Baltimore of Mount Pleasant: A Case Study of the Tradition of the Chanted Sermon in Virginia

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BALTIMORE OF MOUNT PLEASANT:
A CASE STUDY OF THE TRADITION OF THE
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Analysis of theme, style and structure of the chanted sermons of a Virginia preacher shows that the chanted sermon is a powerful ritualistic expression in certain communities. As practiced among Afro-American groups the chanted sermon is a ritual expression which serves to resolve conflicts, affirm values, and meet certain socio-psychological needs.
CHAPTER I

THE STUDY

The chanted sermon, in its unusual blend of controlled structured verse with uncontrolled frenzied emotion, is a unique form of verbal expression in Western culture. Yet, despite its unique qualities and its rather limited usage, it is not unfamiliar. Everyone is familiar with the fundamentalist preacher bringing unbridled enthusiasm to his wide-eyed congregation. Indeed, a sort of folklore of the folk preacher has grown up and been perpetuated by such American writers as William Faulkner. Neither the folk preacher nor his chanted sermons are unknown to most. Why then the virtual absence of scholarly work concerning the folk preacher and his expression? The primary cause lies in the very structure of the chanted sermon. It is neither verse nor song, and its anomalous nature defies any sort of comparative or structured analysis. One is not too hard-pressed to find literary-type analysis of this genre of sermons, and, although not as readily available, there are various discourses on the music of the sermons; but both of these approaches tend to force the chanted sermon into an ill-fitting category. The chanted sermon is not a speech, not a song; it is a chant.
Bruce A. Rosenberg put together a rather enlightened study of the chanted sermon, and his *The Art of the American Folk Preacher* is indeed the only such study which can be considered comprehensive in its dealing with the chanted sermon. Rosenberg accomplished this by discovering a common, though distant, relative of the chanted sermon—the epic song of the Slavic Guslars. This comparison must not be overemphasized, however, for the singing Guslar in Yugoslavia is obviously too culturally distant from the Afro-American preacher to overemphasize the similarities of their art. The importance of Rosenberg's work was that it introduced a structured methodology through which to study the chanted sermon: Albert Lord and Milman Parry's formulaic approach. Rosenberg gave the chanted sermon an aesthetic identity and definition: "The chanted sermon is an art form worthy of study in its own right."¹ It is from Rosenberg's inspirational statement that this study departs.

The chanted sermon is indeed an art form, but, as with all expressions of the folk aesthetic, it must be approached differently from the method of the typical critical approaches to high art, for with high art the function is almost purely aesthetic, whereas with folk art the function is much more a part of the social tradition of the culture in which it is operative.

The chanted sermon is not derived and formulated solely for the purpose of aesthetic pleasure; rather its aesthetic qualities are inextricably tied to social function. Much in the way a handcrafted chair is designed first and foremost to serve a physical function, its aesthetic beauty being somewhat a correlative quality, so the chanted sermon serves first and foremost a community social need, its aesthetic qualities being different, yet by no means incidental. It is the purpose of this thesis to examine the function of the chanted sermon, not as a purely aesthetic expression, but as a social utilitarian medium for expression and satisfaction of a community's values and needs. The tradition of the chanted sermon, as practiced among Afro-American groups, serves through its structure and content as a functionally operative ritual expression in resolving certain conflicts, in affirming certain values, and in meeting certain socio-psychological needs in the community in which it is operative.

The original plan for this study was to take a cross-section of various chant-style preachers and, through study of their differences and similarities in the style and content of their sermons, attempt to ascertain the function of their chanted expression. However, it soon became obvious that such sporadic sampling left little opportunity for a true understanding of the chanted sermon. Indeed, it seemed as though each service were a performance designed solely for my entertainment, with preacher and congregation alike acting out a pageant of emotion. It was then that the decision was made to concentrate on one preacher and
one congregation, making this sort of a case study. It was hoped that a better understanding of the role of the chanted sermon would be obtained through analysis of its occurrence in one congregation from the mouth of one preacher.

The Reverend Carroll A. Baltimore of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in Alexandria, Virginia, was chosen to be the primary subject of this study. Reverend Baltimore had previously preached in Rappahannock County, Virginia, and Charles Perdue, Jr. had recorded a number of his sermons, several of which I transcribed and utilized in this study to complement sermons I recorded at Mount Pleasant. Reverend Carroll Baltimore is not an old man, a fact which may dispute a rather commonly-held notion that the chanted sermon tradition is something of an anachronism practiced primarily by older, rural blacks. Reverend Baltimore is, in fact, quite young (about 30). He possesses a degree from a theological seminary, and seems quite literate and intelligent. He is a man who gives the impression of feeling that he is doing just what he was intended to do. He seems quite happy with his work and is deeply concerned with his effectiveness in his congregation. He is particularly concerned with perpetuating his religious tradition with the youth of his congregation, strongly supporting youth choir activities and being most accommodating to aspiring young preachers seeking a forum.

His congregation at Mount Pleasant is in the midst of the large metropolitan area of Washington, D.C., perhaps contrary to another commonly-held notion that the chanted sermon is primarily a rural phenomenon. For the most part the membership is composed of blacks of lower middle class economic status. The congregation
is rather prosperous, supporting a Sunday school and embarking on a new building program. There are no white members in the congregation, but white visitors are readily welcomed, and a white seeking membership would most probably be likewise accepted. There is a deacon board, commonly called the "Amen corner," which assumes major responsibility for the church's affairs, and functions as a major source of support and affirmation during the preacher's chant.

Most of the families in the congregation seem to be rather recent emigrants from the country. They maintain close contact with their rural relatives and make trips back for annual homecoming celebrations. The congregation is not an isolated community. They come from all parts of northern Virginia, and are not essentially separated from mainstream metropolitan Washington.

The tradition of the chanted sermon is nearly as much a part of the congregation as it is of the preacher, for the chanted sermon is, in essence, a group performance, with the preacher serving the role of controller, mediator, and director. This group performance aspect of the chanted sermon can in no way be described or fully shown in any type of transcription of sermon text. The only way one can attain any feeling at all of this group performance attribute is either through tape recording, or through in-person observation.

Most of the findings in this study are based upon in-person observation of the chanted sermon in its traditional medium. Tapes were recorded, several transcribed, of sermons at Mount Pleasant during the summer and fall of 1974. My desire was to be as unobtrusive as possible, so I utilized a low-profile approach
to my taping, sitting in the rear of the church and taping from my seat, thus avoiding any elaborate and distracting microphone set-ups. Although there were times when it seemed the sermons were designed for my benefit, these feelings diminished as I became more accustomed to the setting and as the preacher and congregation became more accustomed to my presence. In retrospect, it seems that the presence of me and my tape recorder had little or no effect on either the content or style of the sermons or on the response of the congregation.

The purpose of this study is to observe the meaning of the chanted sermon in a black community. A chanted sermon tradition also exists in many white communities, but there do seem to be marked differences in the traditions, and further study is required to ascertain these differences.
CHAPTER II

STYLE AND STRUCTURE

My first exposure to the chanted sermon tradition was through casual Sunday morning radio listening in Charlottesville, Virginia, to the Reverend Rufus Hays, one of the subjects of Rosenberg's study. I was struck most notably by the sound of the sermons. Words join with rhythm in a most harmonious blend, and the sermon almost becomes a continuous, spontaneous musical composition. As Rosenberg points out, the chanted sermon tradition and the importance of music in the black religious tradition are closely intertwined.²

The chanted sermon is, for the most part, a spontaneous composition. The composition is created through three processes working together: the use of stock formulas, new formulaic creations, and non-formulaic utterances. Stock formulas are those commonplace lines having no exclusive relationship to the content of the sermon. Most preachers have less than ten such stock formulas, Rosenberg calls these formulas "stalls"³; however, the term does not seem entirely appropriate because such stock formulas are not always used for stalling as Rosenberg

²Ibid., p. 19.
³Ibid., p. 53.
points out in his delineation of five different types. These
five types are "refrain" formulas, "stimulant" formulas, "intro-
duction of dialogue," "introduction of narrative," and "hortatory."
Reverend Carroll Baltimore uses all types, his favorites being
"Good God almighty!" "Can I get a witness?" "My Bible says . . . ,"
"Pray with me a little while," and "You don't hear me." Although
these formulas have very little importance as far as the theme is
concerned, they are of major importance in controlling the emotional
mood, and, as will be shown later, this emotional aspect seems
to take on a larger role in the sermon than does the actual content.
When Reverend Carroll Baltimore says "You don't hear me," this is
a lightly disguised clue that the congregation is not giving him
the emotional and vocal support that he desires at that particular
point in the sermon. The "Amen corner" quickly comprehends the
hint and leads the congregation into more enthusiastic responses.
Likewise, when Baltimore says, "Pray with me a little while," the
congregation quiets itself a bit and listens more attentively to
what he is saying.

Not only do these stock formulas control the emotional
mood, they also mark rough sign posts of different parts of the
sermon. "Pray with me, church," is an introduction to the central
message of the sermon. "You don't hear me" marks the beginning
of the emotional crescendo toward the chant itself. "I wonder
can I get a witness?" marks the beginning of the chant. "Good
God almighty!" marks the end of a particular chanted portion.
These formulas are by no means used exclusively in these situations, (indeed, they all appear in other parts of the sermon), but when the group of sermons are taken collectively, these formulas do seem to convey certain moods characteristic of certain sections of the sermons.

New formulaic creation almost always bears close relationship to the thematic content of the sermon. Baltimore likes to introduce his sermons with a formula designed specifically for the central theme of the sermon; for example, "A sick world, a weak Christian, and a strong God." He then repeats this formula many times throughout the sermon. Its purpose seems to be to reaffirm the theme of the sermon both to the congregation and to himself. These thematic, introductory formulas seem to be prepared in advance of delivery of the sermon, as is evidenced by the catchy phraseology and the fact that Baltimore uses prepared notes heavily in the introductory portions of his sermon before he actually begins his chant.

In the early portions of the sermon, Baltimore does not use formulas extensively. However, as he gradually approaches the chanted portion of the sermon, his use of formulas increases until in the chanted portion the sermon is almost purely formulaic. In this portion of the sermon the process of formulaic creation is most evident. Most preachers, including Baltimore, use a number of methods in formulaic creation. Every preacher, however, has several more favored methods. One of Baltimore's favorites is the repetition of a principal clause followed each time by a different
prepositional phrase. For instance:

I wanna feel it
In the mornin'.
I wanna feel it
When I get up off my bed.
I wanna feel it
In the middle of the day.
I wanna feel it
In the midnight hour . . .
Deep darkness everywhere.
I wanna feel it
On Sunday mornin'.
I wanna feel it
In the club meetin'.
I wanna feel it.
Good God almighty!

This is perhaps the simplest and most easily mastered of the formulaic methods. First, it provides the preacher with a constant line (the principal clause), thus allowing him time to think of the next line (the prepositional phrase). Secondly, it forces a sort of natural rhythm through its repetition of a constant line. Further evidence of the simplicity and easy mastery of this type of formulaic creation is the fact that several "apprentice" preachers, whose act I observed, relied almost exclusively on this type of thematic formula.

Another of Carroll Baltimore's favorite methods of formulaic composition is expounding. In this method the preacher makes a statement followed by a series of statements expounding on the original statement:

But God's words
Is the same words,
God's words
Is a livin' word.
God's words
Is the same yesterday,
Is the same this mornin'.
It'll be the same when I finish preachin'.
It'll be the same on tomorrow.
God's words is good enough for me,
And should be good enough for you.

As the above example illustrates, not every formulaic passage is the result of one method of formulaic construction. In the above passage are evident three major methods of formulaic construction: the repeated phrase, expounding, and a less prominent method, the past-present-future sequence. It is the mark of an experienced chant-style preacher when he uses a number of formulaic methods in the very same passage.

Another of Reverend Carroll Baltimore's lesser used but nevertheless discernible formulaic methods is opposition. In this method he sets up couplets in opposition to one another:

These were the few
Among the many;
And these were the spiritual
Among the world.
These were the few
Among the fire.
These were the active
Among the inactive
These were the living
Among the dead.
These were the saved
Among the lost.

This use of dichotomous comparison seems central to the delineation of theme in Baltimore's sermons. As seen by a study of Baltimore's central themes, they almost always develop along dichotomous lines. Although extensive collections of chanted sermons are not available, from the collection of Rosenberg's
and the collection herein, it appears that this dichotomous attribute of theme development is integral in the chanted sermon tradition and, indeed, may serve an integral function in the overall formulaic process.

Another type of formulaic process is the use of cause-and-effect relationships:

When you're hungry,
He'll feed you.
When you're naked,
He'll clothe you.
When your shoes are worn out
He'll give you new shoes.

As seen in the above passage, many of the formulas are borrowed from Biblical formulas. Notice the striking similarity of this passage to Christ's Sermon On the Mount.

The process of formulaic composition does not exist as a separate entity. It is dependent upon a number of other factors including sentence construction and rhythm composition. In order to more fully understand the formulaic process, it might be beneficial to analyze these factors. Choice of vocabulary, sentence order, compositional technique, use of commonplaces, repetition -- all these figure in the formulaic composition of the chanted sermon. They help to produce not only the polish, rhythm, and stylish appeal of the sermon, but also help to produce a certain sense of drama which is most essential in the chanted sermon tradition; for this practice is most assuredly a performance--a group ritual inter- actional performance between a preacher and his congregation.

The actual language used in Carroll Baltimore's sermons
does not differ significantly from his language when not preaching -- at least it does not differ significantly from the language he uses in my presence when not preaching. That leaves open the possibility that perhaps he was preaching to me even when not in the pulpit, which is, indeed, a rather acceptable possibility.

There are several more noticeable qualities about the language of the sermon. First, it is direct. There are no attempts made to over-beautify the oratory through use of four-and-five syllable words and inverted sentence order. The sentences are direct, and the language is simple and easily understood. The language sometimes has a Biblical flavor, but very seldom does Baltimore actually use archaic Biblical forms, except when making direct quotes from the Bible. The sermon is most assuredly an oratorical exercise, but its appeal is emotional rather than intellectual. Indeed, in the early portions of the sermon, one gets the sensation of being at a political rally. Such is the approach of the preacher. His words are chosen not so much to enlighten the congregation to new approaches to Christian doctrine but rather to reaffirm beliefs held basic by all those present.

Carroll Baltimore constantly inserts both himself and his congregation into his sermons, with constant reference to both the first and second persons. His narrative approach is in no way consistent. He talks both about the congregation and to the congregation:
The church had a reputation in the community as a live, wide-awake, a good concerned church...

Some of you have lost your power. You laid down in the wrong place. You woke up this mornin' and your power was gone.  

In like manner he speaks of himself in both the first and third persons:

Every once in a while
sure feel like I'm almost home.
I want you to know
That I'm alive.
Good God almighty!

Anytime
All you can do
Is pull down the preacher,
You had it,
But you sure enough have lost it.

Also, he speaks about God, to God, and as the voice of God, all in the same sermon.

The result of all this pronominal juxtaposition is that the sermon unfolds as a series of dramas of dialogue with the preacher taking the part of each character. This device serves two purposes. First, it allows the preacher to remove himself from the role of preacher, thus giving him the power to be anybody and to know anybody. Occasionally Baltimore will speak of Jesus as if He were a close friend whom he often might chat with at the office. He will introduce dramatic dialogue with such lines as "Jesus told me the other day..." Much in the manner

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4This is an obvious comparison to Samson's awakening to the loss of his power.
of the playgoer, the congregation willingly suspends belief and anxiously awaits the further development of the drama, which leads to a second useful purpose served by this device of pronominal juxtaposition. Because the preacher can be anybody, and thus create a one-man drama, he is better able to create the emotional mood which seems the primary objective for which he is striving.

There is one more curious and yet quite noticeable aspect of the chant-style preacher's oratorical style. This is the grunting sound made at the end of each line once the chanting begins. This sound must be heard in order to truly understand what sound it is. It can be variously described as "huh," "uh," "hah," "ah," "ugh," "sh," "tush," etc. In truth, phonemically, there are perhaps as many sounds as there are chant-style preachers.

Rosenberg makes scant reference to this utterance:

Most of the time there is no doubt about the end of the phrase: the congregation clearly makes it known. Or else the preacher himself punctuates his lines with a gasp for breath that is usually so consistent it can be timed metrically.\(^5\)

Perhaps it is just a peculiar fascination with the utterance (which I will call a "voiced exclamation"), but I feel it to be both of a different nature and of more significance than Rosenberg seems to infer. Indeed, Charles Perdue\(^6\) of the University of Virginia views it as a necessary component in the definition

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\(^5\) Rosenberg, p.38.

\(^6\) From interview with Charles Perdue in the fall of 1974.
of a sermon as truly chant-style.

First, in all the preachers and chant-style sermons I have observed, I have paid particularly close attention to this voiced exclamation, and never have I found it to be "a gasp for breath." Rather, it was, in all cases, an exhaling of breath. One would immediately suspect that it serves to empty the lungs in order to provide for a full inhale for the next line; but not so, for often the preacher can be observed inhaling between the end of a line and the voiced exclamation seemingly solely for the purpose of getting his breath for the exclamation. So, one must assume that the voiced exclamation is a purposeful expression -- not necessarily a conscious expression, but a purposeful expression.

It is as difficult to trace the origins of this voiced exclamation as it is to trace the origin of the chanted sermon itself. Tradition is not economical, but is self-preserving. It is possible to look at this phenomenon in its present environment, and so determine what purpose it serves and what effect it has upon the chanted sermon as a whole.

First, as Rosenberg points out, it is a rhythmic, metrical device. The voiced exclamation may be classified somewhere between the heavy downbeat in African musical forms and the throbbing base-line in much twentieth-century blues.  

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As Harold Courlander points out so well, the musical tradition of Africa is much preserved in African culture today (Harold Courlander, Negro Folk Music USA (New York: Columbia
It serves as a pause, a non-verbal accent to mark phrases off. It also seems to provide a rhythmical device through which the congregation is better able to coordinate their antiphonal response with the preacher's pauses. Another theory is that it is a form of hyperventilation, not necessarily deliberate, through which the preacher attains a sort of physical "high" to match his spiritual "high." Although this theory would be difficult to validate, a simple imitative experiment will show that such a breathing method does result in a hyperventilation "high."

There is much that is rhythmic in the sermon besides the voiced exclamation. Once the chant begins the meter is almost entirely iambic. Although the number of stresses per line does not conform to any specific pattern, it does generally follow that the more enthusiastic the chanting, the fewer stresses are found per line. At times the chant becomes almost staccato with the words of each line being scarcely more accented than the voiced exclamation. At times the lines are reduced to single words, or, occasionally, single syllables.

Reverend Carroll Baltimore often makes use of musical formats in a less subtle fashion. In some sermons he quits his prose style altogether and breaks into a spiritual with which the congregation is familiar. They pick up his cue and sing the song until no one desires to start another verse, at which

University Press, 1963), p. 9): "Inasmuch as Africans came to the New World in great numbers, had a deep-rooted tradition of music and dancing, both secular and religious, and preserved many details of their home cultures, it would be something of a miracle if no vestige of their musical tradition remained."
time Baltimore again picks up the sermon. Sometimes these musical intermissions seem staged; sometimes they give every indication of being spontaneous. However, the end of the sermon always has a finale where the organist begins playing a song while Baltimore talks to the congregation in a style quite similar to the way some bluesmen talk during an instrumental break in their song. After weeks of observation of Baltimore's sermons, it struck my attention that the closing of the Bible seemed to be Baltimore's cue for the organist to begin the song, and subsequent observation proved this to be true.

Reverend Baltimore utilizes musical methods in a large portion of his sermons. Often the organist will strike accent chords in unison with the voiced exclamation at the end of each phrase in the chant. This style is similar, once again, to many styles used in contemporary black popular music. Indeed, there is much use of popular musical styles in Baltimore's sermons. When he says "In the midnight hour," or "I want you to know," the sound is more than coincidentally similar to the use of these lines in popular music. This is not to say that the influence flow is single-directional, for many popular singers have developed out of a gospel music tradition, and many phrases and styles have undoubtedly flowed from religious tradition to secular tradition and back again to religious tradition.

One cannot discuss the style of the chanted sermon without mention of the body language involved. Without exception, every chant-style preacher that I have observed or recorded makes
extensive use of body language in helping to arouse the emotional response that he is eliciting from the congregation. Baltimore has several favorite movements, some more subtle than others, that he uses in eliciting various responses from the congregation. He has developed this into a fine art, and utilizes various implements as accessories. I recorded a preacher in Bowling Green, Kentucky, who wielded a handkerchief in the identical fashion in which Louis Armstrong used his to mop a sweaty brow or lip. He would wipe his face and then demonstrably shake his handkerchief in order to emphasize a certain point. It added a certain flair and drama to his performance that only a seasoned performer could effectively utilize.

Baltimore always wears a flowing robe which he utilizes in a similar fashion in order to add dramatic appeal to his performance. When making a particularly demonstrative statement he will assume a rigid, pointing position, with arms fully outstretched with billowing sleeves at a ninety degree angle to his body. The pose is like the judging angel of death. The mood conveyed by the gesture is one of finality, emphasizing the infallibility of his statement.

Sometimes Baltimore will literally scream in the middle of his sermon, and then proceed to make a rapid three-hundred-and-sixty degree turn on the middle of the altar, with his robe flowing like a cape behind him. This movement inevitably puts the congregation into an emotional frenzy, and is therefore used sparingly enough to maintain its special impact. A similar
frenzied mood is created when Baltimore steps down from the altar and prances cakewalk style up and down the aisles preaching to the congregation. This is still another action bearing close relationship to the emotion-eliciting actions of the pop-music idol.

It must be emphasized that the chanted sermon is by no means simply an auditory experience. It is an experience that affects all the senses. It is most predominantly auditory and visual, but one can feel the body next to him rocking, and can almost smell the frenzy-created sweat of the preacher and the more enthusiastic congregation members.

The chanted sermon is unquestionably a performance when dealing with stylistic considerations, and its overall image of barely-controlled, frenzied emotions is not unlike that witnessed at some pop concerts. The most important difference, however, is that the professional's sole effort is geared toward the performance as an end result. He is an entertainer. In the case of the chanted sermon, the performance is simply a tool in the ritual expression. The preacher is not an entertainer, but a priest, in the most traditional and ancient meaning of the word. The art of his performance is not a consciously contrived one, with the exception of a few obvious distinctive frills which the preacher personally adds. It is an art that he learns traditionally through total immersion in a particular culture—an immersion so total that he is undoubtedly blinded to its subtle effects upon his individual character. Such subtlety can be observed in the mother gently patting the rhythm of the
sermon on her sleeping baby's back, the casual observation by the young adolescent of the preacher's body gyrations. Chant-style preaching is an art transmitted by the most traditional means—observation and practice; and the art must be practiced to be mastered, as is evidenced by the young "apprentice" preachers. But the young apprentice does not strive to develop new techniques and new structural and stylistic approaches, but rather recalls his cultural experiences trying to re-convey what has been conveyed. Thus is preserved a ritual expression which remains virtually unchanged, structurally and stylistically, for generation after generation.
CHAPTER III

THE THEME

Unlike the structural and stylistic considerations of the chanted sermon, the thematic content does alter itself somewhat from generation to generation, for the chant-style preacher does not deal exclusively with universal themes, but rather particularizes these themes through specific applications to everyday life. As Rosenberg points out, the central themes themselves are often borrowed from current popular themes. However, one must not be misled into believing that popular themes are the central thrust of the chant-style preacher's repertoire; for this is not so. The unifying force in all the sermons is the Scriptures. Many themes are developed around particular Scripture passages, and even those popular, secular-type themes are used only in direct relationship to Biblical themes. Baltimore, along with most other preachers I have observed, is particularly fond of demonstrating his rather extensive knowledge of the Bible. He does not hesitate to recite a number of passages from memory, and he is unswerving in his belief in its power to enlighten as the true word of God.

With such strong backing from the Bible Baltimore proceeds to develop his sermon themes. Unlike many chant-style preachers,

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8 Rosenberg, p. 29.
Baltimore does not seem to preach many stock sermons. I heard a preacher in Kentucky preach his "King's Highway" sermon, in which the road to heaven was Route 66, with the sixty-six books of the Bible indicating the route number. This sermon was of the concise, tightly-knit thematic type that Rosenberg speaks of in his discussion of the "Deck of Cards" sermon, preached by a number of chant-style preachers. Reverend Baltimore seldom preaches sermons of this type. His themes are usually looser and more disjointed, a bit more analytical, and not quite so singularly metaphorical.

However, Baltimore does have a set pattern through which he constructs his sermons. This pattern does not vary much from sermon to sermon. He apparently has developed, through practice, his personal system for thematic construction in the formulaic style. This style can best be demonstrated by taking a representative sample sermon and tracing Baltimore's steps in thematic construction. The sermon in this example is his "I had it, I lost it, and I want it back" sermon, which is included in the appendix to this study.

Baltimore wastes no time in presenting the central topic of his sermon:

Now I want you to repeat
the subject after me.
I want you to repeat it and
say it like you know
what you're talkin' about.
I had it,
I lost it,

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9Ibid., p. 28, 29.
And I want it back.
That's right, say it again.
I had it,
I lost it,
And I want it back.

In every one of Baltimore's sermons, he introduces his topic in such a fashion, directly confronting the congregation with some catchy phrase which will become the unifying, regrouping phrase in the entire sermon. This is to be his theme, in this particular case, spiritual rebirth.

The major portion of the rest of the prose portion of the sermon is devoted to further development of this theme, primarily through examples of one of two types. The first is Biblical examples, and I might add that Baltimore seems to have a particular fondness for examples from the Old Testament, perhaps because stories from the Old Testament are simpler in their messages than those from the New Testament, and thus lend themselves to a broad, universal type of moralizing. In the case of this particular sermon, Baltimore quotes Jeremiah and then David, with a song interspersed. In keeping with what Rosenberg noticed about chant-style preachers in general being very fond of the Psalms, Baltimore, also, seems to exhibit a particular fondness for the Psalms, especially for those of David.

The other type of example that Baltimore uses to embellish and strengthen the central topic of his theme is the moralizing example. This is of two types. The first type can almost be described as a proverbial axiom:

The zeal of a Christian, the fire within can be lost
Through neglect and carelessness...
Neglect of the spiritual
Can starve a soul and stunt
the growth
Of a Christian life.

Remember, though you may escape
The penalty of sin,
You cannot escape the consequences
of sin.

These proverbial axioms almost seem pre-planned on account of
their metaphorical imagery and poetical prettiness, but the
spontaneity of the chanted sermon does not allow such prepara-
tion. They are instead prime examples of the spontaneous, for-
maaic creation that takes place in the chanted sermon. Carroll
Baltimore simply draws from the psychic cultural experience of
his traditional art to create such lines. He has undoubtedly heard
a number of similar lines throughout his life in this religious
tradition, and he simply draws from his cultural reservoir to
produce such creations.

The other type of moralizing that Baltimore utilizes
is anecdotal moralizing:

No time to waste,
If you have to force yourself
    out of bed on Sunday mornin',
For to go to the House of God,
Pray with me.
If you spend more time findin'
    reasons for not goin'
Than to go.

Anytime. .
You grumble all the time
Are not happy with anything
In God's house. .
You have lost
The joy of salvation.
Anytime. .
All you can do
Is pull down the preacher. .
You had it,
But you sure enough have lost it.
In some instances this anecdotal moralizing is quite pointed as is indicated in Charles Perdue's comments on Reverend Carroll Baltimore's Father's Day sermon in Rappahannock County, Virginia, in 1970, which is included in the appendix to this study:

It is important to know the context in which this sermon was preached. The preacher had been pastor of this church about one year at the time of the sermon. For several months prior to it, a Junior Choir was in the process of being organized—with the pastor's active encouragement. At the same time, there was active discouragement from a small group of light-skinned Negroes who "always try to run thing!" At the choir rehearsal the night before this sermon was preached, there had been a flare-up and angry words were spoken—particularly by the light-skinned piano player for the adult choir who did not want the young people taking part and singing "our songs!" The pastor was present during the squabble, and after he preached his "Father" sermon, launched an attack against the piano player and her friends who were causing the trouble. This attack seemed rather pointed at the time and several individuals commented on it to us—"He was really layin' into 'em, wasn't he?"

Baltimore continues this use of examples of his theme right into his chant. Besides allowing him to make a better point of his topic, these examples prime him for the formulaic constructions that will follow in the chanted portion of the sermon. Thus, he is better able to maintain the rhythm of the chant because the examples he has just used in the prose portion provide him with ample material to use in the chanted portion. Often he repeats the same thoughts used in the prose portion, in the

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10 Incidentally, in Carroll Baltimore's present congregation at Mount Pleasant, he has a youth choir, a junior choir, and a "rock" gospel group, "The Baltimore Specials," in addition to the regular adult choirs.

chanted portion of his sermon. When one examines the sermons closely, he finds lines or thought patterns in the prose portion of the sermon that give rise to certain formulaic constructions in the chanted portion. Here are a few examples. In Baltimore's sermon of December 27, 1970:

Yes, certainly we have opposition from without.
There's always ridicule.
There's always those in the picture that stand on the outside
Tryin' to pull you down,
Tryin' to say that what you're doin' is no good...
What you're doin' . . . you're wastin' your time goin' up to that church.
This is the trick of the devil.
Devil loves to provide opposition of any kind.
Not only the opposition from within,
But the opposition from without.

We meet opposition on every hand. . . uh!
First. . . uh!
There's the opposition from within. . . uh!
Now I wonder if you know what I'm talkin' about. . . uh!
There's always. . . uh!
The good church members. . . uh!
That say. . . uh!
Oh, you don't know what your're doin'. . . uh!
There's always somebody. . . uh!
That's sayin' . . . uh!
Oh that cannot be done. . . uh!
That we are not able. . . uh!
It's too much to ask of us . . . uh!

Occasionally Baltimore will launch into a song, or, as in the case of his December 27, 1970, sermon, he simply inserts the lyrics of a particular song into his chant:
The themes of almost all chant-style sermons are metaphorical in nature. These metaphors are almost always of the same type as those found in the parables of the Bible; that is a rather concrete everyday object or occurrence is used to demonstrate some religious, moralistic theme. However, the clever chant-style preacher updates and modernizes the metaphorical object. The Ship of Glory becomes the automobile. The King's Highway becomes Interstate 66. The mustard seed becomes the
vegetable garden. The idea seems to be to bring the message directly to the members of the congregation by utilizing metaphorical images which are familiar in everyday life.

As mentioned earlier, Baltimore's use of metaphor is not quite as blunt and heavy-handed as that found in many of the preachers that Rosenberg discusses. He does, however, make rather extensive use of the same type of imagery. For instance, the church is God's hospital. The Bible is a letter from God. The scriptures are a "hot-line" to heaven.

The most central and clearly the most frequent message of Baltimore's sermons is man's absolute dependence upon God. It is only through God's goodness, and more significantly, God's power, that man can find meaning in his life. This chapter has dealt with the lyrical expression of the chanted sermon tradition. The next chapter will deal with the ritual expression of the chanted sermon tradition.
CHAPTER IV

THE POWER-AESTHETIC

The sociologist Joseph Washington has dealt extensively with the Afro-American religious experience. His analyses of Afro-American religion are most often based upon his observation of the African roots of black religion. His description of the role of the priest in African community worship is strikingly similar to the role of the preacher in Afro-American community worship, and serves as a suitable departure point in beginning a discussion of what I will term the "power-aesthetic":

The occasion for community worship is an intense emotional event. If the spirit is to possess the priest and make its power available, the priest needs all the help he can get to match his spirit with the spirit desired, indeed, the spirit will not come forth with the power apart from the community emptying itself (and thus the priest), so that the power can reign without interference. The priest is a very central figure in traditional community worship. He is the instrument through which power is made manifest. The heart of traditional African religions is the emotional experience of being filled with the power of the spiritual universe.\textsuperscript{12}

It was this religious tradition that the slaves brought to America with them, and, as the slaves gradually became enculturated into white society, the black preacher emerged. Many slaveowners at first had white preachers preach to their black slaves, and as Roscoe Lewis points out in \textit{The Negro In}

Virginia, the message of the white preacher was designed primarily to justify the subservient position of the slaves. But control through conscious effort was not the message that satisfied the social needs of the African mind. He needed, instead, a ritual expression of the power of the supernatural, and an expression of how this power could emanate from himself and the universe around him. And so, borrowing the Christian structure from his white master, he formulated his own worship service, with his own black preacher serving as mediator to the power expression. An early version of the chant-style church meeting is seen in an account of the slave church meeting cited by Charles V. Hamilton:

De most fun we had was at our meetin's. We had dem most every Sunday and dey lasted way into the night. De preacher I liked best was named Matthew Erving. He was a comely nigger, black as night, and he sure could read out of his hand. He never learned no real readin' and writin' but he sure knowed his Bible and he would hold his hand out and make like he was readin' and preach de purtiest preachin' you ever heard. De meetin's last from early in de mornin' till late at night. When dark come, de men folks would hang up a wash pot, bottom upwards, in de little brush church house we had, so's it would catch de noise and de overseer wouldn't hear us singin' and shoutin'. Dey didn't mind us meetin' in de daytime, but they thought iffen we stayed up half the night we wouldn't work so hard de next day--and dat was the truth. You shoulda seen some of de niggas get religion. De best way was to carry 'em to de cemetery and let 'em stand over a grave. Dey would start singin' and shoutin' about seein' fire and brimstone. Dey dey would sing some more and look plumb sancitified.

Carroll Baltimore serves essentially the same role as did the early black preacher in his community. He is an instrument of ritual through which supernatural power is made manifest.

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Baltimore's role as religious mediator is primarily a socio-psychological role. His sermon is his language of mediation; by language is meant not just words, but rather expression, intonation, body-language, and a host of other less-easily defined, sensually-conveyed expressions.

Why has the means of ritual expression survived in modern society, indeed, even in such non-traditional areas as metropolitan Washington, D.C.? In material culture, form sometimes outlives function simply because the form is imbedded in tradition. To a certain extent, this is also true of the folk aesthetic. However, aesthetic forms, especially verbal forms, seem much less hampered by tradition. Thus an aesthetic form is a much clearer clue to aesthetic function than is the form of a material culture item to its material function. Also, the chant style sermon is not confined to extreme pockets of tradition, but has been carried from the rural South to all the northern urban areas, and out as far as the West Coast. This seems to suggest that the chanted sermon tradition is serving socio-psychological functions of rather large and vibrant dimensions. The question now is, "What are these functions?"

For the moment, let us take the approach of the anthropologist and say that the various aspects of the chanted sermon are symbols, and in the context of the religious experience these are "sacred symbols." Clifford Geertz says:

...Sacred symbols function to synthesize a people's ethos--the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood--and their world view--the picture they have of the way things in sheer
quality are, their most comprehensive ideas of order.  
Order is the main point of the statement. Through a rather complex psychological process, man utilizes ritual to bring order to the universal disorder which surrounds him. Ritual is composed of a set of symbols, and "symbols," in this instance, must be taken broadly to include "tangible formulations of notions, abstractions from experience fixed in perceptible forms, concrete embodiments of ideas, attitudes, judgments, longings, or beliefs."  
In this respect the many sensory tangibles of the chanted sermon must be considered ritual symbols.

In analyzing the function of these ritual symbols, it is helpful to establish a set of structural dichotomies which seem to be represented in the expression of the symbols. We will not arbitrarily call these: order-disorder, clean-unclean, security-danger, pure-impure, power-submission. One notices immediately that these dichotomous pairings are not unique; indeed, these dichotomies are found in the cultural psyche of almost any society. It is the manner of resolution of these conflicting forces that characterizes societies as unique. For instance, when a housewife does her spring cleaning (a traditional and ritualistic act) she not only changes the impure to pure but changes the disorder of her universe into order and indeed, gains power over a universe which threatens to keep her in submission. Religious ritual functions in an identical fashion.

16 Ibid., p. 5.
Among Afro-American folk groups, fatalism is a major part of the psychic scheme. Justifying submission to his environment is the primary obstacle that the fatalist must contend with. Submission is balanced by power, and when power is not obtained in reality, it must be obtained ritually, and it is through black folk religion that this is accomplished. Disorder is the greatest threat to security. All religions are, in a sense, mediums through which order is brought to the universe; disorder, however, occupies a rather ambiguous position. Mary Douglas points out the ambiguities:

Granted that disorder spoils pattern; it also provides the materials of pattern. Order implies restriction; from all possible materials, a limited set has been used. So disorder, by implication is unlimited, no pattern has been realized in it, but its potential for patterning is indefinite. This is why, though we seek to create order, we do not simply condemn disorder. We recognize that it is destructive to existing patterns; also that it has potentiality. It symbolizes both danger and power.\(^{18}\)

Ritual recognizes the inherent potency of disorder. Disorder is an anomalous phenomenon; because of its anomalous nature it is able to exhibit both danger and power. The function of ritual is to order disorder that it becomes powerful. In other words, ritual takes phenomena which are not ordered normally, and so structures them so that they are no longer dangerous.

The chanted sermon is full of such anomalies. The most

\(^{18}\text{Ibid., p. 114.}\)
obvious, of course, is the chant itself. The chant is a most anomalous form of verbal communication. It is neither singing nor talking. The closest similarity found in Western society is in auctioneering. The preacher, like the auctioneer, is trying to bring his audience into an emotional trance, and this is accomplished, in both instances, through the chant. However, in order for the preacher's chant to be considered powerful instead of dangerous, it must first be placed into an ordered scheme. Thus we find the chanted sermon placed into a ritual context. In many respects the chant is a ritual symbol of transition—transition from the real world to the world of the divine. The danger of transition lying in the fact that transitional states are neither one place or the next, ritual, in this case the chanted sermon ritual, makes the transitional phase less dangerous.

In style, structure, and theme, the chanted sermon is designed to be an expression of power. This is obvious in the preacher's creation of an emotional fever, and his attempt to bring the congregation to a state in which they are taken over by the power of God. Likewise, the pervading theme in Carroll Baltimore's sermons is God's power, which would seem to confirm Dr. Washington's statements, and also point to the anomaly involved with power. God is the ultimate anomaly. He is all-powerful, and yet all dangerous. He is the order-Master of the universe, and yet He is the Creator and Ruler of Chaos. He is the Creator of both heaven and hell. He is the Creator of the pure and the impure. However, despite the fact that there is
terrific emphasis on the power of God, it does not follow that He becomes a distant, unreachable God. From Baltimore's sermons, it seems that He is considered a friend rather than exclusively a Ruler. There is constant reference to God being both a brother and an understanding father.

Another interesting characteristic of Baltimore's sermons is a marked concern with rewards in this life rather than a waiting for rewards in the next. Constant reference is made to God's use of His power to restore one to good health, to bring financial security, and end to depression, etc. In fact, there is a rather noticeable absence of reference to the after-life, and when these references do occur, they usually are concerned with hell. Carroll Baltimore seems to look for manifestations of God's power on this earth. The members of the congregation seem not content to sit back and endure in hopes of a better world in the after-life. This would suggest a re-thinking of the traditionally-held notion that the black man espoused Christianity because it made more tolerable his miserable life on this earth by offering him hope of a better life in the next world. The ritualistic, religious experience seems to suggest instead that the black man is more concerned with utilizing God's power for attainment of a better life primarily on this earth.

The members of the congregation play a major supporting role with the preacher in the expression of the power-aesthetic. The "Amen corner" is the focal point of audience participation. They are expected to help the congregation "up" and lead the
verbal emotional expression. An enthusiastic congregation serves to confirm the presence of the power atmosphere. It is not enough to have the power of God made manifest in the preacher. The ritual expression is considered most satisfactory when every member of the congregation is shouting, clapping, and foot stomping with the power of the spirit within him. It is this total expression of the power-aesthetic which is the central purpose of the chanted sermon.
A SUMMARY

The chanted sermon is a group aesthetic creation; the religious ritual is an expression of the aesthetic values of the entire community in which it serves such an integral social function. Emotional excitement, beauty in rhythm, ordered confusion, and, most importantly, the power-aesthetic, showing the power of their God in each of them as individuals, and in the group as a solid community--these are the purposes of their religious ritual, and the chanted sermon is the central instrument in the expression of this group aesthetic.

Carroll Baltimore, as the central figure in this group aesthetic, serves in a number of co-existing roles, all designed to meet the needs of the community in which he serves such an integral function. First, he acts as a mediator in the power-aesthetic. It is through him that the congregation is able to attain a direct and deeply-personal contact with the power of God. Also, Baltimore utilizes his chant in many of the same ways an auctioneer does; in this respect, he occupies the role of a salesman. Similar to the auctioneer's chant, the preacher's chant has a hypnotic effect through which he is able to bring the power of the Spirit, as manifested in emotional excitement, to those members of the congregation who might be
religious skeptics or non-participants. And so, Reverend Baltimore serves as a salesman, selling the power of the spirit idea to those who have not already realized its power and presence within themselves.

It also becomes evident in the content of many of the sermons that Baltimore presents a self-image to the congregation showing himself to be a martyr of sorts. In this martyr syndrome, he points out the suffering brought about through the physical and psychological strains of preaching. This martyr image seems to serve two basic functions. First, it gives the preacher a sort of masochistic justification for his position, for to suffer and sacrifice, as long as it is properly channelled, is to do good. His martyr-image statements serve as a personal re-confirmation, and statement of re-dedication to his calling. The second function is community-oriented. By pointing out his endurance of hardships, and his dedication to his calling, he is suggesting, or implying, a moral superiority the effect of which is to place him on a level above the congregation and to re-affirm his privileged position of authority. It follows that the preacher who maintains his position of power is considered that much more effective in bringing about the manifestation of God's power.

There seems to be a current indication, especially in urban areas, that although the power aesthetic is still very much alive (Black Power, etc.), the community religious ritual is ceasing to be its primary focus of expression. Fatalism is increasingly shifting to activism, and there seems to be a growing
skepticism in faith in the power of God actually making itself manifest in this world. However, there are a number of black folk preachers like Reverend Carroll Baltimore who would scorn these words, for they still have faith in the power of God, and the traditional religious ritual service still serves effectively as a viable expression of the power aesthetic. A passage from one of Baltimore's sermons expresses most eloquently the belief that all power on this earth must come through God:

Jesus came out of the unseen world, and He knowed the forces and the powers that played behind the dark veil that men knew nothin' about. God hold in His hands the workin's and inter-workin's of the forces of the entire universe. For He's aimin' bringin' into play powers that we know nothin' about to show us that we must follow the way of faith.
APPENDIX:

THE TEXTS
It's a great privilege to come and worship in the spirit and the truth.
Brothers, we have to have the heavenly Father with us.
But it's just good to be present among God's holy people.
I hope I might be able to say something here this morning that will encourage your hearts.
Truly we stand in need of prayer.
People tell me every so often that I preach too hard.
But I wonder about that statement.
If you go to a ballfield,
We hear screamin' and cheerin'
It's the same with God.
We forget that a person is called to preach.
He gets wrapped up in what he's doin' and the first thing you want to say is he's gonna preach too hard and kill himself.
But I believe God will take care of His own.
So many tell me that when you're a young man you have a role in life ahead of you.
But God hasn't promised that to us.
The only thing I know that I have is today.
Tomorrow isn't promised.
Next Sunday isn't promised.
I don't intend to save myself for tomorrow,
But I must work today.
We would like to invite your attention to the 121st Psalm, 1st verse.
"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills
And from whence cometh my help.
And I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills
From whence cometh my help."
We pray for us today we'll try to talk about the hills.
Proud to say I'm lift up mine eyes.
This is a personal statement,
For he said what he's gonna do.
But it also can involve those of us here today, b'cause we got to exercise this same course in Scripture.
It's personal to me, because I've had to lift up mine eyes to the hills also.
David's lookin' to the hills won't help me, for I've got to look there myself.
The Hebrew title of this Book of Psalms is called the Book of Praises. It is so called because it is a manual for nurturing spiritual life, But in private as well as public worship.
The purpose of this book is to provide a book of devotion for the Lord's people.
I love the Book of Psalms.
It has so much in it that can encourage you in all circumstances.
This book exults and praises God's holy word.
Which is the greatest expression of God's love and labor.
Actually this book is sung in a thousand tongues,
And is prized above silver and gold.
This book is sweeter than honey in the honey-comb.
This book can be a treasure to all who are blessed as little children.
Makes young men strong, young women pure.
This book protects the widows, and it honors the great power of the aged.
Offers eternal life freely to all people who accept it by faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ.
So I challenge you this mornin' to read the Book of Psalms.
To the Psalmists the whole earth is a bible.
And the voice of nature is the voice of God.
In theology we learn that God reveals Himself in two ways--
That's in nature and the Scripture.
Yet we ask ourselves where can God be found?
Some have even said that God is dead,
But at least acknowledge that there was a God 'Cause something can't die 'lest it first lives.
David gives God the glory and the splendour of the sky.
Creation of the land and the sea,
All that is in Him.
In this message he tells of the happiness of the hills,
And expresses his own determination to look toward the hills.
We are weak today.
We can't succeed in this life on our own strength
'Cause first, we don't have any strength of our own
'Cause God gave it to us.
No man is an island of his own
No matter how independent he want to be.
Somewhere along this life he gonna need some help along the way.
Every man needs help at one time or another in his life.
Regardless of how poor you are
(If you're poor you know you need help.)
Even the rich man need help sometime
'Cause it takes money to call those he needs t' wait on him.
When he gets sick, he'll call any doctor.
Even the rich man needs help.
Little children can't always have mother and father with them.
So there's a great need for someone who's more powerful than flesh and blood.
Every man should have his own hill in which to look for help.
Every man gonna have problems in this life.
Some he gonna be able to cope with.
Some you'll be able to solve on your own.
Some you'll be able to solve by talkin' to a ________.
Yet there are some problems that if we try to solve them on our own,
We gonna make a wreck of our lives.
There are some problems in our lives that counselors can't solve,
Doctors can't solve.
There are some problems in life that you just can't tell to your fellow man.
Why? Because they like to talk.
He'll tell your problems just as soon as he get away from you.
I know you know somethin' about the party line.
You call someone and you can hear your line click--
People listenin' to see what you're sayin'.
I don't believe they hear anything.
Every man needs his own little hill to look to.
Life leads us along a rugged path.
Life isn't as easy as we think it should be.
I hear so many people sayin' why is it that I can't seem to catch up on my bills?
Just as soon as I pay one bill I have another.
Just as soon as I put one dime in my pocket, I have to borrow twenty-six.
Seems like the good I try to do to my fellow man--
It's not gettin' me very far.
Here I see that man off in the street--
He seem to be better off than I am.
But seein' lasts only for a season.
That man in the street might be doin' better than you today,
But tomorrow is comin', and he's gonna stand in need of some help.
Sometimes life takes us down into the valleys.
Sometimes it takes us around the highways and the by-ways.
Sometime life will lead us along the road of prosperity.
Sometime life will reward us, and everything we touch turns to gold.
But Church, I want you to know that it won't last four seasons.
You might be prosperin' this mornin',
But tomorrow some rain is gonna fall.
You might be enjoyin' your sunshine today,
But I believe the clouds are beginnin' to gather.
But we should have a hill to look for--
That one that you know what I'm talkin' about.
There are teenagers livin' in a society that they are led to believe that smokin' pot is alright.
They are led to believe that dope, narcotics, and marijuana can't harm me.
But all are sayin' it lets me feel good.
They are led to believe that sniffin' glue is alright,
But sniffin' glue will rattle your mind.
Sniffin' glue will cause the tissues of your mind to break down.
Narcotics will cause your system to deteriorate.
If you don't believe me, why don't you go down to some of your mental institutions.
You will find that the places are loaded with teenagers.
Who felt that smokin' pot was alright.
But they too must have their own little hill to look to.
One of the first hills that we must face in life is that of confidence.
Why don't you pray for us.
Confidence is that which ties one to his beliefs.
I'm here to tell you this morning that you can't make it without confidence.
I know you'll be called on to stand up in God's house.
You might tremble and shake and stutter,
But it's alright.
If you believe in yourself,
You'll be able to do the job.
Confidence is that which enables us to just wait—give us patience to just wait in the midst of struggles which seem to be lost.
Notice the little child when he's learnin' to first walk—
He may fall time and time again;
But with words of encouragement from Mom and Dad, he soon regains confidence in himself.
He gets up, falls down, but he gets up again.
He'll try today, and he'll try tomorrow.
He'll get a few bruises,
But the child keeps on tryin';
Why? Because someone has encouraged him along the way.
There would be no air travel today if the men did not have confidence in the scientists' skill.
Their doctors wouldn't be able to do very much for us if it didn't have a little confidence in them.
I wonder if you know what I'm talkin' about.
I believe David had confidence in the help that came from his God.
He did not give up when things looked darkest to him,
But waited on the salvation that came from the hills of the Lord.
When I say every man needs his own little hill—
You see experience is still the greatest teacher.
You can have all the education if you want,
But like the old folks say, if you don't have any other, you're not gonna go very far,
For you learn by your mistakes.
You can make a mistake today, but you don't have to make it the same mistake tomorrow,
For you profit by your experience.
David had what we call life experience.
He had bare experience,
He had full life experience.
Was not ready to let go of his experience what had been given him in the name of the Lord for the protection of His sheep. But we all have our hills in life. We all have our ups and downs. We all have our bumps and knocks. But one of hills we must conquer before we accept help from the hills of the Lord—That is the hill of rejuvenation. A new birth gives us access to many hills of Christian help; But you must first be born again. And I say you cannot walk contrary to the will of God. But you must feel a burnin' deep down in your heart. You must feel the little wheel movin' inside of the wheel. You must be like Jeremiah said to the word, "The fire shall be in my bones." And when you get all this movin' on the inside of your heart, Then you aim and look for the hill of heaven. David reports from the Lord that the earth is the Lord and the word is powerful. The world indeed that dwells our ears, The silver and gold that's in our fields, Belong to my God. Even the lilies of the field are called to come forth by God uh! The rain He sends in the season uh! The sunshine He also sends uh! They all come from my God uh! I hear a writer say that God will not withhold anything from them that loves Him uh! But why don't you pray for us, For we all have our own little hills in life. We all got to look to somewhere once in a while. You must lift up your own eyes as well as I must lift up mine eyes. That's tellin' me that I must work as well as you must work. Hills have always told their story, so when we think of hills and mountains, we think not of valleys, but of high places. Well you can come up out of the valleys and go up on the mountainsides uh! And hilltops uh! Where you can look on the Promised Land uh! You can see God uh! God is bein' manifested uh! Let me tell you one thing about my own experience uh! It was a couple of weeks ago uh! That I was out in California uh! One day uh! I went out uh! On a hillside uh! Overlooking the great Pacific Ocean uh! And I looked out uh! And it seemed like uh!
That the waters uh!
And the skies uh!
Came together uh!
And I stood there uh!
Watchin' the waves uh!
Begin to beat against the shores uh!
The billows rolled uh!
And the water dashin' every where uh!
My mind ran back uh!
To the words of David uh!
That the Lord uh!
God is alright uh!
And the heavens uh!
Declare the glory of God uh!
And the firmament uh!

I looked over uh!
On another mountain uh!
Called Mount uh!
Up on that mountain uh!
They had a white cross uh!
They tell me uh!
That every Easter uh!
Their people uh!
Would make their way up on that mountain uh!
And there uh!
They would serve the Lord uh!
I wonder uh!
If you know what I'm talkin' about uh!
This cross uh!
That stood on Mount uh!
Overlooked uh!
The great valley uh!
It looked like uh!
That God uh!
Had scooped out the valley uh!
And set the city uh!
In the midst of the mountain uh!

But let me tell you one thing uh!
God uh!
Is alright uh!
I looked to the hills uh!
From which cometh my God uh!
I wonder uh!
Can I get a witness uh!
It was on a hill uh!
Where Elijah uh!
Had his convincin' contact with uh!
And called down uh!
God from heaven uh!
It was on a hill! Where God gave Moses! The law for his people! It has been God’s way! Throughout all ages! To call men up! To the mountain top! And send ‘em down! To the service! It was on a hill! Where Abraham stood examination! And passed! The test of faith! By offerin’! His own son Isaac! On the altar! It was on a hill! Where David! Made his stand against Goliath! And gave! The victory for Israel! It was on a hill! Where Jesus! Fed the multitudes! With two fish! And five loaves of bread! It was on a hill! Where Jesus carried! Peter James and John! Transfigured Himself! It looked so good up there! That they wanted to build a house! And stay on that mountain! It was on a hill! Where the great Founder of salvation! Between Jesus and the powers of hell! So you see! Hills! Have always told our story! The hill of the faithful! Will tell you! That God will protect His children! In time of danger! In time of sickness! He protected the Hebrew children! In the fiery furnace! He protected Job! In the hour of testin’! He protected Daniel!
In the lion's den uh!
He protected Paul uh!
On his way to Rome uh!
He protected Peter and James uh!
On His way to the cross uh!
No wonder uh!
I can lift up mine eyes uh!
Unto the hills uh!
From which cometh my help uh!
My help uh!
Cometh from the Lord uh!
The Lord uh!
Is my rock uh!
The Lord uh!
Is my salvation uh!
If the Lord uh!
Is on my side uh!
Whom shall I fear uh!
In the hour of temptation uh!
When Satan is all above me uh!
I can cry Lord uh!
Have mercy on me uh!
I can look up uh!
Up on yonders mountain uh!
I can see Jesus uh!
There waiting for me uh!
The lily of the valley uh!
The praise of God uh!
The rose of uh!
Thank God is in me uh!
I wonder uh!
Can you lift up your hearts today uh!
To Jesus the Lamb of God uh!
Lift 'em up uh!
All ye people uh!
Lift up your heads uh!
All ye people uh!
Lift them up uh!
The everlasting Lord uh!
And the King of glory shall come here uh!
But you gotta lift up your hearts uh!
I lift up mine eyes
Unto the hills,
From whence cometh my help.
We all stand in need of some help,
But you gotta lift up your eyes.
You gotta first acknowledge your own need of help.
There is no problem too hard.
There is no sinner too wretched that cannot be saved.
This is where we run into problems, church--
Gettin' down from the mistakes we make.
But mistakes serve as stepping stones.
We make a mistake and then we just step up a little bit.
God will forgive.
Jesus will save.
Pray for that man in the street.
Don't call him a bum.
God made him and God can change him.

But too many times we find ourselves sittin' in the judges seat,
Judgin' our own man.
But I believe we must first search our own hearts.
If we will first look at our own lives.
We will see that we have no room
To judge that other man.
If there's someone here this mornin' that do not know Jesus--
If there's someone here that's a sinner--
Why don't you come and see the hill today
Everything was made for us--
Was prepared for us on the hill--
On the hill of Calvary
But you must accept Him from your own accord--
Man, woman, boy, or girl.
If you will come and unite with this church
Or any church of your choice;
But the choice must be yours.
You must make that first step.
But if you will accept Him,
Sho' nuff He will lead you all the way from earth to heaven.
Now if there's someone here that used to belong to the church--
If you drifted away--
If you haven't been here in over a year--
You haven't been faithful to this church.
Don't fool yourself, you're not in church anymore,
But you've got to stay.
But you can turn around and slide this way.
Come on back into the kingdom of God.
If there is someone here that would like to accept Jesus Christ
as their personal Saviour,
Now is the time.
Reverend Baltimore, Shiloh Baptist Church, Woodville, Virginia,
December 27, 1970. (Transcribed from tape recording made by Charles
L. Perdue.)

We have come this far by faith.
I feel that this will be an appropriate subject to close out this
here service 'cause perhaps we have been walkin' by faith,
Tryin' to do the best that we know how.
Gettin' men to see that God will always ___.
Fourth Sunday July.
We started out here with this service for the young people.
There was some confusion as to my motives as to why I wanted to
do this.
But begin with 'cause first God told us to do it.
Second, because I saw there was a need here for the young people
to have somethin' to do.

? older members.
I did it to unite the two together,
That they might walk together hand in hand.
But we come this far on the journey--
We just come this far by faith.
These are days of extreme anxiety--
Experiences too great for man to do by himself.
These are troublesome day--
Days when nobody seems to know what to do or what the next fellow
will bring.
These are days of vast adversities.
There are many problems that are facin' us.
Many times the world has been thrown into complete confusion,
But the Lord has still always brought us out.
He has brought us from a mountain a long ways.
If we stop to look back over the past year,
No doubt we can say that we've had our differences.
We have had our ups and downs.
We have had some struggles.
But we can see some of the things which we have done, and to which
we have come.
There's only one thing that we can say--
That we have come this far by faith.
Humanity is on the verge of destroying itself.
Crime waves are sweepin' over our country,
Buryin' us like a royal lion sneakin' up on its prey.
Many people have gone out to a life of crime.
For some reason the Church of God is empty when men find all so
many things to do except stop long enough to come out to the
House of God.
We pause today to stop and say thank you Jesus.
We know if it had not been for the Lord we would have stumbled and
fell a long time ago.
But we're still yet holdin' and trustin' in the name of the Lord--
Trustin' and believin' that He will help and provide in many ways.
We have come this far by faith--
Leanin' on the Lord, trustin' in His holy word.
He has never failed us yet.
We can turn around on our journey for we have come this far by
faith.
We must say that we have come this far.
I'm only meanin' to say that we have only reached a certain plat-
form in life where we'll come to a certain place in life.
That's only one rung in the ladder.
For there's yet still more to be done.
Now, yet still more days to move out and advance with Jesus Christ
at the helm.
For we have come this far by faith.
Faith is trust in God.
Scripture says the substance of things so far--
Evidence in things I've seen--
Faith in the unmistakable way of God--
The eternal Creator of all things.
By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of
God.
So that it seems it's made out of things which do not appear.
Faith starts us out on a journey into the unknown.
But Jesus said, "Have faith in God."
This is the thing that so many of us are lackin' today.
That we never have enough faith.
Let us hope through the storm.
We sayin' that we believe in God--
That we believe that He will make a way for us;
Yet so many time that when trouble come--
That at the first problem that might arise in the church--
Then we become all ____ inside.
But have faith in God.
Peter once went out on the storm,
And you know the story--that when the storm arose that--well he
became so excited that he looked up and he saw Jesus walkin'
on the water.
He went out and started walkin' on the water, and to meet his Lord
Savior Jesus Christ.
After a ways his faith failed him and he went down.

This is where men have failed--because our faith is weak.
And if our faith is weak, then many times we are not going to be
able to say it;
But Jesus said, "Have faith in God."
Jesus came out of the unseen world, and He knewed the forces and
the powers that played behind the dark veil that men knew
nothin' about.
God hold in His hands the workin's and inter-workin's of the
forces of the entire universe,
For He's amin' bringin' into play powers that we know nothin'
about.
To show us that we must follow the way of faith;
For yet we have come this far by faith.
But Jesus is the object of our faith.
That is He should be the supreme thought in our minds.
He should always be in the front of all our endeavors and all our
goals.
Jesus should never be left behind but always put in front.
So we must all have some object in view if we want to reach our
goal uh!
No man would have a particular object in mind and not have somethin'
to look forward to uh!
For Jesus is the object of our faith uh!
Then my faith can grow uh!
For he's all-wise and all-powerful uh!
He is an advocate and mediator of all problems uh!
He is the object of our faith uh!
He is our redeemer uh!
For man's faith uh!
Can be no stronger than his object uh!
What I'm tryin' to say uh!
Is that your faith can be no stronger than Jesus uh!
But yet uh!
I say have faith in God uh!
If the object of his faith is weak uh!
No matter how much faith he has uh!
He is limited in his ability uh!
To do what his mind has sought to do uh!
For yet uh!
If you have faith uh!
And trust and obey uh!
Then God uh!
Will always bring you out uh!
My Bible say uh!
Without faith uh!
It's impossible to please God uh!
Say we're walkin' hand in hand with the Master uh!
But yet uh!
The Bible say uh!
If you have not faith uh!
It's impossible to please my God uh!
For he cometh to God uh!
Must believeth that He is uh!
That He's the water uh!
Of them that diligently seek Him uh!
But yet uh!
We have come this far by faith uh!
'Cause Jesus said that I am the vine uh!
And ye are the branches uh!
For he that abideth in me uh!
And I in him uh!
Many have seen uh!
The strong and the weakness uh!
But many have been uh!
To conceal and reveal uh!
Many have been uh!
To joys and sorrows uh!
But we have come this far by faith uh!
Somehow I believe uh!
That my God will provide and bring me out uh!
But yet uh!
We met opposition on every hand uh!
First uh!
There's the opposition from within uh!
Now I wonder if you know what I'm talkin' about uh!
Ther's always uh!
Those individuals uh!
On the inside of the church uh!
They provide opposition uh!
There's always complainin' uh!
That it can't be done uh!
There's always uh!
The good church members uh!
That say uh!
Oh you don't know what you're doin' uh!
There's always somebody uh!
That's sayin' uh!
Oh that can not be done uh!
That we are not able uh!
It's too much to ask of us uh!
Some of you uh!
Have been like the members uh!
That may have been uh!
Like the spies uh!
_____?______ uh!
_____?______ uh!
And came back uh!
To make our report uh!
But instead of givin' a good report uh!
It upset the whole nation uh!
They said we're not able uh!
To take you in uh!
For we are into ours uh!
As grasshoppers uh!
But thanks be to God uh!
There's always somebody uh!
That'll stand up uh!
For what is right uh!
Tell me _____?______ uh!
Still there's people that said uh!
We are well able uh!
Let us go up at once uh!
And possess the Land of Canaan uh!
What I'm trying to get you to see uh!
That our position uh!
Is gonna come within the church uh!
Somebody is gonna pull uh!
Against the program uh!
Somebody's gonna talk about it uh!
Somebody's gonna pull it down uh!
Everytime you say uh!
That it can' be done uh!
You are _____ in God uh!
For God got all power in His hands uh!
There's nothin' too hard uh!
That He cannot solve uh!
There's nothin' uh!
That's too difficult uh!
For my God uh!

Faith in God uh!
And faith in Jesus uh!
But most of all uh!
Faith in your fellow man uh!
For we have come uh!
This far by faith uh!
We have faith in God uh!
That no opposition uh!
Can stop us uh!
And no hill uh!
Too hard to climb uh!
No valley too deep uh!
No distance too far uh!
For we have come this far by faith.
I wonder how many of us could believe this?
Yes certainly we have opposition from without.
There's always ridicule.
There's always those in the picture that stand on the outside
Tryin' to pull you down.
Tryin' to say that what you're doin' is no good.
What you're doin'---you're wastin' your time goin' up to that church.
This is the trick of the devil.
Devil loves to provide the opposition of any kind.
Not only the opposition from within,
But the opposition from without.

_____ tell me you're nothin' but a stumblin' block.
My Bible tells me that God will move every stumblin' block.
For if you're standin' in the middle of God's program,
God somehow or other will find a way to do away with you.
God will not see the church go down,  
But always be lookin' up.

You are standing in the midst of God's program,  
Sayin', "Aw, I'm not gonna work with you.  
And I'm not gonna be for the program.  
I'm not gonna put my money in that Church uh!  
I'm gonna stay home on the fourth Sunday."  
Than you are no more than workin' for the devil uh!  
And God uh!  
Will sure enough move you.  
Yet from all the opposition that we come up against we can say still  
we come this far by faith.  
By faith Abraham gave up his world.  
We are called upon today to give up whatever it is that hinder us.  
Things that get within our hearts that hinder us from doin' the  
will of God.  
Ther's contrary ways in our hatred hearts that stands in the way  
of God's love.  
Ther's always uh!  
A lack of faith uh!  
That stands in the way uh!  
But faith says that your world uh!  
Is your admiration uh!  
When you're called to duty you must give it up uh!  
And obey God uh!  
For if your world uh!  
Is in praise of men uh!  
Give it up uh!  
And obey my God uh!  
For faith says uh!  
Even give up your family like Abraham uh!  
Abraham uh!  
Gave up his family by faith uh!  
And he went to a city uh!  
In fulfill uh!  
The beckon of God uh!  
Told Abraham uh!  
To journey out into a land uh!  
And the Bible said that he journeyed out uh!  
By faith uh!  
When he was called uh!  
To go out to a place uh!  
He didn't know where he was goin' uh!  
But he went trustin' and believin' in God uh!  
For faith uh!  
Has done so much uh!  
For those that believe in God uh!  
For faith uh!  
Has ?? kingdoms uh!  
And attained promises uh!  
Faith uh!
Has brought righteousness uhl
In the heart of mankind uhl
Faith uhl
Has stopped mighty armies uhl
But faith uhl
Itself uhl
Cannot be stopped uhl
But believe in God uhl
And everything will be alright uhl
But what kind of faith should I have uhl
A believin' faith uhl
A believin' that God uhl
Will bring you out uhl
I trust in faith uhl
If I just trust in God uhl
Everything will be alright uhl
It's a holy faith uhl
That tells me uhl
If I hold on uhl
To God's unchangin' hand uhl
If I just hold on uhl
God's holy love uhl
If I hold on church uhl
I sure enough uhl
I will walk uhl
With my God uhl
It's a walkin' faith uhl
That keeps my feet uhl
From standin' in the pitfalls of uhl
It's a givin' faith uhl
That tells me uhl
If I give up my goods uhl
If I give up my talents under God uhl
If I give up my strength uhl
If I give up my needs uhl
If I give unto God uhl
He'll uhl back unto me uhl
It's a helpin' faith uhl
If you help your brother uhl
If you love your fellow man uhl
If you help them uhl
Your time uhl
Everything will be alright uhl
But we've come this far by faith uhl
Faith may be increased uhl
By uhl and your trials uhl
Trials uhl
Are placed on the child of God uhl
It might come uhl
In the form of sickness uhl
It might come uh!
In the form of family trials uh!
It might come uh!
In the form uh!
Of church disturbance uh!
But the faith uh!
Will bring you out uh!
All the tension uh!
That God put upon his children uh!
Are only to try our faith uh!
But ___ are found in providence uh!
The values of ___ uh!

When the saints are wadin' through deep waters uh!
Of trouble and tribulation and sufferin' uh!
That almost covered our heads uh!
With the sheddin' of blood uh!
But we heard the Master speakin' from above uh!
He doesn't overcome it uh!
But He gives to eat of the tree of life uh!
Which is in the midst uh!
Of the paradise of God uh!
And the God said see uh!
And enjoy uh!
We'll forget all of our troubles uh!
And ___ with new courage uh!
But faith uh!
Is like a cord, church uh!
Extended out from the hands of God uh!
Which that we grasp in our hands uh!
And climb up the ladder of his faith uh!
With our mind uh!
And with our soul uh!
With our strength uh!
We can draw Him down from heaven uh!
To aid us uh!
In all of our earthly problems uh!
He shall come down to earth uh!
And the earth shall shake uh!
And summon ___ uh!
And Satan uh!
Shall be put to flight uh!
But we are come this far by faith uh!
Just leanin' on the Lord uh!
I trust in church uh!
And I listen to His ways uh!
And I'm gonna follow Him uh!
Every step of the way uh!
No wonder the hymn-writer say uh!
That I'm pressin' on uh!
The upward way uh!
New heights I'm gainin' every day uh!
Still prayin' that I won't look down uh!
But Lord, plant my feet on higher ground uh!
Lord lift me up uh!
And I shall stand uh!
My faith in heaven uh!
Cable end uh!
On higher ground uh!
Than I have been uh!
But Lord uh!
Plant my feet on higher ground uh!
But Lord uh!
My heart has no uh!
Desire to stay uh!
Where doubts arise uh!
And ___?___ uh!
Though some may dwell uh!
Where these are bound uh!
My prayers my aim uh!
Is higher ground uh!
And I come this far by faith uh!
I want to scale uh!
Those upmost heights uh!
And catch a gleam uh!
of glory bright uh!
But still I pray uh!
'Til heaven I've found uh!
Lord lead me on uh!
To higher ground uh!
But I come this far by faith uh!
I have no desire to turn around uh!
If you don't go,
I'm still gonna go uh!
If I'm still here,
I'm still gonna preach.
We have come this far by faith.
Faith is that thing that every child of God needs.
It's often said that faith is the key to heaven.
Faith unlocks the door.
All I'm tryin' to tell you is that in all your faith you must
exercise a little somethin' yourself.
That is faith.
You may take your problems to any doctor you want to;
But unless you exercise somethin' on your own that key will still
not unlock that door.
There must be some kind of movement or action on your part
In order for that door to open.
This is all I'm sayin' about prayer--that you must exercise your
faith.
Then the doors will be open.
But we have come this far by faith.
We don't know whether we'll get back another year, but we come this far.
We'll take nothin' for the journey 'cause we'll enjoy the trip with God.
But stay in church--stand up for what's right.
Don't always be willin' to bow down and bend over to those who'se not _______ to you.
First you go.
God will meet you somewhere up the road.
But there's always gonna be someone that's gonna stand back and gonna fight against everything.
Some people just like to fight anyhow;
But you can't outfight God.
You can't stop progress.
You can't stop God's program no matter how hard you try;
But somehow someway God Himself will provide and make a way.
Paul said that God will provide all your needs.
Didn't say some of 'em but all of 'em;
But you must have faith.

I don't know why some of you are here today.  
I believe God is gonna help you.  
You don't have to __________.  

Men may not like ____ but I believe that it will touch my heart.  
Men might not like the things we say--the things we preach, but you go and tell it to God.  
God commissioned me to do a job, and I promised Him a long time ago that I wouldn't break it.  
Everything that's wrong--I'm gonna speak against it.  
But don't care who it might hurt.  
The 6th chapter of Matthew, the 9th verse we find these words:  
"Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,"  
"Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name."  
All of you are familiar with the Lord's prayer.  
Time will not permit us to go into the entire prayer,  
But we gonna consider this thing on our father.  
Our father showing it's a personal thing for all of us that's here when you can say "Our Father" showing that you have a part in it.  
The title of father is the most honorable, most glorious, and a most proud moment.  
The most favorable title known to the human family.  
It's lovelier than the titles of kings and rulers.  
It's the most exalted position that any man occupies.  
That's why we recognize it's sanctity.  
Father is a sacred name.  
Not every man is a father.  
I don't care how many children you have.  
Not every man's a father.  
When we think of God as a father,  
We think of Him as being gracious, kind, tender, loving to all His children.  
We are all one father's children.  
Sometimes we become too bogged down and think that you're the only child of God there is.  
Many times we make light of those that are of other denominations.  
It's not important what denomination you are.  
Just so you're working with the same spirit.  
Being father carries a little closeness and tenderness of pat-
ternal care that warms the hearts of His children.

Our Father is greater than kings 'cause a king's over the subjects in a region of power.

That is, he's only over the people in a certain district of jurisdiction.

But a father's over his children as flesh of his flesh, blood of his blood, bone of his bone.

A king would find it impossible to be personally involved in everyone of his subjects individually.

I don't think you understand what I'm talkin' about.

The President of the United States is our leader and he's over us. I don't believe that he can become interested in every individual. 'Cause you are just a little speck making up one number in this great country.

Not so with God 'cause every individual is somebody in the sight of God.

Every individual is God's child.

Whether they are rich or poor, whether they are black or white.

They are all God's children.

A father has a personal interest in each of his children.

God's relationship to the universe is not only as Creator, but He's also Father to all mankind.

A creator must be superior to the object it creates.

In God's relationship to man, God is the Creator--man is the created.

God is the Maker and man is the one that's made.

Man has a kinship with his relatives automatically when he's born into a certain family.

But to have fellowship with God you must reach out.

God loves His children, but you still can be cut off.

But you must exercise your guilt and your belief in Him.

Man is born of his creation and his regeneration.

Now I'm talkin' about our Father.

I don't believe you hear me.

You know, it's sad sometimes--

Some of our churches don't really have the right to be called churches.

Oh, I'd like to stop and pound this thing awhile.

I don't believe that you found God;

'Cause the first thing, the Lord has never been lost.

God have always been there.

Suppose you turn this thing around and say the Lord found me.

'Cause you, one individual, was ever lost.

God saw you somewhere in the wilderness and brought you back to --

Yes, this word... His name was Abba A-B-B-A.

The word simply means "father of my father."

The word may be spelled backwards or forwards, but it is the same whether you spell it backwards or forwards.

Still A-B-B-A.
This, to me suggests to me that God is the same whether we look backwards or forwards.

He's the same yesterday, today, and forever more.

Yet something is wrong with mankind when man changes from day to day.

There are those that claim to be children of God.

Yet something gets within their heart and causes them to strike out against someone else.

There are those that call themselves children of God, and yet they can listen to the minister that God placed on the roll.

Yet lemme tell you one thing, God has placed all of us from the foundations of the world.

You don't have to understand it.

You don't have to like it or go along with it uh!

But God will, bring all things to pass uh!

Yet I'm talkin' about God our Father uh!

But yet today we need to turn the searchlights of heaven on our hearts uh!

Look deep down into the hearts uh!

And see if I'm really a child of God uh!

He is the father of us all uh!

No race, no color, no creed, no class uh!

Can exercise any special rights over another uh!

Nor get any higher than anyone else in God's house uh!

Every man's standing on the same plane uh!

Every man's standing on the same footing uh!

I don't care if you got money in your pocket uh!

I don't care if you claim you got _____ folks uh!

Yet God uh!

Holds the high vote in heaven uh!

God can tear down uh!

And God can build up uh!

Today we have too many preachers uh!

That are just Homecoming preachers uh!

Too many people in the church uh!

Are just _____ uh!

There are too many in the church uh!

That you only see at Christmas uh!

There are too many uh!

That are just here on Easter morning uh!

But thanks be to God uh!

These people are not really in God's house uh!

But yet God uh!

Looks into it uh!

You say you are children of God uh!

But yet I hear the writer say uh!

That you are dead uh!

Deep down in your hearts uh!

You may claim to be a part of _____ uh!

But yet you're on the threshold of life uh!

Ready to _____ and die uh!

But yet we have heard uh!
Much about ? uh!
We heard somebody say uh!
That so-and-so uh!
Is a father of a minister uh!
Somebody else uh!
Is the father of the Constitution uh!
Somebody else uh!
Is the father of ? uh!
But yet uh!
All of these ? uh!
Who made the angels uh!
Who made the tiny snowflakes uh!
Who made the sand upon the seashore uh!
But surely there must be a God somewhere uh!
Nobody can create life uh!
But one day my God uh!
Got down in the midst of the valley uh!
______ uh!
And mold him into a man uh!
Got on top of the mountain uh!
I don't believe you know Him do you uh!
There is one who determines the life and fall of a sparrow and the fate of a ?
God is concerned about every individual.

Thanks be to God for those who first taught us to say and pray,
"Our Father, which art in heaven uh!
Hallowed be Thy name" uh!
We cannot accept God uh!
As the Father of all and refuse to treat all men as brothers uh!
A Father whose will is light and good uh!
All those who are oppressed bind strong the bonds of brotherhood uh!
And who fight with death uh!
But O Father look down from heaven uh!
And bless whatever thy servant be uh!
Thy works of pure unselfishness uh!
Unselfishness uh!
In Thy Father God uh!
If you selfish uh!
God will cut you off uh!
If love uh!
Is not in your heart uh!
God uh!
Will cut you off uh!
There are too many people today uh!
If the Church ask 'em to give two dollars uh!
They cry and scream "It's too much" uh!
But early on Saturday night uh!
They tell me he's out to the barrooms uh!
And the ? places uh!
And spend all their money uh!
In the wrong places uh!
But get 'em in the church uh!
And ask for a dollar uh!
They'll put a quarter in uh!
They'll put a quarter in uh!
But give unto God uh!
That which is God's uh!
And everything'll be alright uh!
I'm talkin' about uh!
Our Father uh!
Which art in heaven uh!
Not only is He in heaven uh!
But yet He walks with me uh!
He's my heavenly Father uh!
He's a everlasting Father uh!
A kind uh!
And loving Father uh!
He's a everlasting Father uh!
He can't never die uh!
His children uh!
Can never be fatherless uh!
And can never be without a home uh!
And one writer said uh!
That the _ on a thousand hills uh!
Belong to my Father uh!
The riches on earth uh!
Belong to my Father uh!
Everlasting to everlasting uh!
Thou art God uh!
Behold heavenly Father uh!
He has no weakness uh!
He has all power uh!
He's omnipresent uh!
Everywhere at the same time uh!
Oh whither shall I flee from thy spirit uh!
Oh whither shall I go uh!
If I had the wings of a bird uh!
And dwell in all parts of the earth uh!
Behold--Thou art there uh!
If I make my bed uh!
Down in the midst of hell uh!
Behold my Father there uh!
But this morning uh!
If I could cry unto God uh!
God gimme two wings uh!
That I might be able to have faith uh!
That I might be able to see the angels uh!
If I had two wings uh!
I'd hear my preachin' uh!
That I might not walk uh!
In the pathway of darkness uh!
If I had two wings uh!
I'd seal my heart uh!
That I might keep the love uh!
Deep down in uh!
If I had two wings uh!
I'd stretch out my hands uh!
And say Father uh!
Here I am uh!
Guide me Oh thou great Jehovah uh!
But my Father is a good Father uh!
God came when I was bowed down in sin uh!
God almighty uh!
Looked over the of heaven uh!
He began to shake the foundations of the world uh!
He said who uh!
I hear somebody uh!
Under the uh!
Why don't you send me uh!
Jesus Christ in the name of God uh!
Came down through forty-two generations uh!
He came on down uh!
Said I want to thank God for victory uh!
Oh Jesus uh!
Where are you going uh!
I'm going down uh!
To Hebrew land uh!
I'm on my way down uh!
Oh Jesus uh!
Why don't you ride right now uh!
Ride on Jesus uh!
Till every knee bow uh!
Ride on Jesus uh!
Every tongue confess uh!
That Thou art God uh!
And beside Thee there are none other.
Do you know what I'm talkin' about?
Do you know what I'm talkin' about?
There's a difference in fathers we have down here.
Fathers down here will sometimes lead you wrong.
Praise be to God for my Father who sits on the throne of glory.
Never will lead me wrong or forsake me.
I'm tellin' you about fathers down here.
They will leave their children at home.
They don't know anything about it when they leave them there.
Go out here when they should be sittin' around home.
My Father got His eye on every individual.
Some of you, I'm afraid... I'm sorry, you might not like this, but
some young friends are on their way down into hell.
There are too many that are tryin' to cut up in God's house.
There are too many that want to be sittin' on the pedestal.
Too many that want to sit up on the throne and pull the reins for what should be done.
There's too many gettin' over in this little group.
There's too many gettin' over in that little group.
There's too many that don't even have the right to be called Christians.
Yet they stay up here and they talk.
I'd like to say this.
I'm a young man,
And I don't have anything to do with it.
See, this is God's business.
People think I don't understand anything.
People think I don't have eyes to see anything.
They think I don't have sense enough to know what's wrong.
But I talk to my Father.
Everyday of the week.
I can talk to my Father late at night.
I've been down and out, church.
I've had to round the table.
So many times people that stand on the church rolls been in the house to pull me down.
One thing about it, you may pull me down on my knees, but when I get down there I'm gonna stay on my knees.
And talk to my Father which art in heaven.
One thing about it while I'm down there uh!
Gonna get in touch with my God uh!
He gonna reach down uh!
And snatch me up uh!
You know, a young minister has it rough.
Some of us are gettin' on up in age.
We can say I been here a long time.
Mothers and fathers are pillars of the church.
Lord God, put your away.
Jesus is the foundation of every church.
If you don't give yourself to God, something's gonna be wrong.
Too many of us tryin' to work God instead of business.
my Father--Make everything alright.
What you tryin' to do behind the pastor's back--God will bring it to light.
What you tryin' to do in your little secret groups--God will bring it to light.
One thing about it--If you stand as a stumblin' block...
Too many of our children are stumblin' over mother and father.
Too many of our young people are stumblin' over those that don't want to give them anything to do.
But praise be to God. He said His word.
Now He'll move every stumbling block.
Go home and read your Bibles more.
Then you won't be so much devil in church.
Pray more so there won't be so much hatred in your hearts.
Always talkin' about somebody hating you--but lemme tell you right now--why is it important if somebody hate you?
You just serve the Lord.
Stand there somehow.
You might have to stand there and talk to the Lord, but you stand there anyhow.
Christ said all things will come.
I Been in many churches across the country.
The corruption in God's house.
I don't want to hear anything about being called to preach.
Lemme tell you one thing about it.
Man didn't put it in my heart.
Man can't stop me from preachin'.
If I don't preach here at Mr. Zion,
Preach down the street on the corner.
Don't preach it on the corner,
I'll preach it in my home.
If I don't preach it in my home early on Sunday morning,
I'll go up the highway and I'll preach it in my car.
People don't like what I say, I'll preach it anyhow.
And I'm gonna walk right.
I'll preach it by the way I live.
Then when it come time to die,
I'll preach it by the way I'll die.
Don't fool yourself.
Don't play with yourself.
If you gonna start doin' some whippin',
Woe unto the people that's gonna be in trouble.
God's got some powerful rockets.
God pull some up in the air with ?
Give 'em a chance to see what He's doin'.
Then when he goes denyin' it before God, something else ?
Homes begin to break up.
Then if you don't get in step after awhile, you'll see 'em start fading away.
Then if you don't get in step after awhile, you'll see 'em in hell.
God's a mover.
Reverend Carroll A. Baltimore, Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church,

Pray with me a little while.
Above all, witness to the truth.
We're gonna use this thought...
Dead, and didn't know it.
Dead, and didn't know it.
Third chapter Revelations, and the first verse...
"And to the angel of the church at Sardis write: These things says he that has the seven spirits of God,
And the seven stars.
I know thy works that thou has a name,
That thou liveth,
And art dead.
I Know thy works that thou has a name that thou liveth,
And art dead."
Dead, and didn't know it.
I wonder
Today, if we were standin' in the Judgement...
The Book of Life open,
And if all our deeds and actions were recorded,
And the Lord would ask you, "What have you done?"
I wonder what you would say.
This is an individual thing, you know.
If the Lord would just ask you this mornin',
"What have you done?"
What kind of an answer would you have?
Perhaps someone'd say, "Well, we had a good time Sunday."
I can hear the Lord sayin', "But what have you done?"
"We had a great spiritual feast."
"Yeah, but what have you done?"
"We had a large attendance."
"But what have you done?"
This is something that we need to think about.
Sometime we are so geared on havin' a good time
That we really lose sight of the true mission of the church.
We have problems there,
But the record is going to be there. We're gonna have to give an account.
Of everything that we've done.
The church has a great responsibility,
And if you're not doing anything to help the cause of humanity,
Then you're not doin' anything.
If you're groanin' and complainin'
About sendin' the aid to somebody
That's sho' 'nuff in need,
Then you are dead and don't know it.
Pray with me a little while.
The liveliest thing in the world is a live church...
A church that is charged with the spiritual power...
A church that is winnin' the Lord...
A church whose members live daily for God's glory...
A church whose services are a high spiritual adventure
Is a joy and a blessing to the almighty God.
But the deadest thing in the world is a dead church.
Pray with me.
Its buildings may be magnificent...
It may have all the required services
And go through all the forms. But if it is not on fire with God,
for a lost world is a stench in the nostrils of God.

Such a church
Was the church at Sardis.
The church had a name to live,
But it was dead.
It was dead, but its members didn't know it.
Pray with me a little while.
This message as recorded in the Book of Revelations is a beauti-

God's word
Is still good.
And the brothers say, "Well, the mission of the church has changed."
Did you hear what I'm sayin'?
This was a deacon, too.
He said the teachings of the church had changed,
But yet you tell me that God's word never changes;
And if that be so, well the mission of the church hasn't changed,
But we've changed.
The mission hasn't changed.
Still same mission that was when Christ established His church.
But we have a message this mornin'
Straight from Jesus.
that are presently here,
But they're spiritually dead.
We're filled up with ice-water
On a hot day.
Nothing falls out.
Only concerned about ourselves.
When we send a letter to someone, we even have to jump down to
the closin' to find out who's sendin' the message.
But here, in our Scripture, Christ lets you know who He is
In the very beginning.
Christ, the One who has the seven spirits of God
And the seven stars in His hands.
In the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, in the first through the third
verse, it say, "And there shall come forth, there shall come
forth, a rod out of the stem of Jesse,
And a branch shall grow out of his roots
And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and might,
The spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord."
Talkin' 'bout the spirit now,
The seven spirits of God.
Jesus is here, right here,
To this day, church... Not in His capacity of a comforter, 
But His reign as a judge. 
For He has the seven stars in His hands 
Which means the pastors of the church, 
And He laid it upon their hands to tell the truth 
Just like it is, 
Charging them with the responsibility. 
And if the pastor will not carry that out, 
The blood's on his hands. 
He is the Christ of all powers, 
And the one who searches out all sin... 
The one who sits in judgment and passes down punishment. 
Jesus said that this church had a name that lived... 
But it was dead. 
Jesus said it. 
The church had a reputation in the community as a live, wide-awake, 
a good, concerned church. 
Yes, it had that reputation in Sardis. 
And it had that name among the brethren and the neighboring churches. 
But it had no such name with God. 
This is what it's all about. 
It matter not what kind of a name you have in the community, but 
how is your name with God? 
Pray with me a little while. 
I wonder if I can get a witness. 
Samson laid down one night 
In a warm place. 
Lay his head where he shouldn't have laid it. 
Woke up and he had no power; 
But the thing about it, he didn't know he didn't have any power; 
But he thought he could do the same things that he did before he 
laid down that night. 
But only one difference, his power was gone. 
Lord, help me today. 
This church thought that they could exercise themselves and do great 
things. 
But they didn't realize that God's power was gone. 
And I'm afraid that this mornin' that many of us were not aware 
of the fact that God's power is gone. 
I'm not sayin' everybody. 
I'm not talking about the building right now. 
I'm talkin' 'bout the church within the individual. 
Some of you have lost your power. 
You laid down in the wrong place. 
And you woke up this mornin' and your power was gone. 
I'm here to let you know that if your spiritual power is gone, 
Then you're dead and you don't know it. 
You should feel somethin' 
Sometimes. 
You should feel the movement of the Holy Ghost. 
I'm not sayin' all the time, 
But sometime. 
If you are alive for the Lord,
You should know it.
You don't have to wonder about it.
But you and the Lord should have a thing together.
You should feel somethin'.
It might be somethin' on the inside.
It might be something in your mind, or it might be the falling of
a tear.
But you should feel somethin'
Sometimes.
I don't think you're prayin'.
Dead,
And didn't know it.
They are still functioning largely from accomplishments and glories
of the past.
I could stop right here
And preach a sermon.
Many of us are livin' in the past.
You know, what we have done.
We are livin' in the past what we used to do.
We are livin' in the past what we have accomplished in days past
and gone.
All of that's good, but what are you doin' right now.
Amen.
Once, they had done great things for God;
But now, they have nothin' left but memories.
That is true of many Christians today.
Once, they were active;
Now, they live in neglect of their Christian duties.
Once, they could hardly wait to go to church;
Now, they consider every excuse for not going.
Lord, help me today.
But don't you know Satan is a shrewd operator.
He knows his business.
He has so many tricks to turn you around...
So many ways to confuse your mind.
We say that the spirit of God is an intelligent spirit.
Don't you fool yourself, for the evil spirit,
is also mighty intelligent.
If the devil can't get you with drinkin' and gamblin' and runnin'
around,
He'll get you another way.
You don't hear me.
Satan uses the young man
To carry out his physical warfare.
He uses the old man
To carry out his intellectual warfare...
To stop the wheels of progress.
Maybe you don't know what I mean.
Well, you've been on the journey a long time,
And nothin' seems to turn you around.
But when somebody back up, what they wanna do with God's word,
And you're still fightin' against it.
Then the devil is usin' you.
You can say what you want about it,
Then we have _____ church.
And if I do what everybody else do.
Yeah, but those folks are not happy about it.
I don't know what it is, but those folks never seem to speak up.
And it's always you that's blockin' the wheel of progress.
And the devil
Is sho' 'nuff usin' you.
I wonder can I get a witness.
You know you're not gonna say "Amen" on this.
But my Bible say, "Will a man rob God
With tithes and offerings?"
But you say, "Well, that was for Jews."
But God's word say, "You are a robber,
And you are a thief."
To deny this fact,
The devil is sho' 'nuff usin' you.
You don't hear me.
But God's words
Is the same words.
God's words
Is a livin' word.
God's words
Is the same yesterday,
Is the same this mornin'.
It'll be the same when I finish preachin'.
It'll be the same on tomorrow.
God's words
Is good enough for me,
And should be good enough for you.
Some of us are dead.
We have no vital connection
Between heaven and hisself.
Every once in a while,
If you are a live one,
You must feel
The glory of His name.
The Holy Ghost movin' in your heart.
It might not affect you
Like somebody else;
But every once in a while
You can feel a little wheel movin'
Inside of you.
Every once in a while
A little tear mount up in your eye.
Every once in a while
Your skin feel like it's gonna crawl.
Every once in a while
Sure feel like I'm almost home.
I want you to know... .huh!
That I'm alive.
Good God almighty!
I'm alive
In Jesus Christ.
I'm so glad,
And it feel mighty good to me.
You don't hear me, church.
But I feel good.
I feel good.

You'll have to excuse me this mornin',
But I feel like preachin' today.
Some of us are dead,
And they don't know it.
And they think they're prayin' inside this church.
Yes, they pray,
But the proud never reach heaven.
Didn't they sing in Sardis?
Yes, they sang.
A music most correct.
But it didn't touch anyone's heart.
 Didn't they give in the church of Sardis?
Yes, they gave,
But not for the love of Christ.
In many things they looked good,
But nothin' that satisfied the heart of God.
They financially 're in good shape.
Their organization was consciously aware.
They were carryin' on a good program;
But the members
Were not growin' in grace.
The church had quantity,
But it had no quality...
The sort had lost its faith.
But do you remember
When you were saved?
God help me today...huh!
Do you remember
When you changed your mind?
When you changed your walk...huh!
When you changed your talk?
Do you remember
When the light looked new?
Do you remember
When the Lord showed up...huh!
Shook your soul...huh!
From the gates of hell...huh!
Lord help me today...huh!
Jesus
That Lamb of God...huh!
He's right here...huh!
All the time...huh!
He sees what you do.
He hears what you say...huh!
He hears what you say. . .huh!
He's right here. . .huh!
Yes He is. . .huh!
Oh He is. . .huh!
And we don't know it. . .huh!

That magnificent Lamb of God. . .huh!
He said, "I have a few. . .huh!
Just a few. . .huh!
A few names". . .huh!
A few names. . .huh!
In the book of life. . .huh!
He said, "Walk with me. . .huh!
Just walk with me". . .huh!
In the white. . .huh!

Just like Jesus. . .huh!
He's alright. . .huh!
He's alright. . .huh!
He's alright. . .huh!
Look in the church. . .huh!
And you found somebody. . .huh!

He searches out. . .huh!
The good. . .huh!
Of every church. . .huh!
The faithful few. . .huh!
Of the whole army. . .huh!
And this I know. . .huh!
These were the few. . .huh!
Among the many. . .huh!
And these were the spiritual . . .huh!
Among the world. . .huh!
These were the few. . .huh!
Among the fire. . .huh!
These were the active. . .huh!
Among the inactive. . .huh!
These were the living. . .huh!
Among the dead. . .huh!
These were the saved. . .huh!
Among the lost. . .huh!
Of course. . .huh!
The Lord is in the savin' business. . .huh!
Yes He is. . .huh!
He still. . .huh!
Has the master's lock. . .huh!
In every church. . .huh!
But what. . .huh!
Can wash. . .huh!
My sins away... .huh!
Nothin'... .huh!
Nothin'... .huh!
But the blood of Jesus... .huh!
What... .huh!
Can make me... .huh!
Whole again... .huh!
Nothin'... .huh!
But the blood of Jesus... .huh!
I am he... .huh!
That walketh... .huh!
Oh, I'm alive... .huh!
Forevermore... .huh!
I am after... .huh!
Oh, I am only... .huh!
The beginning... .huh!
And the end... .huh!
The first... .huh!
And the last... .huh!
I'm He that was... .huh!
I'm He that is... .huh!
I am He... .huh!
That shall be... .huh!
Yeah... .huh!
Good God almighty... .huh!
For He lives... .huh!
He lives... .huh!
Right in my heart... .huh!
I don't know 'bout you... .huh!
But I feel alright now... .huh!
Yeah... .huh!
You're dead... .huh!
And you don't know it... .huh!
I want you to know... .huh!
That one of these mornin's... .huh!
And it won't be long... .huh!
All my... ?... .huh!
Will look for me... .huh!
I'm goin' home... .huh!
I wanna walk with Jesus... .huh!
I wanna talk with Jesus... .huh!
Yeah... .huh!

_____... .huh!
_____... .huh!

Might be on my path... .huh!
But surely... .huh!
I said surely... .huh!
Surely... .huh!
You can run to the mountain... .huh!

_____... .huh!
_____... .huh!

You can run... .huh!
To the cliffs of rock... .huh!
And they're still... .huh!
Small rocks...huh!
(Inaudible for 30 seconds as preacher moves away from microphone.)
He's a mighty good God...huh!
Yes He is...huh!
He'll never forsake you...huh!
He'll stand by your side...huh!
He'll never turn His back on you...huh!

-'-
huh!
-'-
huh!
-'-
huh!
He'll keep you...huh!
In perfect peace...huh!
Yeah...huh!
When you're hungry...huh!
He'll feed you...huh!
When you're naked...huh!
He'll clothe you...huh!
When your shoes are worn out...huh!
He'll give you new shoes...huh!
But one of these mornin's...huh!
Gonna change this robe...huh!
For a robe in heaven...huh!
For surely...huh!
Surely...huh!
Surely...huh!
Surely...huh!
Surely...huh!
It's alright...
Are you dead this mornin'?
Somebody here's dead.
You may not have been buried,
But you're dead.
You don't have time to serve the Lord.
You're dead.
You'd rather go to the beach.
You might as well say, "Amen."
Than to go to God's house.
You're dead.
You'd rather do somethin' else than to go to God's house.
You're dead and don't know it.
You're dead.
And don't know it.
I better stop here.
Somebody here's dead.
folks look and say
church.
You're dead.
The devil's usin' you.
You see, when you're alive you can say, "I can do anything
Through Christ
Who strengthens me."
What's a couple hundred thousand dollars
What's a few bricks when everything
Belongs to my God?
Yeah, when you stand in the judgment
God's gonna say, "Brother Lee, what have you done?"
What you gonna say?
Brother ____, what have you done?
What you gonna say?
Mt. Pleasant, what have you done?
What you gonna say about it?
The record'll be there.
Fool me?
Yes you can;
But you can't fool God.
I'm gonna stop here, church
But I feel good this mornin'.
The reason why I feel good b'cause I have Jesus
In my heart.
Yessir
I like the ____
Of the Holy Ghost.
I'm gonna cut off here,
But I want you to know
I have a hot-line to glory.
The line is always open.
Ain't no storm that can knock it out.
For I can call up God,
And He'll come to my cry.
I want you to know that I have a current, vital connection
With my Jesus.
Church doors are open.
You hear you need to hook up with Jesus.
You need to be attached to the hot-line.
You can get it right here.
The line is open.
You can stick it down or call.
On the way to glory;
And the call comes down in the precious blood of Jesus.
Won't you hook up with Him?
Have mercy.
Won't you come and accept Him?
As your Savior?
If you're lookin' for a perfect church,
You're not gonna find it.
But if you need shelter
To work out your soul's salvation
We have it right here.
You want to feel the spirit move?
You can feel it right here.
If you need somebody
To help you when you don't have food,
You can find it right here.
If you need somebody to talk to when you're troubled,
You can find it right here.
Oh, yes you can.
Yessir.
Church door's open.
Reverend Carroll A. Baltimore, Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Alexandria, Virginia, September 8, 1974.

Now, I want you to repeat the subject after me. I want you to repeat it and say it like you know what you're talkin' about.
I had it.
I lost it.
And I want it back.
That's right, say it again.
I had it.
I lost it.
And I want it back.
David said on one occasion to "Search me O God. Know my heart and try me. And know my thoughts."
Jeremiah said, "I want the Lord to search my heart, And I try to _____
Even to give to every man according to his ways, and accordin' to the fruit of his glory."
The Lord's in the searchin' business. Sometimes we lose things, And we need to go back and try to find 'em. We gonna keep on searchin'
Until we find whatever it is that we have lost. Some of you lost a whole lot this mornin'.
Need to do a whole lot of searchin'. Don't give up at the first obstacle. But just keep on searchin'.
You shall find it. (Song break)
I had it.
I lost it.
And I want it back again.
David _____ of these words unprecedented _____
A military genius.
A brilliant statesman.
_____
Was also a poet and musician. With all his heart, For the love of God. Every trouble, David went straight to God with a prayer. . . Amen, for victory.
_____ Many are present right here today at Mount Pleasant Who may have lost the battles of life. Some of us are down _____
Many have lost the joys of salvation _____ in the Christian life. Then you've lost somethin'. _____
Every child of God knows that there's no true joy but the joy of God's salvation.
Joy in God the Saviour, and the hope of eternal life.
But, thy will for sin surpasses this joy.
Those that sow in the spiritual fields shall reap in the joy of God's salvation.
You never really miss a thing until you lose it.
That's not Baltimore.
But what the Lord gave me.
Jealousy will cause one to be a loser.
When a man sells himself to work evil,
He loses sight of all that is good.
Amen.
The devil makes him believe that right is... rather that wrong is right.
Man may delight himself in his evil ways,
And thank the Lord by pardoning his conscience?
Every principle of Christ.
But justice, in an unexpected day,
Will come upon him and lay the line to crumble,
Like the thief in the mountain,
And weigh him for what he is worth,
And that no more,
Weighed for what we are really worth.
See, we can talk good;
But when the justice weigh us in the balance...
See, you are exposed.
If ye live after the flesh,
God said, "Ye shall die."
That's all that is.
If you live after flesh, you gonna die...
After flesh.
Pray with me, church.
In most things David was righteous.
There's a difference between a sin of weakness,
And a willful, habitual sin.
We've all sinned, haven't we?
A good man may sin, but yet be a good man.
Oh yeah!
But David's plea in the fifty-first Psalm showed him to be just that.
That's different from a man who purposely and willfully breaks all the laws of decency.
David's great sin of adultery and murder is confessed before God and forgiven.
For He said, "Create in me A full heart."
In prayer to His legal aides
He didn't turn 'em into the subjects of his land, but...
But David realized he had to go a little higher than man.
The One that was in the creatin' business.
Augustine, in [?], had this song written on the wall in front of
his bed. . .
Where it was always in view,
Readin' it constantly, weepin' as he read,
"I had it;
But I lost it."
Food, clothing, home, friends, and family, so many times are taken
for granted.
Lord help me.
Until you lose it.
Christian people, God has shown us so many blessings.
Don't really know what it's all about.
How many brothers are in pain, how hard times is.
All you have to do is to just look around you, and there's always
somebody
Who have to cry more than you.
You never miss a leg. . .
'Til you no longer have that leg.
Pray with me, church.
Carelessness, for even God, the love of God. . .
The zeal of a Christian, the fire within can be lost
Through neglect and carelessness. . .
Neglect of the spiritual
Can starve a soul and stunt the growth
Of a Christian life.
You spend too much time
Preparin' for the physical. . .
Flatterin' and fixin' up the physical part of the body. . .
Don't give it a thought to. . .the soul is starving
For the bread of heaven.

But the soul belongs to God.
Pray with me, church.
We take the bread, the offertory gift. . .
And praisin', worshipping, and servin', and all . . .
Sustain God.
Many will say that [?]
With a tremblin' hand, and beggin' Death to stay away,
Pleadin' to the almighty God to give you another opportunity.
I don't think you're prayin' with me.
You had it.
But you lost it.
Need to do somethin' about it.
Hasten now, brother.
No time to delay.
No time to waste.
If you have to force yourself out of bed on Sunday mornin'
For to go to the house of God.
Pray with me.
If you spend more time findin' reasons for not goin'
Than to go.
If you no longer can feel the spirit movin' down in you soul.
If you spend more time tryin' to talk with others than with the church.
I know you don't like this.
If you're always right,
Everybody around you wrong.
If it's a burden
For you to give to God
Some of God's time...
I didn't say all of it.
Of some of God's time...
Then it's a good indication
That you had it,
But you have lost it.
If you have more time
To save for the devil,
And none for God...
If you're not satisfied with anything that's done at Mt. Pleasant,
Lord help me today.
Then the good chance is that you had it,
But you lost it.
It's either go back and search for it,
Until you find it.
Remember, though you may escape
The penalty of sin,
You cannot escape the consequences of sin.
For David, in hot blood,
Committed adultery.
But in cold blood,
He murdered Uriah...
Bathsheba's husband.
Then the man of God came
And looked at the king
And said, "Oh King, thou art ?"
You don't hear me.
The man of God took the king,
Reached out and touched God's church,
And cried, "I am guilty;
Lord have mercy on me."
"Create within me
A clean heart.
A new heart...
Create within me
Something is wrong on the inside.
I don't have the joy I used to have.
Lord, I'm ?
Lord, I feel alright myself.
Lord, I need a repair job.
Good God almighty!
The power to regain a spirit of strength.

Lord, fix me up.
I need fixin'.
I had it.
I lost it.
And I sure enough want it back.
Restore unto me, Lord
The glory of Thy salvation.
I feel no right today.
I'm so glad
That I realize I had it.
You can sure enough lose it.
I wonder can I get a witness?
It was Jesus said, "Go out
And find that one lost lamb.
That one lost sheep
Out of ninety-nine."
It was lost.
He had it.
But he lost it.
And I sure enough want it back.
He's nothin' among the masses,
But I want him back.
I'm gonna search.
Good God almighty!
Can I get a witness?
You all know what I'm talkin' about.
Yeah, we can have it,
And we can sure enough lose it.
I'm servin' notice on ye here this mornin'.
We're always not what we say we are.
We may have had it,
But we've lost it along the way.
Anytime...
You grumble all the time...
Are not happy with anything
In God's house...
You have lost
The joy of salvation.
Anytime...
All you can do
Is pull down the preacher...
You had it,
But you sure enough have lost it.
I'm so glad
I can let my God
Stretch me out today
On the operatin' table.
I may have had it,
But we can lose it by neglect.
I'm so glad
I can go down to my God
In the hospital of glory
And say, "Lord, fix me up.
Fix me up right now."
I realize I am lackin'
In some things.
I have sinned.
I am guilty.
Lord, Lord, Lord.
Have mercy on me.
Yeah, restore
Unto me the joy
Of my salvation.
I wanna feel it
In the mornin'.
When I get up off my bed.
I wanna feel it
In the middle of the day.
?
I wanna feel it
In the midnight hour...huh!
Deep darkness everywhere...huh!
I wanna feel it
On Sunday mornin'.
I wanna feel it
In the ___ hour.
I wanna feel it
In the church meetin'.
I wanna feel it
In the club meetin'...huh!
I wanna feel it
?
Good God almighty...huh!
I want it.
I want it.
I must have it back.
I wonder can I get a witness...huh!
?
And when the spirit
Came creepin'...huh!
Into your room...huh!
?
?
?
?
I'm so glad...huh!
That when I lose it...huh!
I can find it...huh!
I can find it...huh!
I said Lord...huh!
I lost it.
But I want it back.
This is what all of us can say.
I had it.
I lost it.
And I want it back.
When you find it,
Hold on to it.
Umm, the Lord
Will make a way for you.
Hold on to it.
Lord,
Just take my hands
And hold on to 'em.
If you hold my feet,
I will serve you.
If you hold my soul,
I will serve you.
I said hold on

Hold on
When men turn their back on you.
Hold on
When you're like a motherless child,
A long way from home.
Hold on
When you're lyin' on the sick bed...
Doctor given you up.
Hold on
During dark temptation.
Lord, didn't somebody say
That when a storm
Starts a'ragin',
Stand by me.
When a storm
Toss the sea,
And the ship
Out on the sea...huh!
I'm gonna hold on...huh!
A little while longer.
Yeah...huh!
I feel alright now.
I lost it.
And I want it back.
I wanna feel it
Down in my soul.
Just hold me
When the storm rages.
I'm gonna hold on
No matter how long it takes.
Surely
Good God almighty!
Surely
I'm gonna hold on.
Yes I am...huh!
Sometimes...huh!
When the day seems long...huh!
I'm gonna hold on...huh!
Just a little while longer...huh!
Sometimes...huh!
I have to try...huh!
In the midnight hour...huh!
Still gonna hold on...huh!
A little while longer...huh!
Sometimes...huh!
? 
I'm gonna hold on...huh!
- 
? 
I'm gonna hold on...huh!
A little while longer...huh!
- 
? 
- 
? 
That's alright...huh!
I said surely...huh!
Surely...huh!
? 
I found it...huh!
I found it...huh!
I found it...huh!
I found it...huh!
One of these mornin's...huh!
It shook my soul...huh!
? 
? 
? 
? 
Hold on a little while longer...huh!
I found it...huh!
?
I feel alright.
Do you know what I'm talkin' about?
When you get lost
Do you wanna be found?

He is alright, church.
Yes He is.
And the thing about it...
When you've gone the last mile of the way,
And you've turned the last turn,

Surely
Surely
Surely
Surely
When I get home... huh!

It's alright.
he's alright.

He's alright, yeah.
You can rely on Him.
He's alright, yeah.

Here come Jesus
Sayin', "Where you goin'?
You might turn your back on Him.
But I want you to know this mornin'
That you can let me down,
But in my heart,
My brothers and sisters,
I know too much about it.
You can
He's alright with me.
He's alright.
He's alright.
You better hold on.
That's all you have to do.

I feel good this mornin'.
But I might not get back here.
But I feel good this mornin'.
I want you to know today
That I'm on my way home.
A few more
A few more
A few more tears...
A few more heartaches.

You know the man,
And when you go to church
You gotta live for Him;
And if you're gonna live for Him,
Raise your hand and say, "Jesus!"
Jesus!
If you're gonna live for Him

I'm gonna serve the Lord.
In the eight chapter of Jeremiah,
In the twenty-second verse, we will find these words...
"Is there no balm in Judea?
Is there no physician there?
Why then does not the corpse of the daughter of my people recover?"
"Is there no balm in Judea?
Is there no physician there?
Why then does not the corpse of the daughter of my people recover?"
First Corinthians, first chapter, the twenty-fifth verse recalls
that the foolishness of God is wiser than men.
And the weakness of God is stronger than man.
The foolishness of God is wiser than men,
And the weakness of God is stronger than men.
We pray that you get this point...
A sick world,
A weak Christian,
And a strong God.
A sick world,
A weak Christian,
And a strong God.
John said that we know that we are of God,
And the whole world is lyin' in wickedness.
We can say this mornin' how about in our minds that the world is sick.
Leadership is sick.
And we can find a remedy--a cure to save a dyin' generation;
For it is said that it is my people that are called by my name
Shall come on themselves and pray and seek my face,
And turn from their wicked ways;
Then, by help from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and will heal thy life.
Will heal thy life.
This tells me that, uh, the world is sick.
Jeremiah amassed followers in the midst of a people abandoned to everything vital.
We've been day and night
At the thought of impending gloom, he called his nation,
Moved about among the people beggin', pleadin', persuadin',
threatening, and entreatying, employin' that they turn from their wickedness.
For all of his pleadin', and all of his beggin',
All of his tryin' was in vain.
Now the time when the people lived close to God...
Worshipped and served Him,
And obeyed His commands.
But they're now very sinful, and fall away from their God.
Spiritual darkness had settled down everywhere.
No one was goin' to the house of the Lord.
The people were livin' in wickedness,
And contempt of God, revolting against Him.
Lyn', cheatin', stealin',
And committing adultery.
In other words, the world, the nation around him was sick.
It needed a cure.
One year passes after another...
One campaign after another...
And yet our vows are in as bad a shape of condition as ever they were.
No relief comes;
Nor is anything done towards it,
For we are not saved.
Man, today, in our generation
Stand in their won light.
But stand in our own light,
And ? in their own door.
And I'm not sayin' because they are not ready for salvation.
Pray with me.
In Sodom and Gomorrah
We find the cesspool of all iniquity...
A city so vile that their corruptness reached even into the heavens.
It had been only about four hundred years since the flood...
Almost within the memory of many then living;
But yet men had forgotten the lesson,
So God rained down fire and brimstone
On these two cities to refresh their memories,
And to warn of the wrath of God that is in store for wicked men.
Today, around us, our world is sick.
Livin' in abundance,
Yet cryin' about shortage.
Corruption everywhere.
From the church
To the White House.
Pray with me.
Today, on a scale never before known in the history of man,
We breed brutality, beastlessness, and criminal instincts in people in the high places of the earth.
And I come to warn you this morning unless there comes a world movement of repentance,
The day of doom may not be far off.
Brother preacher, why is the world sick?
Cause we have too many weak Christians.
The world is sick because the church have not lived up to what it proclaimed to be.
People are silent
Against right.
And against wrong
People are too silent, not wanting to be involved.
We say we are goin' to heaven.
I don't know about that.
But is there no balm in here?
No medicine for a sick and dyin' world.
Is there no physician there?
The physician was there,
But the patient was not willin' to obey and cooperate.
Pray with me a minute.
See, it's no good to go to a doctor
If you're not goin' to obey and cooperate.
Pray with me now.
The blood of Christ is balm in here.
His spirit is a physician there.
Both sufficient and all-sufficient
So that they might have been healed, but they would not.
A sick world,
A weak Christian,
And a strong God.
Christians, we need to wake up
Hold the banner of Christianity high.
I'm sayin' we're lettin' it down.
We're tramplin' all over
God's richest blessings.
We, we, we are exulting the wrong thing.
Liftin' up our families
Amen.
Liftin' up our own well-bein',
And crushin' God down in the dust.
There are enough Christians right here in our churches today
To turn the world upside down.
But, brother preacher, why is the world sick?
We're sick because we have so many lukewarm Christians.
A weak Christian...
The "don't care" member...
The "off and on" member...
The "Sunday mornin'" Christian.
Lord, help me today.
The "fair weather" Christian...
The "one or two Sunday a month" Christian.
Many of us know that someone is lost.
You don't do one thing about it.
The weak Christian
Don't deny the fact of sin,
But willin' to just go along and tolerate it.
You're not prayin',
He was not the follower of sin.
We shouldn't put blame in the wrong places.
We can't put it in the president.
Amen, church.
We can't put it in the uh, uh, Congress.
Why? Because if you put 'em there,
Amen,
The nation is sick because Christians are too weak today.
We need to stand up
And let the world know
That I'm a child of the church.
Don't you know that if we get out of the church on Sunday mornin'
That's all that God or any of us know anything about
'Til we get back the minutes of a month later.
You don't hear me.
Oh I'm talkin' about a weak Christian.
You can always tell when a man is far away from God,
For he talks about how good he is,
And talks only about his family.

Does he see his own sin?
You don't hear me.
Amen, we have our young people.
We run 'em down, we crush 'em into the __dirt. __
But the trouble is not in the young people,
But it's in the old people.
You don't hear me.
We talk about what the young people do.
Many times the young people know more about what the old folks do.
Yeah, I'm talkin' about a sick world,
And a weak Christian.
See, you can't do anything about the young people
Until we get ourselves together.
Yeah, we come into God's house.
You're not gonna like ti.
I'm gonna tell it anyway.
We get up and testify,
'Bout what the Lord hath done for us.
Yeah, but we can't live with one another.
We talk about what we're gonna do when we get to heaven,
But we can't stand that little pastor.
We talk about what we're gonna do when we get home, church,
And we don't like brother so-and-so.
I'm talkin' about a sick world,
A weak Christian,
But I'm glad I have a strong God.
I don't mind you hearin' me.
Yeah, a weak Christian
In the name of __?
They will stand on the middle of a fence,
And they will straddle in every kind of way.
They will straddle to the right.
They will dodge to the left.
Wherever, uh, they can find the most popularity.
That's where they will go.
They will go where the wind is blowin'.
But you ask a child of God to stand up.
Lord help me today.
Stand up for what is right.
And so many times we can't find in God's house. . .
Worried about what somebody else wanna say.
I'm not worried about what my brother Joe say.
What my sister Jane say.
I'm worried about what God gonna say.
Yeah, I feel alright now.
Yeah, I'm here now
My thanks bein' to God.
The more he seeks his own sins
I wonder can I get a witness?
When Isaiah saw God
He cried out, "Woe . . .
Woe is me.
I am a man of unclean livin'".
When Peter
Saw Lord he cried out, "Depart
From me.
I am a sinful man."
When Moses
Saw the Lord
He said, "Lord,
I can't speak.
I'm not worthy."
When Jeremiah
Was close to the Lord
He said, "Lord,
I can't speak . . ."
I'm so glad
That in a sick world,
Amongst a sick membership,
Among weak Christians,
I have a strong God.
I don't hear you.
A great physician
With healin' in his wings.
He alone
__?__ of sin.
Come down
Let us breathe on the devil.
I'll blow your sins.
Yes God.
They shall be white as snow.
Doctor Jesus
Is in me. . .huh!
Just one punch
From my God
Make everything alright.
I heard John
In the tenth chapter of John
Said, "If I give unto Him
Eternal life. . .huh!
And they shall never perish. . .huh!
Neither children nor man. . .huh!
__?__ my hand". . .huh!
Why, because my God. . .huh!
__?__ . . .huh!
__?__ . . .huh!
And no man. . .huh!
Is able. . .huh!
To ?__ him out. . .huh!
Of my Father's hand. . .huh!
I wonder can I get a witness. . .huh!
You take a crippled man. . .huh!
That walk on crutches. . .huh!
Crutches hold him up. . .huh!
But if you move the crutches. . .huh!
He'll tumble and fall. . .huh!
My crutch. . .huh!
Is the gospel of Jesus. . .huh!
And nothin' else. . .huh!
Can ease. . .huh!
The ?__ of mercy. . .huh!
And nothin' else. . .huh!
My crutch from under me. . .huh!
But the gospel. . .huh!
Is soothin' you. . .huh!
You can lean on it. . .huh!
In a sick world. . .huh!
You can lean on it. . .huh!
In the weak membership. . .huh!
Because Jesus. . .huh!
Is alright with me. . .huh!
Do you know what I was talkin' about?
Do all of you know what I'm talkin' about?
We're in a sick world today.
And the thing about it, the church is almost as sick.
As the world itself.
So many times, church,
You can't tell the Christian
From the man in the street.
You can't tell a child of God in the church on Sunday mornin',
From the man in the barroom on Saturday night.
You don't hear me.
But I'm so glad
That I serve a strong God.
And you got a pretty good idea.
Safe.
Safe.
In the home of Jesus.
Safe
On His tender breast.
Therefore His love. . .huh!
Overshadows. . .huh!
Weakness. . .huh!
My soul shall rest. . .huh!
Jesus.
Have died for me.
Firm on the rock. . .huh!
Of eternal ?__ huh!
Now let me wait. . .huh!
With patience. . .huh!
Wait. . .huh!
'Til the night is old. . .huh!
Wait. . .huh!
'Til I see the moon. . .huh!
Creep on over the shores. . .huh!
For yea. . .huh!
I serve. . .huh!
A stong God. . .huh!
Somebody said. . .huh!
That Jesus. . .huh!
Jesus. . .huh!
Jesus. . .huh!
He died
'Til His hands got bloody.
Yes He died
'Til His feet got bloody.
He died
'Til blood ran down His thighs.
He died
'Til the world. . .huh!
Was thrown out of balance. . .huh!
_________ . . .huh!
And rock. . .huh!
_________ . . .huh!
He died. . .huh!
I said He died. . .huh!
Until the leaves. . .huh!
Fell from the trees. . .huh!
He died. . .huh!
Until my God. . .huh!
Shut off the winds of glory. . .huh!
And that's not all . . .huh!
For early. . .huh!
Good God almighty. . .huh!
I said early. . .huh!
On Sunday mornin' . . .huh!
Jesus. . .huh!
Shook the gates of hell. . .huh!
_________ . . .huh!
_________ . . .huh!
All power. . .huh!
Is in Him. . .huh!
I'm so glad. . .huh!
That this is made for me. . .huh!
_________ . . .huh!
_________ . . .huh!
I'm so glad. . .huh!
That when trouble 'round. . .huh!
_________ , church. . .huh!
He's a strong God.
You can lean on Him.
Yes you can, church.
Maybe you're part of a sick world.
Maybe you are a weak Christian.
But you gotta be careful,
'Cause judgement day'll sure enough come,
And who shall be able to stand it?
But Paul said "I can."
You all can.
And Christ will
died, said, "Let the strong
the weak."
All you gotta do
Is to stretch out
On my God's love.
Ummm, let radiance
Come in your life.
Stretch out
On my God's love.
When trouble come
Tears run down
Stretch out
On my God's hands. . .huh!
He's a strong God. . .huh!
He's a bulwark. . .huh!
He's a battle ax. . .huh!
He's a preacher man . . .huh!
He's my doctor. . .huh!
He's a signal. . .huh!
He's my brother. . .huh!
When I'm down . . .huh!
For surely. . .huh!
Surely. . .huh!
I feel alright now. . .huh!
My God. . .huh!
Is a strong God. . .huh!
I can feel it. . .huh!
In the mornin'. . .huh!
I can feel it. . .huh!
Church door's open.

A church should never change.
We gotta stop talkin' so much.
And do somethin' about it.
Nothin' any sickenin'
Than somebody is supposed to be a Christian
Talkin' about another Christian.
You don't hear me.
Nothin's any sickenin' than somebody talkin' 'bout they're goin'
to heaven.
Are you ready to get
Huh?
Nothin's any sickenin' than somebody like that.
You are a strong Christian.
(Remaining part of sermon is unintelligible as preacher fades out and yields to children's choir.)
BIBLIOGRAPHY


