which examines the social and musical change which resulted from Alpha and Omega's move to a larger and more modern sanctuary. The balance of this chapter, however, begins to examine the pastor and congregation's attitude toward the church's varied musical repertoire.

It seems clear that church officials felt a responsibility to satisfy their members' very diverse musical needs, and at the same time, to attract new members from a broad cross-section of the local community. In interviews with the pastor and minister of music, both endorsed musical variety as a means of appealing to a broad constituency. Even though the church was actively promulgating its image as a vibrant and youthful community, it sought to retain its current older members and to attract a much broader base of support. Musical diversity seemed to be the key to a broad constituency. As Pastor McGhee explained, "That's like music in a social arena: if you want to... make it, you need... variety,... because you want to appeal to a mass"

(I.2.18.92). The minister of music echoed this belief:

Everybody's not interested in the same kind of music. Why not cater to a larger mass? ...Musically you meet the needs

of everyone if you have the ability to be diverse. You should be diverse (I.1.26.91).

He suggested, moreover, that Alpha and Omega's musical repertoire was too limited: "We have the potential to be versatile, but we limit ourselves.... We're geared to more of an upbeat tempo" (I.1.26.91). He added that some slower music, like hymns, and maybe even some "memorized sheet music material" would enable Alpha and Omega to appeal to a larger audience. "This diversity, he contended, "would attract many more people" (I.1.26.91).

Though the choir never started singing from sheet music, a single hymn was added to the Sunday morning order of worship shortly after the move across town.

Both Pastor McGhee and the minister of music maintained that musical variety was essential in attracting a broad constituency, and their view was corroborated by two of Alpha and Omega's "older" congregants--members in their thirties and forties. For example, Sister Hawkins,¹⁵ a choir member who was especially fond of some of the "old songs" like hymns, said, "If you want a hymn, call Sister Hawkins; I'm so old. Leave it to Sister Hawkins to sing those old songs" (I.8.18.92). Though basically content with Alpha and Omega's music, claiming it has "lots of good beats," another congregant lamented the gradual disappearance of "older type songs, like 'Walk with me Lord'": "I hate to see them totally gone" (I.7.10.92). By keeping some of the "old songs," like hymns and congregational songs, in the

¹⁵A pseudonym has been used here to preserve the character of her statement.

church repertoire, Alpha and Omega was better able to meet the musical needs of members such as these. If Alpha and Omega was truly seeking "to appeal to a mass," as the pastor suggested, then surely it could not afford to ignore the musical tastes of members in their thirties and forties, since these were usually the members best able to contribute financial support to the church.

Musical style and repertoire played a key role in conveying Alpha and Omega's youthful image. The upbeat tempos, electric sound, loud volumes, and covers of the latest gospel releases all served to communicate that Alpha and Omega was attuned to the tastes and needs of young people. It was noted that the church's repertoire contained two principal strata: a traditional repertoire and a very contemporary one. While the youthful, contemporary musical stratum was clearly important when the research for this project began, it became even more important after the church's move to a larger and more visible sanctuary. Nonetheless, in an effort to attract a broader, more diverse constituency after the move, the church added a hymn to its order of worship and continued to include the traditional congregational songs in its services. While Alpha and Omega was clearly intent upon cultivating its youthful image, church leadership was also aware that diversity was essential in appealing to a broader audience.

Chapter 6

"But Wake Me Up": Language at Alpha and Omega

Some of you all go to places [where]
they don't like you to open your mouth and say nothing!
You afraid it's gonna wake the preacher up
if you say 'Hallelujah!' But wake me up!
Say, 'Hallelujah.' [C: Hallelujah]
--Pastor McGhee

I. The Specialized and Formulaic Character of Language at Alpha and Omega

Identity within a religious community is established not only through a common set of beliefs and ritual practices, but also through the use of a specialized vocabulary. William J. Samarin has observed that the language of religion "serves in a number of ways to set it apart from the profane or nonreligious" (1976:6). Within the domain of the sacred, language further serves to mark the boundaries of various religious communities; and the multiplicity of linguistic practices can be used to differentiate, for example, Muslim from Christian and Catholic from Baptist, as well as to distinguish among different types of Pentecostals.

Titon and Lawless have discussed the specialized vocabularies of two different congregations, Titon among Baptists in Virginia, and Lawless at a Oneness Pentecostal church in Indiana (Titon 1988:195; Lawless 1988:530). In an earlier study, Barre Toelken examined the topic of esoteric vocabularies in a secular context, among loggers in the Pacific Northwest (1979:52-

56). The specialized language at Alpha and Omega includes a wealth of general terms that are used in many Christian denominations, terms like "baptism," "sermon," "preaching," "praise," "prayer," "the Lord," and "the devil." Other terminology employed at Alpha and Omega--words like "witness," "testify," "altar call," and "healing"--is encountered in a smaller subset of Christian denominations, while terms like "latter rain," "speaking in tongues," and "holy dance" are employed by even fewer congregations and denominations. Moreover, every congregation imbues its vocabulary with specialized meaning. At Alpha and Omega, for example, the word "baptism" connotes immersion baptism "in the name of Jesus," as well as the belief that baptism "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost" will not result in salvation. As explained in Chapter 3, words like "power," "death," and "the devil" also have very specialized meanings at Alpha and Omega, meanings which result in large part from the pastor's understanding and discussion of these terms.

Although different religious denominations, and even individual churches, might be identified through their use of specialized vocabularies, many denominations share common speech patterns and large portions of their esoteric vocabulary. Titon, struck by the similarity of linguistic practices between the Virginia Baptist congregation of his own research and the Indiana Pentecostal congregation which was the subject of Lawless' study, commented that, "it is remarkable that certain of the esoteric

terms and their meanings are identical or nearly so in the two contexts" (1988:193). These similarities, he suggested,

are most likely the result of the strains of pietism, holiness, and dispensational premillennialism in both congregations. Congruence of practice--prayers in which everyone prays spontaneously and aloud as he or she is moved by the Spirit, for example--may result from the legacy of revivalism, as well as from borrowings from other church practices (1988:194).

The specialized vocabulary and ritual practices which I observed at Alpha and Omega are, by extension, strikingly similar to those found among both Titon's Virginia Baptists and Lawless' Indiana Pentecostals, as well as to those encountered in the congregations studied by other researchers (see McIntyre 1976; Paris 1982; and Williams 1974). The Mass Prayer at Alpha and Omega, for example, wherein congregants are invited to the altar to pray together, corresponds closely to the simultaneous, spirit-filled prayer described by Titon in the above quote (see also Lawless 1980:8). The several categories of religious speech which Lawless enumerated in her ethnography of communication in a Oneness Pentecostal church are similar or nearly identical to the variety of speech events encountered at both Alpha and Omega and at Titon's Baptist church.

Lawless observed that Pentecostals almost always described their speech acts in terms of gerunds--active verbs ending in "ing" (1980:6-7, 11-12; 1988:67-69). The primary speech events which she observed included greeting, singing, praying, testifying, preaching, shouting, and speaking in tongues. These several forms of communication correspond very closely to those

which I observed at Alpha and Omega. Lawless also noted that almost all of these speech acts entailed some use of verbal formulas (1980:7; 1988:87-93).

Numerous other authors have pointed to the formulaic quality of language in religious practice, and their discussions have most often focused upon sermons and testimonies (see Clements 1980:28-29; Davis 1985; Rosenberg 1970, 1988; Titon 1988:282-287). From the greetings which preceded the service to the benediction which concluded it, formulaic speech patterns permeated virtually all facets of worship at Alpha and Omega.

Few, if any, formulas were more common than the expression, "Praise the Lord." When greeting another member or a visitor before or after the worship service, a congregant usually said, "Praise the Lord" or simply, "Praise Him," and the person being greeted generally responded in kind. The expression "Praise the Lord" was also employed very frequently in testimonies, usually at the outset of a testimony.

A detailed analysis of two Sunday morning testimony services provides more data concerning the use of formulaic language at Alpha and Omega, including the phrase, "Praise the Lord."¹ The services occurred about four months apart, the first on October 15, 1989, before Alpha and Omega's move to a larger sanctuary, and the second on February 18, 1990, shortly after that move. Fifteen congregants testified in the first of these services,

¹ This data is drawn from this author's unpublished paper entitled, "The Testimony Service in a Black Pentecostal Church" A Study in Change," 1990.

while eleven testified in the second. The twenty-six testimonies varied in length from just seven seconds to over four minutes, with the average testimony lasting one and one-half minutes.

More than half of the testimonies (fourteen of twenty-six) began with a formulaic statement of praise, the kernel of which was the expression "Praise the Lord." Table 6-1 indicates the extent to which several common formulaic expressions were present within the two testimony services analyzed, and illustrates the frequency with which the expression "Praise the Lord" was used to start testimonies. As Table 6-1 indicates, the expression "Praise the Lord" usually occurred as part of a two or threefold statement, with some variation in text or delivery in the repetition, as in the following examples:

Praise the Lord, saints. [C: Praise the Lord]
Praise the Lord again. [C: Praise the Lord]
(10-15-89; Testimony No. 2)

Praise the Lord, saints. [C: Praise the Lord]
Praise the Lord, saints. [C: Praise the Lord]
PRAISE the LORD, saints. [C: Praise the Lord]
(2-18-90; Testimony No. 1)

In this second example, the speaker varied her delivery in each statement, first by prolonging the duration of the word "Lord," and then by raising the volume on the words "praise" and "Lord."

Other variations included the following:

Praise the Lord [C: Praise the Lord]
Praise the Lord, everybody. [C: Praise the Lord]
(2-18-90; Testimony No. 8)

Praise the Lord, everybody. [C: Praise the Lord]
Praise the Lord again. [C: Praise the Lord]
(2-18-90; Testimony No. 10)

The foregoing examples provide some indication of the wealth of

Table 6-1
Occurrence of Selected Formulaic Speech Patterns
in Two Testimony Services

Sunday, October 15, 1989

Testimony number:

Verbal Formula:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
"Praise the Lord" ²	x2	x2	x3					x3	x2	x2	x2		x3		
"Pray my strength in the Lord"			x				x3							x	
"Pray for me"	x							x				x	x		
"I give honor to God who's the head of my life"										x					
"When I think of the goodness of Jesus and all He's done for me, my soul cries out, 'Hallelujah, Praise God for savin' me'"															xv

Sunday, February 18, 1989

Testimony number:

Verbal formula	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
"Praise the Lord"	x3		x2				x	x2	x2	x2	
"Pray my strength in the Lord"				x				x	x		
"Pray for me"											
"I give honor to God who's the head of my life"	x			x	xv					xv	x
"When I think of the goodness of Jesus and all He's done for me, my soul cries out, 'Hallelujah, Praise God for savin' me'"											

KEY: x: indicates occurrence of formula
 xv: indicates varied occurrence of formula
 x2: indicates two appearances of formula
 x3: indicates three appearances of formula

²The formulaic expression "Praise the Lord" was actually heard much more often than this table would suggest, as the above chart lists only instances when the formula was used to open a testimony.

potential variations and combinations on a single phrase. Formulaic expressions like "Praise the Lord" also surfaced in song texts. Although the relationship between spoken formulas and song texts is considered in a later section of this chapter, it should be noted that a kind of cross-fertilization seems to occur. On the one hand, songwriters often employ spoken formulas when constructing song texts; and on the other hand, simple and repetitive song texts regularly enter the pool of spoken formulaic expressions. The spoken expression "Praise the Lord," for example, serves as the basic text of a call-and-response shout, wherein the lead singer's call is echoed by the congregation. Each short stanza features a twofold statement, as follows,

[L:] Praise the Lord, Everybody [C:] Praise the Lord
[L:] Praise the Lord, Everybody [C:] Praise the Lord
(November 4, 1990; See Appendix B for transcription)

While the expression "Praise the Lord" was very common and could be heard literally hundreds of times in a single worship service, other formulas like "Thank you, Jesus," "Thank you, Lord," and "In the name of Jesus" were also very widely used. The aforementioned analysis of two Testimony Services reveals that congregants used certain other longer expressions as formulaic building blocks in their construction of testimonies. It was rather common, for example, to conclude a testimony with the words, "Pray my strength in the Lord," and as Table 6-1 shows, six of the twenty-six testimonies ended with this expression, while yet another three concluded with the shorter

plea, "Pray for me."

Another longer formula, which tended to appear near the beginning of a testimony when employed, was the statement, "I give honor to God who's the head of my life," a formula which was used in six of the twenty-six testimonies. Table 6-1 includes a rather lengthy formula (When I think of the goodness of Jesus..."), which is in fact the text of a favorite congregational song. The spoken formulaic use of this song text is considered later in this chapter, in the section devoted to the interrelation between song texts and spoken formulas.

Although the scope of Table 6-1 is limited to a handful of formulas, the chart clearly indicates that some testimonies contained at least three or four of these common formulas, while others included none. Closer examination of the testimonies themselves revealed that some testimonies were highly formulaic, while others employed little use of spoken formulas. In a study of Pentecostal testimonies in northeast Arkansas, William Clements observed that the great majority of testimonies-- "roughly ninety percent"--were what he classified as the "straight testimony" (1980:28-29). He described the "straight testimony" as "a short, impersonal statement," adding that this type of testimony is "*highly formularized* and virtually interchangeable from person to person" (1980:28-29). Among Virginia Baptists, Titon observed that "roughly two-thirds" of the testimonies were of this type (1988:360). Though formulaic expression was clearly a very important component of testimonies

at Alpha and Omega, it would seem that the proportion of "straight testimonies" there was even smaller than that found by Titon--perhaps only about one-third. Only five of the twenty-six Alpha and Omega testimonies analyzed lasted less than thirty seconds, while fifteen were longer than one minute, and over half of the testimonies included some personal reminiscence.³

The following two testimonies, each short and formulaic, are of the type that Clements has identified as "straight testimonies":

Praise the Lord, saints. [C: Praise the Lord]
Praise the Lord again. [C: Praise the Lord]
I'm SO glad I'm here {anyhow?}.
SO glad I'm here.
SO glad I'm here.
I'm here in Jesus' name. [C: applause; F: Thank you Jesus;
F: Hallelujah]

(February 18, 1990; Testimony No. 3)

Praise the Lord [C: Praise the Lord]
Praise the Lord [C: Praise the Lord]
Praise the Lord EVERYbody [C: Praise the Lord]
Amazing Grace,
how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me.
I said, aMAZing grace,
how SWEET the sound
that SAVED a wretch like me.
Pray for me. [C: applause]

(October 15, 1989; Testimony No. 8)

In fact, both testimonies are constituted entirely of formulas. Each begins with an invocation to the congregation to "Praise the Lord," and the second concludes with the formula "Pray for me," cited in Table 6-1. The intervening material in each case consists of song text. The words "So glad I'm here.... I'm here

³ The "personal reminiscence testimony" is another type of testimony which Clements has identified (1980:29).

in Jesus' name" were drawn from a Choir Selection which features textual repetition analogous to that used in the testimony. In the second testimony, the speaker quotes from "Amazing Grace," a tune familiar to congregants, but one which I never heard sung at Alpha and Omega.

Short scriptural passages constituted yet another type of formulaic expression encountered in testimonies. In some Praise Services, the testimony leaders specifically solicited "scripture testimonies." On November 4, 1990, for example, one testimony leader opened the Praise Service to any congregant wishing to testify with a passage of scripture. Because of the brevity of these testimonies, eighteen people had an opportunity to testify in a very short Testimony Service.⁴ More often, though, short passages of scripture were used as building blocks in the construction of lengthier testimonies. Quoted in full, the following testimony is composed entirely of formulaic building blocks, as it begins with a threefold invocation to "Praise the Lord" and continues with two Biblical verses (in each of the following testimonies, Biblical quotes or paraphrases are placed in italics):

Praise the Lord, everybody. [C: Praise the Lord]
Praise the Lord, EVERYbody. [C: Praise the Lord]
Praise the Lord, EVERYbody. [C: Praise the Lord]
the LORD is MY shepherd; [F: Yeah]
and I SHALL not want. [F: Yeah]

⁴At seventeen minutes in length, not only was this the shortest of the Testimony Services analyzed in Appendix A (same length as Service No. 5), but it also contained the greatest number of testimonies (the same number as in Service No. 4; see Table 7-1).

{In this house?} [F: Yeah!]
I will *BLESS* the Lord, [C: Yeah!]
at ALL times [C:Yeah!]
and His PRAISES [C: applause; exclamations]
will be in my mouth [C: applause; exclamations]
(October 15, 1989; Testimony No. 4; alludes to Psalm
23:1 and Psalm 34:1 respectively)

Because the following Biblical quotes were embedded in much longer testimonies, the entire testimonies are not reproduced; however, the context of each scripture passage is provided by citing portions of the testimony which surround that Biblical allusion:

Praise the Lord everybody. [C: Praise the Lord]
Praise the Lord again. [C: Praise the Lord]
And I do honor the spirit of Christ, our Pastor and his wife, and all the saints. I DO praise the Lord. For I was glad when they said unto me, let us go, into the house of the Lord, Hallelujah.
Truly, if I was to sing a song this morning, it would be, "What a friend we have in Jesus."...
(October 15, 1989; Testimony No. 11; alludes to Psalm 122:1)

This is, *this is the day that the Lord has made;*
Let us, let US [F: Alright]
rejoice and be glad in it.
Because He has done GREAT things for US, [F: Oh yeah]...
(October 15, 1989; Testimony No. 14; alludes to Psalm 118:24)

...Givin' honor to God who is the head of my life, the Pastor in his absence, deacons, ministers, evangelists, {saints?}, and friends.
I will bless the Lord at all times and His praises shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord. The humble shall hear the {Lord?} and be glad.
ALL MAGNIFY THE LORD WITH ME
AND LET US exALT His name together....
(February 18, 1990; Testimony Leader; alludes to Psalm 34:1-2)

The Biblical verses quoted in the foregoing testimony excerpts were among those scriptures most frequently employed in

testimonies at Alpha and Omega. In fact, these scriptural passages were uttered so often that they had become an integral part of the repository of common verbal formulas.

An important attribute of the specialized language used at Alpha and Omega was its formulaic character. The extensive use of a body of standard verbal formulas not only facilitated public speaking but also marked the language as that of a community with a common mode of speaking. A small percentage of speech events, like pre-service greetings and some testimonies, were highly formulaic, but most featured only scattered use of formulas. Later in this chapter, two other aspects of the formulaic character of speech are considered--first, the pastor's use of formulaic speech, and second, the adoption of certain song texts as spoken formulas.

II. The Role of Participation and Performance in Worship

Richard Bauman has noted that "there are societies in which speaking may truly be said to constitute a cultural focus," observing that ethnographers of speaking have been particularly interested in studying certain groups (1974:145). At Alpha and Omega, and generally in Pentecostal communities, speaking is very highly valued, as evidenced by the number of studies which examine Pentecostal verbal art (see Clements 1980; Lawless 1988, 1980; Malpezzi and Clements 1985).

The value attached to speaking at Alpha and Omega was clearly related to the emphasis placed upon active congregational

involvement. At Alpha and Omega, it was considered imperative that members of the congregation become actively involved in worship. A primary objective of worship, discussed in Chapter 4, was to go "higher in the Lord," a process which necessitates active congregational involvement. Near the beginning of one service, for example, the minister in charge implored those present to actively participate in worship, that they might reap the benefits of that involvement:

We're here to have a good time and to uplift the name of the Lord.... You won't get anything out of this service unless you put something in. We ask that you put in the service what you want to get out. God will richly reward you and he will richly bless you (October 28, 1990).

There were a multitude of ways in which a congregant could "put something in," or contribute to, a worship service, and the following discussion enumerates and explores a variety of modes of congregational involvement, both verbal and non verbal.

While every act of congregational involvement is personal, some actions, such as singing lead, testifying, and preaching are more highly exposed than others. The range of congregational involvement might be plotted along a continuum: certain modes of participation are more individual and exposed, and others are more collective and anonymous. Singing lead, preaching, testifying, and dancing, for example, are among the more exposed contributions, while applauding, praising, singing in the background, making short verbal interjections (like "Preach, Pastor, preach" or "I know that's right"), and responding (as directed by the pastor) are more collective, and therefore

anonymous. Although congregational involvement could take many shapes at Alpha and Omega, all of these activities were perceived by members as types of praise, as ways of uplifting the name of the Lord.

Elsewhere in this work, attention is given to the more prominent forms of involvement at Alpha and Omega, like singing, testifying, and preaching. One goal of this section is to draw attention to other, less high-profile forms of congregational involvement. After a discussion of some ways in which congregational involvement is solicited or encouraged, four of the less prominent modes of active participation will be considered: (1) spontaneous interjections, (2) applause, (3) call and response exchanges between the pastor and congregation, and (4) mass prayer. The remainder of this section then explores the ways in which ritual actions like singing, testifying, praying, and preaching constitute types of performance.

At Alpha and Omega, the speakers who implored congregants to become more actively involved in the service were those individuals in charge of worship--the pastor, testimony leaders, and worship leader. During worship, these individuals often stressed the fact that an Apostolic or Pentecostal church is a Spirit-filled church, a church where members can shout, dance, and run down the aisles. During one sermon, for example, Pastor McGhee explained that the true or "right church" is not dull but full of action, one in which "you've got to participate":

...You've gotta have some action.
The crowd goes where the action is.

Somebody say, 'Amen.'
And, and the one thing about it: ain't no better place to be
than around Jesus,
because, there's always some action around Jesus.
That's why I'm saved today, because there's action, Yeah,
around Jesus.
Somebody say, "hallelujah."
My God. That's why I'm in the church today.
Because there's action.
And anybody tell you the church is dull, that means they're
not in the church.
They're not in the church.
I said, 'Lord, help their unbelief.'
Somebody tell you, 'Well, I'm gettin' tired of going to
church. It's so dull. It's so dull.'
I said, 'Well, you're not goin' to the right church.' [F: I
know that's right]
And then if you're going to the right church, you've got to
participate.
(Sunday morning, October 15, 1989; emphasis added)

During another service, he told members,

You don't have to feel embarrassed if you throw your hands
up.
You don't have to feel embarrassed if you jump up and down
in here.
You don't have to feel embarrassed for runnin' down the
aisles.
You just givin' God the praise He deserves.
Every praise! Come on and put your hands together and
praise Him. [C: applause]
(Sunday morning, November 24, 1991)

On still another Sunday, he jokingly chided those churches where
"they don't like you to open your mouth," and explained that
Alpha and Omega was a place where members could shout if they
wanted to:

Some of you all go to places [where] they don't like you
to open your mouth
and say nothing!
You afraid it's gonna wake the preacher up if you say
'Hallelujah!'
But wake me up!
Say, 'Hallelujah.' [C: Hallelujah]
My lips shall praise Him.
Let me get excited if I want to.
That's why we don't get out of church till late....

You got people that God's done something for.
You got people that God's made ways +HAH+
when they knew they couldn't get a way made.
You got people that God has taken off of drugs.
You got people that God stopped pushin' dope.
Let these folks shout if they want to.
(Sunday morning, October 22, 1989)

All of the foregoing entreaties were aimed at encouraging members to give enthusiastic and uninhibited praise to the Lord.

Frequently reminding the congregation of the fervor which surrounds ball games in our culture, Pastor McGhee compared that fervor with the excitement which Pentecostals ought to have for Jesus. On October 22, 1989, for example, he questioned why individuals are more reserved in praising the Lord than at a ball game:

I look at folks who say they got Jesus--they say, they say
they got Him,
can't get excited.
I say, you can't get excited,
but you let the ball game get you more excited than Jesus.

This analogy between church and a ball game was mentioned by one of Lawless' informants, suggesting that it might be one standard Pentecostal defense of emotional religious behavior (Lawless 1988:43).

During his sermons, and at other times, Pastor McGhee employed a variety of short formulaic expressions which were designed to elicit greater congregational response. The film title, "Say Amen, Somebody," is itself one such expression and has helped to popularize the image of an African-American preacher who interacts with his congregation. As Pastor McGhee's delivery became more impassioned and Spirit-filled during the

course of his sermon, it was expected that the congregation would likewise become more animated, applauding in agreement or lending encouragement with verbal interjections like "Preach, Pastor" and "I know that's right." In an effort to rouse greater response, Pastor McGhee routinely drew from a wealth of formulaic expressions. The following are but a sampling of these short expressions, taken from two different sermons, as indicated below:

You all ain't likin' what I'm sayin'.

You're not hearin' me.

You all ain't gonna hear me.

Can I get an amen, here?

You all not hearin' me.

Are you listening to me?

(Sunday morning, November 5, 1989)

I wish I had one amen on that.

Shout 'amen,' somebody.

I ain't gettin' no amens here.

Give me a small amen somebody.

(Sunday evening broadcast, March 8, 1992)

With prodding like this, the congregation was frequently invited to get more involved in worship. During the pastor's sermon, only certain modes of spontaneous active participation were open to congregants, the most appropriate being verbal interjections and applause.

Spontaneous verbal interjections were appropriate at almost any time during worship at Alpha and Omega. In transcripts of testimonies and sermon excerpts in this volume, those verbal interjections which are clearly audible on the fieldwork recordings have been transcribed in brackets, and the gender of the speaker has been indicated with an "F" or "M"; if the congregation or even several individuals responded in kind, a "C"

has been used. At times, so many different exclamations are heard simultaneously that it is difficult or impossible to discern the text of any of the interjections.

Verbal interjections tended to be highly formulaic, and a small set of very short, formulaic expressions constituted the vast majority of these spontaneous remarks. These expressions, moreover, were highly affirmative in character, lending encouragement to the speaker and spurring him to greater heights. Drawn from transcriptions of two testimony services, the following spontaneous expressions are those that were most often employed by congregants:

"Thank you, Jesus"; "Thank you, Lord"; "Yes!"; "Yeah!"; "Praise Him"; "Alright"; "Glory"; "Hey!"; "Hallelujah"; "Well" (with a rising pitch inflection); "Amen"; "Alright now"; "That's alright"; "That's right"; "I know that's right" (October 15, 1989 and February 18, 1990)

These short expressions were also sometimes used in combination with one another, as for example, "Well, alright now" or "Alright, Praise Him." On occasion, verbal interjections were slightly longer, as "You better testify, Sister." The interjections heard during sermons were similar to those encountered in testimony services, with the addition of some specific exclamations related to the speech act itself, most notably, "Preach, Pastor" and "Amen, Pastor."

A second mode of active participation was handclapping. At times, handclapping was heard within the context of a steady pulse, while at other times the clapped patterns were random and irregular. The former will here be termed "rhythmic clapping,"

and the latter labelled as "applause." While rhythmic clapping occurred only in the presence of instrumental and/or vocal music, applause could occur at virtually any time during the worship service. Rhythmic clapping at Alpha and Omega was used to enhance both vocal and instrumental music, and could accompany congregational songs, hymns, and choir selections, as well as the music that fueled "spirit-filled" praise and dance. Occasionally, in the absence of a drummer, rhythmic clapping was used as a drum substitute, but more often than not, it complemented the drumming.

The clapped accompaniment to congregational songs, hymns, and choir selections generally occurred on the weak beats or between the beats. Since these tunes were generally in common time, congregants clapped on beats two and four, or on the eight notes between the beats. Although triple meter was employed less frequently, it also usually featured clapping on the weak beats--on beats two and three. Rhythmic clapping was handled somewhat differently in the fast, instrumental music which accompanied spirit-filled praise and dance. Despite the very fast tempos--often faster than 180 beats per minute--clapping occurred between the beats rather than on the weak beats, and gave the music an even greater sense of rhythmic vitality and propulsion.

Not all clapping at Alpha and Omega provided rhythmic accompaniment. Some clapping could be better described as "applause," and church leaders often equated this type of clapping with praise. Such applause or praise was sometimes

solicited by the pastor or person in charge, while at other times it occurred spontaneously in response to a testimony, a song, a choir selection, or to some remark by the pastor or another worship leader. In fact, applause was used to punctuate almost every speech event at Alpha and Omega.

Examination of a few instances in which applause was solicited helps to show that it was frequently regarded as a form of praise, and further illustrates the context in which it occurred. Near the beginning of the service on November 5, 1989, immediately after the opening song, the worship leader asked the congregation to praise the Lord with a round of applause, "Let's give the Lord a hand of praise this mornin.'" Similarly, when Pastor McGhee entered the sanctuary on September 29, 1991, with the service well underway, his first words to his congregation were, "Hallelujah, everybody give the Lord a hand of praise," words which were followed by a healthy round of congregational applause. On another occasion, during his sermon, he reminded the congregation that they owed God praise:

...I may not have what you got, but I'm glad to be here....
I should lift my hand up now and give Him praise for where I
am now....
Praise be to God, I'm not what I used to be....
Give God the praise.
Put your hand together and give Him praise.⁵
He's been good to ya.
Put your hand together and give Him praise.
(Sunday, October 28, 1990)

Congregational applause began midway through this entreaty and reached the height of its crescendo shortly after the final line.

⁵Pastor McGhee customarily used the singular of "hand."

More often, however, applause was not solicited, but rather began spontaneously in response to a member's testimony, after a song or choir selection, or in response to something the pastor had said. Just as worship leaders usually described solicited applause as praise, spontaneous applause was also interpreted as praise--not applause in praise of the individual testifying, the pastor, or even the choir, but praise for Jesus. When the congregation applauded after choir selections, Pastor McGhee often subtly reminded the congregation that the applause was for Jesus. As the applause which followed one choir selection died away, for example, he admonished the congregation to "Give *Him* another hand of praise" (October 28, 1990; emphasis added). Similarly, during choir rehearsals, the directors often reminded choir members that they sang not for their own glory but for the greater glory of God.

Though the pastor and worship leaders almost always interpreted applause as praise, applause seemed also to fulfill another function, that of both encouraging and evaluating speakers, singers, and less frequently, instrumentalists. Like spontaneous verbal interjections, applause was always affirmative, indicating agreement or satisfaction with the words, delivery, or style of the speaker or singer. While it could be expected that every choir selection and most testimonies would be acknowledged with some applause, certain of these invariably were received much more enthusiastically than others. Moreover, enthusiastic applause after one testimony might signify something

quite different than similar applause after another testimony; on the one hand, it might indicate that the congregation has been moved by a very expressive and heartfelt testimony, while on the other hand, it might signify the congregation's satisfaction with the courage of a young person who has stood up to testify before the congregation for the first time.

Applause was not the only type of congregational response solicited by the pastor or person in charge. Another mode of active involvement consisted of congregational responses solicited by the worship leader, usually by the pastor. This call-and-response format, which was quite common at Alpha and Omega, is analogous to the printed responsorial selections used at other churches. Alpha and Omega, however, employed none of these scripted verbal exchanges, and instead relied entirely upon improvised patterns, patterns which were usually quite formulaic. Because the congregation had no text, the worship leader lined out their text, and these exchanges invariably began with words like, "tell somebody next to ya" or "reach over and tell somebody"--a short formulaic expression which introduced and thereby served to frame the ensuing dialogue.

One such exchange between pastor and congregation began shortly after Pastor McGhee entered the sanctuary on October 15, 1989:

Tell somebody next to ya,
say, 'can't nobody do me like the Lord.' [C: Can't nobody do
me like the Lord]
Say, 'you don't know like I know,' [C: You don't know like I
know]
'what the Lord has done {for?}' [C: What the Lord has done]

Say, 'you don't know like I know,' [C: You don't know like I
know]
'what the LORD has done for ME.' [C: What the LORD has done
for ME]
Say, 'you don't know like I know,' [C: You don't know like I
know]
what the Lord has done for me. OO! AAH! [after this, renewed
instrumental emphasis; music foregrounded]

With familiar, formulaic text drawn from two congregational songs, this highly repetitious exchange, like so many of these responses, was designed to motivate the congregation to praise the Lord. Moments later, after repeating each of the foregoing phrases, Pastor McGhee exclaimed, "It's TIME to GIVE GOD PRAISE here, HEY! HEY!"

While many of these exchanges were aimed at arousing the congregation to praise, many others served to justify or defend the unbridled, spirit-filled worship encountered at Alpha and Omega. Although this type of justification was standard in almost every service, it was particularly abundant in the very emotional Service No. 3. After twenty-eight minutes of spirit-filled dancing and praise, Pastor McGhee began a series of call-and-response exchanges with the congregation, most of which commented upon that very lengthy period of spirit-filled praise.

Tell somebody, next to ya, +HAH+
Say, 'I WANTa sit down, +HAH+ [C: I WANTa sit down,]
But I can't. +HAH+ [C: But I can't.]
I CAN'T! +HAH+ [C: I CAN'T]
The LORD'S +HAH+ [C: The LORD'S]
been GOOD to me.' +HAH+ [C: been GOOD to me.]
Somebody say, 'Yeah!' [C: Yeah!]
Somebody say, 'Yeah!' [C: Yeah!]. . . .

. . . But I came to TELL ya toDAY, +HAH+
Somebody got a right. +HAH+
Help me, Holy Ghost. +HAH+
SOMEBODY, you got a right! +HAH+

I said, you got a right, +HAH+
to praise HIM anyway. +HAH+
Reach over and tell somebody, +HAH+
say, 'I don't know what you're lookin' at me for;' +HAH+
[C: I don't know what you're lookin' at me for;]
I got a right to praise Him.' +HAH+ [C: I got a right to
praise Him.]
Say, 'I don't know what you watchin' me for; +HAH+ [C: I
don't know what you watchin' me for;]
I got a right to praise Him.' +HAH+ [C: I got a right to
praise Him.]
Yeah!
Somebody say, 'Yeah!' [C: Yeah!]
Oh Yeah! (October 29, 1989)

Often, as in the above examples, the exchange between the pastor and congregation proceeded very quickly, featuring overlapping call and response, with the pastor's next "call" beginning well before the congregation had completed its previous response.

Call-and-response formulas frequently occurred during the altar call or at the end of the offering, and the most common was the text, "I receive my blessing that makes me rich and adds no sorrow." Several variants of this call and response pattern are given below:

Now I want everybody in the line⁶, raise both your hands up and say,
'Now Lord,' [C: Now Lord,]
'I receive' [C: I receive]
'my blessing,' [C: my blessing,]
'that makes me rich' [C: that makes me rich]
'and adds no sorrow.' [C: and adds no sorrow.]
[Pastor McGhee; during Altar Call, October 21, 1990]

'Now Lord,' [C: Now Lord,]
'I prepare myself' [C: I prepare myself]
'to receive my blessing,' [C: to receive my blessing,]
'that makes me rich' [C: that makes me rich]
'and adds no sorrow,' [C: and adds no sorrow,]
[Pastor McGhee; at beginning of offering, November 10, 1991]

⁶ The pastor was here referring to the prayer line.

Lift you voice, say,
'In Jesus' name,' [C: In Jesus' name,]
'I receive my blessing' [C: I receive my blessing]
'that makes me rich' [C: that makes me rich]
'and adds no sorrow.' [C: and adds no sorrow.]
'In Jesus' name,' [C: In Jesus' name,]
'Amen.' [C: Amen.]
[Pastor McGhee; at the conclusion of the offering,
November 4, 1990]

I want you to touch yourself and say,
'I am blessed,' [C: I am blessed,]
'because God has blessed me.' [C: because God has blessed
me.]
{and tell Satan,?} 'I receive my blessing, O Lord.' [C: I
receive my blessing, O Lord.]
Touch yourself, say, 'that makes me rich.' [C: that makes me
rich.]
Say, 'I am' [C: I am]
'a prosperous person.' [C: a prosperous person.]
[Pastor McGhee; at the conclusion of the offering;
October 28, 1990]

The preceding excerpts not only illustrate a variety of ways in which the pastor can enlist the active participation of the congregation, but further underscore the importance of formulaic language at Alpha and Omega.

The last mode of active participation to be considered is the mass prayer. This prayer occurred very near the beginning of every Sunday morning worship service, when everyone in the sanctuary was invited to approach the altar for a group prayer. Because attendance was still quite sparse so early in the service, the supplicants usually numbered no more than fifteen or twenty. After a congregational song with members gathered at the altar, the worship leader usually began to pray, and the other members gathered at the altar joined in, with each congregant offering up his own personal prayer--aloud and simultaneously. Only the occasional word or phrase could be deciphered. Having

begun the prayer, the worship leader, who was positioned closest to the microphone, usually reduced her volume, seeking not to overpower the prayers of the other supplicants. With its apparent effort not to foreground the prayer of any one individual, the mass prayer differed from almost all other speech events at Alpha and Omega, where the spoken or sung behavior of one individual was usually foregrounded. Despite this difference, the mass prayer was an important vehicle for active congregational involvement.

The previous discussion of active participation has raised the issues of performance and audience evaluation, and the balance of this section briefly considers this aspect of worship. Recent ethnographies of religious communities have explored the role of performance in religious practice. Ethnographers like Lawless, Titon, and Clements have called attention not only to the rich oral traditions of Pentecostals and rural Baptist communities, but have also emphasized the important role of performance in worship (Lawless 1988:xi, 70-72; Titon 1988:7-10; Clements 1980:21-23). If, as Bauman asserts, "the nature and extent of the realm of performance and verbal art... will vary from speech community to speech community" (Bauman 1977:13), then Alpha and Omega would appear to be one of those communities in which these qualities are very highly valued. From the choreographed entrances of the Voices of Pentecost and its rousing choir selections to the very dynamic and dramatic sermons of Pastor McGhee, the Alpha and Omega community is one which

clearly focuses great attention on performance and verbal artistry.

In his discussion of verbal art as performance, Bauman has concluded that "accountability to an audience" constitutes an essential component of performance:

Fundamentally, performance as a mode of spoken verbal communication consists in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence. This competence rests on the knowledge and ability to speak in socially appropriate ways (1977:11).

Lawless, in her examination of discourse at a Pentecostal church, has presented a very thorough discussion of Pentecostal verbal communication, classifying discourse according to the various types of verbal action (like greeting, singing, testifying, and preaching, and the altar call), as well as according to the audience and mode of evaluation for each of these actions (1988:62-63, 71). She explains that each of these verbal actions is evaluated, and that the means of evaluation are variable: applause, shouting, formulaic responses, or even dancing in the spirit (71).

The principal verbal actions encountered at Alpha and Omega were greeting, singing (of congregational songs, choir selections, and the occasional solo requested by the pastor), praying, testifying, preaching, and altar call; other verbal actions--like procuring an offering, introducing a choir selection, making announcements, and leading the congregation in praise--might also be included. Each of these activities, even reading the announcements, constituted a type of performance and

was subject to audience evaluation.⁷ The modes of evaluation employed at Alpha and Omega were similar to those described by Lawless, but appeared to be more varied than those which she has observed in Indiana. For example, appropriate responses to testimonies at Alpha and Omega included not only those listed by Lawless--"formulaic responses and shouting, [and] dancing in spirit" (1988:71)--but also applause, speaking in tongues, and keyboard and drum responses.

Many of the modes of active involvement discussed above were not only participatory but also evaluative: applause, formulaic responses, dancing in the spirit, and speaking in tongues. The exact significance of applause at Alpha and Omega was sometimes difficult to determine. Was the applause after choir selections rendered "in appreciation of the choir," as one member explained, or was it to be considered as praise to the Lord? It appears that both interpretations are correct. The congregation always responded to choir selections with applause, and when that applause died down, Pastor McGhee often encouraged a second round of applause. On some occasions, he admonished the congregation to give the Lord another hand of applause, while at other times,

⁷In her study, Lawless has suggested that group prayer was the only component of worship that was not subject to evaluation (1988:72). At Alpha and Omega, while group prayer (that is, the Mass Prayer) might not have been evaluated in exactly the same manner as other speech events, it nonetheless was still subject to critical evaluation. For example, the worship leader appeared to judge its success, in part at least, by the number of congregants who had come to the altar for prayer. Its success was further judged by the extent to which this mass prayer became spirit-filled.

he directed that applause to the choir. The following instructions, all given immediately after the performance of choir selections, indicate this variability:

"Let's give *them* a hand. Alright, give 'em another hand. God bless 'em." (October 22, 1989; emphasis added)

"Amen, put your hands together and praise *Him*." (October 29, 1989; emphasis added)

"Give *Him* another hand of praise" (October 28, 1990; emphasis added).

"Amen, give the Voices another hand. They're singin' under the unction of the Holy Ghost." (September 29, 1991; emphasis added)

Even though the pastor often directed the congregation to applaud the Lord after choir selections, there was clearly a correlation between the excellence--or at least, enthusiasm--of the choir selection and the amount of applause which followed that selection. Because of this correlation, it seems clear that applause did function as one important way for the congregation to evaluate the choir's performance. More generally, applause was used to evaluate the communicative competence of virtually all verbal performance at Alpha and Omega: testifying, praying, singing, preaching, and even the reading of the announcements.

The formulaic interjections that permeate the Pentecostal worship service provide an important means of evaluating the competence of speakers. As suggested above, all forms of evaluation at Alpha and Omega--whether applause, formulaic responses, shouting, or dancing in the spirit--were essentially positive. Alpha and Omega was a supportive community in which all verbal performances, the more and less competent alike, were enthusiastically received, and it was only the degree of this

congregational response that varied proportionately to the speaker's competence. One member, for example, was inclined to deliver testimonies that were sometimes not appropriate. Whereas "testimonies should be to glorify God or what He has done in your life" (I.11.15.89), this member's testimonies were routinely despondent and included a litany of personal and financial problems. The congregation knew that this member was basically well-meaning, and received the testimonies warmly, but never enthusiastically.

In many ways, Pastor McGhee served as the measure of verbal competence at Alpha and Omega. Those members who had come from other churches almost always cited Pastor McGhee as their reason for joining Alpha and Omega, and most were attracted by the dynamic quality of his preaching. To a great extent, it was through his performance that Pastor McGhee had been able to increase Alpha and Omega's membership from one to over 350; through his performance, he had been responsible for the conversion and baptism of hundreds, even convincing other preachers that baptism "in the name of Jesus" was essential for their salvation; and through his performance, he had come to be viewed by members as a "true prophet" and "spokesman for the King of Kings." Bauman has discussed the "power inherent in performance to transform social structures" (1977:45), citing the example of comedian Dick Gregory, who, as a youth, used performance to "creat[e] a social structure with himself at the center" (44). The accomplishment of Pastor McGhee, the founder

and charismatic leader of a successful church, is analogous, since he too has created a thriving social structure with himself as undisputed center.

III. The Sermons of Pastor Edward T. McGhee

No study of language in the Pentecostal church can ignore the importance of the sermon. The spontaneous chanted sermon constitutes one of the richest forms of verbal art in African-American culture, and in recent years has been the subject of much attention (Rosenberg 1970a, 1970b, 1988; Davis 1985; Spencer 1987; Titon 1989). In his important work on "the art of the American folk preacher," Rosenberg applied Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord's theories of oral composition to the spontaneous chanted sermons of American preachers⁸ (1970a; 1988). Lord's study of Yugoslavian epic singers determined that oral improvisation was aided by the extensive use of verbal formulas (1960). Rosenberg has noted that chanted sermons differ from the Yugoslavian epics in two important ways: they are not narrative and they are "less metrically regular" (1988:5). Despite these differences, he concluded that the preachers, like the epic singers, drew from a pool of formulaic expressions, and that the mode of composition employed by these preachers was analogous to that described by Parry and Lord (1970a). In his study of "the

⁸The oral tradition of the spontaneously chanted sermon has its roots in the southern United States. Although some white preachers employ this style, it is most often found among black preachers (Rosenberg 1988:33-34).

performed African-American Sermon," Gerald Davis also investigated the use of verbal formulas in chanted sermons, but his primary objective was determining aesthetic criteria, those used in determining the merit or success of a sermon (1985). More recently, Titon has published the text for twenty of the Reverend C. L. Franklin's sermons, along with a brief commentary and life history of Franklin (1989). The following discussion considers the sermons of Alpha and Omega's Pastor McGhee, beginning with a general description of the style and format of those sermons and then focusing upon the language employed in the sermons--particularly, the use of repetition, parallelisms, and verbal formulas.

Because they share a common oral tradition, the sermons of Pastor McGhee and those of preachers like the Reverends C. L. Franklin and Rubin Lacy (Rosenberg 1988) are similar in a variety of ways. Performed without manuscript, the sermons usually begin with prose text which is delivered in a more or less normal speaking voice; at some point, however, this spoken style yields to a chanted delivery, with a tonal center and some suggestion of metric regularity. Rosenberg has labelled this type of sermon the "spontaneous" chanted sermon (1970b). Though useful, this term is somewhat misleading here, since most of Pastor McGhee's sermons were neither entirely spontaneous nor chanted throughout. Because the sermons of the Reverend C. L. Franklin were prepared quite carefully, Titon preferred the word "extemporaneous" rather than "spontaneous" (1989:42).

Pastor McGhee described some of his sermons as "well-prepared," but noted that others were the result of "on the spot revelation...", where [though he had a message prepared] the Holy Ghost has moved in a different area" or direction (I.11.15.89). Although Pastor McGhee's delivery appeared to be totally spontaneous, he admitted that he regularly carried some notes to the pulpit, surreptitiously placing them on the podium to help remind him of certain points or quotes. His sermons had a highly extemporaneous character, and his dependance on the notes was minimal, since he frequently moved away from the podium for long stretches of time.

Pastor McGhee's sermons were based upon scripture readings, and he usually began each sermon by asking the congregation to open its Bibles, as, for example, "I want you, if you will, to open your Bible to Genesis, Chapter 37" (November 5, 1989). The passage explored during a sermon was usually about ten verses in length, but could vary from only a couple verses to over thirty. The scripture⁹ was usually read not by the pastor, but by a designated member, one who worked closely with Pastor McGhee and who generally performed this task for at least several months at a time. Cued by Pastor McGhee, that member read the scripture piecemeal, often only a phrase at a time, while the pastor explored the meaning of each phrase, annotating and elaborating--

⁹The King James Version was employed at Alpha and Omega.

sometimes at very great length--on each bit of text.¹⁰ In this way, the scripture text permeated the sermon and provided the basic structure around which the sermon was constructed.

As the sermon progressed, Pastor McGhee's spoken delivery became louder and more animated, ultimately giving way to a delivery which was mostly chanted, with occasional bits of spoken or sung text. Titon, in his description of Reverend C. L. Franklin's sermons, has used the term "whooping" to refer to this chanted and sung delivery (1989:43). At Alpha and Omega, the volume of amplification was usually raised during the course of the sermon, causing the sermon's climax to be the loudest segment of the entire worship service--louder than the choir and church band combined. The pastor's altered delivery, analogous to the heightened sense of spirituality which results as worship leaders spur the congregation to go "higher in the Lord," appeared to symbolize a gradual infusion of the Holy Spirit. Usually within one minute after the pastor began his chanted delivery, the keyboardist, who had left the organ at the outset of the sermon, returned to the keyboard, located the chant's tonal center, and began responding to the pastor's text. On some occasions, the drummer also returned to his drum set--usually much later than the organist--and complemented the pastor and keyboardist with drum and cymbal rolls, crashes, and flourishes.

¹⁰ A legacy of New England Puritanism, this structure is called "text and context" (or "text-context-application") form, since it begins with a scripture reading and is followed by both an explanation and an application to the congregants' lives (Rosenberg 1988:19,42).

The charts in Appendix A indicate keyboard and drum activity in each of twelve services, showing the presence or absence of these during the sermons. In Service Nos. 4, 5, 6, and 8, the keyboard alone responded to the pastor's text, entering at some midpoint, never aided by drums. The sermons in Service Nos. 1, 11, and 12, featured both keyboard and drum accompaniment, with the drum entering somewhat later than the keyboard. Only two of the remaining services included sermons; both keyboards and drums were employed from the start of the sermon in Service No. 2, and no instrumentation was present in the sermon from Service No. 7. This variability is consistent with the ritual flexibility discussed in Chapter 8.

The use of textual repetition figured importantly in the verbal art of Pastor McGhee, and the following discussion considers three types of repetitious, formulaic language encountered in his sermons: (1) the textual "hook," designed to encapsulate a sermon's message in a single phrase; (2) textual parallelism; and (3) formulaic expressions which were an integral part of his vocabulary, surfacing from one sermon to the next. Most sermons featured a short, prominent, recurring expression--or "hook"--which served to unify the sermon, as well as to summarize its content, thereby helping the audience to understand and to retain the essential message. Usually, Pastor McGhee would ask the congregation to repeat this phrase after him, sometimes dozens of times in a single sermon. The hook in Service No. 5, for example, was, "I believe in miracles," a

statement which the pastor repeated often during the course of his forty-one minute sermon, sometimes asking his audience to repeat the words after him. The following two excerpts suggest the frequency with which a hook might be used:

...I believe in miracles.
Though it might be tight now, but I believe in miracles.
Though the situation may look out of hand now, I believe in miracles.
Though the thing may seem to be far out of our reach, I believe in miracles.
I know that the odds are stacked against me, but I believe in miracles.
I know that when I view myself in the eyes of society, I'm a failure, but I believe in miracles....
Say, 'I believe in miracles.' [C: I believe in miracles.]
If you have a son on drugs, say, 'I believe in miracles.'
[C: I believe in miracles.]
If you have a daughter that's hooked on the street, say, 'I believe in miracles.' [C: I believe in miracles.]
If you got a husband that just won't act right, say, 'I believe in miracles.' [C: I believe in miracles.]
Put your hands together and praise Him.
(Pastor McGhee; October 7, 1990)

Most sermons emphasized a short recurring theme such as this. Other examples of textual hooks used by Pastor McGhee were "I'm thirsty and I need a drink" (Service No. 2); "I'm a dreamer" (Service No. 4); "Refuse to eat the king's meat" (Service No. 6); "What about now?" (Service No. 7); and "I'm goin' over on the other side" (Service No. 8).

The excerpt cited above demonstrates not only the repetitive use of a short hook, but also parallelism. The use of parallel syntactic structures, encountered in each half of the above sermon excerpt, was a common feature of Pastor McGhee's sermons, as well as those of other African-American preachers (see Titon 1989:43; Rosenberg 1970a:15-16). These parallelisms, often quite

lengthy, constituted a significant portion of the chanted segment of sermons. Two such parallelisms from a single sermon are given below. The first excerpt represents a complete unit, beginning and ending with the applause which punctuates segments of the sermon. The parallelism, presented in context, constitutes a subset of this larger unit. The excerpt begins with a male church member (M) reading from the scriptural passage upon which the sermon is based--II Chronicles 32:9-21:

P: And verse 20 and 21 +HAH+
Hallelujah!
Come on,
And,¹¹
M: *And for this cause*
P: for this cause
M: *Hezekiah the king,*
P: Hezekiah the king,
M: *and the prophet Isaiah*
P: and the prophet, what?
M: Isaiah
P: Now the king and the prophet got together. +HAH+
And you see what God does; +HAH+
you see, you need a prophet +HAH+
and you need a king. +HAH+
That's why preachers today, +HAH+
when you are a man or woman of God +HAH+
that is called to preach the gospel, +HAH+
you got to not only +HAH+
be just a preacher, +HAH+
but you've gotta be a king, and a prophet. +HAH+
You gotta be a preacher and a prophet. +HAH+
You gotta stand in the gap +HAH+
and declare +HAH+
the word of the Lord. +HAH+
You gotta stand there when it looks like there is no hope.
+HAH+
You gotta stand there when it looks like the devil +HAH+
and all of his {imps?} +HAH+
can begin to overtake ya. +HAH+
You gotta stand there +HAH+
and say, I +HAH+
don't believe +HAH+

¹¹The "and" is a verbal cue to the reader to continue.

that the Lord brought me this way +HAH+
 just for to leave me. +HAH+
 You gotta stand there +HAH+
 and declare +HAH+
 that the earth is the Lord's +HAH+
 and the fullness thereof. +HAH+
 You gotta stand there +HAH+
 and declare +HAH+
 that weeping may +HAH+
 endure for a night +HAH+
 but joy +HAH+
 will come in the mornin'. +HAH+
 You gotta stand there, +HAH+
 let the tears run down your cheek. +HAH+
 But you gotta stand there, +HAH+
 and say, after while +HAH+
 everything +HAH+
 gonna be alright. +HAH+
 You gotta stand there +HAH+
 and look the devil eyeball to eyeball, +HAH+
 and tell the devil, +HAH+
 I ain't givin' up, +HAH+
 I ain't givin' up, +HAH+
 and I'm sure not quitting. +HAH+
 You gotta stand there +HAH+
 and know +HAH+
 that my good days +HAH+
 outweigh my bad days. +HAH+
 You gotta stand there +HAH+
 and say I'm lookin' {unto?} Jesus +HAH+
 who is +HAH+
 the {author and ?} of my faith. +HAH+
 Put your hand together and praise Him {anyway?}.
 [C: applause]
 (April 28, 1991; the scripture reading is italicized, and
 the parallelism is boldfaced.)

Ten of the above sentences begin with the expression, "you gotta stand there," and several of these are completed with formulas that Pastor McGhee employed quite regularly--as, for example, "Weeping my endure for a night, but joy will come in the morning" and "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." Both of these texts are quotes from the Psalms--the first from Psalm 30:5 and the second from Psalm 24:1. This sermon excerpt, then, is highly formulaic, from its parallel syntactic structure to its

incorporation of formulaic passages from scripture, ones which Pastor McGhee frequently inserted in his sermons.

Many other parallelisms were employed in the chanted portion of this sermon, and one other example, drawn from later in the sermon, will help to better illustrate this technique.

I'm satisfied with Jesus +HAH+
I said I'm satisfied with Jesus +HAH+
I'm satisfied +HAH+
because He is +HAH+
the lily of the valley. +HAH+
I'm satisfied +HAH+
with Jesus +HAH+
because He is +HAH+
the bright and morning star. +HAH+
I'm satisfied +HAH+
with Jesus +HAH+
because He is +HAH+
the rose of Sharon. +HAH+
I'm satisfied with Jesus +HAH+
because He is +HAH+
the {oshanna?} +HAH+
I'm satisfied with Jesus +HAH+
because He is +HAH+
the first and the last. +HAH+
I'm satisfied with Jesus +HAH+
because He's the Alpha +HAH+
He's the Alpha +HAH+
He's the Alpha +HAH+
and Omega. +HAH+
He's the first. +HAH+
He's the first. +HAH+
He is the first. +HAH+
[C: applause]
(April 28, 1991; parallelism boldfaced)

During this excerpt, Pastor McGhee's voice became increasingly louder and more hoarse, until he was literally shouting and the words had become nearly unintelligible. Those segments of the sermon which employed parallelisms were usually among the most rousing, animated, and fever-pitched portions of the sermon. Both of the foregoing excerpts, for example, created great

excitement in the congregation, and each was accompanied by a crescendo of congregational applause and shouting. At the end of each excerpt, only applause and shouting was heard, leaving the pastor with a few moments to anticipate his next volley.

Familiar formulaic expressions constituted a third type of textual repetition found in Pastor McGhee's sermons. These were expressions which the pastor used quite frequently, and together they formed a type of epigrammatic stockpile from which he could draw. Often of Biblical origin, these compact expressions had been tried and tested, and when forcefully articulated, were certain to rouse the congregation. Some of these formulaic passages were encountered in the foregoing discussion of parallelism. Unlike the parallel constructions, however, these were expressions which were used Sunday after Sunday, from one year to the next. Sometimes, they surfaced multiple times within a single sermon.

Instead of cataloging Pastor McGhee's stockpile of expressions, the following discussion examines only two of his most frequently used formulas, considering their content, their use within the pastor's speech, and the extent to which the rhythmic phrasing and pitch contour varied from one occurrence to another. For Parry and Lord, as well as for Rosenberg, metrical consistency was an essential feature of the verbal formula, and Parry defined formula as "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea" (quoted in Lord 1960:30; Rosenberg 1970b:53). In

light of this research, the following discussion examines whether Pastor McGhee's formulas were metrically consistent from one performance to the next, and in addition, if those formulas had been chanted, whether or not the pitch content was consistent from one use to the next.

Though Pastor McGhee employed a wealth of stock epithets, some of these were used more often than others. The following two expressions were among the most commonly used: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy will come in the morning" and "If God be for you, who can be against you. If God be for you, He's more than the whole world against you." The first expression is taken from the Book of Psalms (Psalm 30:5), and at least a portion of the second also appears to be of Biblical origin, for Romans 8:31 includes the words, "If God be for us who can be against us." Rosenberg has noted that the preachers he studied drew many of their formulas from the Bible, and Pastor McGhee was clearly no different in this respect (1988:45). A common theme, that of being downcast or downtrodden, underlies these two formulas, and may help to explain why they carry the emotional power that they do at Alpha and Omega.

The first formula--"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy will come in the morning"--is one which tended to occur at a sermon's most climactic moments. As such, it was usually delivered in a very forceful manner, sometimes with Pastor McGhee shouting hoarsely at the top of his voice. A listener unfamiliar with the biblical verse and with Pastor McGhee's stock formulas

would likely misunderstand at least one or two of the key words.¹² Four different occurrences of this formula are transcribed below. Dynamic and agogic accents are indicated by capitalization and underlining respectively:

SOMething inSIDE of a DREAMer TELLS him +HAH+
that *WEEPIn' MAY* *endURE* for a *NIGHT* +HAH+
but *JOY WILL* come in the mornin'.
(November 5, 1989; heightened speech; not chanted; formula italicized)

I FOUND OUT +HAH+
AFTer aWHILE +HAH+
WEEPIn' MAY +HAH+
endURE for a *NIGHT* +HAH+
but *JOY* +HAH+
I said *JOY* +HAH+
WILL COME in the *MORNin'*.
(November 5, 1989; chanted; formula italicized)

BECAUSE I HEARD the SONGwriter SAID +HAH+
HE MAY NOT COME WHEN YOU CALL Him +HAH+
BUT HE'LL BE ON TIME +HAH+
AND THE WORD SAID +HAH+
WEEPIn' MAY +HAH+
endURE FOR a *NIGHT* +HAH+
but *JOY*¹³ *WILL* come in the mornin'.
(November 4, 1990; heightened speech; not chanted; although the pastor is speaking at the top of his voice, the last four words trail off and are hardly audible; formula italicized)

You gotta STAND THERE +HAH+
and deCLARE +HAH+
that *WEEPIn' MAY* +HAH+
endURE for a *NIGHT* +HAH+
but *JOY* +HAH+
WILL COME in the *MORNin'*. +HAH+
(April 28, 1991; chanted; formula italicized)

These four transcribed excerpts help to indicate the variety of ways in which a single formula can be delivered. Unfortunately,

¹²Its exact text confounded this writer for some time.

¹³It sounds like the pastor said "God" instead of "joy."

they provide only a rough suggestion of the differences, since they fail to indicate pitches or the extent of agogic accent; in the second of the above excerpts, for example, the word 'joy,' when repeated, is sustained for a full two seconds.

On two of the above four occasions, the formula was chanted, and though the other two performances were delivered in a forceful, heightened speech, pitched intonation was not discernible. Examination of multiple occurrences of this formula shows that there was little consistency in meter or pitch contour from one occurrence to the next. In fact, while these deliveries were always highly rhythmic, there was almost never a metric regularity. Occasionally, as in the first excerpt, there is a clear sense of regular pulsation, of equidistant dynamic accents, but it was very short-lived, limited to the four boldfaced syllables in the second line. In short, no great consistency, metric or otherwise, seemed to accompany the several appearances of this formula.

When the "Weeping may endure..." formula was utilized, the text recurred verbatim with each appearance. This was not the case for the second formula to be considered, where the text was varied slightly from use to use. This second formula had two constituent parts, either or both of which could be appropriated by Pastor McGhee when needed. The first part was a question which appears to have been derived from Romans 8:31: "If God be for you, who can be against you?" The second component was a statement which seems to have its roots in oral southern

preaching traditions¹⁴: "If God be for you, He's more than the whole world against you."

The following discussion examines five appearances of this formula, presenting the context in which each was employed. Context reveals that this formula was usually invoked on occasions when Pastor McGhee was talking about being scorned or rejected. On each of the five occasions, this formula was also used to summarize a similar point--namely, as long as God is on your side, it doesn't matter what people think and say about you. This is an important message at Alpha and Omega, and one of which Pentecostals--the "disinherited," "God's peculiar people" (Anderson 1979; Lawless 1988)--often remind themselves.

Like the "weeping may endure..." formula, this formula was usually invoked at some of the most impassioned moments in Pastor McGhee's sermons. Some variant of this formula was often used as an adage at the end of a string of statements to help summarize the pastor's point. This was the case in three of the sermon excerpts transcribed below (October 22, 1989; November 5, 1989; and October 7, 1990).

On November 5, 1989, the complete formula was used at the end of a chanted parallelism, by way of summarizing the content of the foregoing argument. In his sermon for this Sunday, drawn from Genesis 37:1-18, Pastor McGhee talked about "the hated dreamer," using both parts of the formula at the close of one

¹⁴This speculation is based upon the fact that the Reverend Rubin Lacy used a variant of this formula--"if God's for you, He's more than the world against you" (Rosenberg 1988: 272, 274).

brief sermon segment:

Listen here, they SAID this a ABOUT him and they HATE him
the MORE, but the MORE they HATED him +HAH+
My GOD, the BETTER the DREAM got +HAH+
The MORE they disLIKED him +HAH+
The MORE that DREAM BEGIn to COME to be a reality +HAH+
The MORE they disLIKED him, +HAH+
the MORE that DREAM got to be a MOTIVATOR. +HAH+
The MORE they disLIKED him, +HAH+
the MORE that DREAM BUILT his CONFIDENCE. +HAH+
The MORE they DIDn't wanta STAND him, +HAH+
the MORE, the {bro?}¹⁵ that GOD DID for him. +HAH+
The MORE, the MORE, the MORE, +HAH+
he was ELEVATED in his SPIRIT, +HAH+
the MORE he underSTOOD what the BIBLE SAID +HAH+
that *IF GOD BE FOR ya*, +HAH+
then *WHO* can be AGAINST ya; +HAH+
IF GOD BE FOR YOU, +HAH+
He's MORE than the whole world against ya.
Hallelujah. [followed by applause and formulaic
interjections]
(November 5, 1989; chanted; formula italicized)

Replacing the word "God" with "Lord," Pastor McGhee used the
first half of this formula in a similar context in another
sermon:

I USED TO SPEND NIGHTS +HAH+
WORRYING ABOUT WHAT FOLKS SAID ABOUT ME, +HAH+
BUT I AIN'T WORRIED NOW. +HAH+
I'M NOT WORRIED. +HAH+
IF THE LORD BE FOR YOU, +HAH+
THEN WHO CAN BE AGAINST you.
[followed by applause and formulaic interjections]
(October 22, 1989; very loud, heightened speech; formula
italicized)

On the occasion of Alpha and Omega's eleventh year
anniversary, Pastor McGhee invoked another variant of this
formula when describing how members of the Champaign-Urbana
community had predicted that Alpha and Omega would ultimately

¹⁵The pastor seemed to get tongue-tied at this point, using
the next line as a stall tactic.

founder, since its constituency was largely young people who were unable to contribute to the finances of the church. During this sermon, only the first half of the formula was employed, its text altered to first person singular to represent God's voice. The following excerpt was drawn from the beginning of Pastor McGhee's sermon, and was delivered for the most part in a normal speaking voice, though a heightened speech was used for select ideas:

...when we started we only had one person... after that we had a number of young people that was still in high school and grammar school. And the other community of churches and ministers, they said, 'well, he won't be around long; no way he will survive with those people, those young people that are just in high school.' Nobody could give anything. But I beLIEVE in MIRacles. Somebody said it's too straight, and some people, they went back and said we'll NEVER amount to anything. Ah, but I could hear... in my mind, the Lord sayin' '*if I be FOR you, then WHO could be against you.*' (October 7, 1990; formula italicized)

Two other excerpts, both of which employed only the second part of the formula, help to illustrate the amount of variation to which this basic formula was subject. In the second of the following excerpts, this formula was used in conjunction with another biblical verse which was also often used formulaically-- "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" (Psalm 24:1).

But I CAME to TELL the DEVil, +HAH+
You AIN't gonna KEEP me LOOKin' BACK in the PAST. +HAH+
You're not gonna KEEP me wonderin' +HAH+
{even?} WHAT I can MAKE it or NOT
Because I KNOW that *if GOD be FOR me,* +HAH+
He's MORE than the WHOLE world aGAINST me. +HAH+
If GOD said I CAN, +HAH+
I SUREly CAN. +HAH+...
(October 28, 1990; chanted; formula italicized)

PEOPLE CAN'T STAND +HAH+
to FEEL PAIN. +HAH+
THEY CAN'T STAND +HAH+
to HEAR somebody say, NO, YA CAN'T HAVE THIS. +HAH+

THEY CAN'T STAND +HAH+
to be reJECTed. +HAH+
BUT I'M SO GLAD, the BIBLE SAID,
IF GOD BE FOR ya, +HAH+
HE'S MORE than the WORLD aGAINST ya, +HAH+
I HEARD the BIBLE SAID +HAH+
the EARTH IS the LORD'S +HAH+
and the FULLness thereOF +HAH+
(November 10, 1991; very loud, dramatic heightened speech)

Examination of these five excerpts indicates that this formula was subject to considerable variation from use to use: it was sometimes chanted, and sometimes spoken; its text was usually altered with each successive use; and there was little metric consistency evident from one use to another. While these formulas are therefore somewhat different in nature than those examined by Parry and Lord, they clearly constitute a rich and significant facet of Pastor McGhee's verbal art.

IV. The Relationship between Song Texts and Spoken Formulas

Rosenberg has noted that preachers derive some of their formulas from hymns and gospel songs (1988:145). At Alpha and Omega, many of the formulaic expressions which were employed in worship, by both the pastor and by members of the congregation, were also encountered as song texts. Pastor McGhee often acknowledged his indebtedness to song texts by preceding the words of a song with an expression like, "for the songwriter tells us" or "I heard somebody say," as he did on the following two occasions:

For the songwriter tells us that God is sweeter than the
honey in the honeycomb.
(October 22, 1989)

And I heard somebody say, 'when the praises go up, the blessings come down.'
(October 28, 1990)

The text cited on October 28, 1990, is the complete text of a song that was sometimes sung during the offering. While song texts surfaced regularly in the language of Pastor McGhee, they were invoked even more frequently in the language of the congregants.

Song texts served not only to reinforce the specialized Pentecostal language but also--through congregants' repeated exposure to these texts--to facilitate public speaking. This was particularly evident in the Testimony Service portion of Sunday morning worship, when members were given the opportunity to testify to God's goodness. The testimonies of members were solo public performances in which the congregation functioned as audience and evaluator. During these testimonies, members often invoked the words of familiar songs--words which had already been demonstrated effective.

One of the song texts most often quoted in spoken testimony was that of the congregational song, "When I think of the goodness of Jesus," a song which was sung in Services 5 and 6 (transcription in Appendix B). This song has only one stanza of text, which was repeated in performance as many times as desired. The text is as follows:

When I think of the goodness of Jesus,
and all He has done for me,
my soul cries out, 'Hallelujah';
praise God for saving me.

All or part of this song text was regularly quoted or varied in

spoken testimonies.

On some occasions, testimonies presented little more than a personalized statement of a song text. One such testimony, delivered in Service No. 8, employed the text from the song "When I think of the goodness of Jesus" in its entirety, preceded only by a brief formulaic introduction:

Praise the Lord, Saints [C: Praise the Lord]
Praise the Lord, Saints [C: Praise the Lord]
*When I think of the goodness of Jesus,
and ALL He has done for me,
my soul cries out, Hallelujah';
I praise God for savin' me.*

[total duration of testimony: 15"; song text italicized]

Through the dynamic and agogic accent of selected words, members personalized these formulaic texts. In this manner, testimonies, even when constructed entirely of formulaic elements (as above), became creative individual statements.

For new or young members, or those who were not accustomed to speaking in public, short, formulaic testimonies such as the one cited above were quite common. Members who had acquired extensive speaking experience, on the other hand, usually delivered longer, more complicated testimonies; but these testimonies also often contained song texts. During Service No. 1, for example, one congregant, a choir director who was both experienced and comfortable in testifying before the congregation, delivered a rather lengthy narrative testimony which included the text of the aforementioned song. After beginning with a threefold invocation to praise the Lord, the Sister quoted the song's text in its entirety, before continuing

with an account of a trip to a worship service in Chicago. The testimony began,

Praise the Lord, saints. [C: Praise the Lord]
Praise the Lord again. [C: Praise the Lord]
PRAISE the Lord again. [C: Praise the Lord]
When I think of the goodness of Jesus. [M: Yes; Yes.]
and ALL that He's done for me.
MY SOUL cries out, Hallelujah.
I praise God for saving me.
I thank and praise the Lord for how, you know, on Thursday night, I got together with some of the saints. How we rode up to Chicago to hear, to be in a service there....
[testimony excerpt; total duration of testimony: 2'48"; song text italicized]

This testimony, which began with two common formulas, concluded with another familiar expression, one often used to provide closure at the end of a testimony: "pray my strength in the Lord." Although the majority of this member's testimony consisted of an inspirational narrative, both the beginning and conclusion of the testimony were marked by the use of familiar formulaic statements. This concentration of formulaic elements at the beginning and end of testimonies was quite common.

While some congregants cited song texts verbatim in their testimonies, others took greater liberty in their quotation--altering the text to suit their expressive needs. In one such testimony, for example, a congregant varied the text of "When I think of the goodness of Jesus" as follows:

For when I think of the goodness of Jesus. [F: Yes]
and all and all and all and all and all and all He's done for me,
Hallelujah [F: And all, HEY]
my soul cries out, HALlelujah.
I praise God
for setting me free, hallelujah.
[testimony excerpt, February 18, 1990; total duration of testimony: 1'12"; song text italicized]

Because this speaker quoted two other song texts near the start of her testimony, the construction of this testimony corroborates the hypothesis that formulaic elements tended to be located near the beginning and end of lengthier testimonies.

With a cluster of references to three different songs, the beginning of this testimony was a mosaic of familiar congregational song texts. In addition to the above-mentioned variation on the text of "When I think of the goodness of Jesus," the speaker quoted lines from two other congregational songs-- "Praise the Lord, Everybody" and "God is a good God," both of which are shouts (or Type B congregational songs; see Chapter 5). With stanzas of only sixteen beats, these shouts were characterized by a very repetitive interplay of solo call and congregational response.

In fact, some of the call-and-response patterns encountered in these two shouts were maintained in this spoken testimony. In the two shouts, for example, the congregation responded to the text of the solo call; the soloist's "Praise the Lord, everybody" was answered with the words "Praise the Lord" (see transcription in Appendix B), while in the second shout, "God is a good God" was followed with the congregational response, "Yes He is." This complete testimony appears below, with the text of the three congregational songs italicized:

Praise the Lord, everybody. [C: Praise the Lord]
Praise the Lord again. [C: Praise the Lord]
{Giving?} [covered by congregational response] honor to the
Lord today who's the head of my life.
I thank and praise the Lord for all that's been going on.
For truly, God is a good God.

Oh YES He is.

GOD is a GOOD God.

Oh YES He is. [F: Yes He is]

For when I think of the goodness of Jesus. [F: Yes]
and all and all and all and all and all He's done for me,

Hallelujah [F: And all, HEY]
my soul cries out, HALlelujah.

I praise God

for setting me free, hallelujah.

I think of the twenty-third Psalm this morning where it says
My CUP RUNNETH OVER.

Truly, my CUP, RUNNETH OVER, HALlelujah.

{because I keep?} a turnin' and a turnin' and a turnin' and
a turnin'

and He'll fill it and He'll fill it and He'll fill it
{-----?} Jesus.

For truly I thank and praise the Lord today,
for those nine years, the thirteenth of this month, that

I've been walkin' with the Lord. [F: Hallelujah]
I thank and praise the Lord today, for truly knowing that

God is a KEEPer today.

God is a COMforter today.

God is a PROvider today.

EVERYTHING you need is provided in Jesus' name,

And I thank God that every {hour I'm?} goin' HIGHer and
HIGHer and HIGHer in Jesus' name,

for truly my cup runneth over,

in Jesus' name. [F: Amen; clapping; exclamations]

(February 18, 1990)

The above examples illustrate a variety of ways in which the text of a single song, "When I think of the goodness of Jesus," was invoked in the delivery of testimonies. It is instructive to consider the way in which the text of a second song--"He didn't have to do it, but He did"--was used to enrich and fertilize the domain of spoken testimony.

Although the congregational song entitled "He didn't have to do it but He did" was part of the central repertoire at Alpha and Omega, it was sung in only one of the twelve services analyzed in Appendix A (Service No. 6; transcription in Appendix B). On that occasion, six verses were sung, with the text of the first,

second, and fourth verses as follows:

He didn't have to do it but He did,
[Lord], He didn't have to do it but he did,
Oh, He woke me up this morning, started me on my way,
[Lord/And] He didn't have to do it but He did.
(Sunday, October 26, 1990)

The remaining three verses were each variants of this, with the song leader replacing just two words from the A phrase with one or two others, as follows:

Verse 3: He didn't have to *love me* but He did (lines 3 and 4
as before)
Verse 5: He didn't have to *die* but He did (line 3 as before)
Verse 6: He didn't have to *save me* but He did (lines 3 and 4
as before)

The song's text (AABA or AABA') is highly repetitious, with the same line of text used for three of the four phrases.

At times, the words of this song appeared virtually unaltered in testimonies and praise. Half the song's text, for example, was located near the middle of a rather lengthy testimony by a church Mother:

...I just praise God. I praise Him.
And I THANK and praise Him.
He is so good to me.
He woke me up this mornin'
and started me on my way.
He didn't have to do it,
but He did...
(October 15, 1989)

Whereas the text of the song "When I think of the goodness of Jesus" was usually quoted or varied in its entirety, it is the formulaic components of this second song which surfaced most commonly in testimony and praise. Some of its constituent parts --"He didn't have to... but He did" (or simply, "He didn't have to..."); "woke me up this morning"; and "started me on my way"--

were treated as formulas in the construction of personal testimonies, and were encountered in nearly every service. The following excerpts provide a sample of ways in which these formulas were employed in the context of spoken testimonies:

...I thank and praise the Lord for being baptized in His precious name.
I still thank and praise the Lord for the great things He's doing for me.
He didn't have to do it but he did.
He didn't have to save me but he did
He didn't have to keep me but he did....
(Testimony; October 22, 1989)

...I just thank and praise God for the opportunity just to give Him the praise this morning, because *He DIDN't have to DO it but He DID.*
He didn't have to wake me up but he did.
I'm SO GLAD, I'm SO GLAD that *He woke me up this morning, and He started me on my way....*
(Testimony; October 22, 1989)

...I came to give Him the praise this morning, to lift up His holy name.
Because *He didn't have to use me, but He's usin' me,* and I wanta be used up.
(Testimony; October 28, 1990)

...I thank and praise God that *He woke me up and started me on my way.*
I thank and praise God for all the blessings that he's bestowing on me....
(Testimony; January 27, 1991)

...I thank the Lord for *waking me up this morning, 'cause somebody's alarm went off this morning and they did not get up. But it was God truly that woke us up this morning, what started us on our way....*
(Testimony at Talent Show; February 18, 1991)

...I thank God this morning , because *He didn't have to let me get up this morning, and testify and say, 'thank you, Jesus.'*
He didn't have to give me the activities of my limbs this morning.
(Testimony; November 10, 1991)

...I just thank the Lord
because *He woke me up another morning,*

*started me on my way,
And my testimony is:
He didn't have to do it but He did.
Pray my strength in the Lord.
(Testimony: October 27, 1991)*

This crossfertilization between the language of speech and the language of song was an important feature of the specialized language employed at Alpha and Omega. Aside from the everpresent phrases "Praise the Lord" and "Thank you Jesus," the expression "He didn't have to..." was one of the most frequently encountered formulas which appeared in both song and speech at Alpha and Omega. While it may be difficult or impossible to determine whether or not such formulaic expressions antedated the composition of the songs, it is clear that young members are exposed to many formulas in both song texts and in spoken communication. In this way, they become thoroughly acquainted with the specialized and highly formulaic language which is spoken at Alpha and Omega.

A brief discussion of the transitions which usually followed congregational songs and choir selections further helps to indicate the significance of song texts at Alpha and Omega. These transitions, which varied in length from a few seconds to several minutes, usually quoted and amplified upon the words of the preceding song. On one occasion, for example, after the singing of a congregational song, "In the name of Jesus, we have a victory," the worship leader, amidst clapping and verbal interjections, delivered the following message, summarizing the song's text and providing a sense of closure:

Come on, put your hands together.
Hallelujah, Glory to God.
Give Him the praise, Hallelujah.
Glory to God. Thank you, Jesus.
Thank you for the victory, Hallelujah
Thank you for His name, Hallelujah.
In the name of Jesus,
we have everything that we need.
Hallelujah, give Him the praise.
Hallelujah, give Him the glory.
Hallelujah, give Him the honor.
Hallelujah, glory to God.
Glory, glory, glory.
We thank you, Hallelujah.
We adore you, Hallelujah.
We magnify you, Hallelujah.
Glory to God.
(October 28, 1990)

While this transition, lasting about thirty-four seconds, was relatively short, others were sometimes much longer.

The extended transition delivered by Pastor McGhee after the choir processional on September 29, 1991, for example, lasted about seven minutes. After the choir's processional selection-- "I've got joy, great joy, in my soul"--the pastor expounded at length on the subject of 'great joy,' until the announcement of the choir's 'A Selection.' Although Pastor McGhee's transitional speech was too lengthy to quote in its entirety, the following excerpts suggest the nature of its contents. He began his delivery alluding to the choir's 'great joy,' with a reference to a line of text ("the world didn't give me this joy that I have") from the processional selection:

From the sound of it, they got great joy
that the world did not give.
How many got joy?
Put your hands together and say, 'joy.' [C: Joy.]
Everybody say, 'I got joy.' [C: I got joy.]...
...I came to tell ya today,
I got joy.

I came to tell somebody, I got joy.
I came to tell the devil, I got joy.
Hallelujah, I've been a little down, but I got--¹⁶
[C: Joy.]
I've had some hard times, but I got [C: Joy.]
The devil tried to stop me, but I got [C: Joy.]
The devil done lied on me, but I got [C: Joy.]
The devil don't like me, but I got [C: Joy.]
The devil tried to hold me, but I got [C: Joy.]
Friends have left me, but I got [C: Joy.]...
...I don't know if you heard what I said.
I don't have a whole lot of money, but I got [C: Joy.]
I don't live in a penthouse today, but I got [C: Joy.]
I haven't even been to the Whitehouse, but I got [C: Joy.]
Hallelujah.
Hallelujah, that's what it's all about,
that havin' joy--unspeakable....
(September 29, 1991)

As explained elsewhere, congregational songs and choir selections constituted a significant portion of worship at Alpha and Omega, often comprising between a fourth and a third of the duration of each worship service. The above discussion suggests that their importance was even more far-reaching than this statistic implies, since the language of song was so closely intertwined with the spoken language of worship. The words of congregational songs and choir selections surfaced elsewhere in worship; they were employed in countless formulas and in the transitional passages which followed the songs and selections. In this manner, the language of song fertilized all spoken communication at Alpha and Omega, enriching testimonies, prayers, and sermons alike.

¹⁶Pastor McGhee paused, omitting the last word, and the congregation supplied it.

Chapter 7

"We're Goin' Places!": Ritual Transformation after the Church's Move from the Storefront Sanctuary

God wanna fill this church just like it's filled up,
but He wanna do even more, because we, we're goin' places.
--Pastor McGhee (before the move, October 29, 1989)

God said to me some eleven years ago, says,
'I'll build a work through you.' And many of you know
when the odds was against us, in a little storefront,
250 square feet.... Hey! They laughed at us,
but I heard God say, 'It's not over.'
--Pastor McGhee (after the move, January 27, 1991)

I. Alpha and Omega's Move to a Traditional Church Sanctuary

Between 1989 and 1992, Alpha and Omega experienced a period of great social change. When the congregation moved from its small, overcrowded warehouse space to its present sanctuary, some dramatic changes in the congregation's style of worship occurred, and these changes appear to have been a direct result of the church's move. While the warehouse sanctuary was literally packed in the fall of 1989, the new sanctuary, with about three times the floor space, was always half empty after the move. With over 150 empty seats, with its newer, more conspicuous location at the intersection of two busy streets, and with financial responsibilities now much greater than those at the warehouse, the church was at a turning point. Alpha and Omega's mission to the Champaign-Urbana community, as conceived by church leadership, appears to have changed, at least temporarily, after the move; and the church's altered mission was reflected in the

striking changes that took place in the musical and ritual character of Sunday morning worship services. The present chapter (1) reviews the history and significance of Alpha and Omega's move to 400 West Bradley;¹ (2) details the many changes in worship style which accompanied that move; and (3) provides some possible explanations for those modifications.

When Alpha and Omega was still worshipping in the overcrowded warehouse sanctuary, Pastor McGhee promised his congregation a bright future, one which included a new sanctuary. "We're goin' places," he would say. Because of the overcrowded conditions, with more people seeking to worship at Alpha and Omega than the space would comfortably permit, the congregation was charged with the conviction that Alpha and Omega had come a long way and was indeed "goin' places." Addressing the congregation on October 29, 1989, for example, Pastor McGhee referred to the overcrowded sanctuary as evidence that the Lord has plans for Alpha and Omega:

Now you see, God wanna fill this church just like it's filled up, but He wanna do even more, because we, we're goin' places. Somebody say, Amen.... We got to learn to get outa the way and let the Lord just to do it. Amen?

Despite the humble and unpretentious surroundings of the warehouse sanctuary, a sense of hope and expectation prevailed among church members. The congregation's long-awaited move to a "real" sanctuary finally occurred on December 31, 1989, and this

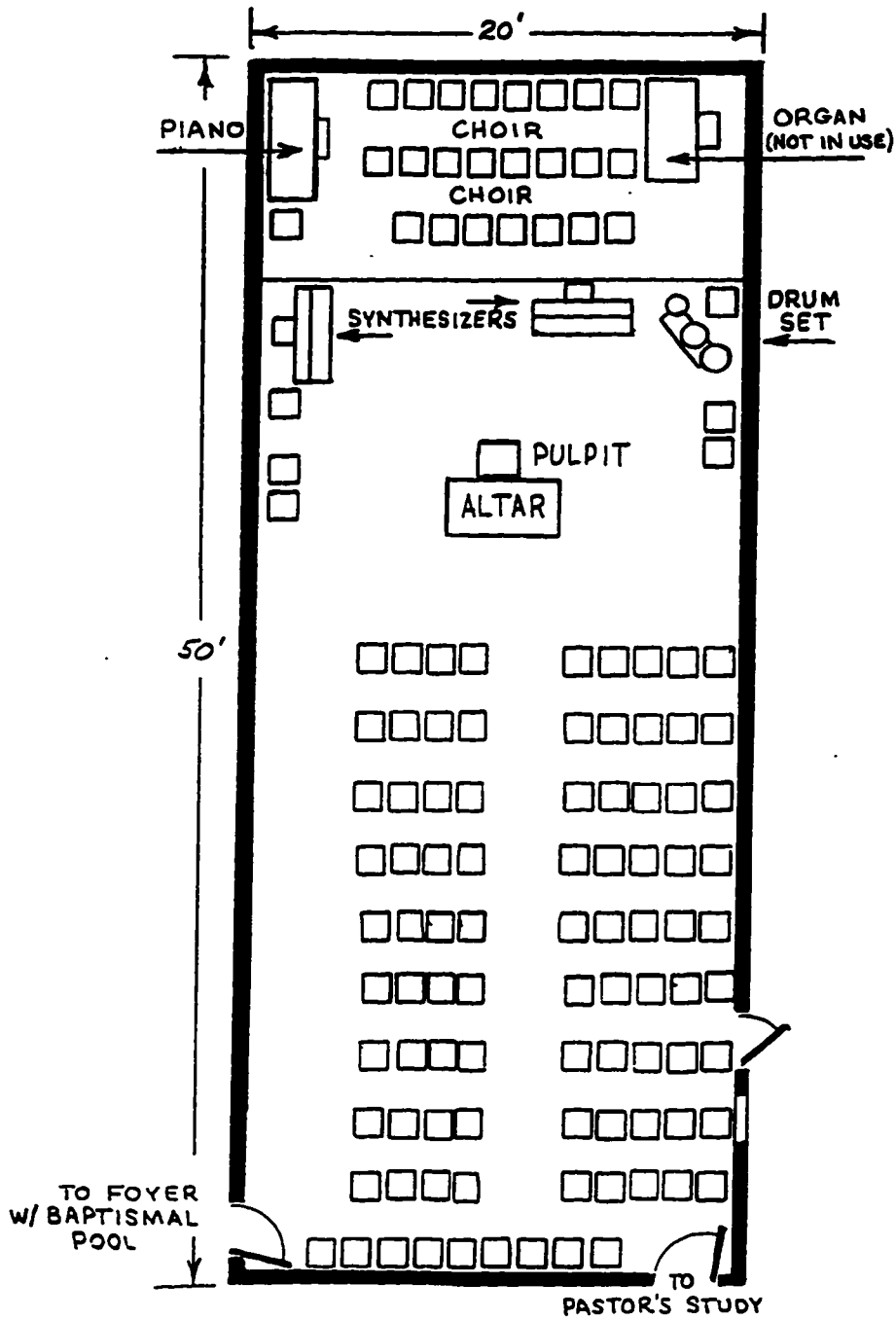
¹The church's move from the warehouse sanctuary has been briefly examined in Chapter 2, in the context of a discussion of Alpha and Omega's history.

new church was strikingly different than the warehouse space.

A description of the physical and environmental context of worship services, both before and after the move, provides the necessary background for the ensuing discussion of musical and ritual change. Though plain and starkly utilitarian, the Urbana warehouse sanctuary had become the congregation's home. Only twenty by fifty feet in size, it could barely fit the more than one hundred adults who gathered for worship every Sunday morning. The floor plan of this sanctuary is reproduced in Figure 7-1. With its tile floor, cinder block walls, and low ceiling, the space was acoustically quite live. The sanctuary was lit almost entirely by florescent ceiling lights, with one small window, adjacent to the side door, providing the room's only natural light. Rows of stacking chairs were arranged in such a way as to permit two narrow aisles, one down the center of the room and a second along the left wall. Additional stacking chairs were arranged at the front of the church to form a choir stand. There were, however, more choir members than seats, and the choir's overflow would sit among the congregation and come forward for the choir selections, lining up along the left wall.

Just as the room and its chairs were plain and functional, all the room's other contents were also simple and unadorned. A wooden table served as the altar, a podium became the pulpit, and an oval aluminum tub, located in the small foyer directly outside the sanctuary, was used as the baptismal pool. A computer paper banner, with the words "The Alpha and Omega Church of Jesus

Figure 7-1
Floor Plan of the Warehouse Sanctuary
905 West Fairview, Urbana, Illinois

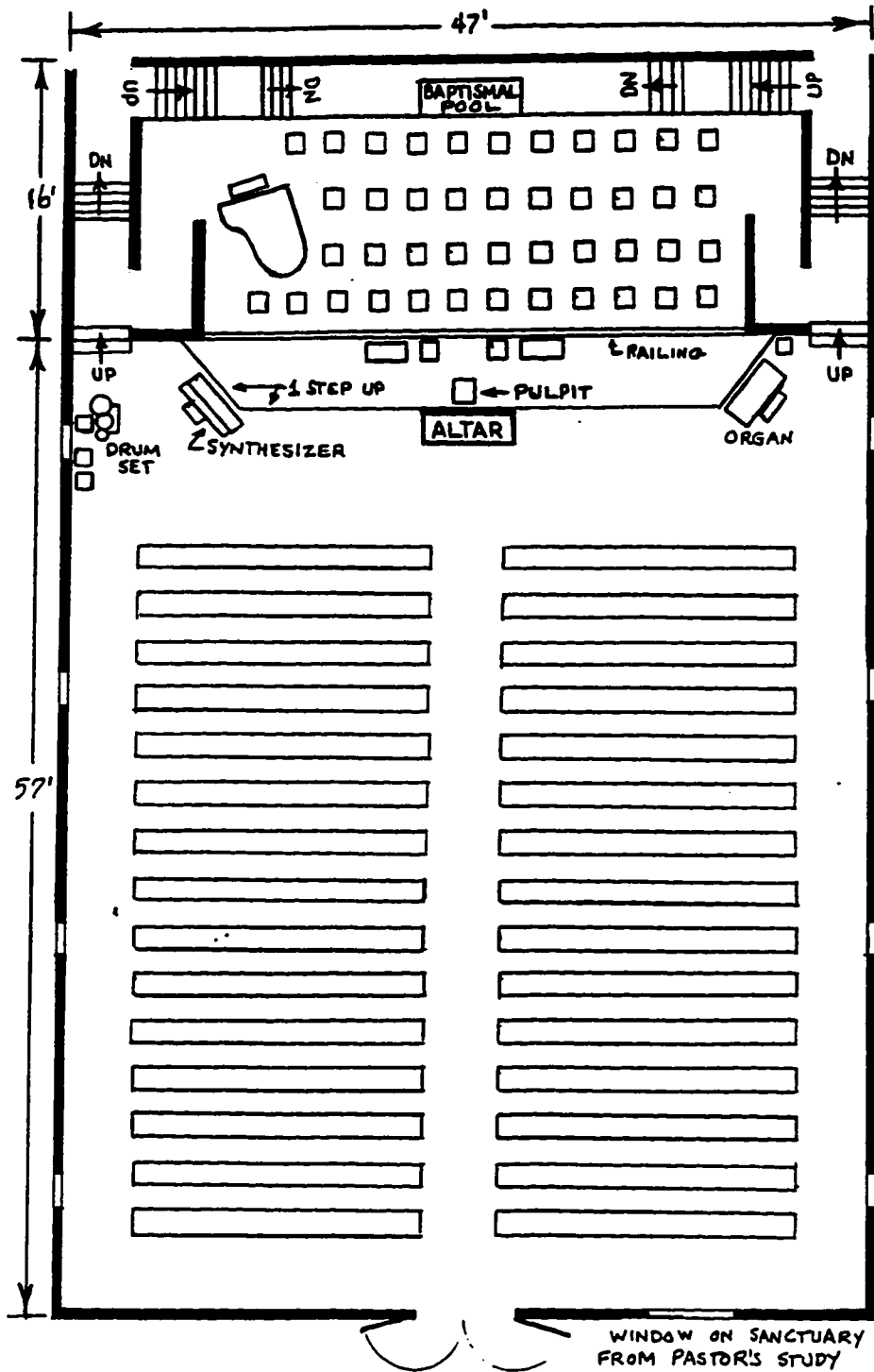


Christ of the Apostolic Faith," was spread across the top of the room's front wall. An upright piano stood in the left corner at the front of the church, and a drum set was located to the right of the altar. The two main keyboardists set up their electronic equipment on either side of the altar, and most of the remaining musicians sat in chairs along the left wall.

After the move, the physical and environmental context of worship was markedly different. The congregation's new sanctuary was a traditional church complex, with a sanctuary constructed in the form of an A-frame.² Its spacious sanctuary, with a lofty wooden ceiling, attractive hanging light fixtures, Hammond organ, and baptismal pool, could seat about 350 persons, and members understandably viewed this attractive and spacious church with a great sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. Finally, after a decade, the congregation had grown to the extent that it could justify the purchase of a "real" church edifice. The worship area at 400 West Bradley was over three times as great as the size of the warehouse sanctuary, and featured two banks of wooden pews, separated by a center aisle, with two additional aisles running along the outside walls of the sanctuary. A floor plan of this second sanctuary appears in Figure 7-2. Simple non-pictorial stained glass windows, designed with large rectangles of colored glass, lined the sanctuary's outer walls. An altar table and a wooden pulpit were located at the front of the

²This church had been previously occupied by a white Pentecostal congregation which was forced to sell the building because of declining membership.

Figure 7-2
 Floor Plan of Alpha and Omega's New Sanctuary
 400 West Bradley Avenue, Champaign, Illinois



worship space. Beyond the pulpit, and bordered with a railing, was an elevated choir stand, with a grand piano located on the left. Behind the choir loft, at the very front of the church, stood a baptismal pool. This pool, and the stairways leading to and from it, were blocked from the congregation's view by wooden paneling. On the stone wall at the front of the church, situated above the baptismal pool, was a large gold-colored cross.

Although the number and placement of instrumental musicians varied from one Sunday to the next, the chief musician was regularly present, and led the other instrumentalists from his position at the Hammond organ, located in the right front corner of the church. The drummer and drum set were situated opposite him, in the left front corner of the sanctuary. A second keyboardist and an electric guitarist, when present, also performed on the left front side of the church. At times, a pianist, seated at the grand piano in the choir loft, added to the accompaniment, while a saxophonist, who doubled on flute, customarily played to his left, at the back of the choir loft.

Narrating Alpha and Omega's oral history, Pastor McGhee periodically recalled how the church's membership was once described by others in the community as "a bunch of kids who play rock and roll," and how the church and its warehouse sanctuary were once "laughed at." With its move to a much finer sanctuary, however, it did appear that Alpha and Omega was "goin' places," and the church's new location at a major intersection was a constant reminder to the religious community that Alpha and Omega

was a force to be reckoned with.

II. Changes in the Style of Worship: 1989 to 1991

The move from a crowded warehouse to a spacious modern sanctuary was accompanied by many changes. Some of these changes, such as the introduction of hymnals, printed programs, choir processions, and processional selections, could be readily spotted, while other changes were more subtle--as, for example, a reduction in the amount of spirit-filled praise and in the amount of time devoted to testimonies; a small but not insignificant reduction in the average length of Sunday morning worship; and an increased emphasis upon the church choir, the Voices of Pentecost.³ The present section, through a detailed analysis and comparison of twelve Sunday morning worship services, explores modifications in worship style at Alpha and Omega over a two year period. Four services each, from the fall of 1989, 1990, and 1991, were analyzed (see Appendix A), and a summary of the results appears in Table 7-1. The services from 1989 were recorded at the warehouse sanctuary, shortly before the church's move on December 31, 1989, while those from 1990 and 1991 were recorded at 400 West Bradley, about ten and twenty-two months respectively after the move. Although it would have been

³My hypothesis regarding ritual and musical change was initially more the result of casual observation than a conclusion drawn from careful examination of recorded services. In an effort to document and quantify these changes, therefore, I decided to analyze four services from the fall of each successive year.

preferable to compare four consecutive services from each period, the recorded data made that option unavailable. The services selected from 1989 are consecutive, and three of the four from 1990 are consecutive, but none of those drawn from 1991 occurred on consecutive Sundays. Nonetheless, internal consistency within each group of four services suggests that the data is truly indicative of the changing style of worship. Graphic analyses of each of the twelve services are located in Appendix A, and serve as the point of departure for this chapter's discussion of musical and ritual change.

Before examining the charts in Appendix A, it is necessary to discuss some of the more obvious changes, mentioned above, that took place after the move: the introduction of printed programs, hymnals, and choir processions. Although printed programs were never used during the Sunday morning worship services observed at 905 West Fairview, they became a regular feature of worship at Alpha and Omega shortly after the move. Pastor McGhee confirmed the fact that printed Sunday bulletins had not been used at the warehouse sanctuary, though programs were printed for special occasions, like the choir concerts (I.03.12.92). The earliest programs after the move included current announcements, the "ORDER OF SERVICE," a list of weekly church services and events, and a statement, "FROM THE PASTOR[']S DESK," espousing church doctrine. These first programs included no mention of a hymn in the "Order of Service."

By June 3, 1990, however, a hymn had been included in the

service order, immediately preceding the Sermon. Although I had never observed a hymnal at the warehouse sanctuary, hymnals became a regular fixture after the move to 400 West Bradley. Both Pastor McGhee and the minister of music explained that hymnals were left behind by the congregation that had previously occupied the sanctuary--the Life Tabernacle Assembly of God Church. An interdenominational hymnal, the *Church Hymnal* could easily satisfy the needs of both Pentecostal denominations (*Church Hymnal* 1951). When asked whether the church owned hymnals before the move, two authoritative informants disagreed--one claiming that the church owned no hymnals before the move, the other stating that the church owned maybe ten or twenty hymnals, but, lacking pews and hymnal racks, never placed them in the sanctuary.

Despite the inclusion of a hymn in the worship order as early as June 1990, only one of Appendix A's eight services from 1990 and 1991--namely, Service No. 8--actually included a hymn, "Sweet Honey in the Rock." On some occasions, the hymn was simply omitted (e.g., Service Nos. 5 and 7); at other times, it was replaced with a congregational song (as in Service No. 6); and on two Sundays, Pastor McGhee announced that a Choir Selection, "Yes, Jesus Loves Me," would be sung "in place of our hymn" (Service Nos. 9 and 11). Thus, despite the decision to include a hymn in the Sunday morning Order of Worship, the hymn's omission or replacement in most services seems to have indicated a rather half-hearted commitment to hymn-singing at Alpha and

Omega. On the other hand, it should be noted that hymns were a more integral part of some special events in 1990 and 1991, since at least two hymns were sung at each of the annual choir concerts and New Year's Eve Watch Services.

Although the hymn's inclusion in the Order of Worship had little impact upon the service, the same cannot be said for the addition of the Choir Processional and the Choir Selection often sung immediately following the procession--here labelled the "Processional Selection." The crowded conditions and narrow aisles at 905 West Fairview would have made choir processionals impractical, if not impossible. After the move, however, choir processionals became a standard part of the worship order. Entering from the sanctuary's rear door, the choir, often with choreographed steps, and sometimes with syncopated clapping patterns, would file down the center aisle; as choir members reached the altar, the choir director typically sent them in alternating directions and they entered the choir stand from doors on either side of the sanctuary (see Figure 7-2).

An examination of Table 7-1 reveals that the Choir Processional and Processional Selection, introduced in 1990, had become a standard and seemingly indispensable part of Sunday morning worship by the fall of 1991. Whereas three of the four services analyzed from the fall of 1990 included an instrumental Choir Processional, two of which also featured a Processional Selection sung by the Voices of Pentecost, all four services from the fall of 1991 featured both a Choir Processional and a

Table 7-1
The Components and Character of Worship
(A Summary of Data from

Service Number: Date:	Fall of 1989				1989 Average	Fall of 1990		
	1 10-15	2 10-22	3 10-29	4 11-5		5 10-7	6 10-21	7 10-28
No. Congr. songs sung: (before Praise Serv.)	4	4	4	3	3.75	5	5	3
Total duration:	13'30"	11'10"	19'40"	10'10"	13'38"	11'30"	9'35"	9'30"
TESTIMONY SERVICE: duration	35'	26'	37'	41'	34.75'	17'	18'	23'
Number of Testimonies: (men/women)	4/11	4/6	3/11	3/15	3.50/ 10.75	3/8	0/7	3/6
No. of songs sung in Testimony Service:	3	6	1	5		4	2	2
Total duration:	17'15"	18'50"	10'30"	17'50"	16'06"	7'05"	6'20"	11'05"
Time of Pastor's Entrance:	:54	1:05	1:04	1:00	1:01	:38	:36	:42
Choir Processional (instrumental):	none	none	none	none		3'30"	2'25"	none
Processional Selection: (vocal)	none	none	none	none		none	3'55"	none
CHOIR SELECTIONS: Number sung:	2	2	3	2		3	3	2
Total duration:	14'00"	12'00"	26'55"	15'25"	17'05"	21'45"	17'40"	22'10"
Offering (duration):	16'	17'	1'+14'	25'	15.75'	20'	10'	34'
Hymn:	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a		none	none	none
SERMON (duration):	62'	57'	none	58'	44.25'	41'	43'	24'
ALTAR APPEAL (dur.):	3'	8'	8'+6'	7'	8'	13'	27'	29'
Number of baptisms:	0	0	3	0		0	0	0
SPIRIT-FILLED DANCING: (total duration)	14'	19'	66'	17'	29'	2'	12'	6'
SERVICE LENGTH:	200'	176'	216'	194'	197'	162'	188'	190'



Table 7-1

and Character of Worship: A Three Year Comparison
(A Summary of Data from Appendix A)

Age	Fall of 1990					Fall of 1991				
	5 10-7	6 10-21	7 10-28	8 11-4	1990 Average	9 9-29	10 10-27	11 11-10	12 11-24	1991 Average
75	5	5	3	5	4.5	4	5	3	4	4
'38"	11'30"	9'35"	9'30"	11'55"	10'38"	8'35"	9'55"	10'30"	10'25"	9'49"
.75'	17'	18'	23'	17'	18.75'	24'	27'	26'	28'	26.25'
50/ .75	3/8	0/7	3/6	6/12	3/8.25	2/6	3/4	6/6	1/4	3/5
'06"	4 7'05"	2 6'20"	2 11'05"	3 9'20"	8'29"	4 14'30"	5 11'50"	4 13'40"	9 22'40"	15'40"
01	:38	:36	:42	:39	:39	:41	:44	:43	:43	:43
	3'30"	2'25"	none	5'30"	2'51"	2'35"	2'25"	2'50"	3'30"	2'50"
	none	3'55"	none	4'00"	1'59"	6'35"	5'20"	5'25"	4'10"	5'23"
'05"	3 21'45"	3 17'40"	2 22'10"	3 21'40"	20'49"	4 31'45"	3 25'00"	4 24'25"	4 20'10"	25'20"
.75'	20'	10'	34'	11'	18.25'	9'	25'	14'+2'	13'+3'	16.5'
	none	none	none	yes		none	none	none	none	
.25'	41'	43'	24'	50'	39.5'	none	none	52'	41'	23.25'
	13'	27'	29'	17'	21.5'	48'	57'	14'	20'	34.75'
	0	0	0	0		1	1	0	0	
	2'	12'	6'	1'	5.25'	31'	56'	1'	21'	27.25'
7'	162'	188'	190'	174'	179'	191'	180'	169'	186'	182'



Processional Selection. Absent from the services in the fall of 1989, these two items accounted for an average of four minutes and fifty seconds per service in the fall of 1990, and an average of eight minutes and thirteen seconds per service in the fall of 1991. Throughout 1990 and 1991, the Voices of Pentecost received more and more performance opportunities during worship--a trend which appears to have begun after the move with the introduction of the Choir Processional.

In addition to these obvious modifications in the worship service--that is, the introduction of printed programs, hymns, and the Choir Processional--other more subtle changes also took place after the move. These changes included shorter services, shorter testimony services, shorter sermons, an earlier entrance by the pastor, lengthier altar calls, less congregational singing, more choir singing, and most important, a significant decrease in the amount of time devoted to spirit-filled dancing and praise. As indicated in Table 7-1, some of these changes were quite dramatic.

Probably the most striking change after the move was the sudden reduction in the amount of spirit-filled dancing and praise. Before the move, in the final months of 1989, the services at Alpha and Omega had been particularly emotional. On October 29, 1989, for example, more than one hour of the service was allotted to spirit-filled dancing and praise; and, on the average, twenty-nine minutes per service was devoted to this activity in the fall of 1989. By the fall of 1990, however,

spirit-filled dancing and praise accounted for a very small portion of each service--an average of slightly over five minutes per service. When compared with the lively worship of the warehouse sanctuary, the more sober and restrained atmosphere which prevailed in 1990, at 400 West Bradley, provided a truly dramatic contrast.

By the fall of 1991, however, the nature of worship had undergone further changes, and by this time much of the spirit-filled character of worship had been restored. Whereas the average amount of spirit-filled dancing and praise had dropped to about five minutes per service in the fall of 1990, it had risen to an average of slightly over twenty-seven minutes per service in the fall of 1991--nearly as much as was encountered in 1989, at the warehouse sanctuary. Moreover, if the shorter service length in 1991 is taken into consideration, it can be seen that spirit-filled dancing and praise actually accounted for a slightly greater percentage of worship time in 1991 than it had at the warehouse sanctuary in 1989.

Although changes in the spirit-filled level of worship were probably the most noticeable, many other significant changes in ritual took place after the move. Service length, for example, which averaged three hours and seventeen minutes in the fall of 1989, decreased an average of eighteen minutes per service--to just under three hours--by the fall of 1990. And while services had lengthened, on the average, three minutes by the following fall, they were still an average of fifteen minutes shorter than

they had been two years earlier, at 905 West Fairview.

While services were decreasing in length, the time devoted to some ritual components actually increased. As Table 7-1 indicates, greater and greater emphasis was placed on the altar call after the move. Averaging only eight minutes per service in 1989, the Altar Appeal expanded to an average of twenty-two and thirty-five minutes per service respectively in 1990 and 1991. Between 1989 and 1991, therefore, the altar call's duration had increased by more than 300 percent--at the same time during which the services were actually decreasing in length. If the amount of time devoted to a ritual activity is an indication of its importance, then the altar call, by the fall of 1991, had clearly assumed a position of prominence in worship at Alpha and Omega. Averaging nearly thirty-five minutes per service, a greater percentage of worship was allocated to the altar call than to any other activity.

During 1990 and 1991, increased prominence was also given to the choir: the Voices of Pentecost. The Choir Processional, discussed above, was initiated after the move, and, by the fall of 1991, a Processional Selection was consistently being sung immediately after the choir's procession. Clearly, these changes served to focus much more attention on the choir, and by the fall of 1991, the choir's role in worship was further expanded, to include--on most Sundays--the singing of a fourth selection (see Table 7-1). During the fall of 1989, most services featured two Choir Selections--Selection A and Selection B. A year later,

most services featured three Choir Selections--Selections A and B, as well as a selection often sung in conjunction with the choir processional. By the fall of 1991, an additional Choir Selection was sung in three of the four services analyzed. In two of those services, the fourth selection sung was "Yes, Jesus Loves Me," and on both Sundays, the pastor announced that it would replace the hymn. Even though there was no mention of a fourth selection in the printed programs, this additional selection had become relatively commonplace by the fall of 1991.

Thus, in each successive year after the move, the choir's presence became more visible. While at the warehouse sanctuary, the choir sang an average of seventeen minutes per service. After the move to 400 West Bradley, this average increased to nearly twenty-one minutes in 1990, and to over twenty-five minutes in 1991. Moreover, these averages calculated for 1990 and 1991 exclude the instrumental Choir Processional, wherein nearly all attention was drawn to the choreographed entrance of the choir.

While greater portions of each service, in 1990 and 1991, were being devoted to the altar call and to performances by the Voices of Pentecost, the length of other ritual components was being pared. By the fall of 1990, the Testimony Services were much shorter than they had been a year earlier at the warehouse sanctuary. Table 7-1 indicates that the length of Testimony Services decreased from an average of about thirty-five minutes in 1989, to roughly nineteen minutes in 1990. By the fall of

1991, this tendency had evidently begun to reverse itself, as the average Testimony Service duration had expanded to about twenty-six minutes.

A similar pattern can be seen when considering alterations in the amount of congregational singing contained in the Testimony Service. Whereas an average of over sixteen minutes per service had been devoted to congregational singing in the fall of 1989, only about eight and one-half minutes were allotted to singing in the Testimony Services of 1990. A reversal was apparently underway by 1991, when the average had nearly expanded to the earlier sixteen minutes per service. Despite this reversal, however, the average number of persons testifying in each service decreased with each successive year--from fourteen in 1989, to eleven in 1990, to eight in 1991.

Table 7-1 further indicates that the amount of congregational singing which preceded the Testimony Service gradually diminished during the time period under consideration. Whereas an average of more than thirteen minutes was devoted to the singing of congregational songs before the start of the Testimony Service in 1989, the average amount of congregational singing at the outset of the service had dropped to less than eleven minutes in 1990, and to less than ten minutes in 1991.

Since the pastor's entrance into the sanctuary effectively concluded the Testimony Service, the time of his entrance should be considered in conjunction with this data on the amount of congregational singing which occurred both before and during the

Testimony Service. On the average, in 1989, Pastor McGhee did not enter the sanctuary until the service had been underway for more than an hour. In both 1990 and 1991, the time of his entrance occurred significantly earlier: an average of twenty-two minutes earlier in 1990, and eighteen minutes earlier in 1991.

With the pastor's earlier arrival, it might be expected that the length of the sermon would be expanded, but in fact its length was shortened. When a sermon was preached in the fall of 1989 (that is, in three of the four services analyzed), it lasted consistently about one hour, or nearly one-third of the service. Even when taking into account that the sermon was omitted during one of those four services, the average amount of time devoted to a sermon was about forty-four minutes per service in 1989--significantly longer than any other component of worship. Although a sermon was preached in all four of the services analyzed from 1990, the average duration was actually shorter, slightly less than forty minutes--but still, in length anyway, the principal component of worship. By the fall of 1991, with the altar call and spirit-filled dancing accounting for ever larger segments of worship, the central focus of worship seems to have shifted away from the sermon and been directed toward the altar call. However, because a sermon was preached in only two of the four services analyzed, the average sermon length given in Table 7-1 for the fall of 1991 is somewhat misleading. Therefore, while the altar call was clearly more important than it had been during either previous year, the limited data may not

justify concluding that the sermon was no longer the principal focus of the service. Nonetheless, the fact remains that none of the eight services analyzed from 1990 and 1991 contained a sermon that was as long as the shortest recorded sermon from 1989.

One final component of the worship service needs to be mentioned: the offering. While the average time devoted to the securing and collecting of an offering increased after the move, this increase was not dramatic. Offerings, which lasted an average of almost sixteen minutes per service in 1989, had increased an average of two and one-half minutes per service by 1990. However, by the fall of 1991, the average offertory had decreased in length to sixteen and one-half minutes, just slightly longer than it had been in 1989. More significant, perhaps, is the fact that, in half of the services analyzed from 1991, a second, much shorter offering was conducted near the end of the service.

Clearly, the data collected in Table 7-1, as well as the foregoing discussion, indicate that ritual at Alpha and Omega was not rigid and static, but vibrant and dynamic. Moreover, church ritual, already quite flexible and dynamic from one week to the next, underwent significant changes in response to the church's move from the crowded warehouse quarters to its new, more spacious and contemporary sanctuary, with the most dramatic changes occurring in 1990, the year immediately following the move to 400 West Bradley.

By the fall of 1990, for example, spirit-filled dancing

accounted for only about five minutes of the worship service-- down from an average of twenty-nine minutes per service in 1989. Worship services lasted, on the average, eighteen minutes shorter in the fall of 1990 than they had in 1989. Other major changes included shorter testimony services, a lengthier altar call, the pastor's earlier entrance, more choir singing, and less congregational singing. While many of these changes underwent a reversal in 1991, some actually became more pronounced after the church's second year in the new sanctuary. In particular, the altar call continued to expand in length in 1991, as did the amount of time devoted to choir selections sung by the Voices of Pentecost.

III. Ritual and Musical Change: Summary and Interpretation

Why did the ritual of Alpha and Omega's Sunday morning worship service undergo such marked transformation after the move? This is an intriguing question for which there is no simple answer. While some members, when questioned, acknowledged ritual change and offered possible explanations, others said that they had not noticed any differences, and felt that worship at 400 West Bradley was conducted very much as it had been at the warehouse sanctuary. In an effort to better understand the data, which suggests significant ritual and musical change after the move, the balance of this chapter explores several possible interpretations of this change--discussing those offered by the pastor, church leaders, and other members, as well as some

posited by myself.

The term "musical change" carries a variety of connotations for ethnomusicologists. John Blacking cautioned that scholars must be careful to differentiate between social and musical change, suggesting that musical change implies significant change within a musical system (1978:2). Nettl's approach to musical change, however, is less restrictive. He has delineated four types of musical change: "substitution of one system of music for another; radical change of a system; gradual, normal change; and allowable variation" (1983:177-8; see also Nettl 1985:23-4). While the musical life of Alpha and Omega underwent profound changes after the move, this "musical" change can, for the most part, be attributed to social change, since the musical system itself did not change significantly. Therefore, although the changes seemed radical to the present researcher, the musical changes here described can be subsumed under Nettl's category of "gradual, normal change."

In an effort to better understand and interpret Alpha and Omega's ritual transformation, it is instructive to examine statements made in the worship services themselves, both before and after the move, for possible clues to this pattern of ritual change. It is imperative, moreover, to understand the atmosphere that prevailed at the warehouse sanctuary in the months immediately preceding the move.

When, on December 31, 1989, Pastor McGhee and his congregation at Alpha and Omega moved across town to 400 West

Bradley, leaving their church home of several years, that moment was no doubt both auspicious and daunting. At the time of that New Year's Eve Watch Service, Alpha and Omega had much for which to be joyful: not only a beautiful and spacious new sanctuary, but also the evidence of prophecies fulfilled. During the previous months, in the fall of 1989, Pastor McGhee had expressed the conviction that, "God is blessin' this church." With the warehouse sanctuary filled beyond its capacity Sunday after Sunday, those last few months at 905 West Fairview were a time of great excitement and energy--the overcrowding perceived as evidence of "what God is doin' here at Alpha and Omega" (October 29, 1989). During these final services at the warehouse sanctuary, Pastor McGhee regularly emphasized the need for a new, larger sanctuary, often prophesying about what God had in store for Alpha and Omega:

God is blessin' this church.... God is doin' great things for this church, and I praise Him for it. And you know, as tight [i.e., crowded] as it is, we need a new building. Somebody say, Amen. Somebody's got one that we can use until we build one.... Whatever way, I wanta go the way the Lord want, and I ain't gonna try to get in front of the Lord (Service No. 1; October 15, 1989)

You all can see how serious it is for us to find another place. We kinda thinkin' we need to build somethin', but you know it takes a lot of money to do that. But God's workin', and you ain't seen the half. People are lookin' for the real stuff. Somebody say, Amen. People are lookin' for the real thing (Service No. 2; October 22, 1989).

Now you see, God wanta fill this church just like it's filled up, but He wanta do even more, because we, we're goin' places. Somebody say, Amen. You, we got to learn to get outa the way and let the Lord just to do it. (Service No. 3; October 29, 1989).

I just feel God is movin' in this place today. Can we say, Amen? [C: Amen] Amen. We have so many visitors with us that, Amen, God has blessed us Sunday after Sunday. Amen, even though it's crowded in here, and Amen, some people are turned back, but still they're comin', because I believe God has His hands on us. Somebody say, Amen. [C: Amen] I know folks don't wanta go places where it's dead; come on, somebody. And... people, when they lookin' for God, they know when they come in contact with the presence of God. [and, much later, during the sermon:]... Ever since we been talkin' about buildin' the church, people still sayin', 'When? I hope it don't be twenty years late.' Well, I'm a dreamer here today (Service No. 4; November 5, 1989).

Clearly, the move to a more spacious and attractive sanctuary was an event that had been eagerly anticipated for many months. According to Frances Kostarelos, who studied an African-American Missionary Baptist storefront church in a Chicago ghetto, "a common aspiration" of congregations which meet in houses or storefront churches "is to build or move into a regular church building" (1989:15). Alpha and Omega had prospered and finally attained that to which most storefront churches aspire: a conventional church building. The move across town, therefore, was one filled with great promise and expectation.

Yet surely all this excitement was accompanied by some anxiety, particularly on the part of Pastor McGhee, who, more than any other, would feel the burden of the increased financial responsibility. An anecdote he told his congregation, about a year later, revealed that apprehension:

Devil said to me when we got over here: 'and you know the bills gonna be high and the expenses gonna be greater than they were at 905 West Fairview.' I told the devil, 'this battle is not mine, but it is the Lord's' (January 27, 1991).

A testimony, given one Sunday at offering time by a Sister in the

congregation, likewise suggested an awareness of the church's greater financial responsibilities at 400 West Bradley:

And you know what? If you have a house, you gotta pay electric, gas, water, everything. We have services faithfully at least three times a week.... It costs money to run a church (Service 7; October 28, 1990).

As Pastor McGhee indicated above, Alpha and Omega's expenses were "greater" after the move. The church had increased its square footage by six or seven fold, secured a better, more visible location within the community, and obtained an attractive and much more impressive place of worship.

Any explanation of ritual transformation at Alpha and Omega must take into account the church's increased financial responsibility after the move. After the move, Alpha and Omega's new financial obligation resulted in the need for additional income--that which only a larger membership could supply. With its reputation as "the disco church," or as "a bunch of kids who play rock and roll," Alpha and Omega, it seems, was well aware of its marginal status in the community. In an effort to appeal to a wider audience and to attract additional members, it appears that the church--whether consciously or unconsciously--began to tone down the fervent character of worship in 1990, after moving to 400 West Bradley. When, in 1991, after a year of more reserved worship, the church membership had not shown any substantial increase, the pastor and congregation gradually returned to their more emotional, spirit-filled style of worship. They returned to "being themselves," and to a style of worship

that was more naturally their own.⁴

Several points can be made in support of this hypothesis. The pastor and members of Alpha and Omega regularly indicated that it was their goal to fill the sanctuary at 400 West Bradley to its capacity, a goal which had already been achieved at the warehouse meeting place. Once the congregation had filled this new sanctuary to capacity, it would have the resources to build on the acreage that it owned across town. On the basis of statements made by the pastor (see above), it seems clear that it was the church's dream, while still at the warehouse sanctuary, to construct its own building. Yet, Pastor McGhee explained to members that "it takes a lot of money to do that" (October 22, 1989), and that an alternate building might have to suffice in the interim. The pastor, a self-acknowledged "dreamer" with the conviction that "God is blessin' this church," dreamed of a burgeoning membership whose growth would require the construction of a new building.

Shortly after the move, one longstanding member of the church casually mentioned to me that Alpha and Omega aspired to become a church that was truly interracial in character, one that would attract equal numbers of African-Americans, Caucasians, and Hispanics. Since the constituency of the church was almost exclusively African American at that time, this goal seemed not only quite remarkable, but also unrealistic on several counts--in

⁴In 1997, reports from the church indicate that the congregation continues to worship in this more emotional and spirit-filled way.

particular, because persons of Hispanic origin constituted only slightly more than two percent of the population of Champaign-Urbana (1990 Census).

Perhaps the desire to create an interracial constituency led the pastor and church leaders to tone down the fervent, emotional character of Sunday morning worship services. Although Pastor McGhee, while still at the warehouse, had said that "folks don't wanta go places where it's dead" (November 5, 1989), worship services, in the fall of 1990, had in fact become quite "dead"--when compared with those at the warehouse sanctuary. Between the fall of 1989 and 1990, the amount of time devoted to spirit-filled dancing had decreased from twenty-nine minutes to slightly over five minutes per service. If the church's goal was truly to attract a more racially diverse membership, then such a change in church ritual might be in order. If the church sought to attract more white members, for example, it might be advisable to reduce the length of the service, as well as the amount of time devoted to very loud, emotional, spirit-filled praise--an aspect of worship which arguably has its roots in African ritual, and which might alienate white visitors. Early in 1992, I asked Pastor McGhee about the possibility of ritual changes that might have been implemented--particularly in 1990, after the move--in order to attract a wider audience:

LW: When you moved over here... for awhile things were... very different--far less spirit-filled. And I was wondering... if you could have been trying to appeal to a wider audience and therefore toned down the fervent character of the service....

P: That's wisdom and that's flexibility again.... There are

some things perhaps that you can eliminate, but yet have it spirit-filled, because you want to get a point across to people who perhaps have not been accustomed to our type of worship. Again you want to grow; and as it is with any growth, changes must be made, you see.... A change must take place if there is growth, and there's no doubt about that. And that's where many traditional preachers have missed the mark, because they want to keep Alpha and Omega on Fairview, but ya can't do that, now that you're at 400 West Bradley Avenue. And again, there are people that comes here to 400 West Bradley Avenue, who would have never come there--because of the exterior. And people look at it from that point, and the people who was coming to Fairview then was people who loved that church and what have you.... They didn't have anything to look for, just for a service, and a good spirit-filled service, and that was it. But now you got peoples who are comin'; they speculating and they are curious. And they'll come in and look, and when all this takes place in the church,... the service have to just be able to minister to all of these people. And me being a pastor who have the spirit of discernment, I look out there and I can see these type things takin' place, and so... I ask the Lord for the flexibility so that we can meet the needs of these people, but yet maintain the flow of the spirit. Because without that, there is no need to carry on--if the Holy Ghost is not going to use us to the capacity of ministering the word of God, and the laying of hands, or whatever the need is. So we must be careful of that, that we don't get... too into... impressin' or trying to win people of a mass, than keeping the relationship that we have with the Lord Jesus Christ. So you got to have both: you got to have the relationship with him--you don't want to lose that--and you got to have the flexibility, because that's why He's there to bring about the flexibility, and so you need to be able to flow with it but yet maintain a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. And I can see why, you know, you starting off with us at the old church and you saw the flow, and you saying well I get here and we see a different thing. Of course, I've seen great change since we come here. But I know that the spirit of God is still moving because things are taking place here that never took place there. We never had seventeen people to come up and get baptized in water in Jesus' name [as did on February 16, 1992]. So right away, on one hand, you may say: well maybe they might be losing out here; but then you look at the other hand: no, because this never took place. And you see, the Holy Ghost is such an intelligent... Spirit; it's so intelligent that it knows how to interact and react at certain times, in order to bring about that great change. Because at our other church, there was certain things that we couldn't have done. Really, we couldn't have accommodated the people that we baptized, like seventeen on

the Sunday. We couldn't have done it as rapidly as we did it; we didn't have the facilities to get these peoples ready, you see....

I'm always excited about something and that's what the church is all about, being excited: what's gonna [take] place this Sunday and what's gonna take place next Sunday. And you're always looking for somethin', because of the flexibility. But if you're not flexible,... if we just gonna say, well, that we was really fervent in the spirit on Fairview--of course we were, we just had a knock-down time. Come here [at 400 West Bradley], we've had those times but...there's a lot of things that have taken place in between there. There's a lot of things you have to look at and to carry on that you didn't have to worry about over there. So it's a lot of things to bring about flexibility, spiritual wise, spiritually so we want to say that the Lord is using us now, I would feel, in a greater way than He ever did before. Because there are many people who have come to this church who's drug addicts that just really got in the prayer line and next thing we know they're off of drugs and you know doing quite well. So there's been a lot of changes made, but I think it's for the good. So I understand how you [arrive at] your interpretation;... it's not bad because what you're saying I can agree with that. But I think I, on this side, can really give some insight to why these things take place, you know. So I can understand why you said that the flow of the spirit seemed to be more intense over there than it is here (I.3.12.92; emphasis added).

Pastor McGhee clearly acknowledged that the style of worship at Alpha and Omega underwent significant change after the move to 400 West Bradley, agreeing that worship became less fervent. He further noted that the more impressive church edifice was itself responsible for drawing community members who would never have come to the warehouse sanctuary, and maintained that the church needed to minister "to people who perhaps have not been accustomed to our type of worship." Although he acknowledged both the less fervent worship and the greater diversity of persons in attendance after the move, he insisted that the Spirit was manifesting itself in different ways--as, for example, in bringing seventeen persons to be baptized during one Sunday

morning service. The Holy Ghost, he believed, played a role in "bring[ing] about that great change" which the church had experienced. Pastor McGhee's belief that Alpha and Omega needed to minister "to people who perhaps have not been accustomed to our type of worship" lends credence to the present theory that ritual change--particularly the shorter services and the less fervent character of worship--occurred, at least in part, to attract a wider audience.

In an interview with Pastor McGhee just six weeks before the move, while I still had no idea that a move was imminent, he confided in me his desire to shorten the length of worship services, and to implement other changes. Concerned that significant rapid change would alienate some of his parishioners, he suggested that major changes could only be undertaken in conjunction with "something to do it with, or cross over on"--that is, a catalyst--as, for example, the institution of a radio broadcast of Sunday morning services. Although the Sunday morning broadcast never materialized, the move to 400 West Bradley provided the catalyst for some of the changes which he sought to implement. The following excerpts from this interview with Pastor McGhee, conducted weeks before the church would announce its move, indicate that he was already eager to make some changes in the style of Sunday morning worship:

As time go on,... we do plan to cut a lot of things and shift a lot of things around, as soon as, you know, God has blessed us to erect our place... and that would cut our services, you know....

Like I said before, as we go on, we're lookin' for reconstruction, you know, because as you get a mass of

people, and as you grow, you have to reconstruct, you know, in order to keep the growth goin'; so we're lookin at it from that standpoint. We're expanding the foundation, so the services will be cut, maybe in a half, to about a half.... Because we had planned another broadcast⁵ during the Sunday morning service, if we could get it, but we have not been able to get it. And that would cut it automatically, because you have a time schedule, that you can tell people that we got to do it that way.... You don't want to be so dogmatic about cutting things, because people feel that they are being abused in a way that they're not gettin' the chance to express themselves. So you have to go with the flow a little bit....

When you're gonna make a transition, you need something to do it with, or cross over on. So that's one thing I wanted to do, is to incorporate another broadcast, and that way we could make a transition, and make it easy, and nobody would do a lot of complaining, and nobody feel they being taken advantage of, and we could, you know, get 'em into the flow of that. But if you just, 'plunk,' and make a change, people just go 'Wow.' So sudden, you know, so we don't wanta do that. We don't wanta lose the people we got, and we don't wanta intimidate 'em by thinkin' we just doin' it like we wanta do it, not givin' them some kind of complaint. So hopefully we'll get that built in soon (I.11.15.89; emphasis added).

As these comments made before the move indicate, Pastor McGhee was clearly concerned with expanding the church's membership, and realized that some changes in worship style would have to be made to facilitate that growth. Presumably, halving the duration of Sunday morning worship services would enable Alpha and Omega to attract a more diverse membership. At the same time, however, Pastor McGhee realized that significant change would be better received by the membership if it appeared to be the logical consequence of some transitional event, namely, the proposed Sunday morning broadcast.

When the prospect of a second broadcast fell through, the

⁵ That is, in addition to the evening broadcast.

catalyst for this ritual change proved to be the move to 400 West Bradley. Although the reduction in service length after the move was not nearly so drastic as that proposed--only 9.1 percent, not 50 percent--the overall ritual transformation, as discussed above, was quite dramatic. Before the move, Pastor McGhee explained that change shouldn't be so abrupt that people feel "they're not gettin' the chance to express themselves." However, congregants did actually have much less opportunity to "express themselves" after the move. The emotionally charged character of worship at the warehouse gave way to a much more sedate style of worship after the move. With less time devoted to congregational singing, a much shorter Testimony Service, and a significant reduction in the amount of spirit-filled dancing, expressive opportunities for the average parishioner had been significantly diminished. Whereas these three activities--congregational singing, the Testimony Service, and spirit-filled dancing--accounted for an average of seventy-seven minutes per service in 1989, they accounted for only about thirty-five minutes per service in 1990. When asked about the much more sober atmosphere that prevailed after the move, Pastor McGhee later explained that the overcrowding at the warehouse sanctuary caused spirit-filled excitement to be highly contagious:

[It was] because of the setting.... When you have a group of people that's just mashed together [as they were at 905 West Fairview], it's just like you sitting next to me. I catch on fire. If you don't move, then you catch on fire. But here with the space [at 400 West Bradley], people have the tendency to utilize the space, get distracted by other things, you see, and therefore not catch on fire (I.3.12.92).

My own experience corroborated the pastor's observation, as well as the appropriateness of his metaphor. With over 125 people all singing, shouting, and dancing in a room only twenty by fifty feet in size, the temperature at the warehouse sanctuary rose noticeably during the course of the three hour services.

Combined with the congregation's desire to "go higher in the Lord" and the gradual crescendo in dynamic levels, the increased room temperature contributed to the service's escalating intensity. The increased spiritual temperature caused members to "catch on fire" more easily, and once ignited, "the fire" spread quickly. With the move to a much more spacious sanctuary--one with a lofty ceiling and over three times the floor space--the room temperature underwent little fluctuation, and the dynamic levels never reached the powerful, penetrating volumes that had characterized worship at the warehouse. There can be little doubt, therefore, that the new, much more spacious sanctuary contributed to the drop in spirit-filled fervor, as was suggested by Pastor McGhee.

Like Pastor McGhee, the minister of music at Alpha and Omega was aware that many changes had taken place since the move, but he accounted for these changes in a somewhat different manner. He noted that the,

emphasis is more now on teaching than emotionalism. [It used to be the Pastor's belief that you] spend your energy here so that you don't have time to do bad things. If you get tired here, it's for the cause. Teaching is now more important. [The] emotionalism of the old church is still there. It will never not be there, [but] Pastor refrains himself from dancing as much as he used to, trying to emphasize something else (I.1.26.91).

The minister of music's observations are borne out by the data discussed above. In the fall of 1990, the pastor and congregation were dancing much less than they had a year before. Whereas an average of nearly fifteen percent of the worship service had been devoted to Spirit-filled dancing in the fall of 1989, this activity abruptly decreased after the move, accounting for less than three percent of the service's duration in the fall of 1990. Because the portion of a service devoted to Spirit-filled dancing was the most emotionally charged segment of worship, any reduction in this activity might be interpreted as a de-emphasis of "emotionalism."

The minister of music's perception that the emphasis at Alpha and Omega had shifted from emotionalism to teaching, or education, receives some additional support from Table 7-1. Each of the four services analyzed from the fall of 1990 featured a sermon: this was not true in 1989 or 1991. While the sermon's average duration had actually decreased since 1989, its presence in every service analyzed from 1990 suggests that the sermon--with its preaching and teaching of the Word of God, the most educational element of worship--had become more indispensable.

Other changes observed in 1990, the year following the move, included a significant reduction in the amount of congregational singing, as well as the hymn's addition to the Order of Worship--changes which might similarly be viewed as evidence of a shift from emotionalism to teaching. Pastor McGhee explained that, after the move, he encouraged the praise leaders to sing more

hymns, and fewer congregational songs:

P: I have tried to encourage them to kind of stay into the hymns, as far as our hymnal is concerned, to sing more of those type of things.... I have spoken to the praise leaders that we would like to kind of lean towards our hymnal, singing blood songs. We call 'em blood songs, songs that would minister to the people while they are here. Some people do not testify, and they don't get as involved in the service as others do. So you want to, if nothing but the song, if they can get involved in that part of singing with the congregation.

LW: How do hymns do that more than congregational songs do it?

P: ...Congregational songs, they're more repetitious, you see, and if you noticed, they usually sing the chorus and they just stay right with that.

LW: [But] that way it's easier for people to participate if they've never been here before.

P: That is true; that is very true. But then, on the other hand... I feel... it's good to have one in there, but I think that if we had a break, and have one, and then had a break or either have the hymn and then one of those congregational songs at the end, it would also enhance what they've gotten through the hymn, you know. But also I think the hymn is like the meat; it kind of keeps your feet on the ground. It really talks to you. When I say talk to you, you got, "nothing but the blood of Jesus can wash my sins away." It kind of minister[s] like I do, in a way.... Where the congregational song it would be an inspirational type thing; it would be more on the up note....

LW: So would you say that the hymns are more instructive?

P: Definitely, they are more instructive (I.2.13.92).

Clearly, then, the pastor perceived the congregational songs as more inspirational, and the hymns as more instructive.

Therefore, the reduction in congregational singing--from an average of about thirty minutes per service in 1989 to about nineteen minutes in 1990⁶--as well as the inclusion of a hymn in

⁶Only that congregational singing which occurred at the beginning of the service--that is, before and during the Testimony Service--is shown in Table 7-1 and here considered. In practice, this accounted for almost all of the congregational singing, as these songs were rarely sung after the entrance of the pastor and choir.

the order of worship in 1990, served to decrease the service's inspirational content, while at the same time increasing its instructional content. This interpretation further reinforces the minister of music's belief that the pastor's emphasis shifted from "emotionalism," while at the warehouse sanctuary, to "teaching," after the move to 400 West Bradley.

While less time was allotted to congregational singing after the move, more time and attention was devoted to the choir, the Voices of Pentecost. Although Choir Processionals would have been impractical and nearly unthinkable in the congested and overcrowded warehouse sanctuary, they were instituted immediately after the move to 400 West Bradley. The choir's entrance, which occurred shortly after the Pastor's own entrance, was usually announced by the pastor, in terms which accorded a special status to the choir, as follows:

We want you now to receive the great singers that's gonna minister to us in songs today. They gonna lift up the name of Jesus in song. Will you thank God for these wonderful young people, and will you pray for them as they come in the name of the Lord (Service 9; September 29, 1991).

As the pastor's introduction suggests, Alpha and Omega was proud of the quality and youthfulness of its choir. Expressions like "great singers" and "these wonderful young people" were formulas often employed by the pastor in reference to the Voices of Pentecost. After a brief introduction by Pastor McGhee, the instrumental musicians usually began playing, and the choir filed slowly, often with choreographed steps, down the church's center aisle. This processional was a way for the church to increase

the choir's visibility, and to recognize the commitment made by the choir members and the accompanying instrumentalists.

In the fall of 1990, three of the four services analyzed included a Choir Processional, and two of the three processionals were followed by a Processional Selection, sung by the Voices of Pentecost. A year later, all four services analyzed included both a Choir Processional and a Processional Selection. Thus, by 1991, these two elements had become a standardized part of worship. This instance of ritual transformation indicates that more attention was gradually being accorded to the Voices of Pentecost after the move. The Choir Processional and Processional Selection, it seems, became a new way for Alpha and Omega to showcase the size, talent, and youthfulness of its choir.

The introduction and gradual standardization of the Choir Processional and Processional Selection is not the only evidence of the choir's increased importance. During the fall of 1989, three of the four services analyzed contained only two choir selections--Selections A and B. A year later, after the introduction of the Processional Selection, that number had risen to three; and, by 1991, most of the services analyzed featured four choir selections--Selections A and B, the Processional Selection, as well as an additional selection. With the implementation of the Choir Processional, the gradual standardization of a Processional Selection, and the frequent inclusion of a fourth Choir Selection, the amount of time

allotted to the Voices of Pentecost rose from an average of about seventeen minutes per service in the fall of 1989, to almost twenty-four minutes in 1990, to over twenty-eight minutes in 1991. Because the services in 1990 and 1991 were significantly shorter than those in 1989, the increased proportion of time devoted to the choir was greater than these numbers suggest. Thus, the proportion of worship time allotted to the Voices of Pentecost nearly doubled between 1989 and 1991--jumping from 7.8 percent to 15.5 percent of the average service's total duration.

Why did the choir's role in worship become more prominent after the move? Again, it seems clear that the new sanctuary was the catalyst for this change. Before ever attending Alpha and Omega, I had asked an African-American friend about the music of black churches in Champaign-Urbana, and was told that Alpha and Omega had the "hottest" choir in town. Although the Voices of Pentecost had this reputation before the move, the church's storefront location seemed to prevent many community members from taking the church and its choir very seriously. Not long after the move, Pastor McGhee remembered, "other folk was laughing at us, [and sayin': you] tell me you all got a choir, and got all them people, where is your church?" (Anniversary service, October 31, 1990). With the move to 400 West Bradley, Alpha and Omega had a "real" church structure, and as Pastor McGhee's comment suggests, others could begin to take the church seriously. Because the choir's reputation had already been established while at the warehouse sanctuary, it was natural for the church to

feature the choir more prominently in worship after the move. About a year after the move, the Minister of Music himself said that Alpha and Omega has "the choir in town" (I.1.26.91). If, as one of the choir's featured soloists suggested, "sometimes people don't come to church for the word, but for the music" (I.8.18.92), then increasing the choir's role in Sunday worship might help to attract a greater variety of people to Alpha and Omega. As was indicated above, Pastor McGhee was well aware of the church's responsibility to minister to people of diverse backgrounds.

Although several of the ritual modifications discussed underwent a reversal in 1991, such was not the case with the choir's increased prominence. The Voices of Pentecost continued to play a greater role in worship in 1991 than it had in 1990. Another facet of ritual which became increasingly more important in each successive year was the altar call. The time allotted for the altar appeal, which lasted an average of only eight minutes in 1989, had increased to an average of over twenty-one minutes in 1990 and almost thirty-five minutes in 1991. Of all the changes in ritual which occurred at Alpha and Omega, the altar call's expansion was the most dramatic: growing from four percent of the service's duration in 1989, to twelve percent in 1990, to nineteen percent in 1991.

Before suggesting an explanation for this dramatic increase, it must be understood that the altar call was clearly very important before the move. While still at the warehouse

sanctuary, Pastor McGhee had explained to me that "the purpose of our being [here]" is to baptize people in the name of Jesus Christ. "The whole background of our comin' together," he said, "is to win peoples to Christ" (I.11.15.89). The altar call was the church's *raison d'être*, and even though its duration was much shorter in 1989, it was still the goal or culmination of every service. Well aware of its primacy after having attended only several services, I had observed, in an interview with the pastor, that Sunday morning worship seemed to take the form of "a gradual crescendo,... a buildup of intensity to the altar call" (I.11.15.89).

Already the goal of worship in 1989, the altar call--through its gradual expansion--assumed increasingly greater importance during the next two years. What factors, then, accounted for the more than fourfold expansion of the altar call by the fall of 1991? Like other instances of ritual transformation, this change appears to have been precipitated by the church's move, and any explanation of the altar call's expansion must consider the impact which the move had upon Alpha and Omega's perception of its role in the community.

In the fall of 1989, Alpha and Omega seemed to be a very isolated community of believers. Aside from warnings about drugs, alcohol, and "shackin',"⁷ little or no reference was made to the community or world outside of Alpha and Omega. The

⁷A term used by Pastor McGhee, "shackin'" refers to any sexual relationship between a man and a woman outside of the bonds of marriage.

overcrowding experienced every Sunday at 905 West Fairview left little room for visitors. With the move across town, however, Alpha and Omega was transformed from an isolated community of believers, meeting in a crowded, nondescript warehouse space, to a visible congregation, centrally located in a spacious and attractive contemporary sanctuary. Since more than a third of the pews sat vacant, this new sanctuary--unlike the warehouse--could comfortably accommodate many visitors. Slowly, after the move, the congregation became more involved in the larger community: church announcements began to mention community events, like performances by the University of Illinois' Black Chorus; the Voices of Pentecost performed at a local Gospel Festival, and as a guest choir at other local churches; Alpha and Omega invited the Black Chorus at the University of Illinois to participate in their Anniversary celebration; and, in 1992, Pastor McGhee joined the Minister's Alliance of Champaign-Urbana. According to one member, the pastor joined the Ministers' Alliance because of accusations "that Alpha and Omega keeps to itself and doesn't fellowship" (I.1.11.93). This accusation, made nearly three years after the move, suggests that Alpha and Omega was still being perceived by some as an isolated community long after the move.

Although the transition was very gradual, Alpha and Omega made a serious effort to become a more integral part of the African-American religious community in Champaign-Urbana. The church's move to 400 West Bradley, moreover, was the primary

catalyst for this change. Alpha and Omega's perception of its different role in the community contributed importantly to modifications in the ritual patterns of Sunday morning worship.

The altar call's expansion, for example, can best be explained as the result of Alpha and Omega's changing perception of its role in the community. At 905 West Fairview, with little space for visitors, Pastor McGhee was preaching largely to his community of believers--those already converted. But, after the move, with his conviction that "there are people that comes here to 400 West Bradley Avenue, who would have never come there because of the exterior," Pastor McGhee believed that his audience included more people who had not yet accepted "the one true plan of salvation."

After the move to 400 West Bradley, the altar call's "prayer line" grew in importance, becoming a central feature of almost every service. During the altar call, after having made his appeal for persons wishing to be baptized "in the name of Jesus," Pastor McGhee usually invited persons to come down for prayer, "or whatever." On some occasions, when "the spirit is prevalent," nearly the entire congregation came forth for prayer, filling the center aisle and the aisles along the church's rear wall. These invitations were directed to persons seeking salvation (baptism), prayer, or membership in the church family, as follows:

[If] there's somebody that want prayer, whatever, you just come on down. We got altar workers to pray with you, however you comin'.... This is not only for sinners; it's not only for people out of the church. This is for anybody

who is tryin' to refuse to eat the king's meat. This is for anybody that's tryin' to live right and have a desire to live right. (Service 6; October 21, 1990)

...Come for prayer. However you come, just walk down the aisles.... Whatever your needs are, get up from where you are and come. Let's do this quickly. You know what you stand in need of. You know whether you're saved or not. You know whether you want to be a part of this family. You get up and come, 'cause God knows your heart today.... We got men and women here gonna pray with you.... Somebody say, 'Well, I wanta be a part of this church'; get in line, come on. You know [if] you're not water baptized in Jesus' name; get in line, come on. (Service 7; October 28, 1990)

Before the move, Pastor McGhee invited persons to come to the altar for prayer in only one of the four services analyzed. After the move, however, the prayer line became a nearly indispensable part of worship. Usually culminating in the laying on of hands, the prayer line gave anyone present the opportunity to be prayed for and touched by Pastor McGhee. With Alpha and Omega's growing church membership, the altar call and its prayer line enabled Pastor McGhee to maintain personal and individual contact with any congregant seeking prayer. The prayer line also allowed each and every congregant--including visitors--the opportunity to approach the "spokesman for the King of Kings" at the altar, the church's most sacred space, and provided further evidence of the pastor's willingness to give personal attention to those seeking help. In fact, Pastor McGhee usually lavished extra attention upon any visitors expressing the need for prayer or fellowship. Because the sanctuary at 400 West Bradley provided ample room for visitors, Alpha and Omega gradually began to perceive itself less as an isolated community of believers and more as a fellowship of saints ministering to the spiritual needs

of the larger community.

In considering reasons for the altar call's expansion, some practical considerations should also be taken into account. As Pastor McGhee acknowledged in our dialogue, quoted above, the warehouse sanctuary "couldn't have accommodated" the seventeen baptisms performed on February 16, 1992; "we couldn't have done it as rapidly as we did it; we didn't have the facilities to get these peoples ready." Even more important, it is unlikely that the persons assembled at the warehouse sanctuary on any given Sunday ever included as many as seventeen adults who had not yet been baptized.

Differences in architectural design and the baptismal pool's placement before and after the move also contributed to the new emphasis bestowed upon the altar call. With only two, very narrow aisles and little space for members to gather around the altar, the warehouse space could not have accommodated lengthy prayer lines. The design of the new sanctuary, which featured three wide aisles and ample space around the altar, permitted as many as eighty persons to gather in the center aisle, and return to their seats via the side aisles after Pastor McGhee had prayed for and touched them. At 905 West Fairview, the baptismal pool was an aluminum tub located in the church lobby, visible only to those in the sanctuary's last row. The baptismal pool at 400 West Bradley, on the other hand, had a position of prominence at the center of the church's front wall, directly below the cross (see Figure 7-2). Although the pool itself, about thirty inches

in depth, was concealed from the congregation's view by wooden paneling, congregants were able to see the person being baptized and the deacon performing the rite. Without the prominent baptismal pool and the added space, it seems unlikely that the altar call would have expanded to its present proportions.

After the move greater portions of the worship service were allotted to the altar call, as well as to performances by the Voices of Pentecost. The greater time devoted to these activities meant that other elements of worship might have to be significantly pared. Nowhere was this reduction more evident than in the shortened Testimony Service. In 1989, the Testimony service, on the average, lasted longer than any other element of the worship except the sermon. Averaging nearly thirty-five minutes in length in 1989, it had decreased in length to less than nineteen minutes in 1990. By the fall of 1991, however, this trend had reversed, and the length of the Testimony Service had increased to over twenty-six minutes. The data reinforce the minister of music's observation that less emphasis was being placed on the more emotional components of worship in 1990.

After the move to 400 West Bradley, the worship services at Alpha and Omega underwent significant transformation. The foregoing discussion has detailed these ritual changes and proposed a number of possible interpretations. After the move to a much larger, more impressive, and centrally-located sanctuary, Alpha and Omega had additional space to expand its membership. Proud of the fact that the congregation had prospered and

outgrown its warehouse sanctuary, the pastor and members, upon the move to 400 West Bradley, announced their intent to fill this new church home to capacity. Aware that the church edifice itself would attract a new, more diverse crowd, Pastor McGhee observed that Alpha and Omega needed to minister "to people who perhaps have not been accustomed to our type of worship." It appears, then, that many of the ritual changes initiated after the move were designed to attract a larger and more diverse audience. In January, 1991, the minister of music noted that the old emphasis on "emotionalism" was gradually being replaced with an emphasis on "teaching." When, by the fall of 1991, the more sober and restrained worship had failed to attract sufficient new members, it appears that the church began to revive some of that "emotionalism" which characterized its worship at the warehouse sanctuary.

Chapter 8

"Have Your Way Lord": Musical and Ritual Flexibility at Alpha and Omega

When the flexibility is in our congregation
and in the midst of us, people will marvel
and be turned to the Lord.
--Pastor McGhee (I.3.12.92)

I. Introduction

During the first worship service I attended at Alpha and Omega, in October, 1989, my attention was drawn to the flexible character of worship, the spontaneous music-making, and the pastor's repeated references to the importance of flexibility in worship. However, the real significance of flexibility in worship at Alpha and Omega became most obvious during the Sunday morning worship service on October 29, 1989 (Service No. 3; see Appendix A). Markedly different than the services I had attended earlier that month, this service was held up by participants as a model for serious, spirit-filled "churchin'." Having attended three services at Alpha and Omega, I had begun to get a sense of a standard order of worship; and because printed bulletins had not yet been introduced, my understanding of service order was based entirely upon observation. Service No. 3, however, did not adhere to the order of worship that I had observed on the previous three Sundays. Unlike those other services which I had attended, Service No. 3 was far more spirit-filled and featured two altar calls, one early in the service; and although it lacked

a sermon, it lasted longer than any other service I had attended.

It was during this service, moreover, that Pastor McGhee made frequent references to the flexible character of worship at Alpha and Omega. For example, shortly after a young man from Chicago testified that he had come "all the way here" to Alpha and Omega to be baptized, Pastor McGhee made an altar appeal, saying,

This here brother's come all the way from Chicago, Illinois, to get water baptized in Jesus' name. Hey! We don't have no certain order when folks wanta get saved. Hey! We don't have no certain order now. There may be somebody right here, right now. Don't worry about interruptin' our program. Don't worry about that. If you are here right now, you can come down this aisle and there's somebody here to baptize ya in water in Jesus' name. [Pastor shouts] We're not waitin' on no certain time. The Bible say, today you're here and gone. Come on Sister. Come on Brother. We got time for ya right now. Oh, Jesus. Glory to God. We gonna go like God say go, hallelujah! (emphasis added)

With similar statements throughout the service--e.g., "We're going to do this thing just like the Lord wants to do it"--the Pastor made reference to the belief that the Holy Ghost was present and working in the service, guiding its direction.

As my familiarity with the church increased, it became more evident that this belief in the "Spirit-filled" character of Pentecostal worship was a key construct governing doctrine and behavior at Alpha and Omega. As such, the concept of flexibility (or "Spirit-filled" worship) is indispensable in shedding light upon the nature of ritual, and upon the character of musical expression at Alpha and Omega. While Pastor McGhee and congregants commonly suggested that glossolalia, spirit-filled dancing, and the variable order of worship constitute evidence of

the Holy Ghost's presence at Alpha and Omega, it is clear that other facets of worship--such as music and musical behavior--were similarly "Holy-Ghost filled." The doctrinal emphasis placed upon being Spirit-filled was often manifest in musical and ritual flexibility. In his study of Aymaran musical creation, Thomas Turino has explored "the homologous relationship between musical culture and behavior, forms, and values in other realms of activity" (1989:2). Similarly, at Alpha and Omega a homologous relationship existed between doctrinal and expressive domains. This chapter examines the coherence between Pentecostal doctrine and musical and ritual behavior, exploring the flexible, spirit-filled character which permeated many different aspects of worship at Alpha and Omega.

In treating the issue of musical and ritual flexibility, the analytic approach employed in this chapter corresponds to Merriam's model for ethnomusicological study, with the discussion focusing respectively upon concept, behavior, and sound (Merriam 1964:32-3). The following analysis of musical and ritual flexibility examines: (1) the concept of flexibility, and its basis in Pentecostal doctrine; (2) evidence of flexibility in both ritual and musical behavior; and (3) the importance of flexibility in musical sound--particularly musical form. Because these three facets of musical culture--concept, behavior, and sound--are inseparable, it is impossible to divorce each completely from the others. In particular, the following discussion of the concept of flexibility is further enhanced

throughout the balance of the chapter, as it becomes increasingly clear that musical and ritual behavior and sound contribute importantly to the concept of flexibility.

II. Pentecostal Doctrine and the Concept of Flexibility

While scholars have noted the importance of flexibility in Pentecostal worship, no one has explored this aspect of worship in any great depth. Both McIntyre and Lawless have commented upon the unpredictability of Pentecostal worship. McIntyre has asserted that, "to a greater extent than perhaps any other branch of Christianity except Quakerism, Pentecostal groups as a whole tend to favor an improvised liturgy with an absolute minimum of predictability" (McIntyre 1976:35). Lawless further confirms the variability of Pentecostal worship, noting that "Pentecostals assert that 'anything' can happen at any time in a church service" (1988:59).

Arthur E. Paris, on the other hand, contends that Pentecostal worship is not as unpredictable as some scholars allege. While Paris' discussion of ritual in three Boston churches suggests that variability is an important component of black Pentecostal worship (1982:45-79), he concludes that ritual is not "chaotic and freewheeling," as some have suggested:

It should be emphasized that, despite descriptions of Black Pentecostal services as chaotic and freewheeling, all services are structured and participants act through their specified roles in constructing the ritual performance (Paris 1982:79).

Paris is justified in questioning descriptions which portray

Pentecostal worship as "chaotic and freewheeling." Indeed, despite the variable order of worship, the occasional omission of the sermon, and the great ritual flexibility at Alpha and Omega, some components of worship appear to have been indispensable. All evidence indicates, for example, that a Sunday morning service without an altar call, an offering, congregational singing, and at least one or two choir selections was unthinkable at Alpha and Omega. The emic explanation, at least at Alpha and Omega, however, points not to the invariable, but to the flexible elements of worship. Therefore, although some components of the service order were invariably present, the pastor and members, in explaining the flexible and spirit-filled character of worship at Alpha and Omega, pointed rather to the flexible elements--the omitted sermon or the variable amount of spirit-filled dancing. From the congregation's perspective, worship was freewheeling, because it was thought to be guided by the Holy Spirit, a power greater than the congregation itself. Pastor McGhee and the congregation of Alpha and Omega would concur with Lawless' assertion that "'anything' can happen" in a Pentecostal worship service--including healing and miracles.

During worship services, Pastor McGhee and church members commonly advocated the need to be "flexible" in their worship. According to the pastor, this emphasis upon spontaneity and flexibility at Alpha and Omega is grounded in Pentecostal doctrine. Citing Acts 2, Pastor McGhee preached that salvation requires the gift of the Holy Ghost, as well as the resultant

speaking in tongues. The pastor and congregation believed that there is only one plan of salvation: a person must repent of his/her sins, be baptized in water in the name of Jesus, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, which includes speaking in tongues, and lead a holy life. For Pastor McGhee and his congregation, the value placed upon flexibility was related to the belief that either an individual or a group of people--as in the Upper Room (Acts 2)--can receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Because they believed that the Holy Ghost's presence can direct people's actions, causing them, for example, to speak in tongues or act as if drunk, members considered it imperative that they be flexible and willing to yield to the Spirit's direction during worship.

Members of Alpha and Omega, and other Pentecostals as well, trace this need to be filled with the Holy Spirit to a biblical passage, Acts 2:4: "And they were filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." This verse, the scripture most frequently quoted at Alpha and Omega, places an implicit emphasis upon flexibility. When I asked Pastor McGhee about the relationship between this verse and the flexibility advocated at Alpha and Omega, he agreed that Pentecostal flexibility is "rooted" in this scripture:

...Without... Acts 2 and 4, it [worship] could very easily be a traditional one-two-three thing. But because of their receiving the Holy Ghost in Acts Chapter 2, and our church being spirit-filled, the flexibility have to be there. Because on the day that they received the Holy Ghost, it was so much flexibility, and when I look at it, that the people marvel at what took place with these people in the upper room. And so likewise, *when the flexibility is in our congregation and in the midst of us, people will marvel and be turned to the Lord rather than turn away, you see....* If

people would... marvel at things that take place in the midst of the service when they come in, there's no way for them not to be convicted and turn to the Lord--if the flexibility is there. So Acts, Chapter 2 and verse 4 is definitely our key for flexibility (I.3.12.92; emphasis added).

The value ascribed to flexibility at Alpha and Omega, then, had its basis in Pentecostal doctrine and the Pentecostal interpretation of the scriptures. Pastor McGhee's observation that great flexibility, when experienced in worship, will cause people to "marvel and be turned to the Lord," hints at the real significance of flexibility at Alpha and Omega. Rather than asserting that the congregation will "marvel" when the Holy Ghost is in their midst, Pastor McGhee implicitly equated flexibility with the Holy Ghost's presence, suggesting that flexibility is itself cause to marvel. While flexibility in the secular world rarely provides an occasion to "marvel," in this religious context flexibility meant that the Holy Spirit was present. Thus, fervent worship which resulted in varied service order *signified* the presence of the Holy Ghost. This was consistent with the tendency of members to explain flexible activities--glossolalia, fervent worship, and variable service order, in particular--as evidence or proof of the Holy Ghost's presence. Congregants would "marvel," because flexibility, in all of its forms, was equated with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Flexibility in worship was thus attributed to the Holy Ghost's presence, a presence which could manifest itself in different types of religious experience--in variable service order, holy dancing, glossolalia, spontaneous musical behavior,

and flexible musical forms. Pastor McGhee and members regularly acknowledged that glossolalia and fervent worship provided empirical evidence of the Holy Ghost's presence. When the Lord was so "prevalent" that the order of worship needed to be varied, the resulting alteration in service order was interpreted as further confirmation that the Holy Spirit was actively directing the course of worship. In those services where the standard order of worship had to be altered, a public explanation was usually given. These explanations are considered in greater detail below, in conjunction with the discussion of variable service order. At this point, however, it will be sufficient to note that these explanations attributed fervent worship and variable service order to the presence of the Holy Ghost. Accounting for the unusual service order on October 29, 1989, for example, Pastor McGhee said, "We're goin' to do this thing just like the Lord want to do it."

Glossolalia and spirit-filled dancing were among the signs that the Holy Ghost was present and directing congregants' actions. When a member spoke in tongues for the first time, the event was understood as a gift--"the gift of the Holy Ghost speaking in tongues"--and viewed as evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence. Glossolalia was believed to be a sign from God that the congregant had been baptized by the Holy Ghost and was "Holy Ghost filled." Subsequent glossolalia by that member provided additional, but seemingly unnecessary, proof of the Holy Ghost's indwelling. Similarly, the terms which Pastor McGhee and church

members employed to describe ritual dance--what some researchers call "ecstatic dance"--likewise implied the involvement of the Holy Ghost: "spirit-filled dancing" and "holy dance."

While ritual flexibility was commonly explained or justified during worship, public explanations of musical flexibility were usually not offered, making it somewhat more difficult to draw the connection between musical flexibility and Holy Ghost involvement. Nonetheless, flexibility in musical sound and behavior was clearly related to the belief that the Holy Ghost is present during worship. Just as members believed that the Spirit could lead worship in unexpected directions, they also believed that the Spirit's presence affected musical behavior and sound, animating and directing musical performances. This accounts for the fact that the duration of congregational songs, hymns, and choir selections was extremely variable. At Alpha and Omega, all of these genres were "open-ended" in conception.

While an outsider might expect performances of a single hymn or choir selection to be fairly uniform from one week to the next, they were in fact characterized by great variability. A spirit-filled performance of a particular selection, for example, might last more than twice as long as a more routine performance of that same selection. The analysis of five performances of "Oh Lord We Praise You," presented later in this chapter, illustrates that the duration of a choir selection can vary significantly from performance to performance. The shortest, or most "routine," of the five performances analyzed lasted only three

minutes and twenty seconds, while the longest lasted seven and one-half minutes. Though an outsider might attribute this flexibility to improvisation, the emic explanation points rather to the presence of the Holy Ghost. When asked about the flexible structure of choir selections, one choir member, and frequent lead singer, explained that variable form is the result of the Holy Ghost's presence:

You can do it [i.e., a vamp or section] as many or few times [as you like].... You don't never do it [i.e., a choir selection] totally the same way. If the Spirit comes in and takes control of one part... we do it over and over again (I.9.18.92).

The spirit-filled character of musical performance was likewise suggested when Pastor McGhee announced the Voices of Pentecost. Introducing the choir selections, he commonly called upon the choir to sing "under the unction of the Holy Ghost," as he did before the choir's B Selection on Sunday, October 22, 1989:

The Voices of Pentecost: will you receive them in Jesus' name, and let 'em sing under the unction of the Holy Ghost. God bless 'em, in the name of Jesus (Service No. 2).

The concept of flexibility was one which surfaced regularly at Alpha and Omega. Pastor McGhee and congregants often emphasized the need to be flexible during worship--always ready to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Although such admonitions to be flexible admittedly implied an active involvement on their part, congregants interpreted ritual flexibility as evidence of the Spirit's presence. Moreover, when providing a rationale for the musical and ritual flexibility encountered at Alpha and Omega, Pastor McGhee and congregants

invoked aspects of Pentecostal doctrine, particularly the important role which the Holy Spirit plays in the lives of saints. Their explanations--whether provided during worship as a justification for ritual flexibility, or when solicited in interviews--attributed variable service order, glossolalia, holy dancing, spontaneous musical behavior, and flexible musical forms to the Holy Ghost's presence and active involvement in worship. Precisely because it was understood as proof of the Holy Ghost's presence, flexibility was a powerfully charged concept at Alpha and Omega--a key principle, one grounded in Pentecostal doctrine and worldview, and one which can help to throw light upon behavior and sound.

III. Flexibility in Ritual and Musical Behavior

The foregoing discussion has sought to demonstrate the value attached to flexibility at Alpha and Omega, as well as its links to Pentecostal doctrine. The present section explores flexible behavior, both ritual and musical, in an attempt to show the far-reaching impact of the concept of flexibility. Because members cited ritual flexibility more often than musical flexibility as evidence of the Holy Ghost's presence, this section begins with a discussion of flexible ritual behavior.

During worship, the pastor and church leaders, with invocations like "Have your way Lord" or "Have your way Jesus," often implored the congregation during worship to be flexible and to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Church members

believed not only that an individual could be "Holy Ghost filled" but also that the worship service itself could be "Spirit-filled." In a Spirit-filled church, Pastor McGhee explained, it is essential to follow the direction of the Holy Ghost:

In our services we try to be open to hear what the spirit is saying, or what the spirit is leading us to do.... Because with a Spirit-filled church, there is a time when It's [the Spirit] like leaning that way, and if you get away from that, you miss sometime the thing that you should be accomplishing. You miss it because you don't flow with that flexibility. And so what we try to do is... what the Scripture calls for: 'he that has an ear let him hear' what the Spirit has to say to the church (I.3.12.92).

Although evidence of flexibility could be found in nearly every facet of ritual and musical behavior at Alpha and Omega, variable service order provides the most convincing example of the value attached to flexibility.

Variable service order was the one type of flexibility most commonly acknowledged at Alpha and Omega; and the concept of flexibility was usually invoked by way of explanation--typically, a justification for departure from the "standard" order of worship. When the standard service order was abandoned in Service No. 3, for example, the Pastor explained to his congregation, "We're going to do this just like the Lord wants to do it." When asked later about the unusual order of this worship service, Pastor McGhee explained that, though many services adhere to a "routine" order, there are times when the Lord "shows Himself more prevalent." He further suggested that healing and miracles take place in those services which are particularly spirit-filled--in those services with the greatest amount of

spirit-filled dancing. When asked about the unusual character of Service No. 3, Pastor McGhee attributed the altered order of worship to the Holy Ghost's presence:

LW: One service [Service 3]... was very different [from others that I attended], and during that service you said that this is what churchin' is all about.... That Sunday was different very early on, before you even came out.... I'd like to understand a little better... why that was the case.

P. ...You felt that it was somethin' different, and there's often times that that takes place.... You just know that the Lord is leading another way.... And I feel that a person that's gifted with the Holy Ghost--that's what I'm talkin' about, the Holy Ghost being a key factor in it-- [should]... just get outa the way and let the Lord do what He wants to do. And you'll find out, everybodys in the service will be blessed from that.

LW: Before the service [that Sunday], Brother H----- [asked if I planned to attend the Choir Concert and explained that] the Spirit level is higher [at that event]. I really didn't quite understand what he was sayin', but it seemed to me [later] that that Sunday was a manifestation of a higher spirit level.

P: Yeah, and it happens, and that's where I feel healing takes place, and a lot of other things. And people that have mental problems, whatever.... God begin to minister to these people. And I try to make a distinction that *though we have services, there are times when we just really go through a routine.* The Lord [accepts] that, because we doin' it to His glory, *but there are times.... that he shows Himself more prevalent, you know, and we have to adhere to that and take advantage of it.* Because as you would know, God being who He is, nobody could really stay on such a force often, you see. So He knows what we stand in need of, so we have to be receptive to it (I.11.15.89; emphasis added).

While most worship services proceeded loosely according to a standard order, a handful of particularly spirit-filled services departed markedly from the regular order of worship, with the omission of the sermon constituting the single greatest departure from the standard worship format. In three of the twelve services analyzed in Appendix A (Service Nos. 3, 9, and 10), for

example, the sermon was omitted. Since the average duration of the sermon, when present, was forty-eight minutes, it might be expected that these three services were significantly shorter than the others. On the contrary, the shortest of these three services lasted three hours, and Service No. 3, with a duration of three hours and thirty-six minutes, was the longest of the twelve services analyzed. The sermon's omission was therefore counterbalanced by the prolongation of other events.

In Service Nos. 3, 9, and 10, the sermon's omission was offset by extended altar calls and large blocks of time devoted to spirit-filled dancing and praise. In fact, Service No. 3 included two altar appeals, lasting a total of eighteen minutes, while the altar calls in Service Nos. 9 and 10 lasted forty-eight and fifty-seven minutes respectively. Spirit-filled dancing accounted for sixty-six, thirty-one, and fifty-six minutes, in Service Nos. 3, 9, and 10 respectively. Moreover, when compared with the other nine services analyzed, the data indicate that these three services were clearly more Spirit-filled than the others--since no other service analyzed in Appendix A had more than twenty-one minutes of spirit-filled dancing and praise.

In short, the Spirit-filled intensity of these three services seemed to account for alterations in service order, as well as for the omission of the sermon in each. In Service Nos. 3 and 10, Pastor McGhee offered some explanation for the omission of the sermon. During Service No. 3, the most fervent of the twelve services analyzed, Pastor McGhee justified the sermon's

omission and the interrupted offering as follows:

[1:05] This here brother's come all the way from Chicago, Illinois, to get water baptized in Jesus' name. Hey! We don't have no certain order when folks wanta get saved.... You might be here right now. Don't worry about interruptin' our program. Don't worry about that. If you here right now, you can come down this aisle and there's somebody here to baptize you in water in Jesus' name. We're not waitin' on no certain time.... *We gonna go like God say go, hallelujah....* [1:08"] I know most of the time we accustomed to a sermon bein' preached and then the altar call bein' made, but God said make it now. People can get restless and go home and change their mind, and the devil will steal the victory from 'em. [1:35--Later, after Spirit-filled dancing has interrupted the offertory:] Listen here, we ain't gettin' nothin' but the offering. We got time to get that. Hey! Somebody believe in rejoicin' with somebody that rejoice, I want you to jump on your feet. If you can jump, jump. If you can dance, dance. [2:25--After the Spirit-filled praise has abated and the offering has been resumed:] *We're goin' to do this thing just like the Lord want to do it (emphasis added).*

Similar explanations, some chanted, were offered in Service 10:

[1:58] I had a little sermon ready....
[1:59] You know I had a little sermon back there. I got my little notes and everything back there, +HAH+ but when the Spirit comes in, +HAH+ come on somebody, +HAH+ when the Spirit comes in +HAH+ (x3) somebody say, 'let the Lord have his way.' +HAH+...
[2:01] I don't have to preach.... Anytime God does what He wanta do, that's always right.... [2:03] *I had a sermon to preach, but I can't mess with that. People came here to be delivered (emphasis added).*

No such justification was provided for the sermon's omission in Service 9, but perhaps that is because the pastor extemporized for over thirty minutes on the message of the added Choir Selection, "Yes, Jesus Loves Me." Although there was no sermon in the strictest sense, the pastor's discussion of the song text was similar to a sermon, and must have been perceived by many as a sermon substitute.

During one particularly Spirit-filled service, on February 16, 1992 (not included in Appendix A), seventeen persons were baptized and no sermon was delivered by the pastor. In an interview about a month later, Pastor McGhee described the concrete benefit which resulted that Sunday from going "with the flow"--that is, following the Spirit's direction:

I don't know if you was here on that one Sunday that we had, I recall, great flexibility where we didn't even minister as far as a sermon is concerned. We just went with the flow, and that's what we mean by being flexible and having flexibility. Because I could have easily said, 'well, let's wait until I minister my sermon,' but my sermon wouldn't have done any more than that. Seventeen people was baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (I.3.12.92).

For Pastor McGhee and members of Alpha and Omega, fervent worship was an indication of the Spirit's presence, and "when the Spirit comes in," they believed that they must "let the Lord have His way." Therefore, during particularly Spirit-filled services, the order of worship was altered in an effort to be attentive to the direction in which the Holy Ghost was "leaning." Yet, all evidence, including the data on Service Nos. 3, 9, and 10, indicates that only certain components of the order of worship could in fact be deleted. The sermon and hymn were dispensable, while the altar call, offertory, and choir selections appear to have been indispensable. Clearly, some ways of accommodating the Holy Spirit were more acceptable than others. The sermon might be viewed as an easement that could be appropriated when needed. Thus, Pastor McGhee's statement, "I had a sermon to preach, but I can't mess with that," was a formulaic statement which he had spoken on other similar occasions.

During those services in which the sermon was omitted, Pastor McGhee generally provided some rationale for that omission, as he did on February 16, 1992: "Anytime God does what He wants to do, that's always right." Later, referring to the "great flexibility" of this service in which seventeen persons were baptized, he explained, "my sermon wouldn't have done more than that." Ironically, the pastor seems to be right. In the twelve services analyzed in Appendix A, baptisms occurred only on the three Sundays that were extremely fervent, in particular, during the three Sunday morning services that were so "spirit-filled" that the pastor abandoned his intention of delivering a sermon (see Table 7-1). As noted before, Pastor McGhee believed that the church's *raison d'être* "is to win peoples to Christ" (I.11.15.89), and nothing, it seems, could bring about this end more effectively than a very flexible service--one which the members believe to be "Spirit-filled." In addition, the occurrence of baptisms in only the most fervent and flexible services corroborates Pastor McGhee's assertion that great flexibility will cause people to "be turned to the Lord."

Of the twelve services analyzed in Appendix A, Service No. 3--with sixty-six minutes of spirit-filled dancing, two altar calls, and no sermon--was not only the most fervent and flexible service, but also contained the greatest number of baptisms (three). A detailed examination of this service will enable the reader to better understand the nature and extent of ritual flexibility. Moreover, by comparing this unusually Spirit-filled

service with a more or less "routine" worship service, the reader can begin to get a more accurate picture of the range of possible behavior and the extent to which the standard worship service can be varied. Because Service No. 4, the service held the following Sunday, adhered closely to the standard order of worship, and therefore conforms to the pastor's description of a "routine" service, it can provide a frame of reference against which to measure the flexibility of Service No. 3. Although both services occurred in 1989, before the introduction of printed programs at Alpha and Omega, the standard order of service in the fall of 1989 followed the same general format as that given in the printed programs which were introduced in 1990 (see Tables 4-1 and 4-2). Because the hymn and Choir Processional were not introduced until after the move, these elements were absent in the fall of 1989.

Whereas Service No. 3 (October 29, 1989) was held up by congregants as a model for Spirit-filled worship, Service No. 4 (November 5, 1989) was an example of a typical or "routine" service. The latter proceeded according to the standard order of worship (as listed in Table 4-2), with only one minor exception--namely, the placement of the announcements and the acknowledgement of visitors before, rather than after, the second choir selection. Service No. 3, on the other hand, departed radically from the regular service order. Because Service No. 3 varied significantly from the standard order of worship, it requires a much closer examination.

Although somewhat more animated than usual, Service No. 3 proceeded quite typically until the entrance of the pastor (:48). [All time indications refer to the analysis of Service No. 3 in Appendix A.] Normally, as seen in Service No. 4, he did not enter the sanctuary until the testimony or praise service was over. In Service No. 3, however, the congregation received Pastor McGhee after only four testimonies, and the testimony service continued in his presence. At :57, a man stated that he was visiting from Chicago and would like to be baptized. A cause for great rejoicing, this man's announcement was followed by about five minutes of spirit-filled dancing.¹ This sort of Spirit-filled activity was nearly four times as prevalent in Service No. 3 than in Service No. 4, with about sixty-six minutes of such praise in the former, as compared with only about seventeen minutes in the latter.

In the standard order of worship, the altar call and baptisms (if there are any baptisms) occurred after the sermon, near the close of the service. In Service No. 3, however, Pastor McGhee, responding to the young man from Chicago who requested baptism, made an altar appeal quite early in the service (1:04). In explanation, he said, "Don't worry about interrupting our service.... We gonna go like God say go." This altar call resulted in another person requesting baptism. After these two

¹Each horizontal crosshatch on the charts in Appendix A signifies about one minute of the very fast, ostinato-based instrumental music which accompanied this spirit-filled dancing and occasional trance-like states.

baptisms had taken place, there was an apparent attempt to redirect the service toward the standard worship order. The choir sang an A Selection (at 1:16) and the Pastor announced the offering (1:26). Moments later, however, the church's bass player walked through the door, after an extended absence from Alpha and Omega. His appearance resulted in one particularly animated spirit-filled outburst, about twenty-eight minutes of rejoicing and dancing. After this lengthy praise break, the pastor seemed to abandon any hopes of giving a sermon. Instead, he delivered another brief altar call at 2:14, after which a third person came forth to be baptized. At 2:20, nearly an hour after the offering was initially announced, the pastor resumed his attempt to get an offering. The offering was followed by two choir selections and about twenty-seven more minutes of dancing and praise.

Although Service No. 3 lasted almost twenty-five minutes longer than the more "routine" Service No. 4, it contained no sermon--which in a typical worship service could have accounted for nearly a third of the entire service, as it did in Service No. 4. With no sermon, two altar calls, a third choir selection, and over an hour of dancing and praise, Service No. 3 was far from routine. When asked about this variability in the character and order of worship services and about Service No. 3 in particular, the Pastor suggested that a higher spiritual level had been attained in the that service. He added that "healing takes place" on occasions such as those. Regarding the irregular

placement of the altar appeal at the beginning of the service, he explained,

if a person comes and wants to be baptized,... we feel it's so important that they should not be delayed, because the whole background of our coming together is to win peoples to Christ... [If a] person [is] gifted with the Holy Ghost [we must] get out of the way and let the Lord do what He wants to do (I.11.15.89).

While ritual flexibility was evident in every worship service, on occasions such as Service No. 3 the value ascribed to flexibility at Alpha and Omega became particularly clear. The fervent behavior and variable service order were seen by congregants as evidence of the Holy Ghost's presence. Because this "great flexibility" was perceived as a sign that the Holy Spirit was directing the course of worship, it resulted in the baptism of three persons--confirming Pastor McGhee's observation that flexibility causes people to "marvel and be turned to the Lord."

Although Pastor McGhee and his congregation consider variable service order to be the most important form of ritual flexibility, other forms of flexibility in worship were also evident at Alpha and Omega. These other forms of behavioral flexibility include the spontaneous placement of spirit-filled dancing; the flexible time of arrival for worship, which applied to musicians as well as congregants; the spontaneous singing that occurred within the context of the Testimony or Praise Service; and the spontaneous improvisation on the part of the instrumental musicians. These additional forms of flexible behavior provide further evidence of the value ascribed to spontaneity, and

illustrate the extent to which such behavior permeated worship services at Alpha and Omega. While an outsider might explain this behavior as spontaneous improvisation, for Pastor McGhee and congregants, these other examples of ritual flexibility, like variable service order, provided further evidence that the Holy Spirit was actively guiding the course of worship. The following discussion briefly considers each of these additional varieties of behavioral flexibility.

Although not included in the printed "order of worship," spirit-filled dancing was regularly encountered in Sunday morning worship services at Alpha and Omega. Since some spirit-filled dancing--from as little as one minute to more than an hour's duration--was included in each of the twelve services analyzed in Appendix A, a nominal amount of this activity appears to be an indispensable part of worship. In fact, even after the move in 1990, when the character of worship became much more sober and restrained, no service was completely devoid of spirit-filled dancing. Pastor McGhee has noted that congregants need a "chance to express themselves" during worship (I.11.15.89), and spirit-filled dancing provided an important outlet for this expression.

Although spirit-filled dancing appears to have been an indispensable part of worship at Alpha and Omega, there is no evidence of any clear pattern which would enable one to predict the extent and placement of this activity within worship. The amount and location of spirit-filled dancing within the services analyzed can be quickly surmised by a glance at each of the

twelve charts in Appendix A (each horizontal crosshatch on a chart signifies about a minute of spirit-filled dancing). As Appendix A suggests, the extent and placement of Spirit-filled praise within the service varied significantly from one service to the next. In fact, its extent and location within the service was so variable that it is difficult to draw any conclusions about the patterns of this activity. For example, in five services spirit-filled dancing occurred before the pastor's entrance (Service Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 10); on occasion, it occurred during the sermon (Service Nos. 1, 2, and 4), or during the altar call (Service Nos. 2, 7, 8, 9, and 10). Few generalizations can be made. It will be noted that Spirit-filled praise never occurred during the first twenty minutes of worship; this, it seems, can be attributed to the limited number of persons present, as well as to the fact that some time is required to raise the spiritual level--to "go higher in the Lord." Spirit-filled dancing or praise seems always to have been precipitated by some action--as, for example, a particularly moving testimony, an inspired choir selection, or a passionate plea by the pastor or a testimony leader ("You oughta give Him some praise"). Whether or not an action resulted in spirit-filled dancing depended not only upon the response of the congregation but also on the receptivity of the drummer and keyboardist(s). Once a rather intense level of Spirit-filled praise had been attained, as in Service Nos. 3, 9, and 10, the excitement could become infectious. Because the analyzed data reveal no clear

patterns, this activity appears to have been truly spontaneous, depending on the persons present, their moods (especially those of the pastor, musicians, and testimony leaders), events of the past week, and any number of other variables. To Pastor McGhee and his congregation, the variable and unpredictable nature of this activity was itself an indication of the Holy Ghost's presence.

The arrival of musicians and congregants was also characterized by a great deal of flexibility. Services almost invariably began with only a handful of persons present. Throughout the first hour of worship, congregants arrived in a steady stream. Gradually, during the course of this hour, the number of persons present could increase from as few as six or eight to as many as one hundred fifty. The arrival of church musicians followed a similar pattern, and it was quite unusual for more than two musicians to be present when the call to worship was announced. Those musicians present at the start of the service were rarely as experienced and accomplished as the primary musicians, who invariably arrived later. By the time the pastor entered the sanctuary (forty-five minutes to one hour after the call to worship), there were usually three to six instrumentalists present; this group could include one to three keyboardists, a drummer, saxophonist, electric guitarist, and bass guitarist. The data in Appendix A suggest that while a keyboardist had to be present for a service to commence, the presence of a drummer was not absolutely necessary. Although a

keyboardist was present and actively participating at the outset of each of the twelve services, no drummer was present during the first twenty-two minutes of Service Nos. 5 and 9, or during the first twelve minutes of Service No. 12.

A description of the arrival of congregants and musicians during one Sunday morning worship service will help to demonstrate this flexible aspect of worship. On September 29, 1991, at 11:15 a.m., the time at which Sunday morning worship was scheduled to begin, I was the only person in the sanctuary. When the service actually began, at 11:23 a.m., there were only ten adults present, including the worship leader, as well as a keyboardist who played until the chief musician arrived. By 11:30, fifteen adults and four children were present, but still no drummer. At 11:40, the electric guitarist arrived and set up his equipment, and the chief musician and the drummer both appeared about five minutes later. Congregants continued arriving, usually in small groups, and by the time the pastor and choir entered the sanctuary, at 12:04 p.m., the congregation numbered about one hundred persons--including the thirty-four choir members present. Even after the service had been in progress for more than an hour, though, members and visitors continued to trickle in.

All services at Alpha and Omega were characterized by this flexible pattern of arrival. For example, at the start of the live radio broadcast at 6:00 p.m., on Sunday evenings, the choir was generally only about twelve members strong, but by the end of

the hour-long broadcast, the choir had usually doubled in size. This flexible pattern of arrival is not, of course, limited to Alpha and Omega, but can be found in other African-American congregations as well--whether Pentecostal or not. Compare the above-mentioned pattern of arrival at Alpha and Omega with that observed by McIntyre, in his discussion of black Pentecostal churches in Windsor:

The arrival of the presiding minister signals the starting time of the meeting, and this may in fact be some time later than scheduled. The meeting may begin with only a half-dozen participants, numbers may swell to perhaps a hundred or more during the testimonies, and further still during and just after the sermon, then dwindle again as large groups leave before the end (1976:26).

Although the early exodus of congregants described by McIntyre would have been considered offensive and inappropriate at Alpha and Omega, the pattern of arrival which he described conforms closely to that encountered at Alpha and Omega.

While the above discussion focuses primarily upon ritual flexibility, musical flexibility also played a very important role in worship at Alpha and Omega. Considering first the variety of flexible musical behaviors and then flexibility in musical forms, the balance of this chapter will be devoted specifically to musical flexibility. Flexible musical behavior was most clearly evident in (1) the spontaneous singing which occurred within the context of the Testimony or Praise Service; (2) the spontaneous improvisation, throughout the service, on the part of the instrumental musicians; and (3) the flexible treatment of the hymn, within the order of worship.

Flexibility of musical behavior was perhaps best illustrated by the spontaneous singing that occurred within the context of the Testimony or Praise Service. During this portion of the service, a congregant could stand (with or without cue from the testimony leaders) and forcefully begin a familiar song. The congregation joined in and the drummer picked up the beat, while the organist usually searched for the tonal center by trial and error.

Pentecostal keyboardists, and some Baptists too, are noted for their ability to improvise. Alpha and Omega's minister of music related an anecdote about the circumstances under which he learned to improvise. Having taken piano lessons since the age of seven, he had begun his study of the piano by learning to read notes. As a member of a Baptist church in Ohio, he began playing, at the age of eleven, for his church choir during the Testimony Service. He would give the choir the key and--to his consternation--they would begin in another key; or, they would start singing before he was even able to set his books on the piano. He would ask them, he said, "to let me start first," but the same thing happened the next week. Finally, his aunt told him to "go down the row till you find it" (that is, the right note), and in this manner, he began to learn how to improvise (I.1.26.91).

The keyboardist and drummer at Alpha and Omega provided improvised accompaniment not only for congregational songs but also throughout the entire service. As a perusal of the charts

in Appendix A indicates, the keyboardist and drummer could contribute musically to nearly any element of the order of worship. They regularly provided improvised musical support for prayer, testimonies, the offering, the altar call, the sermon, the spirit-filled dancing and praise, and of course, for all musical selections. In fact, the scripture reading and the announcements were the only two elements of the worship order during which instrumental accompaniment was conspicuously silent.

The principal musicians, therefore, contributed importantly to a service's flexibility. The mood, experience, and sensibility of the instrumental musicians present had a significant impact upon the character of any worship service. Except for the pastor, no other individual had as much input into the direction which a service took as the principal keyboardist, who has the title of "Chief Musician." In large part, he determined whether an altar call or offertory would be slow and pensive or animated and upbeat. His response to the actions of others--whether to a testimonial or to Pastor McGhee's admonitions to the congregation to "Praise the Lord"--could determine the direction which a service took; and the character of his instrumental response could serve alternately to quell or to enliven worship. From the perspective of a cultural outsider, it would appear that the pastor, chief musician, choir director, and other principal figures regularly made a series of decisions which determined the course of worship. From the emic perspective, church leaders and musicians believe they are

following the direction of the Holy Spirit. Pastor McGhee explained that even though cues were exchanged between individuals like himself and the chief musician, the latter must be attuned to the way in which the Holy Ghost is leading. Regarding his interaction with the chief musician, the pastor explained,

We talk to him that he should have a feel. In a Holy Ghost moved church or congregation there has to be a feel for what's goin' on. Just like... if you makin' a speech you have to feel your audience. Sometimes you may have to inject something in there to get 'em back. So he works along with the feeling of where I'm goin' and maybe once in a while... he might be a little out front with the music and I'll just give him a sign. He'll cut it and fall in the back you see (I.11.15.89).

Pastor McGhee regularly gave a variety of verbal and physical cues to indicate the direction in which he wanted the service to go. On one Sunday, for example, he had considerable difficulty in beginning his sermon (November 5, 1989). When it appeared that the spirit-filled dancing had abated, he announced the scripture that would serve as the basis for the sermon, and asked the congregants to open their Bibles. Just then, one woman was filled with the Spirit, and began to holler, reel, and dance. The other members and musicians were strongly affected by her behavior, and only with great difficulty and many cues did the pastor finally succeed in quelling the crowd. As "spokesman for the King of Kings," the pastor, it seems, always has the final say as to where the Spirit was "leaning."

Flexible musical behavior is also evident in the call-and-response exchange which took place between the pastor and chief

musician during the latter part of the sermon. As the sermon climaxed and the Pastor's delivery changed from speech to chant, the chief musician usually resumed his position at the keyboard and the drummer at his drum set, and both began to respond to the pastor's lines. A dialogue was often established between the pastor and these two musicians, with the latter contributing to the heightened intensity of the sermon's climax. By and large, the keyboardist was given free reign and the character of his response was very improvisatory. Of course, there are always unspoken limits to such flexible behavior, and, as suggested above, the pastor would occasionally cue the keyboardist and drummer to tone down their responses.

The treatment of the hymn at Alpha and Omega provides one final example of flexible musical behavior. Although the order of worship, as printed in the Sunday morning bulletins since the spring of 1990, indicated that a hymn was to be sung immediately preceding the sermon, the hymn was in fact commonly omitted, or replaced by a choir selection or congregational song. Eight services analyzed in Appendix A occurred after the hymn was added to the printed programs (i.e., Service Nos. 5-12), but only one of these services, Service No. 8, actually included a hymn sung from the hymnal.

Behavioral flexibility, both ritual and musical, figured importantly in worship at Alpha and Omega. Ostensibly the result of active decisions by the participants, flexible behavior was seen by the pastor and congregants as evidence of the Holy

Ghost's presence. Because it signified the active involvement of the Holy Spirit, flexibility in worship--whether variable service order, glossolalia, holy dancing, or spontaneous musical behavior --offered cause for members to "marvel."

IV. The "Spirit-filled" Character of Musical Form

Although not so commonly acknowledged at Alpha and Omega as flexible service order, the flexibility of musical forms was far-reaching and contributed importantly to congregants' ideas about the nature of Pentecostalism. The pliable, improvised structure of musical forms played a subtle but important role in shaping members' perceptions about what it means to be "Holy Ghost-filled." The following discussion examines performances of each of the three most important vocal genres at Alpha and Omega--congregational songs, hymns, and choir selections--in an effort to better understand the pliable character of musical structure at Alpha and Omega.

The very flexible form of congregational songs at Alpha and Omega derived in large part from the manner of performance. Usually, the person who initiated a song also lead the congregation in the singing of that song. Sometimes, though, during the Testimony Service, a quiet, reticent congregant began a song as a form of testimony, and the testimony leader would continue the song, assuming the lead, from her position at the microphone. In any case, there was usually a song leader whose authority rested either on a powerful voice or access to the

microphone. In the congregational songs, the lead singer generally directed the course of improvisation--determining the length and, when applicable, verse order of the song. On Sunday, November 5, 1989, for example, the worship leader opened the service with the congregational song, "Jesus on the Mainline," which lasted about five minutes. The song's melody was sung fourteen times, with the lead singer (L), answered by a congregational response (C). The first verse (A) provided the text that was sung for nine of the fourteen stanzas:

L: Jesus on the Mainline	C: Tell Him what you want
L: Jesus on the Mainline	C: Tell Him what you want
L: Jesus on the Mainline	C: Tell Him what you want
L & C: You just call Him up and tell Him what you want	

In the other verses, the words "Jesus on the Mainline" were replaced with the following phrases,

Verse B: If you need more love
Verse C: If you need the Holy Ghost
Verse D: If you need more joy
Verse E: If you need more peace

and the overall verse order was: A A A B A C A D A E A B A A. Clearly, this order was flexible, dependent upon the leader, his mood, and the response he received from the musicians and congregants. Because of this flexibility, a congregational song like "Let's Go Higher in the Lord" could last four minutes in one performance, as it did in Service No. 1, and less than two minutes in another (Service No. 8). Since these congregational songs have been passed on in oral tradition for decades, their flexible, "open-ended" form is perhaps not surprising. More noteworthy is the flexible character of hymns and choir

selections at Alpha and Omega.

Although hymns, with their finite and particular number of verses and choruses, are often understood as having a "closed" form, when sung at Alpha and Omega, they became open-ended in character. Hymns were infused with the same flexibility, or Spirit-filled fervor, that characterized the performance of other musical genres at Alpha and Omega. Pastor McGhee explained that the flexibility employed in the singing of congregational songs was applied to the performance of hymns as well:

congregational songs... give you that flexibility to do that--you know, go and... pick it back up and go and really never really miss a beat.... And usually that's what we try to do even when they have the hymnal. When we're singin' from the hymnal,... [we] have the praise leaders to kinda watch for that, oversee, and see when the spirit begins to bring us to a point... [where] the Spirit can have Its way (I.3.12.92).

This flexibility was made possible by the presence of a song leader, positioned at a microphone, who led the congregation in song and directed the flow of the hymn. The song leader determined which verses would be skipped or repeated, and how many times the chorus would be sung, while the congregation and instrumentalists were expected to follow her lead. On one occasion, for example, a choir director, positioned at a microphone, led the singing of a hymn with five stanzas; he omitted the third and fourth stanzas, but repeated the second stanza three times after he had sung the fifth. In the singing of hymns that contain choruses, it was not uncommon for the leader to sing the chorus as many as five or more consecutive times. Text repetition, it seems, helped to intensify the power

of the word, while musical repetition carried a power in and of itself.

The placement and function of a hymn clearly influenced the extent to which the form might be "stretched." When, for example, a hymn preceded the sermon, its function was to prepare the congregation for the Word of God, to subdue any overly animated worship, and to render the congregation more sober and receptive to the Pastor's message. Given its placement immediately before the sermon, therefore, the hymn in Service No. 8, "Honey in the Rock," was delivered in a flexible but straightforward manner. A comparison of the components in the printed and performed versions reveals the following differences:

As Printed:
(*Church Hymnal*: 338)

verse 1--chorus
verse 2--chorus
verse 3--chorus
verse 4--chorus

As Performed:

verse 1--chorus
verse 2--chorus
verse 4--chorus--chorus

Already at the pulpit's microphone, the pastor sang the last phrase of the last chorus with a pronounced ritard, providing a clear sense of closure, and indicating his eagerness to begin the sermon.

When, on the other hand, the hymn was intended to inspire, electrify, and lift the congregation "higher in the Lord," much greater liberty would be taken with the hymn's form. For example, at the third annual concert of the Voices of Pentecost, on November 30, 1990, the worship leader began the program by leading the congregation in a hymn, "When We all Get to Heaven,"

the text and music of which was printed on the programs.

Although the hymn has four verses and a chorus (*Church Hymnal*: 393), the worship leader led the congregation through only three verses but through nine statements of the chorus, as follows:

verse 1--chorus
verse 2--chorus--chorus--chorus--chorus--chorus
verse 4--chorus--chorus--chorus

Perhaps the congregation's apathetic response at the outset helps to explain the many repetitions of the chorus. During the fifth statement of the chorus, the leader asked, "If everyone would just stand up and help us sing this hymn please." By the hymn's final choruses, the congregation's singing was much more animated than at the beginning.

Sometimes, the chorus of a hymn was used without any trace of the hymn's verses. During the altar appeal on October 28, 1990 (Service No. 7), for example, the organist began to play the chorus of "Pass Me Not" (*Church Hymnal*:373), very softly, and at a very slow tempo (quarter note equals 44). After a while some choir members began to softly intone the words of the hymn's chorus. Because neither choir members nor instrumental musicians made any reference to the *Church Hymnal*, the chorus of this hymn appeared to be in Alpha and Omega's oral tradition. The text of the chorus--"Savior, Savior, hear my humble cry; while on others Thou art calling, do not pass me by"--is short, simple, easily remembered, and appropriate for use during the altar call.

For about eighteen minutes during this altar appeal, a handful of choir members repeated the chorus softly in the

background--singing a total of twenty-four consecutive statements of the chorus. Having begun before and concluded after the choir, the organist played this chorus throughout the entire altar call, for a total of about twenty-nine minutes. Extracted from the hymn, the chorus is employed in a flexible and open-ended manner, and the hymn's closed form, with four verses and a chorus--is nowhere in evidence. Additional liberties were taken with the chorus itself. Although written in common time, it was performed in compound quadruple meter (12/8). The melody was also varied, but the variation was rather consistent throughout the chorus' multiple statements. A comparison of the printed and sung versions of the chorus appears in Figure 8-1, below. Choir members replaced the leading tone in measure five with the

Figure 8.1
A Comparison of Printed and Sung Versions
of the Chorus of the Hymn "Pass Me Not"

The figure displays two pairs of musical staves comparing printed and sung versions of the chorus. The first pair shows the first line of the chorus, and the second pair shows the second line. Each pair consists of an 'AS PRINTED' staff and an 'AS SUNG' staff. The 'AS PRINTED' staves are in common time (C) with a tempo marking of quarter note = 44. The 'AS SUNG' staves are in compound quadruple meter (12/8). The lyrics are: 'Sav- ior, Sav- ior, hear my hum- ble cry.' and 'While on others Thou art call- ing, do not pass me by.' The sung version shows a more melismatic and varied melody compared to the printed version.

AS PRINTED: Sav- ior, Sav- ior, hear my hum- ble cry.

AS SUNG: Sav- ior, Sav- ior, hear my humble cry.

AS PRINTED: While on others Thou art call- ing, do not pass me by.

AS SUNG: While on others Thou art call- ing, do not pass me by.

supertonic, and, as a result, the sung melody became pentatonic. All of these changes in "Pass Me Not"--the independent chorus, the triplet subdivision of the beat, and the varied melody--indicate that hymns were not perceived as rigid entities. In this case, the hymn's chorus had become a part of the church's oral tradition, and as used in Service No. 7, was barely distinguishable from the flexible manner in which congregational songs were employed.

The variable form of choir selections provides yet another example of musical flexibility. While an outsider might logically assume choir selections to be the most rigid musical element in worship (since they constitute the most complex music, employing multisectional forms and prescribed harmony, and enlist the coordinated efforts of director, choir, and backup musicians), they were in fact driven by the same "spirit-filled" sensibility that permeates the rest of the service. In order to better understand flexibility of form in choir selections, several performances of a single selection must be considered. The following discussion, therefore, examines multiple performances of a single choir selection.²

The elasticity of choir selections can be demonstrated by comparing several performances of "Oh Lord We Praise You," one of Alpha and Omega's favorite and most frequently performed choir selections. Written by Stanley Brown and Hezekiah Walker, "Oh

²Three performances of another choir selection, "Yes, Jesus Loves Me," were examined in an earlier discussion of musical genres (see Chapter 5).

Lord We Praise You" was recorded on an album with the same title by Hezekiah Walker and the Love Fellowship Crusade Choir in 1990. The Chief Musician at Alpha and Omega explained that he had learned the work from that recording and subsequently taught it to the Voices of Pentecost. The following discussion compares five different performances of "Oh Lord We Praise You," as sung by the Voices of Pentecost. Further comparison of these cover versions with the original recording by Hezekiah Walker demonstrates the flexibility inherent in the process of covering and performing these works.

In both the original and cover versions, a four-measure chord progression, or vamp, underlies the entire selection. Throughout all performances, this vamp is subjected to a series of ascending half-step modulations, as illustrated in Table 8-1. The building blocks employed in this selection are A, B1, and B2, all of which are based on the same four measure chord progression: I IV | V I | I IV | V I. In all six performances, the vamps designated by the letter "A" are choral (see Figure 8-2), while the "B" vamps, when included, are sung by a vocal soloist. In Walker's original recording and all five Alpha and Omega performances, the text of A--the choral vamp--is always "Oh Lord we praise You, Oh Lord we praise You." In the original recording, each statement of A is sung in harmony by the entire choir. While the cover versions at Alpha and Omega always began with the full choir singing A in harmony, four of the five performances featured an additive vamp--vocal sections singing

Figure 8-2
 "Oh Lord We Praise You": Section A, the Choral Vamp

♩ = 102

S Oh Lord, we praise you. Oh Lord, we praise you.

A Oh Lord, we praise You. oh Lord, we praise You.

T Oh Lord, we praise you. Oh Lord, we praise You.

alone or in pairs. This same technique was discussed in Chapter 5, in conjunction with "Yes, Jesus Loves Me." In that selection, however, the sopranos, altos, and tenors each sang different texts, and their lines were contrapuntally independent (see Figure 5-1). As Figure 8-2 shows, the choral vamp of "Oh Lord We Praise You" was almost entirely homorhythmic, and there was no such contrapuntal interest. Nonetheless, the performance on July 6, 1992, was the only performance at Alpha and Omega which did not feature vocal sections singing alone, in pairs, and then together again.

Sung by a male soloist, B1 and B2, a melodic variant of B1, use the same four-measure chord progression, but not the same melody, as A. The text of B1 and B2 is as follows:

- B1 I was thinkin' the other day
 about the joy that came my way.
 He took away my frown
 and those sins that had me bound.
- B2 I thought about all the times
 when I was walkin' around in a daze.
 But tonight I stand before You

Table 8-1
A Comparison of Six Performances
of "Oh Lord We Praise You":
the original recording by Hezekiah Walker
and five covers by the Voices of Pentecost

KEY (Major):	Db:	D:
1. Hezekiah Walker:	3A B1 B2 2A B1 B2 2A	2A
2. A & O: 9-30-90:	3A	2A
3. A & O: 10-21-90:	2A	2A
4. A & O: 10-31-90:	2A	2A
5. A & O: 11-30-90:	2A	2A B1 B2 2A B1 B2 2A
6. A & O: 7-5-92:	4A B1 B2 2A	2A B1 B2 2A

continued:

KEY:	Eb:	E:	F:	Gb:	G:	Ab:
1.	2A	2A	2A	3A	4A	3A [end]
2.	2A	2A	2A	9A	skips	16A + 7A [ends/resumes]
3.	1A	2A	2A	1A	2A	14A [end]
4.	2A	2A	2A	2A	5A	4A [end]
5.	2A	2A	2A	2A	8A [end]	
6.	2A	4A	12A [end]			

Additional information:

	Hezekiah Walker:	A & O	A & O	A & O	A & O	A & O
		9-30:	10-21:	10-31:	11-30:	7-5:
Tempo:	108	96	114	102	96	102
Duration:	4'30"	6'15" +1'15"	3'55"	3'20"	4'40"	4'55"
No. Vamp						
 Stmts:	29	43	26	21	28	32
Additive						
 Vamp:	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	no

Note: Tempo refers to the number of quarter note beats per minute. Duration excludes instrumental introduction and conclusion. Since the same instrumental vamp underlies A and B, the number of vamp statements equals the total number of sections. Additive Vamp refers to the practice of isolating and recombining the constituent parts--soprano, alto, and tenor.

with nothing but praise.

The fact that three of the five Alpha and Omega performances examined did not feature a soloist suggests a very fluid conception of the work: "Oh Lord We Praise You" could be used as a selection for lead singer and chorus, or as a work for chorus alone. The performance of this selection at the Voices of Pentecost's annual concert on November 30, 1990, actually featured two soloists, each singing one statement of B1 and B2.

Probably the clearest aspect of this selection's flexibility, however, can be seen in the variable length and variable distance of modulation. Examination of the relative durations of the five Alpha and Omega covers of "Oh Lord We Praise You" indicates that the length of this choir selection was quite variable--lasting as little as three minutes and twenty seconds, or as long as seven and one half minutes (see Table 8-1). The distance of modulation was similarly variable. The original recording by Hezekiah Walker begins in D-flat major, and through a series of ascending half-step modulations, traverses a perfect fifth, ending in A-flat major. Although all five of the Alpha and Omega covers began in D-flat major, only three ended in A-flat major. Of the remaining two covers, one traversed a tritone, while the other covered only the distance of a major third. During one performance at Alpha and Omega (September 30, 1990), the keyboardist skipped a whole step instead of a half step, but this clearly seems to have been an error, since the choir modulated only a half step. When it was clear that the

keyboardist had no intention of modulating downward, the choir abandoned its key and accepted the keyboardist's tonal center. While Hezekiah Walker's version features the soloist--present in B1 and B2--only in the opening key, one Alpha and Omega performance employed a soloist at two key levels, at both D-flat and D major (July 5, 1992).

This examination of several performances of "Oh Lord We Praise You," as well as an earlier discussion of multiple performances of another choir selection (see Chapter 5), suggests that choir selections were perceived not as rigid forms, but rather as sets of three or four components which could be repeated and combined in an endless variety of ways. Improvisation is thus an essential characteristic of the choir selections, because, as the soloist quoted above explained, "You don't never do it totally the same way."

But, how was such choral improvisation possible, and who controlled its development? As explained in Chapter 5, it was the choir director who determined the course of improvisation. In the midst of a performance of "Oh Lord We Praise You," for example, she decided the extent to which a choral vamp would be prolonged, the number of modulations to be performed (and therefore the total intervallic distance covered from beginning to end), and whether or not to isolate and recombine the constituent vocal parts. Her intentions were communicated through a system of visual cues (see Chapter 5). To signal an ascending half step modulation, for example, she raised her arm,

pointing to the ceiling with her index finger. Attuned to the presence of the Holy Spirit, as well as to the mood of the pastor, choir, musicians, and congregation, the choir director took charge of the vocal and instrumental musicians, thereby determining both the character and length of choir selections. Many factors, therefore, conspired to produce the flexible musical form of choir selections at Alpha and Omega.

The foregoing discussion has examined the role of spontaneity and flexibility in service order, in musical behavior, and in musical form at Alpha and Omega. Although the pastor and congregation often pointed to flexibility of service order as evidence that the Holy Spirit was actively influencing worship, interpretation of flexibility in musical behavior and of musical forms was rarely offered. When questioned, however, the pastor and choir members acknowledged that musical flexibility was also the result of intervention on the part of the Holy Spirit. This chapter has examined the dynamic relationship which exists between Pentecostal doctrine and musical and ritual flexibility. The emphasis placed upon flexibility at Alpha and Omega suggests a strong coherence between doctrinal and expressive domains. By reinforcing the belief that the congregation and the service are "Holy Ghost-filled," ritual and musical flexibility plays a vital role in validating a key Pentecostal construct. Thus, Pastor McGhee explained to his congregation, "We're going to do this just like the Lord wants to do it."

Chapter 9

"We'll Even Take Professor Ward Today":

On Ethnography and Salvation

Now you know this man... *must* be baptized
in the name of Jesus.... Professor Ward is professor
over his class, but he ain't the professor over God....
I know Professor Ward is tough.... And I thought I was tough
too, and you thought you was tough, and you thought you was
tough, but He got you, and He got you, and He got you....
--Pastor McGhee (during Altar Call, December 27, 1992)

I. The Unsaved Professor: Role and Identity among Pentecostals

During his altar calls, Pastor McGhee, speaking directly to the unsaved members of his audience, regularly questioned the congregation with the familiar phrase, "Is there one?"--that is, is there one in our midst who seeks to be baptized in the name of Jesus. Eventually, a second formulaic entreaty became almost as familiar. Directed at me, this second simple phrase--usually just "Professor Ward?"--was designed to determine if I was yet ready for baptism. By March, 1992, the issue of my continued resistance to baptism had apparently come to represent a distinct challenge to Pastor McGhee, for during one evening worship service, he proclaimed, "My work ain't done until Professor Ward get down here," that is, comes down to the altar to be baptized (March 8, 1992).

These altar call exchanges serve to illustrate the two principal roles which were assigned to me by the pastor and members of Alpha and Omega: first, the role of music professor,

and second, the role of one not yet saved. Though I was a graduate teaching assistant at the University of Illinois when my fieldwork at Alpha and Omega began, the pastor and congregation immediately ascribed to me the role of "professor," despite my introduction, during which I described myself as a graduate student in music. After several months, when I had become a regular fixture during worship, Pastor McGhee would sometimes refer to me with the words "our professor," or "our very own professor," titles indicating that I had become an integral part of Alpha and Omega. Like the role of professor, my second role, as an unsaved soul in the midst of a congregation of saints, was also assigned by the pastor and members; however, this second role was one with which I felt much less comfortable. Since I had begun my fieldwork with an entirely different role in mind--that of inexperienced graduate student ethnomusicologist, curious and eager to learn about the musical life of an African-American Pentecostal church--I had not anticipated the extent to which these two new roles would shape the fieldwork experience.

Having studied the music of Pentecostals and Baptists, Jeff Todd Titon has expressed his dismay at the extent to which scholars have avoided documenting the particular dynamics which characterize fieldwork among such groups:

It seems reasonable to expect that the scholarship on religious folksong in the United States would highlight issues of role, stance, and identity, but a survey of this scholarship reveals that these problems have been largely avoided... (1985:19).

Titon defines *stance* as the role ascribed to the fieldworker by

his informants, whereas *identity* is the fieldworker's own perception of his role in the field (1985:18-19). As Titon explains, "under ideal circumstances, stance and identity are the same" (1985:19). When scholars do fieldwork among Pentecostals, however, there is usually some disparity between the role which the fieldworker assigns himself and that ascribed to him by informants. In the case of my own research at Alpha and Omega, that disparity seemed formidable. The following discussion will explore the nature of the role(s) assigned to me by the congregation, as well as the dynamics of my relationship with the community at Alpha and Omega.

My initial assumption that I could attend a Pentecostal church and quietly observe worship without being actively drawn into the event proved to be the best example of my ethnographic naivete. Even if the pastor had not regularly called upon his audience to turn to their neighbors and say things like, "I don't know what you're looking at *me* for; I got a *right* to praise Him," the fact that I had not been baptized in the name of Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, and spoken in tongues made me a prime target for conversion efforts and altar appeals. Perhaps a researcher could go more or less unnoticed in the churches I had attended as an adolescent and young adult,¹ but such anonymity was not possible at Alpha and Omega. There are two primary reasons why anonymity was virtually inconceivable at Alpha and

¹These churches were of two Protestant denominations: the United Church of Christ and the First Christian Church.

Omega: (1) the church is in the business of saving souls according to the one true plan of salvation; and (2) the pastor and congregation believe that if a person attends a worship service, he has done so for a reason--namely, because God has ordained it.

First, Alpha and Omega's *raison d'être* is to save souls by teaching people the plan which the church holds to be the only true plan of salvation. Pastor McGhee explained, "the whole background of our coming together is to win peoples to Christ" (I:11.15.89). Alpha and Omega's urgency to save souls stems in part from the congregation's belief that many good, God-fearing people will not be saved because they have subscribed to a false doctrine, the most common of which, they believe, is the doctrine which preaches baptism "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."² According to Pastor McGhee, the only "right church" is "the church that is water baptized in Jesus' name and got the Holy Ghost speakin' in tongues...; if it's another, it's gotta be false" (November 4, 1990). Even after attending my first service at Alpha and Omega, it was clear to me that the pastor and congregation would consider my own baptism entirely invalid: I had been baptized as an infant (before the age of consent); the trinitarian baptismal formula was used; and neither was I immersed nor did I subsequently speak in tongues. During my first service at Alpha and Omega--when a

²Alpha and Omega's doctrine is examined at length in Chapter 3.

woman seated in front of me turned around and asked, "Have you been baptized in the name of Jesus?"--I already understood the question's implications.

Anonymity is unthinkable for a second reason: the pastor and congregation believe that if an individual is drawn to Alpha and Omega, it is because God ordains it. In this way, the congregation's explanation of my presence was quite different from my own interpretation. Whatever ostensible reason I might offer for my presence, they believed they knew the *real* reason: it was God's will. "He *thinks* he's here to study our music," they reasoned, "but we know why he's *really* here." Although I believed that I had selected Alpha and Omega as a place to conduct ethnomusicological research, the pastor and members steadfastly maintained that it was God who had called me to do research at Alpha and Omega as part of His plan of salvation for me. Pastor McGhee contended that if a person comes to Alpha and Omega, there must be a reason:

I want you all to understand, here, it's nobody comin' to an Apostolic church just to be comin'. I don't believe that anybody just come to Alpha and Omega to be comin'; you must understand that (Sunday morning, September 29, 1991).

This same philosophy was echoed in the printed worship program of another P. A. W. church which I attended, the Lively Stone Church of God, located in St. Louis, Missouri; it stated, "Remember, you always have an open invitation to worship at Lively Stone, and your being here today was not by chance, but ordained by God" (Bulletin: Sunday, March 4, 1990).

During the course of my research, Pastor McGhee and church

members believed that I would come to understand the truth, would seek baptism in Jesus' name, and would ultimately be filled with the Holy Spirit, speak in tongues, and become a real member of the Alpha and Omega community. In order to hasten that conversion, considerable pressure was sometimes exercised during worship. I can recall many tense and awkward moments, when Pastor McGhee would direct the congregation's attention to me, remind everyone that I was still unsaved, and impress upon me (once again) the urgency of accepting Jesus and seeking baptism. Excerpts from some of Pastor McGhee's altar appeals will help to suggest the character of these entreaties, as well as the method of his persuasion. As noted in an earlier chapter, altar appeals are not limited to Sunday morning worship services; rather, they are considered an essential component of virtually all church gatherings, whether a worship service, prayer service, bible study, choir concert, or talent show.

During the altar call of one lengthy Sunday evening service (about one and one half hours after the hour-long broadcast had ended), Pastor McGhee directed his attention to me:

Professor Ward? I'm serious tonight.... Anybody that God sends here, they're not just coming here. I know there's a reason (March 17, 1991).

This scene was played out repeatedly. About a year later, for example, again during the altar call following a Sunday evening broadcast, Pastor McGhee directed his appeal first toward a young, unbaptized male and then at myself:

Somebody else oughta get up, come on down here, and [get] baptized in Jesus' name.... Brother, what about you,

brother? Still waitin' on ya, praise Him. God forbid you been sittin' there... all these months and don't get baptized in Jesus' name. My God! Thank you Lord! My work ain't done until Professor Ward get down here. [applause] Praise Him! Praise the Lord, Hallelujah! As long as he's got breath in his body, he's still got a chance. Somebody say Hallelujah! (March 8, 1992)

The applause after the mention of my name served to register the congregation's support of the pastor's remarks, indicating that they too were eager for my conversion. The effect of the entire congregation vociferously urging my conversion and baptism was often quite daunting. On one occasion, as the pastor reminded the congregation that I was still unsaved, three members came independently from around the sanctuary to minister individually to me, literally waiting in line to try to convince me that this was the day for me to repent and be water baptized. As explained in Chapter 7, Pastor McGhee's altar appeals became progressively longer after Alpha and Omega left the warehouse sanctuary, and sometimes lasted nearly an hour (see Table 7-1). For me, these altar calls were emotionally and physically taxing, and I often thought it ironic that congregants left the church invigorated and "gassed up" for the ensuing week, while I left feeling exhausted and drained.

The implicit tension of the altar calls, moreover, seemed to escalate as I learned more about the pastor's theory concerning unsaved congregants. During worship, he often proclaimed that he could preach in such a way that any person who attended regularly would soon see God's true plan of salvation and be baptized in the name of Jesus. In the eyes of his congregants, he was, after

all, "a true prophet of God" and "spokesman for the King of Kings." His conviction that any individual would yield when regularly confronted with the truth is illustrated particularly well by one story. Membership in the Voices of Pentecost was generally restricted to those who had been saved--that is, to those who had been water baptized "in the name of Jesus"--but Pastor McGhee made an exception in the case of one young woman with a Church of God in Christ background.³ Although this young sister had not been baptized in Jesus' name, Pastor McGhee was convinced that she was earnestly seeking the truth, and when she asked to join the choir, he permitted it, despite the objection of some church members. After having attended Alpha and Omega for a few months and sung in the choir, she ultimately requested baptism in the name of Jesus, while on a choir trip to Chicago. During the next Sunday's worship service, Pastor McGhee told the congregation that she had been baptized, suggesting not only that his faith in her had been warranted, but also that the outcome had been virtually inevitable:

I told her, 'honey you sing right on in the choir,' 'cause I know if anybody comes around here, stay around here any length of time, you gonna get water baptized in Jesus' name and get the Holy Ghost.... If we preach the truth to people... I feel that people are intelligent enough to know if you hear somethin' you ain't got, and it's for your soul, you get it (September 29, 1991).

How, I wondered, would congregants interpret my own nearly

³The Church of God in Christ is a Pentecostal denomination which employs the trinitarian baptismal formula, one which Pastor McGhee and his congregation insist is not a component of the "one true plan of salvation."

three year resistance to baptism? Would they hold the pastor accountable, attributing my resistance to some weakness on his part, or would they conclude that I was impervious to the truth and therefore an agent of the devil in their midst? My continued unconverted presence at Alpha and Omega was the source of some tension between the church and myself. Periodically, Pastor McGhee made it known to the congregation and to me that he had neither forgotten nor given up on me. During one of my return visits to Alpha and Omega after the principal fieldwork had been concluded, for instance, Pastor McGhee devoted nine and one-half minutes during the altar call to an appeal from the pulpit to me--assuring both the congregation and me that my time for baptism would come. The following is excerpted from that appeal:

Now you know this man... *must* be baptized in the name of Jesus.... Somebody believe in that, put your hands together. [applause]... Professor Ward is professor over his class, but he ain't the professor over God.... I know Professor Ward is tough.... And I thought I was tough too, and you thought you was tough, and you thought you was tough, but He got you, and He got you, and He got you.... Matter of fact, it makes it even better when you real tough.... They say that the heavier you come, the harder you have to fall; the tougher you are, the more you have to do... (December 27, 1992).

I asked one congregant whether church members might hold the pastor accountable for my longstanding unconverted presence, and found her response both practical and enlightening. In her own words, she recalled the pastor's assertion that "nobody can sit up under my [the pastor's] teaching and not get involved." But when asked whether my refusal to convert might reflect negatively upon his ability to preach, she said, "not to me it wouldn't;

everyone's not gonna believe God" (I.6.11.92). From my perspective, Pastor McGhee seemed indefatigable in his efforts to reach me, and no one, it seems, could have accused him of not trying.

On two occasions, Pastor McGhee and I discussed the issue of my unconverted presence. In November 1989, when research for the seminar project was nearing completion, I had begun to contemplate making Alpha and Omega the focus of my doctoral dissertation, and explained that to Pastor McGhee. I was concerned, however, that my unsaved status might prove to be an insurmountable impediment at Alpha and Omega. During the course of an interview with him, therefore, I explained that I was a non-believer, and asked if either he or his congregation would perceive that as an obstacle to a long-term study. Pastor McGhee's response included the following comments:

It wouldn't make any difference to us. It wouldn't bother us, and it hasn't bothered us.... I have to respect your feelings, but I don't see you as a non-believer, you see.... Long as we know, you know, what your goal is--as far as we're concerned--there is no problem; there is really no problem. And we'd just love to have you there.... I believe... that it's ordained of God however it's going; and whatever you're getting out of it, I feel that it's ordained of God. It have added balance in our church services, and it have opened up avenues, even for our musicians, you know, to feel that they're being studied or observed, and make them project the best they can, and to improve in areas where they was lack[ing]. So it's really good... so we wouldn't shy away from that. I just believe that it's ordained of God (I.11.15.89).

Because Pastor McGhee believed that my presence at Alpha and Omega was part of God's plan of salvation for me, he almost invariably questioned me during the altar appeals, checking to

see whether I was yet ready for baptism.

Over two years after this initial interview, after a multitude of unsuccessful attempts to secure my repentance and baptism, Pastor McGhee and I again discussed my resistance to conversion. Perhaps overly sensitive to the church's untiring efforts to save me, I felt obliged to address the issue of my salvation:

LW: The last thing that I wanted to talk to you about was my own conversion. You should know that I'm an incredibly stubborn person.

P: Yes, we know that by now.... Oh, how well I know that! In Jesus' name, I know it.... I know that's... part of your make-up, but you're loveable and you're not to the point that's unbearable. It's just you, and that makes me a better preacher. It makes this church a better church when people of all sort come around.... [Sometime,] in the midst of me appealing to you, somebody else'll get it, and I just keep going and keep going, cause that mean I gotta go an extra mile because I know Professor Ward he's a stubborn one, you gotta go an extra mile. So you do that, so it makes you better because you're always looking to go a little higher [to] reach somebody that you didn't reach before.

LW: A long, long time ago, I felt that, well, if they [Alpha and Omega] can win me over, they have all of Champaign-Urbana. [Pastor laughs] You know, because I am surely gonna be one of the most difficult people to change in the town.

P: But that is wonderful, because I've seen people like that.... I have people here now who, if you had asked these people years or two ago about this church, would they be a member baptized in Jesus' name at this church, they would have said 'no'.... You is no tougher than Saul, you know, his name was changed to Paul. I don't think you is near as tough as he is. You haven't killed anybody?

LW: No.

P: And you haven't taken anybody and put 'em in jail or anything for speaking in Jesus' name. So, hey, you're tough alright, but, you know, I don't think you're that tough. And, if the Lord could do that, He can do it. He can do it. So I'm never finished; my job is still goin' on and this really is building me and... I'm reaching for higher grounds, and it's just making me a better preacher and everything, you know, to see a person come to the congregation like you, you sit there.... And I say Lord

every Sunday, what note do I need to hit, what words do I need to say? So, it's good, it's really good; that don't bother me at all.... I'm just loving it, I'm just loving it. Because I have confidence in the word of God. I do have confidence in the word of God.... Your not responding is not taking any away from the relationship or the congeniality that we have goin'. So I'm just confident that the Lord's gonna to do it whenever He gets ready.... So I want you to know that I'm not bothered by that and by your not responding at the given time that the appeal is made, it doesn't bother me in that sense.... You won't be the only one who have come and I didn't baptize in Jesus' name, but then later I found out they were [baptized] somewhere else.... I believe in what the Bible says: one plants a seed, one waters, and God give the increase. So, I may be just the one to plant the seed, and I may not be the one to water, you see, but I do know one thing: that when the increase is given, the Lord will do that.... And one thing about it, wherever you go you can't get away from Him; that's for sure (I.3.12.92).

Although these talks with Pastor McGhee helped to establish a healthy line of communication, they did little to correct the disparity between my identity and stance in the community-- between my self-ascribed role and the role/s assigned to me by the pastor and members of Alpha and Omega. Neither did these talks help to allay the considerable anxiety which I experienced during altar calls, for the pastor's entreaties became no less regular or insistent. Though I became frustrated with the church's unrelenting attempts to save me, I realized that my continued resistance to conversion was also a source of frustration to the pastor and his congregation. Despite these tensions, Pastor McGhee and church members continued to accept me warmly and graciously, even referring to me as a "good member."

II. On This Enterprise Called Ethnography

In this volume I have sought to tell "the story" of one Pentecostal church's musical life, all the while aware that ethnographic study is not nearly so objective as this goal suggests. Who, after all, could write the story of Alpha and Omega's musical life? There are surely many stories which might be narrated from a variety of perspectives. The present document of Alpha and Omega's music-making is simply *my* account, colored by my enthusiasm as well as my frustration, by my insights as well as my oversights. Bruno Nettl has observed that just as the ethnomusicologist,

samples repertoires, informants, musicians, audiences, villages, periods in a short span of history... the ethnomusicologist is himself also a sample. Just as one cannot study the whole musical culture but must experience it in samplings, one cannot satisfy all desired approaches but must depend on one's own capabilities (1983:257).

In conducting fieldwork and writing this ethnography, I have been acutely aware of my own limitations. At the same time, however, I believe that at least some of this volume's insights are the result of my particular sensibility. The present section not only enables me to comment upon selected merits and limitations of the research, but also provides an opportunity to reflect more generally upon the fieldwork experience, as well as upon the writing of this ethnography.

From the outset, I was exposed to a world of religious worship radically different from any I had ever witnessed, and curiously, this world was only one mile from my university residence. When the project began in the fall of 1989, Alpha and

Omega was still worshipping in the overcrowded warehouse sanctuary. Every Sunday morning, the small warehouse space was literally packed with congregants, and those first services that I attended, with their bouts of dancing, shouting, and falling in the aisles, were among the most Spirit-filled and memorable services I witnessed during the course of my research.⁴ The lengthy, very animated worship in such crowded quarters caused the room temperature to rise appreciably during the three hour services, and from my perspective, these services were marked by a general buildup: a gradual accretion of sound, motion, and heat, both spiritual and physical. In the context of this overcrowded and highly animated gathering, I was not only taking up a much needed seat, but was also swimming against the spiritual current.

Amidst this palpable spiritual excitement, my own sober, dispassionate, and "objective" demeanor must surely have created a peculiar contrast. While I sensed that many congregants were pleased to have me in attendance, I believed that others found my presence intrusive. For me, the act of observing others in the throes of spiritual abandonment felt not only intrusive but also selfish. Robert A. Georges and Michael O. Jones have noted that fieldwork, by its very nature, is "a one-sided and a selfish act" (1980:23). Although fieldworkers endeavor "to establish a meaningful basis for communicating,"

⁴This sample includes observation of over seventy-five services at Alpha and Omega, as well as services at a half dozen other Pentecostal churches.

every fieldwork project has its inception in the mind of some individual who decides unilaterally that some other human being(s) will serve as the source or resource for information (1980:23).

Sunday after Sunday, I was, after all, intruding upon the spiritual and highly personal lives of church members.

Though no one ever questioned my behavior during worship, I wondered what church members thought of my detached and seemingly unmovable presence--my "professional distance." "How can he ever hope to *understand* us," they might have reasoned, "if he's unwilling to get caught up in the Spirit?" When Pastor McGhee and I talked about the extent of my involvement in worship, he approved of my effort to "be myself," but also mentioned the need to find common ground for communication:

If you go and really try to be somebody else,... then you gonna lose what you're there for.... And you already stated that you're doin' a study. And you really can't study peoples unless you be yourself, and then on the other hand, you kinda come to be like they are, at some given point. Because that's the only way you can really get out of them what you really lookin' for; you have to come to be a part of them at some given point, you see.... There's no way... I can remain as a pastor per se, you know up here, and think that I really relate. I have to come to be, you know, at a certain level, in order to really relate and to help peoples, and to get from them certain things that I need and to give back to them. I have to come down to a point that they feel comfortable with me, in order to relate. So I think, it's a give and a take situation (I.11.15.89).

The tension between "being myself" and "really relating" is illustrated in the simple issue of greeting church members. Since my first service at Alpha and Omega, congregants had almost invariably greeted me with the formulaic phrase, "Praise the Lord." When greeted in this manner, other church members usually responded in kind, but it seemed insincere for me to respond with

"Praise the Lord." I admitted to Pastor McGhee that I had replied with a multitude of responses, from "good morning" to the embarrassing "thank you." The pastor came to my defense, saying, "'thank you,' well that's good, because I think the people... recognize that you're not convicted to our particular persuasion" (I.11.15.89). It seems, then, that Pastor McGhee felt that I could relate to the congregation at its "level" and "be like they are," without feigning belief or acting duplicitously.

When I began this project, I had hoped to interview a greater number and variety of congregants than I ultimately did. Though I interviewed the Pastor and most of the church's key musical personalities, I found it much more difficult to connect with the average congregant. Pastor McGhee was always gracious in his willingness to answer my questions. While some of the key musicians were willing to be interviewed, others proved to be more elusive. Because the elusive ones acted no less amicably toward me, I concluded that they wished not to go "on record," and usually retreated. In the case of one very important musician, I was much more persistent. After having twice advised me to see him, as Nettl says, "next Tuesday" (1983:248), he finally relented, granting me a brief interview in a very noisy room. Because all but a couple of my informants seemed to be suspicious of any questions which were not directly musical, I often explained that I was trying to understand music in the context of Pentecostal worship and belief, and therefore needed to know as much as possible about everything.

As mentioned above, it was more difficult to enlist the help of the average congregant. Just as Nettl has observed that informants often "select themselves" (1983:255), so my average congregant selected herself. After the church's move, she regularly sat in the pew directly in front of me, and, since she worked at the university, invited me to stop by her office. We often visited in her office, began taking walks together, and ultimately I was invited into her home. Though she never allowed me to tape our discussions, she consented to two, more or less formal interviews. Far more valuable, however, have been our many informal discussions, which continue now, by phone, e-mail, and occasional visits, long after the formal research has concluded. Though I am of course grateful to Pastor McGhee for his permission to study Alpha and Omega, as well as his continued willingness to teach me about the church, I am most indebted to this one informant who wishes to remain nameless. Not only did she teach me about Alpha and Omega, the church's beliefs, its membership, and the life of one of its saints (herself), but also, through her friendship, she added a more personal dimension to the research. It is difficult to imagine how this study might have unfolded without her help, interest, and friendship.

The objective of this volume has been to "tell the story" of one congregation's musical life, and the image of ethnography-as-story has surfaced repeatedly during the writing process. At a very early stage of the writing, my dissertation advisor recommended that I think of the ethnography as "a story." "Just

tell the story," he advised. In his book about "the call of stories," Robert Coles tells a story about his internship as a psychiatrist, a story with implications for the ethnographer. As an intern working with victims of polio, he had become adept at formulating abstract theories to account for the "psychodynamics" of his patients. While most of his mentors were quite pleased with his growth as a psychopathologist, one mentor wanted something different; he wanted to learn more about Coles' patients and their stories. "A pity you're not giving us them," he once explained (1989:27). Similarly, Coles' wife, who also worked with polio victims, was troubled by the tenor of his scholarly papers, and on one occasion, said, "At times I feel you're explaining away those people" (1989:28). In closing this volume, it is my hope that I have done justice to the people of Alpha and Omega: that I have given the reader "them" and their story.

Chapter 10

Conclusions

[Old Sister Price] sure can't play no piano,
not for me she can't. She just ain't got no *juices*, somehow.
When that woman is on the piano, the service just gets so dead
you'd think you was in a Baptist church.
--Odessa (in James Baldwin's *The Amen Corner*)

A Sanctified service and a Baptist service is totally different.
...When you come into the Sanctified service,
it is a Spirit-lifting type of music,
and singing slow, kind of draggy-like songs has a tendency
to bring the Spirit down instead of giving
that kind of boost that you're looking for.
--female congregant (Alpha and Omega; May 29, 1991)

At the outset of this volume, I proposed that my study would shed light upon several areas of concern to ethnographers. The four primary objectives of this study--to (1) provide a holistic description of a church, with an emphasis upon its music and worship; (2) to study the relationship between music and other facets of culture at that church; (3) to examine the effect which social change had upon the musical and ritual life of the church; and (4) to explore the relationship between the researcher and the institution being studied--have now been accomplished. The present chapter reflects briefly upon these several objectives, and concludes with a summary of the findings of each of the foregoing chapters.

First, in presenting a holistic description of a church and its worship, I have demonstrated one way in which an ethnographer might describe an institution. My examination of the musical and

ritual life of a single Apostolic Pentecostal congregation, the Alpha and Omega Temple of Jesus Christ, has sought to convey the Spirit-filled character which animated the congregation and its worship. As the above two epigrams suggest, Sanctified--or Spirit-filled--services, like those held at Alpha and Omega, have a particularly lively character in which music-making plays a key role. By describing the doctrine, ritual, music, and language of this church, I have attempted to delineate the beliefs of church members; to show how things were done at a Holy Ghost-filled church; and to communicate something of the excitement that pervaded worship.

Second, because music at Alpha and Omega existed not in a vacuum but rather as an integral part of the congregation's expressive culture, music has been examined in its relation to other facets of culture. A variety of topics in several chapters have addressed the interrelationship between music and Pentecostal belief, ritual, and language. These topics have included the homologous relationship between Pentecostal doctrine and musical and ritual flexibility; the cross-fertilization which occurs between formulaic spoken language and song texts; the use of song texts to communicate fundamental principles of church doctrine; and the relationship between Alpha and Omega's musical repertoire and the church's constituency. By examining the church's music not as an isolated phenomenon, but rather as it relates to Pentecostal belief, ritual, and language, this study has sought to communicate the rich oral traditions, musical as

well as linguistic, which characterize Alpha and Omega's expressive culture.

Third, this study has examined the social, ritual, and musical change occasioned by Alpha and Omega's move from an overcrowded warehouse sanctuary to an attractive, spacious sanctuary across town. Detailed analyses of twelve Sunday morning worship services from a period of over two years have provided the basis for my examination of the changes in musical and ritual behavior which accompanied Alpha and Omega's move to a "real" church edifice. In Chapter 7, I have not only chronicled the modifications to which worship services were subject after the move, but also have provided a variety of interpretations to account for this change.

The fourth objective of this study was to look reflexively upon the fieldwork experience, and to examine patterns of interaction between myself and the Pentecostal congregation which I studied. This reflection is the content of Chapter 9. My status as a non-believer amidst a community of saints resulted in a very dynamic relationship between myself and the church members. Concerned about my salvation, Pastor McGhee and church members were diligent in their efforts to teach me--the unsaved Professor--the most important lesson of all. My regular attendance, and therefore repeated exposure to the Word, made my prolonged unconverted presence all the more puzzling to them. These and other aspects of the fieldwork experience have been explored in the previous chapter. The following narrative

summarizes the conclusions of each of the foregoing chapters.

Chapter 2 presented general background information on Pastor McGhee, his congregation, and the urban community in which Alpha and Omega is located. An examination of the history of Pentecostalism, as well as of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (P. A. W.), the church body to which Alpha and Omega belongs, helped to situate the church and its belief system within a historical context. The chapter's final section explored the issues of church personnel and gender. It was observed that the church's founder and leader, Pastor McGhee, whom members regard as "the spokesman for the King of Kings" and "a true prophet of God," commanded a firm, charismatic authority at Alpha and Omega. As in the Pentecostal congregations studied by Lawless and Gilkes, men held all the key positions of authority at Alpha and Omega,¹ even though women constituted almost three-quarters of the adult membership. The P. A. W., unlike many Pentecostal denominations, has traditionally ordained women and granted them pastorates; but while members of Alpha and Omega occasionally had an opportunity to witness female leadership in the form of a guest pastor, authority at Alpha and Omega rested firmly in the hands of men.

In the third chapter, which examined the congregation's religious convictions as they were espoused in worship, it was noted that song played an essential role in teaching the

¹The pastor, the four deacons, the minister of music, and the chief musician were all male.

fundamental tenets of church doctrine at Alpha and Omega. Harvey Cox has asserted that Pentecostals, unlike many Christian groups, have "historically... felt more at home singing their theology" than in writing essays about it (1995:15). At Alpha and Omega, where songs and singing were held in very high regard, song provided a powerful means of communicating basic religious tenets. Because of the value ascribed to song, it was one of the most important ways in which the congregation, and particularly its young people, came to understand and internalize the church's convictions.

Chapter 4 examined the nature of worship at Alpha and Omega, as well as the components of a "routine" service. It was noted that the Sunday worship service can be divided into three principal segments of roughly equal duration: the pastor was absent during the initial, warming up segment of worship; he shared leadership with the choir during the middle portion; and he single-handedly directed the final segment, which included the sermon and altar call. This chapter concluded that a spiritual buildup was an important objective of all worship services at Alpha and Omega, and that this processual and transformative character of worship was manifest in an accretion of sound, congregational involvement, and spiritual excitement. This process, which members believed to be influenced by the presence of the Holy Ghost, was highly variable and ultimately unpredictable. Members attributed great power to the Holy Ghost, and believed that its presence was manifest also in glossolalia

and healing, as well as in other Spirit-filled behavior, such as ritual dance and being "slain in the Spirit."

Chapter 5 examined the congregation's musical repertoire. It was determined that the repertoire contained two principal strata. The congregational songs and hymns constituted the older, more traditional portion of the repertoire, while the choir selections and shout music comprised a more contemporary musical stratum. Examination of Alpha and Omega's congregational song repertoire demonstrated that striking melodic and structural similarities were found within subsets of the repertoire, suggesting that the multiplicity of congregational songs is reducible to a smaller number of tune types or families. In the final section of Chapter 5, it was determined that while church leadership cultivated a youthful image by emphasizing the more contemporary stratum of musical repertoire, it also sought to maintain the older, more traditional repertoire, even adding a hymn, aware that musical diversity was the key to attracting a wider audience.

The importance of language and verbal performance was examined in Chapter 6. Speaking is highly valued at Alpha and Omega, and worship leaders regularly encouraged active congregational involvement in the form of oral testimonies and prayers. Chapter 6 concluded not only that Pentecostal language, as encountered at Alpha and Omega, is specialized and formulaic, but also that the highly formulaic character of language enabled new and old members alike to extemporaneously construct familiar

and appropriate testimonies. It was also determined that the language of song is closely intertwined with the spoken language of worship, and that the reservoir of formulaic song texts further facilitated active verbal performance among congregants. Because Pastor McGhee was the measure of verbal competence at Alpha and Omega, Chapter 6 examined the language and character of his sermons, focusing upon textual repetition in the form of "hooks," parallelisms, and verbal formulas. In comparing the pastor's use of verbal formulas to that described by Lord in his analysis of Yugoslavian epic singers, it was concluded that these different forms of oral improvisation are only remotely similar. Analysis of selected formulas showed that even though verbal formulas are employed extensively in the Pastor's oral improvisation, their recurrent use is highly variable, with changes in metric emphasis and textual repetition.

When Alpha and Omega moved from its overcrowded storefront sanctuary to a "real" church edifice across town, the ritual and musical character of worship underwent dramatic change. Using data from detailed analyses of twelve worship services (four each from 1989, 1990, and 1991; see Appendix A), Chapter 7 examined the nature and extent of that change, and advanced a variety of interpretations to explain that transformation. The data indicate that a dramatic reduction in the amount of spirit-filled dancing and praise occurred in the year immediately following the move. Whereas spirit-filled dancing had accounted for an average of twenty-nine minutes per worship service in the fall of 1989,

one year later, after the move, this very emotional activity accounted for an average of just over five minutes per service. In addition to this striking decrease in the amount of time devoted to spirit-filled dancing and praise, other changes were also noted: shorter services, shorter sermons, lengthier altar calls, less congregational singing, and more choir singing, to name a few.

Chapter 7 offered a variety of explanations for this dramatic change. After the move, the minister of music acknowledged that the emphasis had shifted from "emotionalism" to "teaching," and this explanation helps to account for at least some of the changes, particularly the shorter services and the reduction in spirit-filled dancing. Pastor McGhee similarly acknowledged that worship was less fervent in the year following the move, and he suggested that some changes had been effected to appeal to a wider spectrum of people. Because the exterior of the new church would attract people who would never have entered the warehouse sanctuary, he explained, "the service has to just be able to minister to all of these people." Pastor McGhee's explanation helps to explain the shorter, less emotional services, the choir's increased prominence, and the shorter sermons. Any explanation of the dramatic ritual change must also take into account the fact that the church's expenses increased geometrically after the move. It appears that the heightened financial responsibilities of the church were in part responsible for the reduction in emotionalism. After the move to the

spacious sanctuary at 400 West Bradley, half of the seats were regularly vacant. In need of more members and broader financial support, church leaders, it seems, whether consciously or not, toned down the very emotional character of worship in order to appeal to a greater variety of congregants; this theory also helps to explain the burgeoning length of the altar appeal, as a means of increasing church membership. When, after more than a year of reduced emotionalism, the church had failed to attract many new members, it began to revive some of the more emotional, spirit-filled aspects of worship.

Chapter 8 examined the value ascribed to flexibility at Alpha and Omega, and concluded that various forms of musical and ritual flexibility played a vital role in validating a key Pentecostal construct--namely, the belief that an individual or worship service can be "Holy Ghost filled." Scholars have pointed to the unpredictable and spontaneous character of Pentecostal worship, but little attention has been devoted to the relationship between Pentecostal doctrine and musical and ritual flexibility. This chapter sought to address that neglect. Pastor McGhee and worship leaders often advocated the need to be "flexible" and ready to follow the Holy Spirit's direction during worship. According to Pastor McGhee this emphasis upon flexibility has its basis in scripture and Pentecostal doctrine. Flexible ritual behavior was interpreted by the pastor and his congregation as evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence. Virtually equating flexibility with the Holy Spirit's presence,

Pastor McGhee maintained that ritual flexibility caused worshipers to "marvel and be turned to the Lord." Flexibility in worship was encountered in a variety of ways: variable service order, spontaneous singing, spontaneous instrumental improvisation, the openended musical form of congregational songs and hymns, and a similar elasticity found in choir selections. Because all forms of musical and ritual flexibility reinforce the conviction that the congregation and the service are "Spirit-filled," flexible ritual behavior validates a central Pentecostal construct; and the value ascribed to flexibility in both doctrine and ritual behavior demonstrates a strong coherence between doctrinal and expressive domains at Alpha and Omega.

Chapter 9 provided an opportunity for the author to reflect upon the fieldwork experience, and particularly upon the relationship between himself and the Pentecostal community. The issue of the researcher's role was examined--both the role that he ascribed to himself and that assigned to him by the pastor and congregation at Alpha and Omega. The discrepancy between these two roles--with the author imagining himself a curious graduate student ethnographer and the church assigning him the role of unsaved professor--was substantial and resulted in a considerable amount of awkwardness and tension. The pastor preached that no one can be exposed to the Word of God for any sustained period of time without seeing its truth: "if anybody comes around here, stay around here any length of time, you gonna get water baptized in Jesus' name and get the Holy Ghost." The author's unconverted

presence over a period of three years appeared to be a source of frustration for Pastor McGhee and members of his congregation. Despite the awkwardness and frustration, however, the relationship between the researcher and the church was always one of mutual respect, and the congregation invariably accepted the author both warmly and graciously, even referring to him as a "good member."

**Appendix A:
Graphic Analysis of Twelve Sunday Morning Services**

Four Services from the Fall of 1989	Page
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NOTE: The vertical lines located at the right of each of the following twelve charts indicate activity on the part of the keyboardist/s and drummer. Each horizontal crosshatch signifies about one minute of the very fast, ostinato-based instrumental music which accompanied spirit-filled dancing and occasional trance-like states.

Service No. 1 (October 15, 1989)

Timeline		keyboard	drum
---:00-	:00 SONG: Let's Go Higher in the Lord (4'00")		
---	:04 SONG: Victory, Victory Shall Be Mine (2'25")		
---	:08 call to the altar for PRAYER ; a SONG , My Soul Loves Jesus (1'55"), precedes prayer		

---:15-	:15 Scripture: I Corinthians 16: 1-7		
---	:16 SONG: Thank You, Thank You Jesus (3'10")		
---	:19 PRAISE SERVICE: lasts c. 35 min., during which time 11 women and 4 men testify; shouts sung: Praise Him (15"), I Get Joy... (1'00");		
---	SONG: God Is Great; He's Greatly to be Praised (1'15")		

---	:45 Testimony Leader: "You didn't hear what she's sayin'.... She had that suicide demon in her last year, but it's gone now."		
---:45-			
---	:54 Pastor enters (unannounced)		
---	P: "Say, 'You don't know like I know/ what the Lord has done for me.'" Congregation repeats each phrase in turn after the pastor.		
-1:00	1:02 Choir Selection A: Dancing in the Spirit (7'00")		

---	1:09 OFFERING: lasts c. 16 min.		

-1:15-	1:17 P: "Professor Ward, you can stand." (Someone gave fifty dollars on my behalf.)		
---	1:21 SONG: as members bring their offerings to the altar, choir softly sings, I Just Can't Tell It All (3'55")		

-1:30-	1:26 announcements and acknowledgement of visitors		
---	1:34 Choir Selection B: And He Rose (7'00")		

---	1:41 At this time, a member leads her daughter (c. 10 years old) to the front of the church. During the next 33 minutes the Pastor and members seek to cast out the evil demon which is said to possess her. Shouting, clapping, moaning, wailing, and sobbing is heard, but music is conspicuously absent. Of the many exclamations, the following are the most common: "in the name of Jesus," "thank you, Jesus," "the blood of Jesus," "Jesus," "Hallelujah," and "loose your hold, in the name of Jesus."		
-1:45-			

-2:00-			

-2:15-	2:14 SERMON: last c. 62 minutes The sermon relates to the "casting out" which just occurred; it is drawn from St. Mark 9: 16-27. A member reads and rereads phrases from this passage, and the pastor amplifies upon them.		

---	2:15 P: "Some of you all need to wake up... and realize that the devil is real. But thank God for the Holy Ghost. There's power over the devil.... I said the devil is real."		

-2:45-	2:17 P: "Hallelujah,... we can call out any demon and devil and he'll come out. He gotta come out. The blood of Jesus say he's got to come."		

---	2:22 P: "What's God's name? Say, 'Jesus,'... You've got to have the right name.... We got the authoritative name [Jesus] to cast him [the devil] out."		
-3:00-			
---	2:35 P: "The devil does not care who he uses.... He'll visit the saint's house--if you'll not pray it up."		

-3:15-	3:16 ALTAR APPEAL: lasts c. 3 minutes; P: "While we're prayin', there may be somebody here that's not saved.... You get up and come down here now.... We'll even take the professor today."		

---	3:19 announcements		
---	3:20 benediction		

Service No. 2 (October 22, 1989)

Timeline		keyboard ↓	drum ↓
---:00-	:00	<u>song</u> : Jesus is Mine (3'30")	
---	:03	<u>song</u> : Bless That Wonderful Name of Jesus (3'10")	
---	:07	<u>prayer requests</u>	
---	:09	<u>prayer</u> at the altar; a <u>song</u> , I Want To Be More and More Like Jesus (2'20"), precedes prayer	
---:15-	:14	<u>scripture</u> : Acts 27: 31-44	
---	:16	<u>song</u> : Jesus Gettin' Us Ready for That Great Day (2'10")	
---	:19	<u>PRAISE SERVICE</u> : lasts c. 26 min., during which time 6 women and 4 men testify	
---:30-	:21	<u>song</u> : I Want To Be More and More Like Jesus (3'40")	
---	:33	<u>song</u> : I'm So Glad that the Lord Saved Me (2'00")	
---	:45	<u>song</u> : Just Another Day that the Lord Has Kept Me (3'10")	
---	:50	<u>song</u> : Look Where He Brought Me From (4'10")	
---	:55	<u>shout</u> : Come On Praise His Name (4'20")	
-1:00	1:02	<u>shout</u> : He's Worthy (1'30")	
---	1:05	<u>receive Pastor</u> ; P: "Reach over and tell somebody, 'Excuse me, while I praise the Lord.' ... I tell you, you can get healed while you praise Him.... We're going to have a Holy Ghost time here."	=====
---	1:08		
---	1:12	<u>acknowledgement of visitors</u>	
-1:15-	1:13	<u>Choir Selection A</u> : Grace (6'00")	
---	1:19	<u>OFFERING</u> : lasts c. 17 min.; P: "Now we're going into the part of the service where all of you can participate in it. It is our offering time...."	
---	1:33	<u>song</u> : I'm Waiting for a Miracle (3'25"), choir singing during collection	
-1:30-	1:36	<u>announcements</u>	
---	1:40	<u>Choir Selection B</u> : He's Worthy (6'00")	
-1:45-	1:47	P: "The Lord is good to us, and we thank Him when we praise Him, Hallelujah."	
---	1:50	<u>SERMON</u> : lasts c. 57 minutes P: "I want you to open your Bibles with me. The sermon is drawn from a very short text: Psalms 63: 1-3. A minister reads phrases from this passage, and Pastor McGhee amplifies greatly upon each phrase. P: "Reach over and tell somebody, say 'I'm thirsty and I need a drink.' ... It ain't no brew I'm talkin' about, now.... I want you to know we just need to get a drink of Jesus." P: "When you get drunk off of Jesus, you don't care what folks say about you." P: "I look at folks who say they got Jesus, ... but you let the ball game get you more excited than Jesus." P: "What you need to do is get up! Say, 'I'm thirsty for Jesus.' Get up! Tell the devil, 'I'm tired of your mess.'"	
-2:00-	2:06	<u>ALTAR APPEAL</u> lasts c. 8 min.; P: "I want you to come down these aisles.... If you recognize that there's something missing out of your life. ... You say, 'I'm coming now, to get drunk off of Jesus.'"	=====
---	2:14		
-2:15-	2:47		
---	2:55	<u>announcements</u>	
---	2:56	<u>benediction</u> ; service ends	

Service No. 3 (October 29, 1989)

Timeline		keyboard ↓	drum ↓
---:00-	:00 <u>song</u> : Thank you, Thank you, Jesus (7'40")		
---	:08 <u>PRAYER REQUESTS</u>		
---	:10 call to the altar for prayer; a <u>song</u> , We Have Come into His House (3'10"), precedes prayer		
---:15-	:17 <u>shout</u> : My God's Alright [What do you know about Jesus?] (5'10")		
---	:22 <u>Scripture</u> : Psalm 138: 1-8		
---	:24 <u>shout</u> : "as we continue to sing My God's Alright" (3'40")		
---:30-	:27 <u>PRAISE SERVICE</u> : lasts c. 37 min., during which time 11 women and 3 men testify; the Testimony Service leaders are now in charge		
---	:28 <u>shout</u> : In that Great Gettin'-up Morning (10'30")		
---:45-	:39 "We're gonna let you testify; who'll be the first?"; 4 testimonies before Pastor enters		
---	:48 <u>receive Pastor</u> : (it's unusual for Pastor to enter in the midst of a Praise Service)		
---	:57 young man from Chicago wants to be baptized		
-1:00	1:04 <u>receive Pastor</u> (again); marks end of Praise Serv.		
---	1:04 <u>ALTAR APPEAL</u> : P: "Don't worry about interruptin' our program....We gonna go like God say go."		
---	1:06 second person requests baptism		
---	1:12 <u>acknowledgement of visitors</u>		
-1:15-	1:13 two persons baptized		
---	1:16 <u>Choir Selection A</u> : He Sends His Love (9'15")		
---	1:26 <u>OFFERING</u> : "prepare yourself to give an offering"; because of an interruption during the offering, it is not completed until 2:36--70 min. later		
-1:30-	1:27 the church's bass player enters after an extended absence from A & O; his arrival results in great rejoicing; P: "Well, Hallelu[jah], just like a family reunion here."		
---	1:40 P: "We got time to get the offering....I want you to jump on your feet. If you can jump, jump! If you can dance, dance!"		
-1:45-	1:55 P: "Tell somebody, say, 'I told ya, excuse me'... 'while I praise Him'.... 'I got somethin' to praise Him for.'"		
-2:00-	2:04 P: "Reach over and tell somebody, say: 'I don't know what you're lookin' at me for'.... 'I got a right to praise Him.'"		
---	2:14 <u>ALTAR APPEAL (resumed)</u> : P: "There may be somebody else....You know you need to be water baptized in Jesus' name. The deacon is still on duty."		
-2:15-	2:17 third person requests baptism		
---	2:20 <u>OFFERING (resumed)</u> 2:23 third baptism		
---	2:25 P: "We're going to do this thing just like the Lord wants to do it."		
-2:30-	2:32 P: "If you expend yourself to give the largest offering that you can, God has a blessing in store for you"; offering ends c. 2:36		
---	2:37 <u>Choir Selection B</u> : I Guess You're Wondering (12'10")		
-2:45-	2:50 Pastor provides transition before and after the following choir selection; P: "Amen, put your hands together and praise Him. I'm gonna make it, hallelujah!... Everybody say, 'I gotta make it.'"		
-3:00-	2:50 <u>Additional Choir Selection</u> : I Do Believe I'll Make It (5'30")		
---	2:57 Pastor speaks on A & O; e.g., "I want you to know one thing: that God is blessin' this church."		
---	3:11 P: "This is what you call havin' church. Ah, reach over and tell somebody, 'We churchin' in here.'"		
-3:15-	3:13 singer improvises on subject: "is my livin' in vain"		
---	3:20 Pastor continues theme "is my livin' in vain"		
-3:30-	3:28 <u>announcements</u>		
---	3:35 <u>benediction</u>		
---	3:36 service ends		

Service No. 4 (November 5, 1989)

Timeline

		keyboard ↓	drum ↓
--:00-	:00		
--	:05		
--	:06		
--	:09		
--:15-	:17		
--	:18		
--	:19		
--:30-	:22		
--	:36		
--	:40		
--:45-	:47		
--	:51		
--	:58		
-1:00	1:00		
--	1:09		
-1:15-	1:15		
--	1:19		
-1:30-	1:23		
--	1:27		
-1:45-	1:41		
--	1:48		
--	1:59		
-2:00-	2:01		
--	2:06		
-2:15-	2:09		
--	2:26		
-2:30-	2:34		
--	2:36		
-2:45-			
--			
-3:00-	2:43		
--	3:04		
--			
-3:15-	3:11		
	3:14		

Service No. 5 (October 7, 1990)

Timeline		keyboard ↓	drum ↓
--:00-	:00 <u>song</u> : In the Name of Jesus, We Have a Victory (2'00")		
--	:02 <u>song</u> : Send Down the Rain (2'45")		
--	:09 <u>prayer</u> at the altar; a <u>song</u> , Because He Lives (1'40"), precedes the group prayer		
--:15-	:12 <u>song</u> : Let's Go Higher in the Lord (2'35")		
--	:15 <u>Scripture</u> : St. John 15: 1-14		
--	:19 <u>song</u> : There's Power (2'30")		
--	:21 <u>PRAISE SERVICE</u> : lasts c. 17 min., during which time 8 women and 3 men testify; <u>songs</u> sung:		
--:30-	:30 Since I Lay My Burden Down (3'00"); When I Think of the Goodness of Jesus (1'05"); He's Been So Good to Me (2'05"); There's Power (55")		
--	:38 <u>receive Pastor</u>		
--	:39 <u>choir processional</u> (3'30")		
--:45-	:45 <u>Choir Selection A</u> : Magnify Him (8'25")		
--	:55 P: "You ought to give God the highest praise; he's been good to ya"		
--			
-1:00	1:00 <u>OFFERING</u> : lasts c. 20 min		
--	1:05 <u>song</u> : When the Praises Go Up (4'10")		
--	1:14 P: "We're gonna get an offering right now; We're gonna do this swiftly."		
--	1:16 P: "Let's make it a good offering.... You plant the seed right now."		
-1:15-	1:20 P: "Let's put our hands together for the offering."		
--	1:21 <u>Choir Selection B</u> : He Can Work It Out (6'20")		
--	1:27 <u>announcements: acknowledgement of visitors</u>		
-1:30-	1:33 After announcing another choir selection Pastor McGhee asks the congregation to get their Bibles ready: "...everybody get your Bibles, 'cause I just want to talk to you from your Bible."		
--	1:34 <u>Choir Selection</u> : All in His Hands (7'00")		
-1:45-	1:45 <u>SERMON</u> : lasts c. 41 min. The sermon is drawn from II Kings 6: 1-2; 13-17. A member reads and rereads phrases from this scripture, the Pastor commenting upon them. The principal recurring motive is, "I believe in miracles."		
-2:00-	1:47 P: "Though the situation may look out of hand now, I believe in miracles. Though the thing may seem to be far out of our reach, I believe in miracles."		
--	2:12 P: "Say, 'I believe in miracles.' If you have a son on drugs, say, 'I believe in miracles.' If you have a daughter that's hooked on the street, say, 'I believe in miracles.'"		
-2:15-	2:27 <u>ALTAR APPEAL</u> : lasts c. 13 min.; P: "Is there one? ...You may be coming for prayer or you may be coming to be a part of this family." Choir sings very softly.		
-2:30-	2:42 <u>benediction</u> : A minister closes; the congregation repeats after him: "Lord/ I receive my miracle/ in Jesus' name/ on this day/ in Jesus' name/ Amen."		
-2:45-			

Service No. 6 (October 21, 1990)

Timeline		keyboard ↓	drum ↓
---:00-	:00 <u>song</u> : I'm So Glad That He Lifted Me (2'15")		
---	:04 congregation called to the altar for <u>PRAYER</u> ; <u>SONG</u> , My Soul Loves Jesus (1'00"), precedes prayer.		
---	:09 <u>song</u> : I Praise Him, I Praise Him... (1'30")		
---	:10 <u>Scripture</u> : Isaiah 45: 4-12		
---:15-	:12 <u>song</u> : When I Think of the Goodness of Jesus (1'40")		
---	:15 <u>shout</u> : I Get Joy When I Think About... (3'10")		
---	:18 <u>PRAISE SERVICE</u> : lasts c. 18 min., during which time 7 women testify; no men testify. <u>song</u> : He Didn't Have To Do It But He Did (2'00"); <u>shout</u> : If You Call on Jesus, He Will Answer Prayer (4'20")		
---	:36 <u>receive Pastor</u> ; followed immediately by the <u>choir</u> <u>processional</u> : Oh Lord, We Praise You (6'20")		
---	:43 P: "Put your hands together and praise Him. [clap- ping] Come on and give the Lord the praise. You've got a right to praise Him.... He's been good to ya. He's been good to ya...."		
---:45-	:53 <u>Choir Selection A</u> : I Just Can't Tell It All (7'40")		
-1:00	1:01 P: "We realize that the devil is still the devil, but God has given us the victory."		
---	1:04 <u>OFFERING</u> : lasts c. 10 min.; P: "And of course you know you can't buy salvation, and thank God He didn't die because of what you had in your pocket; but we do know that it takes finance to exist and to operate at the same time."		
-1:15-	1:14 <u>Choir Selection B</u> : You Must Be Born Again (6'05")		
---	1:20 <u>announcements and acknowledgement of visitors</u> ; Pastor McGhee himself announces important upcoming events: A & O's First Bible Conference and the church's eleventh anniversary.		
---	1:42 <u>song</u> : Oh Come and Magnify the Lord (3'45")		
-1:45-	1:46 <u>SERMON</u> : lasts about 43 min.; the Pastor cites time constraints as the reason for skipping over verses in the passage under consideration; the following verses are read and reread by a brother, while the Pastor amplifies upon them: Daniel 1: 3, 6, 9-12, 15. Before getting to the scripture, however, Pastor McGhee begins with a lengthy introduction (c. 15'). One idea (viz., "refuse to eat the king's meat") returns again and again, and serves to unify the sermon.		
-2:00-	P: "How many know that the devil is out to get you? He'll set something up for you.... Ah, but you don't have to fall for the king's meat. You don't have to eat the stuff that the devil is tryin' to give you."		
-2:15-	2:29 <u>ALTAR APPEAL</u> : lasts c. 27 min., though it is difficult to say when it ends. Many come forward for prayer. Pastor McGhee's prayer includes the following: "Now Father, these mens and women have said they refuse to eat the king's meat. They refuse to eat the ungodly things of this world."		
-2:30-	2:56 The last 12 minutes of the service--the most emotionally charged or "spirit-filled" part of this service--might be called a "praise break."		
-3:00-	3:03 P: "Now we're gonna try to let you go home. I've been ready, but it don't seem like you all ready."		
---	3:08 <u>benediction</u> ; service ends		

Service No. 7 (October 28, 1990)

Timeline		keyboard ↓	drum ↓
--:00-	:00 song: <i>Let Us Go Into the House of the Lord</i> (4'10")		
--	:06 congregation called to the altar for PRAYER ; SONG , <i>My Soul Loves Jesus</i> (1'50"), precedes prayer		
--	:12 song: <i>In the Name of Jesus... We Have a Victory</i> (3'30"); the minister in charge then leads the congregation in praise, with reference to the song: "Thank you for the victory, Hallelujah!"		
--:15-			
--	:17 Scripture: Psalm 92: 1-10		
--	:19 PRAISE SERVICE: lasts c. 23 min., during which time 6 women and 3 men testify; song: <i>I Love the Lord and I Won't Take it Back</i> (3'25"); song: <i>O Come and Magnify the Lord</i> (4'10"; later, 3'30")		
--:30-			
--	:42 receive Pastor: Pastor leads the congregation in praise: "How many feel the presence of the Holy Ghost? Raise your hand in here."		
--:45-			
--	:48 Choir Selection A: <i>Lord, I Believe</i> (10'5")		
--			
--	:59 OFFERING: lasts c. 34 min.; a Sister testifies how God has blessed her with a house, cars, and a promotion to manager of a local restaurant. She adds, "Even as we stand in line, you all get your mind on Jesus, and begin to tell Him what you want... You know what's in your pockets. God can increase it. He done it for me." Pastor prays: "We pray now that the blessings of God... would come down upon them, and make them rich and add no sorrow to them... I want you to touch yourself and say, 'I am blessed.'... Say, 'I am a prosperous person.'"		
-1:00			
--	1:34 announcements: "We will be celebrating our 11th annual church anniversary and our first annual Bible conference beginning tomorrow."		
--	1:41 Choir Selection B: <i>You Can Make It</i> (12'05")		
-1:45-			
--	1:55 Spirit-filled praise seems to have been generated by excitement over the Choir Selection, as well as by the Pastor's remarks afterwards.		
-2:00-			
--	2:06 SERMON: The sermon is drawn from a very short text: Job 29: 1-2; sermon lasts c. 24 min. P: "Reach over and ask somebody, say, 'What about now?'...say, 'what are you doing about now?'" This short question--"What about now?"-- is asked dozens of times during the sermon. P: "There's sometime you be so messed up with the past, until you cannot enjoy the present NOR the future.... Are you grateful for where you are right now?"		
-2:15-			
--	2:30 ALTAR APPEAL: lasts c. 29 min.		
--	2:33 P: "I'm gonna give you some time... for you to come. Come for prayer; however you come, you just walk down the aisles." No one is baptized today but more than half the congregation comes for prayer.		
-2:45-			
--	2:39 Hymn: <i>Pass Me Not</i> (18'00") during much of the altar call, choir softly sings hymn's chorus		
--	2:59 P: "Before you leave... I'm gonna pray for some miracles."		
-3:00-			
--	3:05 P: "I pray right now, Professor Ward, that you will write this book so fast it'll shock you, in the name of Jesus."		
--	3:08 song: <i>May the Lord God Bless You Real Good</i> (1'00")		
--	3:10 benediction; service ends		

Service No. 8 (November 4, 1990)

Timeline		keyboard ↓	drum ↓
---:00-	:00	<u>song</u> : In the Name of Jesus, We Have a Victory (2'50")	
--	:03	<u>song</u> : Let's Go Higher in the Lord (1'45")	
--	:05	<u>song</u> : Send Down the Rain (3'40")	
--	:09	<u>prayer requests</u> : spoken and unspoken	
---:15-	:12	<u>prayer</u> at the altar; songs precede and follow prayer: My Soul Loves Jesus (2'05") and There's Power, Power, Wondrous Working Power (1'35")	
--	:20	<u>Scripture</u> : Psalm 114: 1-8	
---:30-	:22	<u>PRAISE SERVICE</u> : lasts c. 17 minutes, during which time 12 women and 6 men deliver short testimonies based on passages from scripture; <u>SONGS</u> : There's Power, Power... (1'30"); I Shall Not Be Moved (2'20"); <u>shout</u> : Praise the Lord Everybody (5'30")	
---:45-	:39	<u>receive Pastor</u>	
--	:39	<u>Choir Processional</u> : Instrumental vamp accompanies procession (5'30"); then choir sings <u>Processional Selection, Keep on Fighting</u> (4'00")	
--	:52	<u>Selection A: Give Him Praise</u> (8'20")	
-1:00	1:02	P: "Put your hand together and Praise the Lord... Sometime you need to just take time out and praise Him."	
--	1:07	<u>OFFERING</u> : lasts c. 11 min.; P: "Say, 'In Jesus' name'...'I receive my blessing'...'that makes me rich'...'and adds no sorrow'...'in Jesus' name'...'Amen'" [congregation repeats after Pastor]	
-1:15-	1:19	<u>Selection B: Born Again</u> (9'20") "You must be born again.... You gotta be born again."	
---:30-	1:29	<u>announcements and acknowledgement of visitors</u>	
--	1:36	<u>Hymn: Honey in the Rock</u> (2'30")	
--	1:39	<u>SERMON</u> : lasts c. 50 minutes. This sermon is unusual in that Pastor McGhee reads the entire Scripture passage (Mark 4: 35-41) at the start of the sermon; then he himself lines out verses before amplifying upon them. The principal recurring theme of this sermon is: "I'm goin' over on the other side." The subject is deliverance.	
-1:45-	1:48	P: "There are still people that are... water baptized in Jesus' name, speakin' in tongues, Holy Ghost-filled, and know that they're in the right church and still not delivered."	
-2:15-	1:52	P: "What do ya mean by 'go on the other side'?" You need to tell the devil, 'I'm gonna be saved despite of what you got me hooked up in.'"	
--	2:24	P: "Salvation and deliverance is a process... but know one thing: He [Jesus] is on board. And because He's on board, you can get to the other side."	
-2:30-	2:29	<u>ALTAR APPEAL</u> : lasts c. 17 minutes P: "If you here today not water baptized in Jesus' name, you can come... You wanta come and be a part [of A & O], come for prayer, come for whatever, this is your time."	
-2:45-	2:54	<u>benediction</u> ; service ends	

Service No. 9 (September 29, 1991)

Timeline		keyboard ↓	drum ↓
---:00-	:00 <u>song</u> : Victory, Victory Shall Be Mine (2'30")		
---	:02 <u>song</u> : Send Down the Rain (2'55")		
---	:07 call to the altar for <u>prayer</u> ; a song, My Soul Loves Jesus (1'05"), precedes prayer		
---	:12 <u>scripture</u> : Psalm 27: 1-9		
---:15-	:14 <u>song</u> : In the name of Jesus... (2'05")		
---	:17 <u>PRAISE SERVICE</u> : lasts c. 24 min., during which time 6 women and 2 men testify; <u>shout</u> : I'm a Soldier in the Army of the Lord (1'35"); <u>song</u> : Since I Lay My Burden Down (2'40"); I Feel Like Goin' On (1'30"); <u>shout</u> : God is a Good God, Yes He Is (5'20" + 3'25") (this same shout is begun again about four minutes later)		
---	:41 <u>receive Pastor</u>		
---	:42 <u>choir processional</u> : instrumental music accompanies choir entrance (2'35"); <u>Processional Selection</u> : I've Got Joy, Great Joy, in My Soul (4'55" + 1'40") (selection concluded but resumed)		
---:45-	:51 Pastor expounds on the subject of "great joy" for c. 7 min. (until Selection A is announced)		
---	:58 <u>Selection A</u> : I'll serve Him (5'20")		
-1:00	1:04 Pastor talks about the choir's trip to Chicago last night: "The Lord met us in that service... in a way that I have not seen in a very long time."		
---	1:13 <u>OFFERING</u> : lasts c. 9 min.; instrumental music to accompany congregation's walk to the altar		
---	1:22 <u>Selection B</u> : Power of God (6'55") "After the Holy Ghost has come upon you, you shall receive power from God." [text]		
---:30-	1:29 <u>announcements and acknowledgement of visitors</u>		
---	1:34 <u>Additional Choir Selection</u> : Pastor asks if a Sister would lead choir in Yes, Jesus Loves Me "in place of our hymn." (12'55")		
---	Solo, unmeasured introduction consists of the chorus of the 19th c. hymn sung 3 times		
-1:45-	1:48 This selection precipitates spirit-filled dancing. Moreover, the pastor--for 32 min. (and well into the altar call)--continues referring to the song's message. Although there is no sermon today, the Pastor's discussion of this text is very similar to a sermon.		
---	2:00 P: "I wonder did you hear a song? You know that song changed somebody--you know, the Holy Ghost jumpin' on these people--because somebody's wakin' up, realizin' that 'Yes, Jesus Loves Me.'"		
---:15-	2:14 <u>ALTAR APPEAL</u> : lasts c. 48 min.; one Brother baptized; many come for prayer		
---	P: "Somebody might be here today, [who] says 'I know you got somethin' [when you say, 'Jesus Loves Me']; I wants to be saved.' Get up and come."		
---	Pastor focuses upon a young man who comes forth for prayer, but is not ready for baptism. Reference is made to his problem with drugs.		
---	2:30		
---	2:45		
---	2:48 P: "He's in this place today."		
---	2:55 P: "This is what church is all about."		
---	3:00		
---	3:04 P: "And there's Professor Ward, Amen. He's still callin' your name. I got it written down, that's right. You ain't gonna escape this thing, Glory to God."		
---	3:11 <u>benediction</u> ; service ends		

Service No. 10 (October 27, 1991)

Timeline		keyboard ↓	drum ↓
---:00-	:00 <u>song medley</u> : In the Name of Jesus (1'10")--Send Down the Rain (2'25")--In the Name of Jesus (1'05")		
---:07	call to the altar for prayer; a <u>song</u> , I Need Thee (1'35"), precedes prayer		
---:15-	:13 <u>Scripture</u> : Matthew 18: 21-35		
---:15-	:15 <u>song</u> : Let's Go Higher in the Lord (1'40" + 2'00")		
---:17	:17 <u>PRAISE SERVICE</u> : lasts c. 27 minutes, during which time 4 women and 3 men testify		
---:30-	<u>shout</u> : Praise the Lord (4'10"); <u>songs</u> : I've Come to Glorify His Name (2'30"); Oh What a Mighty God We Serve (1'25"); I Want to be More and More Like Jesus (1'30"); Victory, Victory Shall Be Mine (2'15")		
---:44	:44 <u>Pastor enters</u> (unannounced) P: "We ask at this time that you receive these great singers that will minister to you in song...."		
---:45-	:45 Instrumental <u>Choir Processional</u> (2'25"); and <u>Processional Selection</u> : The Lord Will Make a Way Somehow (4'30" + 50")		
-1:00	:54 P: "We came here to have church today.... We didn't come here to entertain you."		
1:04	<u>Choir Selection A</u> : Power of God (7'10"); text of 4mm vamp: "Power/ after the Holy Ghost has come upon you/ you shall receive Power from God."		
-1:15-	1:13 <u>OFFERING</u> : lasts c. 25 min.; P: "I want everybody in the place that can to plant a seed, and I don't want you to plant it for just yourself. I want you to remember somebody else...--somebody you want to save, somebody you want to heal. Let's plant a seed for 'em with ten dollars today.... I heard somebody say, Dr. Ward, would you stand up."		
1:33	<u>Choir Selection</u> : The choir begins singing an unannounced selection during the offering; it continues after the Pastor gives thanks for the offering.		
-1:45-	<u>I Got Joy, Great Joy, In My Soul</u> (12'30")		
1:46	Afterwards, the Pastor extemporizes on the theme of the Selection; P: "Tell somebody next to you, say, 'I got joy'.... say, 'I may have to shout before I leave here.'"		
-2:00-	2:01 <u>ALTAR APPEAL</u> : lasts c. 57 min; P: "Now listen. I'm gonna stop right here and make an altar call. If you need to be baptized, I want ya to rush down here. If you need to be prayed for, I want you to rush down here."		
-2:15-	P: "I don't have to preach.... Anytime God does what He wanna do, that's always right.... I had a sermon to preach, but I can't mess with that. People came here to be delivered."		
-2:30-	P: "How many can see that the Lord is filling this church up?"		
-2:45-	Pastor McGhee emphasizes that there is but one plan of salvation: P: "The real key is to get born again...and you get baptized in water in the name of Jesus. That's the only name.... You don't have to join this church to get baptized in Jesus' name. ...You got to have the Spirit which is the Holy Ghost, which is the gift that God gives you, and once you get this gift, you talk back to God." [glossolalia]		
-3:00-	3:00 <u>benediction</u> ; service ends		

Service No. 11 (November 10, 1991)

Timeline		keyboard ↓	drum ↓
--:00-	:00	<u>song</u> : <i>Jesus Gettin' Us Ready for that Great Day</i> (2'40")	
--	:04	call to altar for prayer; a <u>song</u> , <i>My Soul Loves Jesus</i> (2'45"), precedes prayer	
--	:10	<u>Scripture</u> : Matthew 25: 1-13	
--:15-	:11	<u>song</u> : <i>Thank You, Thank You Jesus</i> (5'05")	
--	:17	<u>PRAISE SERVICE</u> : lasts c. 26 min., during which time 6 men and 6 women testify; "Testimony Service is open to each and every one of you to sing your own song and testify to the glory of God."	
--:30-		<u>songs</u> : <i>Can't Nobody Do Me Like Jesus</i> (2'05"); <i>We Come with ???</i> (2'25"); <i>Hallelujah, Hallelujah, I Love to Praise His Name</i> (2'30" + 5'20"); <u>shout</u> : <i>I Get Joy When I Think About...</i> (1'20")	
--:45-	:43	<u>receive Pastor</u>	
--	:44	<u>Choir Processional</u> (2'50") <u>Processional Selection</u> : <i>I get Joy, Great Joy, In My Soul</i> (5'25")	
--	:53	P: "Thank God for the joy that we have.... We heard a songwriter said, 'the joy that I have, the world didn't give it and the world can't take it away.'"	
-1:00			
--	:55	<u>Choir Selection A</u> : <i>Jesus is Real</i> (4'45")	
--	1:01	<u>OFFERING</u> : lasts c. 14 min.; <u>song</u> , <i>His Eye Is On the Sparrow</i> (4'25"), sung by a Brother at the request of Pastor McGhee	
-1:15-			
--	1:15	<u>Choir Selection B</u> : <i>I'll Make It</i> (5'00")	
--	1:21	<u>announcements and acknowledgement of visitors</u>	
--	1:27	P: "The Voices will sing a portion of <i>Yes, Jesus Loves Me</i> , and this is for our hymn today...."	
-1:30-	1:28	<u>Additional Choir Selection</u> : <i>Yes, Jesus Loves Me</i> (9'15")	
--			
--	1:37	<u>SERMON</u> : lasts c. 52 min. The sermon is drawn from John 11: 4-5, 11-28, 34-45. At the outset a member reads verses 11-28, with the pastor repeating the phrases immediately thereafter; atypically, he provides no elaboration or annotation. Later in the sermon, the Pastor employs his standard technique of elaborating upon other lined out verses. Unlike most sermons at A&O, this sermon lacks a recurring motive.	
-1:45-			
--	2:18	P: "When God saved you, it ain't just for your benefit. He's tryin' to help somebody else to know that He's a savior.... When he moves you outa the basement, puts you in a penthouse, it ain't just for you to be there. He wants somebody else to know: if you're in the basement and you stay there long enough, I [i.e., He/God] will raise you up."	
-2:00-			
--	2:15-		
--	2:29	<u>ALTAR APPEAL</u> : lasts c. 14 min	
--	2:33	Pastor asks a Sister to sing a <u>song</u> : <i>Only Believe</i> (3'20" + 3'40"); the song is foregrounded at first, then sung very softly in the background--while Pastor prays.	
-2:45-			
--	2:43	A second offering appeal is made at this time.	
--	2:49	<u>benediction</u> ; end of service	

Service No. 12 (November 24, 1991)

Timeline		keyboard ↓	drum ↓
---:00-	:00	<u>song</u> : Let Us Go Into the House... (4'40")	
---	:04	<u>song</u> : Let's Go Higher in the Lord (1'30")	
---	:06	Congregation called to altar for <u>prayer</u> ; <u>song</u> , My Soul Loves Jesus (1'35"), precedes prayer	
---	:11	<u>scripture</u> : Psalm 67: 1-7	
---:15-	:12	<u>song</u> : Victory, Victory Shall Be Mine (2'40")	
---	:15	<u>PRAISE SERVICE</u> : lasts c. 28 min, during which time 4 women and 1 man testify; <u>songs</u> : In the Name of Jesus, We Have a Victory (1'15"); Send Down the Rain (4'15"); I Was Glad When They Said unto Me (1'30"); Victory Is Mine (1'25"); I Want To Be More and More Like Jesus (1'45"); There is Power, Power, Wondrous Working Power (2'00")	
---:30-		<u>shouts</u> : Have You Tried My Jesus... (4'20"); If You Call on Jesus (2'40"); I Get Joy (3'30")	
---	:43	<u>receive Pastor</u>	
---	:44	<u>Choir Processional</u> : instrumental music accompanies choir entrance (3'30");	
---	:48	<u>Processional Selection</u> : Touch Me (4'10")	
---	:59	<u>Choir Selection A</u> : Just When I Need Him Most (6'35")	
-1:00			
---	1:06	<u>OFFERING</u> : lasts c. 13 min.	
---	1:15	As the rows file to the altar, the musicians play a choir selection, <i>Abundant Life</i> , with some choir members singing along softly.	
-1:15-			
---	1:22	A guest evangelist briefly leads the congregation in praise.	
-1:30-	1:26	<u>Choir Selection B</u> : Get Up, If You're On the Lord's Side (6'00")	
---	1:34	<u>announcements and acknowledgement of visitors</u>	
---	1:42	<u>Additional Choir Selection</u> : A Bright and Morning Star (3'25")--an a cappella spiritual, performed with hand clapping and foot stomping	
-1:45-			
---	1:47	<u>SERMON</u> : lasts c. 41 minutes The Sermon is drawn from Genesis 9: 19-29 P: "We're gonna try to limit this [sermon] to twenty minutes.... What's wrong with the church today, the reason why people have to sing so many songs, and they have to kinda pump us up, and get us emotionalized, is because we don't have enough Word."	
-2:00-			
---	2:15	P: "You gonna have to get to the point, young Sisters, young Brothers, that you gonna have to choose right from wrong. God saved you but he never took your will away."	
-2:15-			
---	2:28	P: "The message is today: how you live now will determine what your future will be."	
-2:30-	2:28	<u>ALTAR APPEAL</u> : lasts c. 20 minutes; for the first ten minutes the musicians quietly play another Choir Selection, <i>The Potter's House</i> , with the choir singing softly in the background	

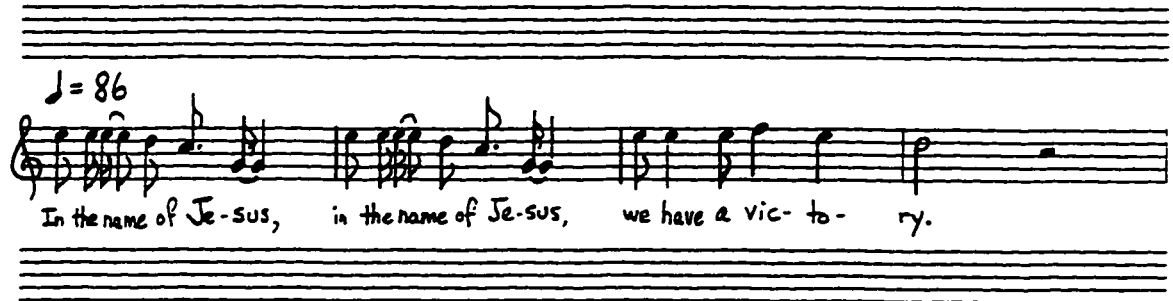
-2:45-			
---	2:48	<u>SECOND OFFERING</u> : Although the appeal for an offering lasts only c. 3 min., the next 16 minutes are characterized by spirit-filled praise and devoted to creating a "breakthrough" in members' finances. P: "The devil seems to be tryin' to hold up the finances of the saints."	
-3:00-			
---	3:06	<u>benediction</u> ; service ends	

**Appendix B:
Transcription and Analysis of Congregational Songs**

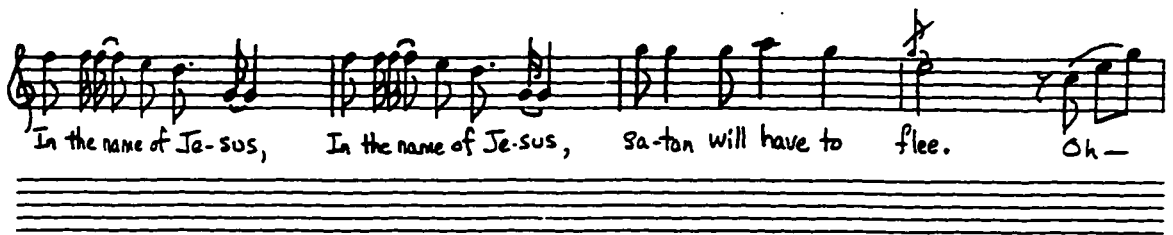
"In the name of Jesus... we have a victory"	
Transcription.....	416
Analysis.....	417
"Send down the rain"	
Transcription.....	418
Analysis.....	419
"Let's go higher in the Lord"	
Transcription.....	420
Analysis.....	421
"Victory, victory shall be mine"	
Transcription.....	422
Analysis.....	423
"There is power, power, wondrous working power"	
Transcription.....	424
Analysis.....	425
"When I think of the goodness of Jesus"	
Transcription.....	426
Analysis.....	427
"Jesus on the mainline"	
Transcription.....	428
Analysis.....	429
"He didn't have to do it but He did"	
Transcription.....	430
Analysis.....	431
"I get joy when I think about..."	
Transcription.....	432
Analysis.....	433
"If you call on Jesus, He will answer prayer"	
Transcription.....	434
Analysis.....	435
"Praise the Lord everybody"	
Transcription.....	436
Analysis.....	437
"My soul loves Jesus"	
Transcription.....	438
Analysis.....	439

IN THE NAME OF JESUS... WE HAVE A VICTORY

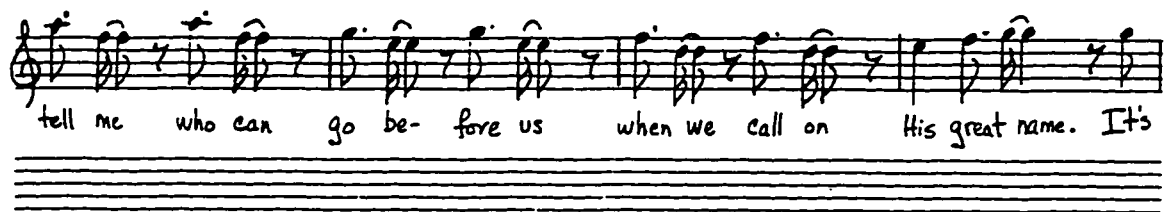
$\text{♩} = 86$



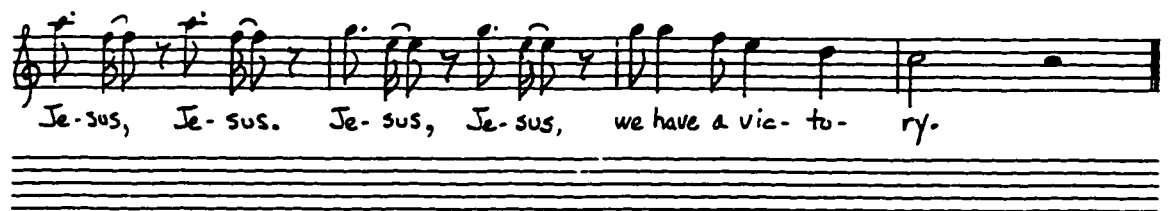
In the name of Je-sus, in the name of Je-sus, we have a vic-to-ry.



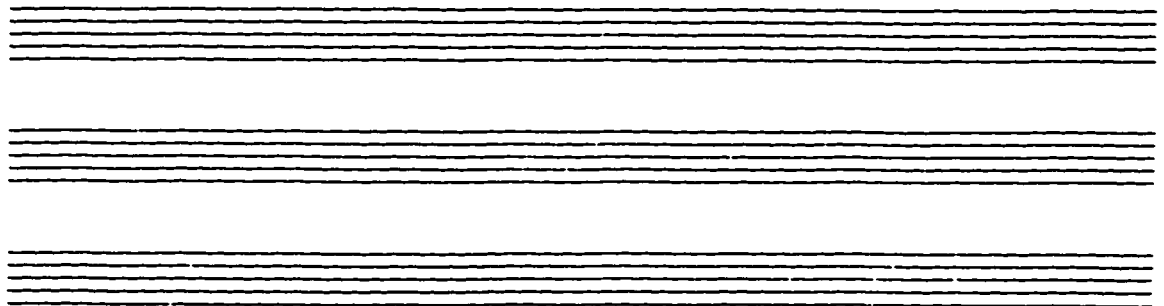
In the name of Je-sus, In the name of Je-sus, Sa-tan will have to flee. Oh-



tell me who can go be-fore us when we call on His great name. It's



Je-sus, Je-sus. Je-sus, Je-sus, we have a vic-to-ry.



"In the name of Jesus... we have a victory"

Congregational song (Type A)

Service No. 8, November 4, 1990; male song leader

song duration: 2' 50"

tempo: quarter note = 86

original tonic: E

melodic pitches used: c d e f g a

range: M9 (dominant to submediant)

handclapping: the loudest clapping occurs on the quarter note beats, but some are clapping on the eighth notes between the beats

instrumentation: organ

comments: The sparse accompaniment and on-the-beat clapping are evidence that this was sung early in the service.

Only a handful of members were present and the main musicians had not yet arrived.

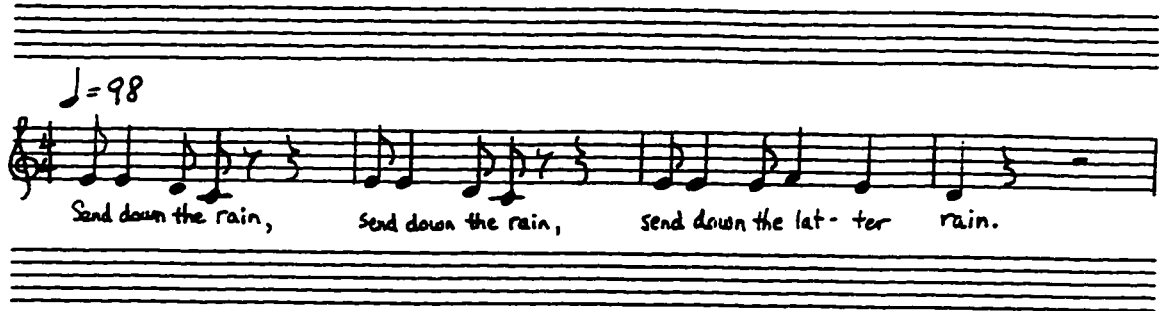
TEXT: (all four stanzas)

In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus, we have a victory.
In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus, Satan will have to
flee.

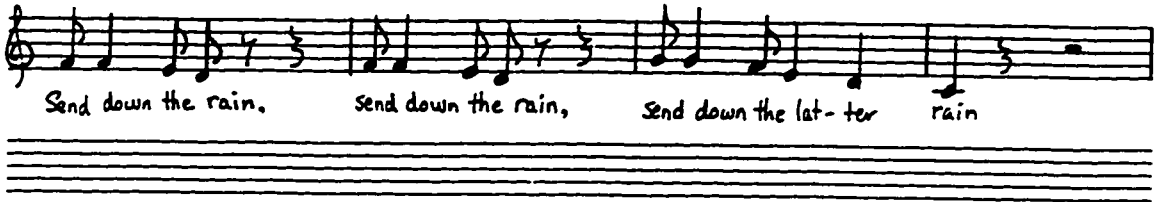
Oh, tell me who can go before us, when we call on His great name.
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, we have a victory

SEND DOWN THE RAIN

$\text{♩} = 98$

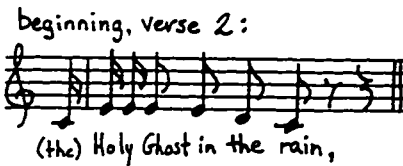


Send down the rain, send down the rain, send down the lat-ter rain.



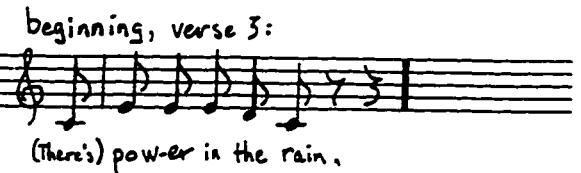
Send down the rain, send down the rain, send down the lat-ter rain

beginning, verse 2:

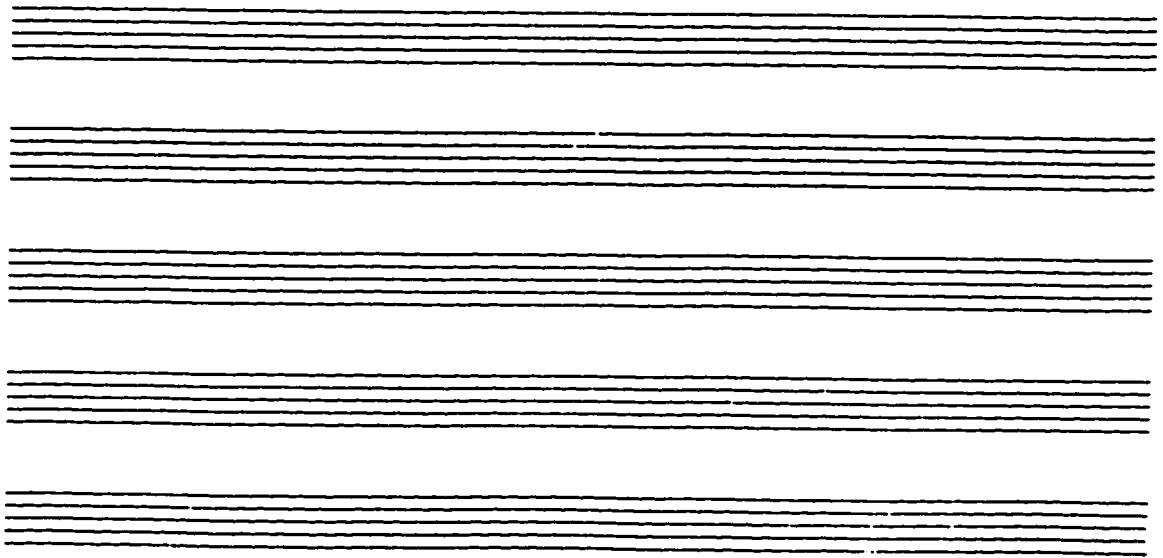


(the) Holy Ghost in the rain,

beginning, verse 3:



(There's) pow-er in the rain,



"Send down the Rain"

Congregational Song (Type A)

Service No. 8, November 4, 1990; male song leader

song duration: 3'40" (sung in a medley with "Let's go higher in the Lord")

Tempo: quarter note = 98

Original tonic: B-flat

Melodic pitches used: c d e f g

Range: P5 (tonic to dominant)

Handclapping: there is little clapping

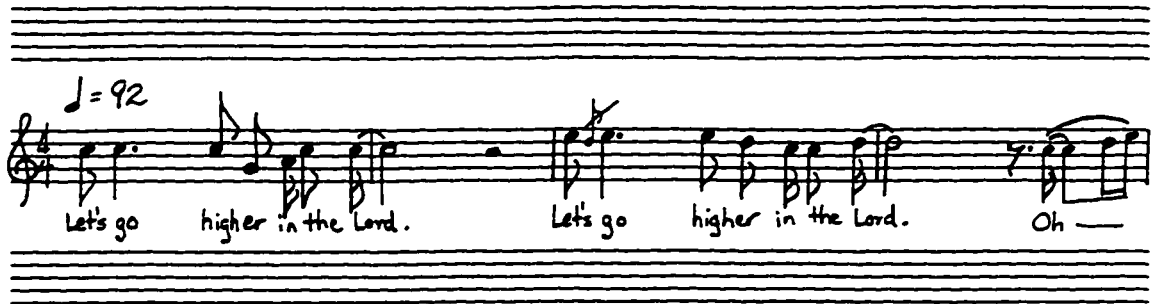
Instrumentation: Organ, synthesizer, and drum set. The snare drum regularly accents eighth-note the backbeat, except at the end of stanzas.

Comments: no call and response alternation between song leader and congregation; vocal harmonies are clearly audible during some stanzas.

TEXT:

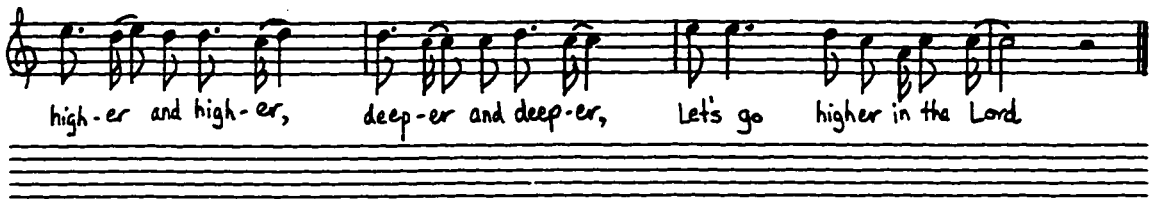
- v. 1: Send down the rain, send down the rain, send down the latter rain. (x2)
- v. 2: Holy Ghost in the rain, Holy Ghost in the rain, Holy Ghost in the latter rain. (x2)
- v. 3: (There's) Power in the rain, power in the rain, power in the latter rain. (x2)
- v. 4: There's love in the rain, there's love in the rain, there's love in the latter rain. (x2)
- v. 5: There's joy in the rain, there's joy in the rain, there's joy in the latter rain. (x2)
- v. 6: Send down the rain, etc.
- v. 7: Holy Ghost in the rain, etc.
- v. 8: There's power in the rain, etc.
- v. 9: There's love in the rain, etc.
- v.10: Send down the rain, etc.

LET'S GO HIGHER IN THE LORD

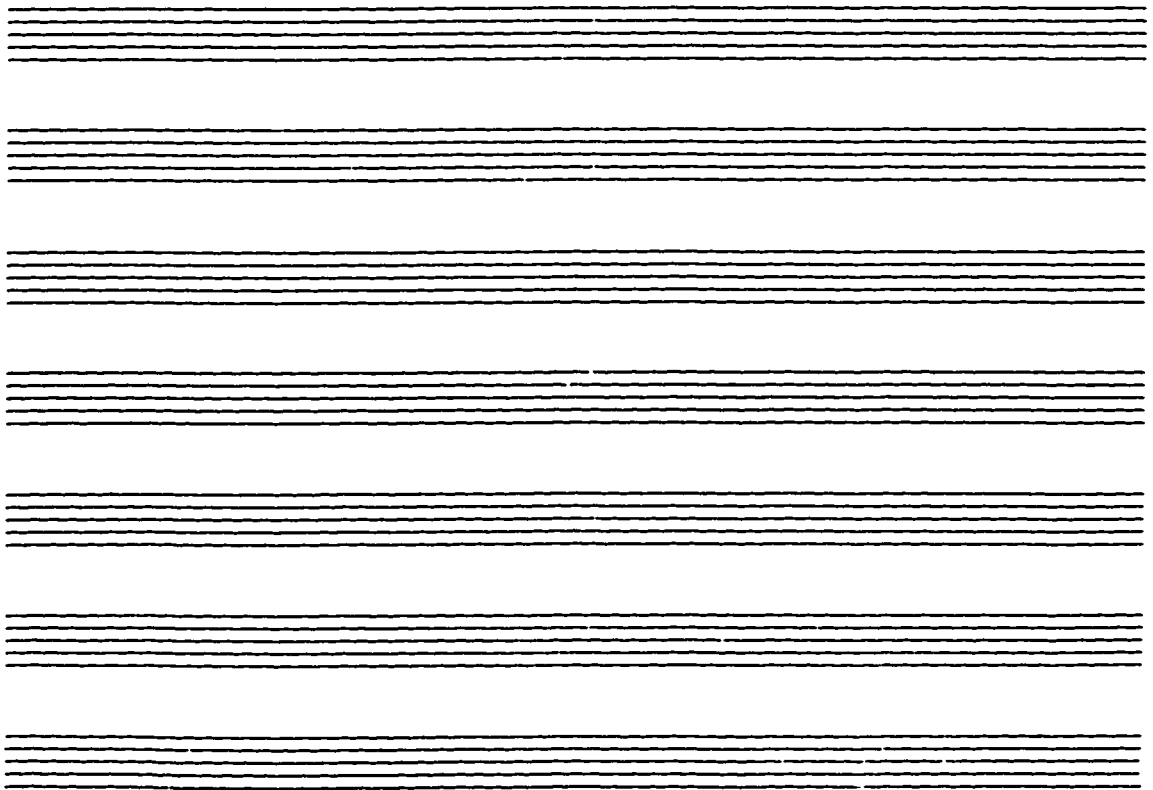


♩ = 92

Let's go higher in the Lord. Let's go higher in the Lord. Oh —



high-er and high-er, deep-er and deep-er, Let's go higher in the Lord



"Let's go higher in the Lord"

Congregational Song (Type A)

**Service No. 8, November 4, 1990; male song leader
song duration: 1'45" (sung in a medley with "Send down the
Rain")**

**Tempo: quarter note = 92; increases to 100 after entry of
drums**

Original tonic: B-flat

Melodic pitches used: c d e g a

Range: M6 (dominant to mediant)

**Handclapping: there is clapping both on and off the beat
(when off the beat, on the eighth note)**

**Instrumentation: Organ, synthesizer, and drum set. Drums
enter midway through verse 4; snare drum accents eighth-
note backbeat.**

**Comments: no call and response alternation between song
leader and congregation**

TEXT (all five stanzas):

Let's go higher in the Lord.

Let's go higher in the Lord.

Oh, higher and higher, deeper and deeper,

Let's go higher in the Lord.

VICTORY, VICTORY SHALL BE MINE

verse 2: $\text{♩} = 84$

Victory victory shall be mine. Victory victory shall be mine. If I

hold my feet, let the Lord fight my battle, victory victory shall be mine.

CALL AND RESPONSE:

L: O shall be mine O shall be mine shall be mine O shall be mine

C: mine shall be mine shall be mine shall be mine shall be mine

"Victory, victory shall be mine"

Congregational Song (Type A)

Service No. 1, October 15, 1989; female song leader

song duration: 2'25"

tempo: quarter note = 84

original tonic: D-flat

melodic pitches used: c d e g a (when the song is transformed into a shout, new pitches are used: e-flat, f, and b-flat.)

range: M6 (dominant to mediant; the range changes when the call-and-response shout pattern is begun)

handclapping: on the eighth note between the beats

instrumentation: synthesizers, drum set, and trumpet

comments: Unlike other performances of this song that were examined, this performance dissolves into a call-and-response shout, then later resumes the original form. Both the second verse and the first several measures of the shout which immediately follows that verse are included in the transcription.

TEXT: (all verses, except shout)

Victory, victory shall be mine.

Victory, victory shall be mine.

If I hold my feet, let the Lord fight my battle,

victory, victory shall be mine.

The text of the shout alternates the leader's "Oh shall be mine" or "shall be mine," with the congregation's "Shall be mine."

In another performance (September 29, 1991), the song leader replaced the word "victory" with other words in some of the ensuing stanzas, as for example, "Joy, joy shall be mine" and "Love, love shall be mine."

THERE IS POWER, POWER, WONDROUS WORKING POWER

$\text{♩} = 88$

Oh there is pow-er pow-er wondrous working power in the blood of the Lamb There is

power power wondrous working power in the pre-cious blood of the Lamb

"There is power, power, wondrous working power"

Congregational Song (Type A)

**Service No. 8; November 4, 1990; male song leader
song duration: 1'35"**

Tempo: quarter note = 88

Original tonic: A

Melodic pitches used: c d e f g a

**Handclapping: there is clapping on the eighth notes between
the beats, as well as some syncopated patterns on the
sixteenth notes.**

Instrumentation: Organ, synthesizer, and drum set

TEXT:

Verses 1, 2, and 4

**There is power, power, wondrous working power in the blood of the
Lamb.**

**There is power, power, wondrous working power in the precious
blood of the Lamb.**

Verse 3:

[Before this verse, the leader calls out "There's Healing."]

**There is healing, healing, wondrous working healing in the blood
of the Lamb.**

**There is healing, healing, wondrous working healing in the
precious blood of the Lamb.**

[Before Verse 4, the leader calls out "There's Power."]

WHEN I THINK OF THE GOODNESS OF JESUS

$\text{♩} = 90$

When I think of the goodness of Jesus, and all he has done for me, my

soul cries out, 'Halle-lujah'; praise God for sav- ing me.

alternate openings:

When I think Oh when I think

"When I think of the goodness of Jesus"

Congregational Song (Type A)

Service No. 5; October 7, 1990; female song leader

Song duration: 1'05"

Tempo: quarter note = 90

Original tonic: E-flat

Melodic pitches used: c d e f g (a)

Range: P5

Handclapping: off the beat, on the eighth note

Instrumentation: Organ and drum set; snare drum accents eighth-note backbeat.

Comments: When eighth notes occur in pairs, the second one usually sounds a bit earlier than notated, but not early enough to notate the first as a sixteenth or a triplet eighth.

TEXT: (all three stanzas)

**When I think of the goodness of Jesus,
and all He has done for me,
my soul cries out, 'Hallelujah';
praise God for saving me.**

JESUS ON THE MAINLINE

verse 3 $\text{♩} = 92$

L: Oh, Jesus on the main- line Oh—

C: tell Him what you want. Oh,

L: Jesus on the main line Oh

C: Jesus on the main line tell Him what you want

L: Jesus on the main- line You just

C: Tell Him what you want

L: call Him up and tell Him what you want.

C: call Him up and tell Him what you want.

"Jesus on the Main Line"

Congregational song (Type A)

Service No. 4, November 5, 1989; male song leader

song duration: 5' 00"

tempo: quarter note = 92

original tonic: E-flat

melodic pitches used: c d e-flat/e (f) g a c

range: call: M9 (dominant to submediant)

response: P5 (submediant to mediant)

handclapping: on the eighth note, off the beat

instrumentation: piano, drum set, synthesizer

comments: This song was used to begin the worship service.

After the song, the worship leader said, "Come on, you all, let's give the Lord a hand of praise this mornin'.

Jesus is on the Main Line. Call Him up and tell Him what you want. Hallelujah to God. We thank and praise..."

TEXT:

Verse 1:

(This same text is used for verses 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 14. The following transcription of the text suggests the call and response character of this performance.)

**L: Jesus on the Main Line, tell Him what you want
C: tell Him what you want**

**L: Jesus on the Main Line,
C: Jesus on the Main Line, tell Him what you want**

**L: Oh, Jesus on the Main Line,
C: Jesus on the Main Line, tell Him what you want**

**L: You just call Him up
C: call Him up and tell Him what you want**

verse 4: If you need more love...

verse 6: If you need the Holy Ghost...

verse 8: If you need more joy...

verse 10: If you need more peace...

verse 12: If you need more love...

HE DIDN'T HAVE TO DO IT, BUT HE DID

v.1 $\text{♩} = 98$

He didn't have to do it but He did. Lord, He didn't have to do it but He did. Oh, He

wake me up this mornin' started me on my way. Lord He didn't have to do it but He did. Oh, He

"He didn't have to do it but He did"

Congregational Song (Type A)

Service No. 6, October 21, 1990; female song leader

song duration: 2' 00"

tempo: quarter note = 98

original tonic: A-flat

melodic pitches used: c d e g a

range: M6 (dominant to mediant)

handclapping: on the eighth note between the beat

instrumentation: organ, synthesizers, drum set

comments: Because one of the testimony leaders leads this song from a microphone, and because the congregational singing is quite reserved, the song ends abruptly when the song leader stops singing and begins to talk.

TEXT:

first verse: (one used for transcription)

He didn't have to do it but He did,

[Lord], He didn't have to do it but he did,

Oh, He woke me up this morning, started me on my way,

[Lord]* He didn't have to do it but He did.

v. 2: same as v. 1

v. 3: He didn't have to love me but He did
(lines 3 and 4 as before)

v. 4: same as v. 1

v. 5: He didn't have to die but He did
(only line 3 remains unchanged)

v. 6: He didn't have to save me but He did
(lines 3 and 4 as before)

* sometimes "and" is used here

I GET JOY

Verse 2 $\text{♩} = 104$

L: I get joy when I think a-bout I get joy when I think a-bout Oh —

C: what He's done for me. what He's done for me.

Verse 3

L: you don't know like I know Oh — you don't know like I know

C: what He's done for me. what He's done for me.

LATER,

L: I get joy I — get joy — I get joy. I get joy

C: I get joy. I get joy.

L: Joy — joy. joy joy joy joy joy joy joy I get joy

C: I get joy joy-joy joy-joy joy-joy joy-joy joy-joy

"I get joy when I think about"

Congregational Song (Type B)
January 27, 1991; female song leader
song duration: 2'55"
tempo: quarter note = 104, at beginning; 100 near end
original tonic: G-sharp
melodic pitches used: c d e-flat f g b-flat c
range: call: P8 (dominant to dominant; upper dominant not
found in transcribed excerpt)
response: P4 (subtonic to mediant)
handclapping: on the eighth notes between the beats
instrumentation: organ, synthesizers, drum set
comments: This song is introduced by the worship leader,
with the words, "I'm gonna ask Sister E----- to help me
out on a little congregational song."

TEXT:

L: I get joy when I think about, C: what He's done for me.
L: I get joy when I think about, C: what He's done for me.

The almost continuous textual variation includes the following
text:

L: Oh you don't know like I know, C: what He's done for me....
L: Oh I get happy when I think about, C: what He's done for
me....
L: I get joy, C: I get joy....
L: Joy, joy, C: joy, joy....
L: Oh I rejoice when I think about, C: what He's done for me....
L: Oh you can't tell it, let me tell it, C: what He's done for
me....
L: Down in my soul, C: I get joy....
L: Down in my heart, C: I get joy....

IF YOU CALL ON JESUS

verse 2 ♩ = 106

L: If you call on Je- sus-, If you call on Je- sus, If you
C: He will answer prayer. He will answer prayer.

LATER:

L: If you call Him in the morning, If you call Him in the morning, If you
C: He will answer prayer. He will answer prayer.

L: You just call Him up, call Him up, tell Him what you want. Call Him up, call Him up, tell Him what you want.

L: Call Him up, call Him up, tell Him what you want. You just call Him up and tell Him what you want.

"If you call on Jesus (He will answer prayer)"

Congregational Song (Type B)

Service No. 12; November 24, 1991; male song leader

song duration: 2'40"

tempo: quarter note = 106

original tonic: D

melodic pitches used: c d e-flat f b-flat

range: call: P5 (subtonic to subdominant)

response: m3 (tonic to mediant)

handclapping: on the eighth notes between the beats

instrumentation: organ, synthesizer, drum set

comments: The tune's continuous metamorphosis is suggested in the transcription, which excerpts segments from the beginning, middle, and end of this shout.

TEXT:

L: If you call on Jesus, C: He will answer prayer.

L: If you call on Jesus, C: He will answer prayer.

several variations follow:

L: If you call Him in the morning, C: He will answer prayer....

L: If you call Him in the noonday, C: He will answer prayer....

L: In the evening's final hour, C: He will answer prayer....

and later, the lead singer only:

You just call Him up, call Him up, tell Him what you want.

Call Him up, call Him up, tell Him what you want.

Call Him up, call Him up, tell Him what you want.

You just call Him up and tell Him what you want.

PRAISE THE LORD EVERYBODY

verse 1 ♩ = 104

L: *Praise the Lord ev-ery bo-dy* *Praise the Lord ev'ry bo-dy.* *Praise the*

C: *Praise the Lord* *Praise the Lord*

L: *Lord ev'rybody*

C: *Praise the Lord, ev' rybo- dy, all praise the Lord.*

LATER, AFTER ABOUT 2 MINUTES :

L: *Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, Ev' ry*

C: *Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.*

L: *bo dy. Ev'- ry bo-dy*

C: *Praise the Lord Praise the Lord Praise the Lord Praise the Lord*

"Praise the Lord everybody"

Congregational Song (Type B)

Service No. 8, November 4, 1990; female song leader

song duration: 5'30"

tempo: quarter note = 104

original tonic: A-flat

melodic pitches used: c d e-flat f g b-flat

range: call: m6 (subtonic to dominant);

response: P4 (subtonic to mediant)

handclapping: on the eighth notes between the beats

instrumentation: organ, synthesizers, drum set, saxophone

comments: This shout undergoes significant change after about two minutes, when the unit being varied is reduced from eight measures to two measures (see transcription). Later, the soloist and congregation quit singing and this shout becomes fully instrumental. Still later, the volume softens and the musicians fade out as the pastor begins speaking.

TEXT:

L: Praise the Lord everybody C: Praise the Lord

L: Praise the Lord everybody C: Praise the Lord

L: Praise the Lord everybody C: Praise the Lord

C: Everybody all praise the Lord

after six stanzas, several variations follow:

L: Praise the Lord C: Praise the Lord

L: Praise the Lord C: Praise the Lord

L: Clap your hands everybody C: Praise the Lord...

L: Clap for joy everybody C: Praise the Lord...

MY SOUL LOVES JESUS

TIME IN SECONDS: 0 5 10 15 20

My — soul — loves Je sus my soul loves Je- sus
Lead Singer

20 25 30 35 40
my — soul loves Jesus bless His name. He's a wonder
Lead Singer

40 45 50 55 60
in my soul. He's a wonder in my Soul. He's

60 65 70 75 80
a wonder in my soul. Bless, bless His name Yes, Yes,

80 85 90 95 100
Yes, Yes, Yes Yes etc.

"My soul loves Jesus"

Congregational Song (Type C)

Service No. 1, October 15, 1989; female song leader

song duration: 1'55"

tempo: very slow and unmetered; no steady pulse is discernible in this song

original tonic: D-flat

melodic pitches used: c d e f g a

range: M9 (dominant to submediant);

handclapping: there is applause near the end of this song (after c. 1'15"); this handclapping is erratic and neither supports nor suggests a steady pulse

instrumentation: keyboard synthesizer and drum set

comments: Very few songs in the Alpha and Omega repertoire were unmetered. Sung in eight of the twelve services analyzed in Appendix A, "My soul loves Jesus" was the most popular of those unmetered songs.

TEXT:

My soul loves Jesus (x3)

Bless His name.

He's a wonder in my soul (x3)

Bless, bless His name.

Yes (x6)

Yes Lord (x6)

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Vita

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