

Evangelists of Education: St. Philip's Episcopal Church & Educational Activism in
Post-World War II Harlem

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Abstract

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Post-World War II public schools in Harlem, New York were segregated, under-resourced and educationally inequitable. Addressing disparities in education was of paramount importance for the socioeconomic mobility and future of the neighborhood. In an effort to understand how race, religion, community, and education intersected in this context, this dissertation answers the following research question: How did St. Philip's, the first Black Episcopal church in the city and one of the most historic churches in Harlem, participate in education during the post-World War II period? Responding to and preventing inequities in the neighborhood, including the substandard state of the public schools, St. Philip's served as an educational space and organizational base for the community.

St. Philip's participation accounts for the way a Black church emerged as a space for education when the public schools were foundering. The church's ethos of education - community engagement - reframes traditional frameworks of teaching and learning beyond schoolhouse doors. During the postwar period, St. Philip's expanded its in-house programming for Black children, youth and adults, constructing a new community youth center, where classes, tutoring, after-school activities, college counseling, career guidance, day-care, recreation and clubs were community staples. Understanding the importance of inclusivity, continuity and consistency, programming was accessible to the entire neighborhood, regardless of membership with year-round services such as summer camp and career counseling. As an organizational base, the church hosted education talks and committee meetings, facilitating a forum for the community to engage in critical conversations about the state of education. It was a safe space

for transparency and troubleshooting. Concerns about education expanded beyond conversations in the church, however. St. Philip's corresponded directly with city governance, petitioning school-makers with recommendations and demands.

This dissertation broadens the traditional civil rights narrative of Black religious activism, which has the tendency to dichotomize who participated and how they participated. This polarization includes regions: North-South, religions: Christian-Muslim, figureheads: Martin Luther King, Jr.-Malcolm X, and strategies: peaceful-militant. Historians Charles Payne and Nikhil Pal Singh push back on this oversimplified interpretation as "King-centric."¹ St. Philip's educational activism foils this paradigm as a Black Episcopal institution in a northern city. St. Philip's brings nuance to categorizations of Black churches as either being focused on the far-reaching goal of social transformation or compliant with conservative social philosophies based on respectability politics. Its participation was both radical (such as establishing educational programming at the Community youth center that was open to members and non-members alike, regardless of class, age, political or religious beliefs) and conservative (such as sitting out of the 1964 citywide school boycott, while the majority of the Black community participated). In this way, St. Philip's educational activism in Harlem calls into question criticisms of the Black Episcopal Church that position it as elitist and accommodationist to white values and white power, hence, apathetic to the challenges facing the Black population in cities during the post-World War II period.

¹ Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 6; and Charles Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 419.

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¹ Jonathan Gill, *Harlem: The Four Hundred Year History From Dutch Village to Capital of Black America* (New York: Grove Press, 2011); Kevin McGruder, *Race and Real Estate: Conflict and Cooperation in Harlem, 1890-1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); “Program to Expand to Meet the ‘Urban Crisis,’” St. Philip’s Church Newsletter, vol. XXIV, no. 1, p. 2, Box 13, November 1967, St. Philip’s Church Records, Courtesy of The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library (hereinafter St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library).

² St. Philip’s Church, “St. Philip’s Church Marches for Better Community” Press Release, p. 1-3, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

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Introduction

“[W]on’t you please help a New York City youngster to keep off the hot streets this summer?”¹ This question, which was printed in a St. Philip’s Protestant Episcopal Church memo in the Spring of 1969, stared back at parishioners who were seated in the historic chapel in Central Harlem. In many ways, the memo’s ‘ask’ was a plea to churchgoers: Support youth in the city during their school year interim, the unstructured time between the end of one academic year in the spring and the beginning of the next in the fall. The memo listed some of the “youngster’s” choices: “[U]nder [St. Philip’s] supervision, [youth] can go to our day camp, or get a job at a fair wage, or spend two weeks with family outside of the city, or go to a registered summer camp.”² The possibilities for youth ranged from recreational activities to opportunities to gain workforce experience. These differentiated experiences reflected St. Philip’s awareness of the varying needs and values of Black Harlemites: If summer camp was impractical, employment was an option. Summer programming represents one of the church’s initiatives designed to engage Black youth in educational experiences. It is one example of St. Philip’s educational activism in postwar Harlem when the church became an educational space and organizational base for the neighborhood. St. Philip’s participation in education, from in-house programming to petitioning the Board of Education for integrated and improved public schools, challenges the “deficit-model” or “deficit orientation” of Harlem that has positioned the

¹ M. Moran Weston, “St. Philip’s Community youth center,” Church memo, Box 12, April 1969, St. Philip’s Church Records, Courtesy of The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library (hereinafter St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library).

² Ibid.

community as static, impoverished, and in a state of crisis.³ Historical scholarship of the 21st century has brought nuance to the “deficit-model” by documenting educational activism that existed in neighborhoods like Harlem and by discussing the forces and actors that impoverished the neighborhood: The legally sanctioned policies and practices, which limited economic opportunities, perpetuated segregation in public schools, restricted housing options and property investment, and curbed access to policy making.⁴ St. Philip’s programming demonstrates the agency, resourcefulness, and proactivity of a local Black institution in response to and prevention of inequities in the educational landscape in postwar Harlem.⁵ The church’s commitment to engaging the community in experiences by way of in-house programming and organizing represents a viable model of education. It is an example of education that occurred beyond schoolhouse doors and in a neighborhood institution. In order to fully understand how race, religion, education, and community intersected in postwar Harlem, this dissertation answers the following research question: How did St. Philip’s, the first Black Episcopal church in the city and one of the most historic churches in Harlem, participate in education during the post-World War II period?

This dissertation is the first comprehensive study of a Black church’s participation in education in Harlem, New York during the post-World War II period. St. Philip’s history serving Harlem dovetails with the long history of Black churches as the cornerstones of Black

³ Ansley Erickson, “HARYOU: An Apprenticeship for Young Leaders,” eds., Ansley Erickson and Ernest Morell, *Educating Harlem: A Century of Schooling and Resistance in a Black Community* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ansley Erickson, “HARYOU: An Apprenticeship for Young Leaders,” eds., Ansley Erickson and Ernest Morell, *Educating Harlem: A Century of Schooling and Resistance in a Black Community* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019).

communities. The centrality of Black churches to Black life dates back to Antebellum America: churches were among the first spaces that the Black population established in order to gather freely.⁶ Even prior to the existence of the church house and steeple, historians have documented instances when enslaved Black people used religion to preserve culture and tradition, gather, reflect, learn, and mobilize in the face of oppression.⁷ After the Civil War in 1865, Black churches became even more important to culture and life. They were one of the first institutions that operated independent of white control, where members could experience racial affirmation and belonging and participate in political mobilization, social organization, and civil liberation. Scholars have traced the role of Black churches into the second half of the 20th century with civil rights history. However, as historians Charles Payne and Nikhil Pal Singh have underscored in their respective research, the vast amount of postwar scholarship on the Black church and civil rights has reinforced a “King-centric” (Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.-centered) interpretation of activism.⁸ Pal Singh describes this framework as “misleading, [...] abbreviated periodization [that] fails to recognize the historical depth and heterogeneity of Black struggles against racism,

⁶ Societies were also integral to the Black population operating as autonomous spaces for gathering as early as the Colonial period. See Craig Steve Wilder’s *In the Company of Black Men: The African Influence on African American Culture in New York City* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2001).

⁷ Examples include Lawrence W. Levine’s *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); Thomas L. Webber’s *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community, 1831-1865* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978); Heather Andrea Williams’ *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005); and Gayraud Wilmore’s *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religion of African Americans* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998).

⁸ Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 6; and Charles Payne, *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 419.

narrowing the political scope of Black agency.”⁹ This paradigm has not only truncated the civil rights movement to the 1960s, but it has also oversimplified the complexity and dynamism of activism, and overlooked the diversity of activists, including Black women. Common polarizing frameworks that emerged from this discourse have included regions: North-South, religions: Christian-Muslim, male figureheads: Martin Luther King, Jr.-Malcolm X, and strategies: peaceful-militant. While St. Philip’s participation in education during the postwar period does not address every nuance Payne and Pal Singh are seeking, it does bring forth a previously marginalized perspective: The Black Episcopal church.

Despite the long history of Black churches in the United States, their role in northern cities during the post-World War II period remains understudied, specifically, regarding their participation in education. As scholar Angela Dillard explains, “[W]hile much has been written, both positive and negative, about the advent of Black Power and Black nationalism in the mid-to-late 1960s, the generative role of religion remains relatively unexplored.”¹⁰ Dillard’s article focuses on Central Congregational Church’s responses to inequities in postwar Detroit public schools. In addition to Dillard’s work, another noteworthy contribution to the discourse on Black church activism and education in postwar cities is Clarence Taylor’s study of Milton A. Galamison, the Reverend of Siloam Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, New York. Taylor documents the protests and initiatives spearheaded by Galamison, who used the Black church as

⁹ Pal Singh, *Black Is a Country*, 6.

¹⁰ Angela Dillard, “Religion and Radicalism: The Reverend Albert B. Cleage, Jr., and the Rise of Black Christian Nationalism in Detroit,” eds., Jeanne F. Theoharis and Komozi Woodward, *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 157.

an organizational base to integrate New York City public schools during the 1950s and 1960s.¹¹

The apex of Galamison's leadership came during the 1964 public school boycott when thousands of students remained out of school in a stand against segregation.

Yet, no comparable study on the intersection of educational activism and the Black church in postwar Harlem exists.¹² This is surprising, considering that, historically, Harlem has been home to one of the largest Black communities in the most populated city of the United States. Furthermore, the sheer number of places of worship in Harlem during the postwar period calls for a consideration of the role of Black churches in the lives of Harlemites; by 1940, nearly 150 different religious institutions were established in the neighborhood.¹³ During the 1950s and 1960s, St. Philip's had the largest membership of any Episcopal church in the United States, with over 4,600 parishioners.¹⁴ The increase in its membership was linked to major demographic

¹¹ Clarence Taylor, *Knocking at Our Own Door: Milton A. Galamison and the Struggle to Integrate New York City Schools* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2001).

¹² See Stephan P. McKinney's dissertation on secularization theory in the Graduate Division of Religion at Drew University. He uses St. Philip's to show that by the second half of the 20th century "the demise of legal discrimination has permitted secular aspects of Black communal life to achieve more independence, allowing the church to no longer have to function in a variety of nonreligious roles," "Secularization Theory and Black Protestantism: Patterns of Differentiation in a Contemporary Black Church" (Drew University: Madison, New Jersey, 2010), Abstract. His work surveys some of the Church's programming. Also see William Welty's dissertation on services provided by several Harlem churches, including St. Philip's during the first half of the 19th century: "Black Shepherds: A Study of the Leading Negro Clergymen in New York City: 1900-1940" (New York: Columbia, 1969).

¹³ Even though this number decreased by the 1970s, it still speaks to St. Philip's appeal to the Black New Yorkers as well as the Church's commitment to maintain programs for the community regardless of its fluctuating membership. Post-World War II, St. Philip's would be affected by middle-to-upper class Black migration out of cities. Jonathan Gill, *Harlem: The Four Hundred Year History From Dutch Village to Capital of Black America* (New York: Grove Press, 2011), 180; Ramon Estrada, *An Evaluation of the Community Development Projects of St. Philip's Church Final Report* (Cambridge: Abt. Associates, Inc. 1974), 2; and "Harlem's Banker-Priest: Father Weston heads New York's St. Philip's Episcopal church and oldest Black savings firm," *Ebony*, March 1969, 100.

¹⁴ M. Moran Weston, *Another Great Step for St. Philip's – and You!*, p. 7, Box 12, November 1963, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library. As of 1963, St. Philip's membership accounted for 4,609 people. See also Gardiner Shattuck, Jr., *Episcopalians and Race: Civil War to Civil Rights*

changes. Racist policies and practices, the absence of economic and educational opportunities, and violence towards Black people (both actual and threatened) were some of the factors that continued to push Black people out of the South during the Great Migration.¹⁵ This push was met with the pull of better housing and pathways to education and jobs in northern cities. Harlem's population also grew with the arrival of first- and second-generation Afro-Caribbean immigrants, who were seeking economic opportunities and settled in the neighborhood beginning in the 20th century. Accordingly, location (Harlem, New York) and context (the postwar period) were two of the parameters that guided this research. Church leadership was the third parameter guiding the scope of this research.

During the postwar period, St. Philip's refocused the role of its community center from social services during the Great Depression to community youth, aligning its mission and programming with similar efforts to that of the neighborhood: Improved public schools, access to equitable opportunities in recreation, education, and the workforce. Under the leadership of Rev. Dr. M. Moran Weston, who served from 1957 through 1982, education became increasingly central to St. Philip's operations. Both as a child growing up in segregated North Carolina and as an adult working for the Episcopal denomination, Weston experienced racial discrimination. In the South, he attended all-Black parochial primary and secondary schools. In adulthood, he was the only Black Reverend in the Episcopal denomination to successfully maintain a higher-level

(Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 182; "Harlem's Banker-Priest," *Ebony*, 100; and "Negro Church Tops City Episcopalians: St. Philip's Congregation in Harlem Exceeds the 3,655 at St. Bartholomew's," *The New York Times*, December 27, 1951.

¹⁵ Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010). Some historians start the Great Migration after World War I in 1915; however, there is evidence that patterns of movement were already underway in the late 19th century. Some historians also separate out the Great Migration from the Second Great Migration, which is considered the second wave of migrants that relocated North after World War II.

position as Executive Director of Social Research and Education.¹⁶ He navigated white bureaucracies (the Episcopal denomination and New York's city governance) and their racist policies and practices in both his educational and professional careers.¹⁷ Historian Gardiner Shattuck, Jr. captured the contentious environment in which Weston worked for the Episcopal denomination, explaining that white Episcopalian leadership consistently “downplayed the contributions and ideas of skilled Black rectors in ghetto parishes.”¹⁸ Despite a lack of support from within the Episcopal denomination and criticisms from the Black community, Weston realized that Harlem's large, centralized Black population made it a critical locality to participate in education. Weston's decision to attend college in the North, lead a Black congregation, and serve a Black neighborhood were testaments to his resiliency and commitment to change. As rector, the appointed clergy member in charge of a parish in the Episcopal church, Weston oversaw St. Philip's operations in collaboration with the vestry, a team of eleven (eight men, three women during the postwar period), who were involved in business operations and financial matters.¹⁹ The backgrounds of the vestry, including first- and second- generation Afro-Caribbean immigrants, Black southern migrants, and Black northerners (some with ancestries dating back to Colonial New York); and their professions, including activists, educators, social workers, an attorney, a postal worker, and an architect, underscore the diversity that existed within the church

¹⁶ Shattuck, Jr., *Episcopalians and Race*, 169; and M. Moran Weston, *Biographical Sketch*, p.1-2, Box 53, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁷ Estrada, *An Evaluation of the Community Development Projects of St. Philip's Church Final Report*, 2; and Shattuck, Jr., *Episcopalians and Race*, 169.

¹⁸ Shattuck, Jr., *Episcopalians and Race*, 169-170.

¹⁹ The vestry during the postwar period included Robert H. Wynn, Sr. (Sr. Warden), Edwin B. Adams (Jr. Warden), Courtney C. Brown (Clerk), Frederick B. Cranston, Hendri A. Le Gendre, Irving Lynons, Archibald Murray, Florence Richards, Ann Russell, Constance G. Wright, and Joseph Wyke.

and within Harlem. Similar to Weston, several of the vestry members' educational journeys were marked by racism and, accordingly, they made it their missions (both at St. Philip's and in their careers) to challenge the inequities that they experienced. Leadership was paramount to the evolution of St. Philip's programming. Weston and the vestry used community engagement as education. In other words, they facilitated Black Harlem's access to experiences, activities, clubs, classes, dialogue, and organizing. In this way, the church's programming was education broadly writ and it represents a viable response from a community-based institution to inequities in the educational landscape.

While Weston led the church through 1982, by the mid-1960s, many young Black families began departing Central Harlem and relocated to other New York City neighborhoods.²⁰ With civil rights legislation and legal challenges to segregation came degrees of mobility. Increased housing options and access to different neighborhoods, which were previously inaccessible to many Black Harlemites effected the membership of the church and the attendance of its programming. Moreover, the fiscal crisis of the 1970s forced St. Philip's – like many institutions during this period – to revamp its budget, which inevitably took a toll on the extent of community engagement programming that had once thrived in its facilities. It is important to note, however, that while this dissertation focuses on the programming of the 1950s and 1960s, even when the church membership dipped, St. Philip's continued to serve Harlem. In the 1970s, the church refocused its initiatives to address the fiscal crisis and the drug epidemic with education around money management and addiction prevention. The parameters of this dissertation - location, context, and leadership - are inextricably linked its contributions.

²⁰ Harlem Urban Development Corporation (HUDC), *A Profile of the Harlem Area* (New York: The Harlem Task Force, 1973), 32, The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.

Examining St. Philip's participation in education in Harlem during the post-World War II period broadens the historical discourse and enriches existing scholarship on the intersection of Black churches, education, and urban communities in several ways. During the post-World War II period, Black churches located in northern cities faced scrutiny from Black scholars, activists, religious leaders, and non-Episcopalians. They questioned the ability of Black churches to meet the needs of their memberships amidst significant demographic changes to the urban environment. These shifts were multifaceted, including: 1.) Population growth with the arrival of hundreds of thousands of southern Black migrants to northern cities during the Great Migration; 2.) The absence of employment in those very northern cities with postwar deindustrialization; and 3.) The federal government's decision to fund development outside of cities in white suburbia, also known as decentralization. In a whirlwind of social and economic reordering, critics questioned the extent to which urban Black churches in the North effectively meet the needs of their growing memberships.

While Black churches in general were under scrutiny, such criticisms fell squarely on the shoulders of Black Episcopal churches, whose status as a Black church was continually under fire.²¹ The microscope applied to the Black Episcopal church was based on two beliefs or perceptions: Black Episcopalians remained part of a racist denomination with a history of racist policies and practices that lasted well into the second half of the 20th century and Black Episcopalians were part of the bourgeoisie: An educated elite with a socioeconomic status that aligned them with white power and values as opposed to Black power and values. Such race and class affiliations became the crux of criticisms of the Black Episcopal church. It was

²¹ Estrada, *An Evaluation of the Community Development Projects of St. Philip's Church Final Report*, 2; and Shattuck, Jr., *Episcopalians and Race*, 169.

accommodationist to white leadership, values, and ideologies. Its parishioners were complacent with their status and, accordingly, conservative in their social, political, and economic beliefs. The characteristics that critics assigned to Black Episcopalians rendered them incapable of relating to, or sympathizing with, the values and interests of the other side of the coin. Black Episcopalians were deemed at odds with the radical goals of civil rights activists from lower-class background, namely, razing the racial hierarchy and challenging systemic oppression. The aforementioned dichotomization of the civil rights movement is present in the affiliations of class and activist platform (middle- to- upper class and conservative vs. lower-class and radical).

Such generalizations are problematic for several reasons. They have overwhelmingly muted the participation of Black Episcopalians in the history civil rights activism. They have perpetuated misconceptions that middle- and upper- socioeconomic status and Episcopal faith were inextricably linked to conservative approaches to activism. On the other side, they have intertwined lower socioeconomic status with radical activism. The term “respectability politics” or the “politics of respectability” was “the turn-of-the-twentieth-century [B]lack middle-class ideology [...] promulgated by [B]lack elites to ‘uplift the race’ by correcting the ‘bad’ traits of the [B]lack poor.”²² The phrase has become especially fraught with tension in the 21st century as it “has been portrayed as an emancipatory strategy to the neglect of discussions about structural

²² Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, “African-American Women's History and the Netalanguage of Race,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17, no. 2 (1992): 251-274; Higginbotham created the term respectability politics or “politics of respectability.” See also, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church: 1880 – 1920*; and Frederick C. Harris, “The Rise of Respectability Politics,” Winter 2014, *Dissent Magazine*. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, “African-American Women's History and the Netalanguage of Race,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17, no. 2 (1992): 251-274. Harvard University Press, 1993. Derrick P. Aldrige, “Of Victorianism, Civilization, and Progressivism: The Educational Ideas of Anna Julia Cooper and W. E. B. Du Bois, 1892–1940,” *History of Education Quarterly* 47 (November 2007).

forces that hinder the mobility of the black poor and working class.”²³ However, some scholars have encouraged a consideration of respectability politics as a viable strategy for racial uplift throughout the 20th century. This camp implores us to “acknowledge the successes of the movement” and to conduct “a sound assessment of its deployment in a given instance depend[ent] on its goals, the manner in which it is practiced, and the context which within which a given struggle being waged.”²⁴ This dialogue is important to consider since St. Philip’s educational activism in Harlem brings nuance to discussions about the polarization of the Black Episcopal church as either being focused on the far-reaching goal of social transformation or aligned with the conservative social philosophy based on respectability politics and accommodation.²⁵ Its participation was both radical (such as establishing educational programming at the community center that was open to members and non-members alike, regardless of class, age, political and religious beliefs as well petitioning city governance to improve schools) and conservative (such as sitting out of the 1964 citywide school boycott). In addition to its varied strategies for improving education in Harlem, St. Philip’s history also reflects the diversity that existed within the Black Episcopal church. Its congregation was anything, but uniform in background, identity, and beliefs. Accordingly, this research pushes back on the notion of the Black church as a monolith by documenting the diversity in faith and activism exhibited by St. Philip’s participation in education in Harlem.

²³ Frederick C. Harris, “The Rise of Respectability Politics,” Winter 2014, *Dissent Magazine*.

²⁴ Randall Kennedy, “Lifting as We Climb: A progressive defense of respectability politics,” October 2015, *Harper’s Magazine*; and Brando Simeo Starkey, “Respectability politics: How a flawed conversation sabotages black lives,” December 12, 2016, *The Undeclared*.

²⁵ Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, “African-American Women's History and the Netalanguage of Race,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17, no. 2 (1992): 251-274.

Sociologist C. Eric Lincoln and religious historian Lawrence Mamiya underscore the need for scholars to account for the nuance and “complexity of Black churches as social institutions” in their interpretations and analyses.²⁶ They put forth the “dialectical model” or “dialectical polarities” as a means to reaching this end.²⁷ The six dialectics outlined in their research operate as frameworks of inquiry for analyzing Black churches: priestly and prophetic, this-worldly and other-worldly, universalism and particularism, communal and privatistic, charismatic and bureaucratic and resistance and accommodation. And, while the inclination is to think of dichotomies as polar opposites, far removed from one another, Lincoln and Mamiya argue that they are in constant ‘conversation,’ ebbing and flowing over time and in different contexts. Drawing from this methodology, my interpretation of St. Philip’s supports a “dynamic view” of Black churches as opposed to the static interpretations widely upheld by mid-century scholars E. Franklin Frazier, Gunnar Myrdal and Charles Silberman.²⁸ It is important to note that while I gleaned from Lincoln and Mamiya’s notion of dialecticism, their four hundred plus page study on the Black church excludes any discussion of or reference to Black Episcopalians. This void represents the history of exclusion that Black Episcopalians have experienced in Black church history, which is discussed at greater length in Chapter I.

This research broadens the historical discourse on education in Harlem as it occurred beyond schoolhouse doors, not only in terms of the space in which education occurred, but also in terms of the philosophy of education. Several histories discuss education in Harlem outside of

²⁶ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, Lincoln, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 10-16.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, Lincoln, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 10-16

the public schools, however, the discourse does not account for the educational activism of a Black church during the post-World War II period.²⁹ St. Philip's active role in supporting education in Harlem informs our understanding of how a local religious institution interpreted education, transforming a place of worship, by definition, into a space for programming and a base for responding to and preventing inequities. Education, as interpreted by St. Philip's, was not schooling. Hence, this is not a dissertation about teaching and learning. Neither is the purpose of this research to suggest that St. Philip's offered formal schooling as a substitute to public schooling, nor to make a case that St. Philip's used religious instruction, or Episcopal doctrine, to some evangelical end. Rather, this dissertation examines education as it was broadly writ by St. Philip's. I argue that St. Philip's philosophy of education was community engagement or experiences that empowered and equipped Harlemites in their daily lives. Community education manifested itself in town halls on race and college admissions, career counseling for Black men, women, and young adults seeking employment, programming on Black history and cultural contributions, marches to improve conditions in the neighborhood, and letters of protest demanding equitable and integrated public schools. Community engagement empowered Harlemites by providing a space and forum for learning, thinking critically, and discussing inequities and it equipped Harlemites with resources and strategies for navigating inequities.

This model of education draws from several histories of education. I derived the notion of community engagement or community activism as education from Barbara Ransby's biography of Ella Baker, a Black female activist and educator, who worked in the Harlem chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (hereinafter NAACP) during the

²⁹ Chapter II examines the literature on approaches to education outside of Harlem's schoolhouse doors.

interwar period.³⁰ Baker's political teachings focused on the community's "participation and deliberation" in reform, a process that was educational and "empower[ing]."³¹ Organizing increased grassroots participation and gave Harlemites a voice in politics that shaped their lives. Community-based initiatives helped Harlemites mobilize and strategize, two political skills critical to pushing forward civil rights. Baker also incorporated her teachings of collaborative, community activism in her work at the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (hereinafter SNCC). Empowering Harlemites to participate in civic life, especially, but not limited to the public school system, was part and parcel of St. Philip's theology of education.

In the process of characterizing St. Philip's ethos of education, I also examined the pedagogical frameworks or theories that informed the educational experiences of Black students during the postwar period. Baker's notion of participation and mobilization remained steadfast in the pedagogies of education beyond schoolhouse doors or what some historians refer to as "alternative schools."³² Historians Daniel Perlstein, Martha Biondi, and Russell Rickford's respective studies on the intersection of education and civil rights during the post-war period help contextualize another theme underpinning St. Philip's programming: inclusive educational experiences that focus on Black histories and cultural contributions as means to empowerment and resiliency.³³ For instance, Perlstein discusses the evolution of SNCC's freedom schools,

³⁰ Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker & the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 151.

³² Daniel Perlstein, "Minds Stayed on Freedom: Politics and Pedagogy in the African-American Freedom Struggle." *American Education Research Journal*, Summer 2002, No. 2, 249;

³³ Perlstein, "Minds Stayed on Freedom," 266; Martha Biondi's *The Black Revolution on Campus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); and Russell Rickford, "Integration, Black Nationalism, and Radical Democratic Transformation in African American Philosophies of Education, 1965-74," eds.,

noting that during the mid-1960s, there was a “commitment to self-determination [or] ‘build[ing] Black consciousness’” through “teaching Black elementary, secondary, and college students ‘their history and values as a People.’”³⁴ Biondi documents the efforts of Black students and Brown students at various colleges and universities in the late-1960s, including New York’s City College, in establishing Puerto Rican Studies and Black Studies’ programs. In Rickford’s interpretation of community control (a movement which emerged in 1966), he identifies “democratic participation and cultural pluralism” as a socially transformative educational philosophy that emerged from the “commingling” of integrationist and nationalist “currents.”³⁵

Community engagement was the educational ethos or value system underpinning St. Philip’s programming. The church’s enterprising programming modeled meaningful community engagement: It was inclusive and accessible to the entire neighborhood, regardless of faith, class or age; and it differentiated according to the varied interests and needs of Harlemites. It supported mobilization or activism, facilitating a space for ongoing dialogue, committee meetings, neighborhood marches, and collaboration with other local, city and national organizations; and it empowered the community, providing resources and opportunities for personal and professional development by way of classes, recreation, counseling, college and career guidance. It is important to note that the programming did not shy away from race. Many of the classes and experiences focused on Black history and culture. And, the dialogue and

Manning Marable and Elizabeth Kai Hinton, *The New Black History: Revisiting the Second Transformation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 289.

³⁴ Perlstein, 259.

³⁵ Russell Rickford, “Integration, Black Nationalism, and Radical Democratic Transformation in African American Philosophies of Education, 1965-74,” eds., Manning Marable and Elizabeth Kai Hinton, *The New Black History: Revisiting the Second Transformation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 289.

activism were premised on the fact that Harlem (and St. Philip's) served a predominantly Black population. Cultivating confident, resourceful and knowledgeable Black children, youth and adults, who were capable of navigating New York—and theoretically, the world—required action, involvement and investment from both St Philip's and from Harlemites. The extent to which community engagement was an effective means of education in Harlem was contingent upon the participation of the community. And, attendance records from the church's community center (7th and 8th Avenues adjoining the church) and its overall membership during the post-World War II period suggest that the programming resonated with Harlemites. In examining St. Philip's community engagement, I argue that the church functioned as both an educational space and an organizational base. Aligned to the same ethos of community engagement, St. Philip's also used the strategy of collaboration to participate in education, working in partnership with neighborhood, city, and national organizations to connect Harlemites with meaningful experiences.

This dissertation is an historical narrative of St. Philip's educational activism in post-World War II Harlem. The research is organized in five chapters. As a means of orientation, Chapter I provides an institutional history of St. Philip's leading up to the post-World War II period. Its legacy as the first Black Episcopal church in New York City merits consideration and informs its lifetime of work in the Black community. Within this conversation, I discuss the broader history of Black Episcopalians, how they are similar or different from other groups such as African Methodist Episcopal and Baptists. This is useful in unraveling why the Black Episcopal church was criticized more than any other Black religious institution. The first chapter also addresses the context of Harlem in the post-World War II period with a focus on the state of

public schooling in the neighborhood. The factors that produced the “urban crisis” during this era are critical to understanding the scope and character of St. Philip’s participation in education.³⁶

The following three chapters each focus on a different aspect of St. Philip’s educational activism in Harlem during the post-World War II period. Chapter II elaborates on St. Philip’s philosophy of education, community engagement, and the varied ways it connected Harlemites with empowering, engaging, and valuable experiences in a neighborhood rife with inequities. Church leadership was integral in interpreting St. Philip’s mission during the post-World War II period, identifying education as integral to meeting the needs and mobilizing the Harlem community. Rev. Dr. M. Moran Weston played an important role in the church’s participation in education in Harlem, including instituting in-house programming at the community youth center, supporting public school protests, engaging members and non-members alike in important conversations about education and hosting experts at the church who discussed relevant topics, such as the college application process. Chapter II broadens the discourse on responses to educational inequities in northern cities by examining St. Philip’s approaches to community engagement. It examines how the church operated as an educational space, reimagining education as it occurred outside of the schoolhouse and inside of the parish house.

In the process of participating in education in Harlem, St. Philip’s did not operate as a silo. Chapter III analyzes when and how St. Philip’s participation in education in Harlem intersected with the work and goals of local leaders, community-based institutions, and national organizations. For example, St. Philip’s collaborated with Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited (hereinafter HARYOU), for which Reverend Weston also served as an Executive

³⁶ “Program to Expand to Meet the ‘Urban Crisis,’” St. Philip’s Church Newsletter, vol. XXIV, no. 1, p. 2, Box 13, November 1967, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

Committee member on the Board of Directors, and citywide organizations such as the Urban League. Both relationships were evidence of a religious institution partnering with a secular entity. This bridge was a testament to the collective importance assigned to education in Harlem. The value of collaboration and intergroup cooperation in the history of education regardless of race, class, and, in this case, religion, captured the collective investment in, or importance assigned to, the goal of educating Harlem.³⁷ It is pertinent to examine this, especially as Black churches have been criticized for being solely focused on the religious sphere in the postwar period.

Chapter IV examines the extent to which St. Philip's fits within traditional civil rights narratives and the moniker of "the Black church."³⁸ Black churches in northern cities faced criticism from Black scholars, academics and non-Episcopalians, who argued that they were ill-prepared and would fail their communities amidst the major demographic changes of the post-World War II period. This criticism was disproportionately directed towards Black Episcopal institutions, including St. Philip's, for two reasons: 1) the long-history of white leadership in the Episcopal denomination and the subsequent racism that shaped the experiences of its Black branches 2) and the 'elite' status of its membership with middle- and upper- class parishioners. This race and status affiliation became the underpinning to criticisms of the Black Episcopal church that questioned its ability to serve lower-class populations in an effective way. And, during an apex of the civil rights movement, this interpretation became a blaring light that

³⁷ See Sonia Song-Ha Lee's *Building a Latino Civil Rights Movement: Puerto Ricans, African Americans, and the Pursuit of Racial Justice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014) and Martha Biondi's *The Black Revolution on Campus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

³⁸ W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Negro Church* (Atlanta: Atlanta University Press, 1903); and Carter G. Woodson's *The History of The Negro Church* (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, 1921). Du Bois 'coined' the terminology "the Negro church" – or "the Black church" in his study.

blinded scholars to the real contributions and activism of St. Philip's. In addition to carving out a meaningful place for the Black Episcopal church in the historical discourse through the educational activism of St. Philip's, Chapter IV mines the monolith that is the Black church by examining the role of Black Episcopalians in the post-World War II period.

In each chapter, traditional historical methods were used to gather, interpret, and analyze sources. This methodology required a critical examination of archival materials with specific consideration of the following: the author of the document, the individual or group for which the document was created, the purpose behind the document's creation, the context in which it was produced, the reaction to the document, the credibility and biases of the document, and its relevance to this topic. The wealth of evidence for this dissertation came from two archives: Columbia University Rare Book & Manuscript Library Collections and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Both archives are located in New York City and collectively house nearly 400 boxes of primary materials on St. Philip's and Reverend Weston, including church pamphlets, petitions, correspondence, contracts, sermons, speeches and church records. The foci of these collections were boxes that document the years under study: the postwar period.

The African American Episcopal Historical Collection (hereinafter AAEHC) in the Bishop Payne Library of Virginia Theological Seminary had two relevant resources, including the Bishop Family of Annapolis unpublished history, which provided information about St. Philip's rectors leading up to the post-World War II period, and Walter Decoster Dennis Diocese of New York Papers, which contained materials and correspondence regarding recreation and programming at the community youth center. Additionally, a series of newspapers, scholarly journals and magazines proved invaluable to contextualizing the research. Primary sources

included an oral history interview with Clerk of the Vestry and life-long parishioner, Courtney Brown, who was an active member of St. Philip's during the years under study. The same level of criticism and interpretation was also used to analyze the oral history interview transcription, carefully considering of the limitations of the human memory, while honoring the importance of individual histories that are oftentimes unaccounted for in archival collections.³⁹

In the process of reflecting on the methodology used in this dissertation, it is important to note that the limited extent to which women's voices are accounted for in this research. I would be remiss if I did not address this considering that the women's rights movement was experiencing an apex during the postwar period, and the 21st century has reminded us civil rights activism is a continuum for both women and Black Americans. I conjecture that due to the history of exclusion in the Episcopal denomination, which limited the access of Black Episcopalians and women's access to positions of governance, Black women's role in St. Philip's educational activism was less defined in the archives. However, this is not to say that they are entirely absent, and I am certain that the collections at Columbia and the Schomburg would be useful for a history focused on Black women in the Episcopal church. Black women's names are found on various manuscripts as the authors, typists or scribes of church petitions, memos, correspondences, and pamphlets. During the postwar period, Florence Richards, Ann Russell, and Constance G. Wright comprised of one-third of the vestry, the team responsible for overseeing church affairs.⁴⁰ Richards was a teacher and a chemist, Russell was a post office

³⁹ While the credibility of oral history as a resource is controversial, there is literature that discusses its importance to the historical discourse when used in addition to other manuscripts, documents and archives. For further analysis of oral history see *The Oral History Reader*, eds., Alistair Thompson and Robert Perks, (New York: Routledge: 2016).

⁴⁰ Courtney C. Brown, interview by Jennifer Boyle, New York, New York, November 2013.

worker, and Wright, who was considered a “Hidden Figure” of World War II for her contributions as a statistician for the U.S. Signal Corps in New Jersey, was a teacher (1957-1962) and principal (1962-1966) of PS 197 in Harlem on 135th and 5th Avenue and an assistant principal of PS 161 in Harlem on Amsterdam Avenue and 133rd Street (retired in 1978).⁴¹ I was fortunate to conduct an oral history interview with Wright’s son, Kevin (a politician and former New York Assemblyman), and grandson, Jordan, who generously shared about her work in Harlem. Black women were named as participants in the church’s committee meetings, career conferences, and community marches. Black women and youth were captured in attendance reports and photographs as participants in church programming. For example, we know that girls made up about 50% of the enrollment at the community center and summer camp.⁴² The *New York Amsterdam News* corroborated the role of Black women in St. Philip’s initiatives. Their names appear countless times as members of the church’s committees, coordinators of community events, and leaders of youth groups. It is also valuable to note that other scholars have written women’s voices into the history of education in Harlem as well as into the historical discourse on the Black church and Black activism, including, but not exclusive to Bettye Thomas Collier and V.P. Franklin, Lauri Johnson, Barbara Ransby, and Deborah White.⁴³

⁴¹ “Constance (Connie) Emma Gray Wright Passes,” *New York Amsterdam News*, July 19, 2018, 31.

⁴² Albert A. Edwards, *Summer Program Report to the Board of Directors*, Box 12, 30 August 1968, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

⁴³ Bettye Thomas Collier and V.P. Franklin, *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement* (New York: NYU Press, 2001); Lauri Johnson, “A Generation of Women Activists: African American Female Educators in Harlem, 1930-1950” *The Journal of African American History*, Vol. 89, No. 3, Summer 2004; Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker & the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003); and Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999).

This important work must continue in order to establish an inclusive and credible historical narrative. Accordingly, where possible in this dissertation, I have underscored the involvement of women at St. Philip's, for, it is without question that they were instrumental in the church's initiatives.

At the same time, I am cognizant of the fact that the main voice or perspective that I used for this dissertation is that of Rev. Dr. M. Moran Weston. While this choice reinforces a patriarchal perspective of civil rights activism in the Black religious community, I weighed this limitation against the contribution of this scholarship. Namely, St. Philip's broadens the history of religious activism by examining the work of a Black Episcopal church. Black Episcopalians have been marginalized in, and in many cases excluded from, Black church studies. In this way, examining St. Philip's educational activism not only brings nuance to generalizations about the Black Episcopal church, but it also challenges the monolith that is the Black church. Furthermore, despite the fact that Harlem was the center of the Black community throughout the 20th century (both in New York City and in the United States), this research represents the first examination of the intersection of religion, education, race and community in Harlem during the postwar period.

As a case study of St. Philip's, this dissertation is a comprehensive interpretation of one church's role in education in Harlem. Case studies are a valuable approach to interpreting the scope and character of a broader topic and, in this case, a Black religious institution's work in education in a northern city. As Milton C. Sernett states at the outset of *African American Religious History*, "without adequate histories of local churches, regional jurisdictions, and national denominations, no general synthesis and interpretation [of African American religious

history] are possible.”⁴⁴ However, one of the sacrifices made by examining a singular institution as opposed to examining the participation of numerous churches across multiple cities, is the inability to document patterns and establish a comparative framework. While dissertation fills one void, Sernett’s call for future research on the work of other Black churches stands.

⁴⁴ Milton C. Sernett, ed., *African American Religious History: A Documentary Witness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 2.

Chapter I: Post-World War II Harlem, New York: “The Black Capital of the World” & “The Urban Crisis”¹

Post-World War II Harlem was at once the center of the Black community in New York, a locality abounding with Black cultural autonomy, and a community shaped by major demographic changes, including deindustrialization, white suburbanization and Black urbanization. Accordingly, it is a rich context for an historian examining the participation of a local institution in the community amidst what contemporary commentators referred to as “the urban crisis.”² The ways in which St. Philip’s responded to and prevented inequities in education was inextricably linked to the postwar context. In order to understand the scope of St. Philip’s efforts to improve education in Harlem, it is important to first address the context informing the church’s participation. In this way, I designed this chapter to contextualize education, Harlem and St. Philip’s in the postwar period. The state of education in Harlem, namely, the public schools is an important starting place for understanding the community’s responses to what Rev. M. Moran Weston and other contemporary commentators referred to as part of “the urban crisis.” Lastly, I examine the origins of St Philip’s as the first Black Episcopal church in New York City, and the history of Black Episcopalians.

¹ Jonathan Gill, *Harlem: The Four Hundred Year History From Dutch Village to Capital of Black America* (New York: Grove Press, 2011); Kevin McGruder, *Race and Real Estate: Conflict and Cooperation in Harlem, 1890-1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); and “Program to Expand to Meet the ‘Urban Crisis,’” St. Philip’s Church Newsletter, vol. XXIV, no. 1, p. 2, Box 13, November 1967, St. Philip’s Church Records, Courtesy of The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library (hereinafter St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library).

² “Program to Expand to Meet the ‘Urban Crisis,’” St. Philip’s Church Newsletter, vol. XXIV, no. 1, p. 2, Box 13, November 1967, St. Philip’s Church Records, Courtesy of The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library (hereinafter St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library).

Part I: Segregation and Racism in Harlem's Public Schools - A state of "inefficiency, inferiority, and massive deterioration"³

Harlem's public schools had been an ongoing source of protest in the neighborhood for decades. Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia's Commission on the Harlem Riot of 1935, the first city investigation into the quality of the neighborhood's public schools, included particularly disconcerting information. According to the Commission, Harlem's public schools were "old, poorly equipped [including limited recreational space or playgrounds...] overcrowded and constitute[d] fire hazards."⁴ In the report, the entity responsible for overseeing education in the city, the New York City Board of Education, was a perpetuator of this inequity: "of the \$120,747,000 asked [of the federal government by the Board of Education] only \$400,000 was earmarked for schools attended by the vast majority of colored children"; and out of the 168 newly constructed school buildings in the city, the Board of Education overlooked Harlem save for one annex.⁵ Disparities in Harlem's public schools ran deeper than a lack of monetary means to improve the infrastructure, classrooms, and play spaces. The Commission reported on "racial discrimination practiced" by the predominantly white administration and faculty, who disregarded "the welfare of the children" and viewed their assignment to oversee and teach in

³ Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc. (HARYOU), *Youth in the Ghetto: A Study of the Consequences of Powerlessness and A Blueprint for Change* (New York: HARYOU, 1964), Volume I and II.

⁴ Mayor LaGuardia's Commission on the Harlem Riot of March 19, 1935, "The Complete Report of Mayor LaGuardia's Commission on the Harlem Riot of March 19, 1935" (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 73 and 84.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 85.

Harlem's public schools as "punishment."⁶ In the 1930s, Harlem was on the wayside of educational investment, improvement and equity.

Nearly thirty years after the Mayor LaGuardia's Commission, Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited (hereinafter HARYOU), an organization established in 1962 with the goal of documenting neighborhood conditions, flagged the educational experiences of Harlem youths as "one of inefficiency, inferiority, and massive deterioration."⁷ Under the leadership of prominent Black educator and psychologist, Dr. Kenneth Clark, HARYOU's official report on Harlem was published a decade after the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision. *Brown v. Board of Education* overturned the 1896 *Plessy vs. Ferguson* ruling of "separate, but equal" as the basis for school segregation.⁸ However, because the federal government did not provide a timeline for desegregation or a model for integration, the interpretation of *Brown v. Board of Education* was at the whim of city and state policy makers, who debated, delayed, and deviated from implementation, especially in neighborhoods with predominantly Black populations.

In 1964, the Allen Report emerged as one of New York State's efforts to address segregation in public schools. It amended requirements for elementary, middle and high school so that students would spend four years in each setting.⁹ This meant that the youngest of learners would continue to attend their neighborhood elementary school, while middle-school or intermediate-

⁶ Mayor LaGuardia's Commission on the Harlem Riot of March 19, 1935, "The Complete Report of Mayor LaGuardia's Commission on the Harlem Riot of March 19, 1935" (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 78 and 81.

⁷ HARYOU, *Youth in the Ghetto*, Volume I and II.

⁸ Supreme Court Of The United States. *U.S. Reports: Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483. 1954; and Supreme Court Of The United States. *U.S. Reports: Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537. 1895.

⁹ Diane Ravitch, *The Great School Wars: A History of the New York City Public Schools* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1974), 282.

aged youth would start commuting to “more integrated intermediate schools, two years earlier than under the present system.”¹⁰ However, historians Vincent Cannato and Diane Ravitch have demonstrated that the Allen Report missed the mark when it came to achieving racial integration. It failed to account for the city, state, and federal sanctioned inequities that stood in the way of integration such as housing policies that perpetuated residential segregation and job discrimination that supported white families’ ability to financial access private and parochial schools. On a local level, the Board of Education was responsible for overseeing implementation of the Allen Report and the desegregation of the public schools. Yet, its role involved more oversight than overseeing. In response to community protests of the slow pace of integration, the Board of Education used the construction of Intermediate School (IS) 201 in Harlem to show movement or ‘progress.’ True integration, however, was never part of the Board of Education’s plan, which enrolled the same number of Black students as Puerto Rican students at IS 201 to “solve” the integration issue.¹¹ Despite the recalcitrance of the Board of Education and the hands-off approaches of federal and state actors, Harlemites continued to push for equity and integration as demonstrated in the respective research of historians Adina Back and Marta Gutman on IS 201.¹²

¹⁰ Vincent J. Cannato, *The Ungovernable City: John Lindsay and His Struggle to Save New York* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 271.

¹¹ Marta Gutman, “Intermediate School 201: Race, Space, and Modern Architecture,” eds., Ansley T. Erickson and Ernest Morrell, *Educating Harlem: A Century of Schooling and Resistance in a Black Community* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019); and Adina Back, “‘Exposing the ‘Whole Segregation Myth’: The Harlem Nine and New York City’s School Desegregation,” eds., Jeanne F. Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940 – 1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

¹² *Ibid.*

In addition to segregation, among the ongoing challenges of Harlem’s public schools were school administrators, who did not reflect the communities they served (racially, economically and geographically). The absence of a dedicated teaching staff, who was empathetic, knowledgeable, and specifically committed to the education of Black children, was an additional challenge.¹³ During one of Dr. Clark’s many speeches on education in New York City, he revealed that public school teachers remained indignant about the Board of Education’s “Teacher Assignment Report,” which placed teachers at schools with predominantly Black and Brown student populations. They argued “that to require experienced teachers to serve in these underprivileged schools would be ‘like sentencing them to Siberia.’”¹⁴ Teachers’ reluctance to work in Harlem was fueled by the deficit language that questioned student ambition and performance and cited “dropout” rates thereby casting an ominous shadow on the future of Black children. Data to support the shortcomings in Harlem’s educational landscape is plentiful and underscored the variance in educational achievement between Black students and students enrolled at other New York City public schools. Consider the following results from intelligence quotient tests on reading comprehension, word knowledge and arithmetic that quantified such concerns, “[I]n the third grade, Central Harlem pupils are fully one year behind the achievement levels of New York City pupils. By the sixth grade they have fallen nearly two years behind; and by the eighth grade they are about two and one half years behind.”¹⁵ Not only was the quality of

¹³ Jonna Perrillo, *Uncivil Rights: Teachers, Unions, and Race in the Battle for School Equity* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012).

¹⁴ Algernon D. Black, Kenneth B. Clark and James R. Dumpson, *The City’s Children and the Challenge of Racial Discrimination*. New York: Society for Ethical Culture, 1958), 19 – 20.

¹⁵ HARYOU, *Youth in the Ghetto*, Vol. II, 6-197.

education in Harlem's public schools deemed detrimental, but also the lack of public school facilities acted as a barrier for continued education and educational achievement.

Central Harlem's public schools only served students from kindergarten to eighth grade, forcing high school-aged youth to leave their immediate neighborhoods to access secondary education. The absence of a public high school in the neighborhood speaks volumes to the disparities in the learning landscape of the city during this period, and it was one factor that contributed to attrition rates. The circumstances under which Black youth were expected to learn were daunting, from a daily commute to access school to coping with administrators and faculty who were, by and large, disconnected from them and apathetic to their learning. The economic state of Harlem was another factor influencing Black youth's decisions to leave school. HARYOU's report underscored the "high rate of broken homes" in the neighborhood, noting "half of the youth of the community under eighteen years of age live with one or no parents."¹⁶ Oftentimes, youth left school to support themselves financially and, in some cases, their families. However, finding lucrative work was a challenge. Employers used their lack of educational achievement to justify workforce discrimination. Post-*Brown v. Board of Education*, Harlem's public schools were facing many of the same challenges as their 1930s predecessors.

Post-World War II Harlem: What was on the "hot streets" that youth should be kept from?¹⁷

The inequities uncovered from the 1935 Commission persisted into the post-World War II period. Recall St. Philip's memo on summer programming from the Introduction. The memo, a version of which had been printed in church pamphlets for years, begged a question--one that

¹⁶ HARYOU, *Youth in the Ghetto*, Vol. I, 4-137.

¹⁷ M. Moran Weston, "St. Philip's Community youth center," Church memo, Box 12, April 1969, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

was positioned as rhetorical for congregation members in Harlem on that April morning, and one that historians have continued to research, analyze and write about ever since: What was on the “hot streets” that youth should be kept from?¹⁸

In 1964, five years before the memo was printed, a bullet took the life of James Powell, a Black 15-year-old, ninth grade student. A white lieutenant from the New York Police Department, Thomas Gilligan, was responsible for his death, shooting Powell three times.¹⁹ The incident reverberated from its point of contact, the Upper East Side, and throughout New York City. Gilligan’s implicit racial bias towards Powell impacted predominantly Black communities, namely, Harlem in Manhattan and Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn. Powell was an unarmed teenage boy en route to summer school classes at Robert F. Wagner Junior High School, which was located in an affluent, white neighborhood, Yorkville, on 76th Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues. Historian Michael W. Flamm recounted the incident, which started with David Lynch, a white male apartment building superintendent, who confronted a group of Black youth on the building stoops he was hosing down with water. When they did not follow his order to move, he spouted racial slurs and used the hose to spray water on them. The youth responded by throwing debris at Lynch. Amidst the altercation, an off duty, out of uniform Gilligan, who had been watching from a nearby store, and Powell, who had observed the interaction on the other side of the street, entered, coming face-to-face with one another. Gilligan claimed Powell had a knife

¹⁸ M. Moran Weston, “St. Philip’s Community youth center,” Church memo, Box 12, April 1969, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁹ Martin Arnold, “Police Board Absolves Gilligan In Slaying of Negro Teen-Ager: No Violation of Rules Found – Shooting Led to Riots in Harlem and Brooklyn,” *The New York Times*, November 7, 1964, p. 1 and 13.

and that he shot the teenager to defend himself.²⁰ Among the sonorous reactions to Gilligan's trial, which ended with his exoneration, was that of the Congress on Racial Equality (hereinafter CORE: a national activist organization focused civil rights that had been established in 1942): "the results of its [the police department's] own investigation showed that the youth had been 'needlessly' shot by the officer. [CORE] expressed the opinion that if Powell had been white [sic] Lieutenant Gilligan would have acted differently and the boy would still be alive."²¹ CORE's interpretation of the incident as a senseless act of discrimination reflected views of New York City's predominantly Black neighborhoods, where the effects of racism were felt in every aspect of life. The need to travel from the Bronx to the Upper East Side just to attend classes raised questions about the geographical inequities underpinning the location and quality of the city's public schools. During the regular school year, Powell attended Samuel Gompers Vocational High School in the Bronx.²² The fact that a training school was the most accessible education for Powell as opposed to a traditional academic high school raised red flags about the equity and experiences of Black youth in the public school system. Historians have demonstrated the long history of vocational training as a way to track Black youth into career paths with limited socioeconomic mobility.²³ The burden was on a Black youth to travel outside of his

²⁰ See Daniel Perlstein "The Dead End of Despair: Bayard Rustin, the 1968 New York School Crisis, and the Struggle for Racial Justice," *Civil Rights in New York City: From World War II to the Giuliani Era*, ed., Clarence Taylor (Fordham University Press, New York, 2011), 118-140; and Michael W. Flamm's *In the Heat of the Summer: The New York Riots of 1964 and the War on Crime* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2017).

²¹ Martin Arnold, "Police Board Absolves Gilligan In Slaying of Negro Teen-Ager: No Violation of Rules Found – Shooting Led to Riots in Harlem and Brooklyn," *The New York Times*, November 7, 1964, p. 1 and 13.

²² Michael W. Flamm, *In the Heat of the Summer*, 11.

²³ James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); and Herbert M. Kliebard, *Schooled to Work: Vocationalism and the American*

neighborhood to access summer school classes at Robert F. Wagner Junior High School. Furthermore, the New York City Police Department, an entity that should have represented protection and safety, perpetuated a culture of fear and uncertainty by taking the life of a teenage boy. The crime was not the first of its kind and would not be the last.

While Powell's death was an extreme outcome of the racial inequities that characterized the school system, it was a stark reminder of the racism sewn into the fabric of the city's policies and practices. Black communities quickly responded to the tragedy with six days of protests, in what was known as the Harlem riot of 1964, an event that helped to lay bare the neighborhood's "political economy," or the "essential social and economic dimensions of the city itself, the fundamental processes that contribute to the [...] spatial configuration of people and relationships."²⁴ During the post-World War II period, cities faced the effects of decentralization, which marked a shift in both industry and demographics. The shift in industry, or deindustrialization, saw the depletion of blue-collar work in cities. The shift in demographics, or suburbanization, saw the migration of hundreds of thousands of white middle- and upper-class families out of cities. On a national scale, President Lyndon B. Johnson responded by formally calling for a War on Poverty in 1964, initiating programs that were designed to alleviate some of the burdens weighing on those living in the lowest economic class. These programs included Head Start, Food Stamps, and the Jobs Corps. On the local level, Harlem leaders worked themselves to remedy the poor housing conditions, limited access to policy-making, the shortage

Curriculum, 1876- 1946 (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999).

²⁴ John L. Rury and Jeffrey E. Mirel, "The Political Economy of Urban Education." *Review of Research in Education* 22, no.1 (1997), p. 98.

of economic opportunities for Blacks and substandard schools.²⁵ Reverend Weston described New York as experiencing an “urban crisis,” one that would only be exacerbated by the 1970s fiscal downturn and the subsequent War on Drugs.²⁶ While inequity pervaded the experiences of urban Black populations in the post-World War II period, it was also a time during which activists accelerated civil rights initiatives that had been in motion for decades.

Most scholars regard the post-World War II period, especially the 1960s, as a pivotal moment in history, where discussions about equality surged to the forefront of the nation’s agenda. Echoing the work of other historians, I concur that the post-World War II period offered a continuation or extension of a longer civil rights’ history, which cannot be relegated to one decade or a singular movement.²⁷ Earlier civil rights frameworks underscore the importance of legislation passed during the 1950s and 1960s, including *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), The Civil Rights Act (1964), The Voting Rights Act (1965) and The Federal Fair Housing Act (1968), all of which called for a national commitment to racial progress, often juxtaposing the U.S. governing system with that of its Cold War adversaries. Yet, while the United States rested on its democratic laurels, as opposed to communism or socialism, it remained unclear how legislation would be applied on a local level. Meaningful change remained an arbitrary,

²⁵ Rury and Mirel, “The Political Economy of Urban Education,” 98. See Daniel Perlstein, “The Dead End of Despair: Bayard Rustin, the 1968 New York School Crisis, and the Struggle for Racial Justice,” *Civil Rights in New York City: From World War II to the Giuliani Era*, ed., Clarence Taylor (Fordham University Press, New York, 2011), 118-140; and Flamm, *In the Heat of the Summer*.

²⁶ “Program to Expand to Meet the ‘Urban Crisis,’” St. Philip’s Church Newsletter, vol. XXIV, no. 1, p. 2, Box 13, November 1967, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

²⁷ Historians who have reframed understanding of the civil rights movement to before and after the 1960s include Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004) and Manning Marable, *Race, Reform and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond in Black America, 1945-2006* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

undefined concept that was pitted against decades of racist ideologies and discriminatory policymaking. Historians also imploded the “noble” North narrative, which characterized the region as progressive, “innocent” of the crime of Black enslavement and the concomitant racist ideologies.²⁸ Scholars often have represented the northern region as a place where segregation remained *de facto* (i.e., not legally sanctioned), as opposed to *de jure* (or sanctioned by law). Overturning the *de facto/de jure* binary, which remains a widely accepted paradigm and the framework through which many Americans gain knowledge about the history of discrimination in the North versus that of the South, historians have shown that federal and state policymaking was often systematic and calculated.²⁹ There was nothing circumstantial, objective or “matter of fact” about the origins of inequities in education, politics, housing, and the economic disparities found in the North.

In many ways a boon to *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the concept of “enshrining segregation as public policy” commenced during the New Deal and was reinforced by post-World War II legislation.³⁰ As historians Kenneth Jackson and Ira Katznelson have shown, on the surface, New Deal and post-World War II policies encouraged home ownership, entrepreneurship, and redevelopment;

²⁸ Nicholas Lemann, *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 7; and Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2008), 152 and 271.

²⁹ Ansley T. Erickson, *Making the Unequal Metropolis: School Desegregation and Its Limits* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

³⁰ Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 213. Scholarship that addresses residential segregation in New York City includes Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth Century America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005); Eric C. Schneider, *Smack: Heroin and the American City* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, Press, 2008); and Samuel Zipp, *Manhattan Projects: The Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). For scholarship on residential segregation in northern cities outside of New York, see Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996, 2005).

yet in reality these critical Depression-era and wartime policies perpetuated discrimination and segregation. For example, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), which was established in 1934, sanctioned redlining and subsequently excluded Black neighborhoods from the new investments that white neighborhoods enjoyed. Enacted in 1944, the G.I. Bill facilitated the socioeconomic mobility of World War II veterans, offering returning soldiers money to purchase homes in suburbia, attend college and start businesses. Yet, the G.I. Bill diverted white middle-class households and their tax expenditures to the suburbs and to various all-white neighborhoods in the city, such as the Upper East Side, where Powell was murdered. Similar to the New Deal programs that emerged out of the Great Depression, funding was doled out locally, and many Black veterans were denied the same benefits as their white counterparts. Consider this statistic to quantify the extent to which local actors, including realtors and mortgage brokers, shaped demographic changes in New York by facilitating white suburbanization, “[I]n NY and the northern NJ suburbs, fewer than 100 of the 67,000 mortgages insured by the G.I. Bill supported home purchases by non-whites.”³¹

The transformation of New York’s geography over the course of the two decades following World War II further affected Harlemites, as the neighborhood was selected for “slum clearance.”³² With government funding from The Federal Housing Act (1949), ‘public housing’

³¹ Ira Katznelson’s *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth Century America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 140.

³² Zipp, *Manhattan Projects*, 14, 79, 163 and 223. By capping annual income at \$4,000, public housing regulations concentrated Black people from lower economic classes in the housing developments. Exclusionary real estate practices were not specific to Harlem and occurred throughout New York City as well as in other cities in the United States. See also Pritchett Wendell, *Brownsville, Brooklyn: Blacks, Jews, and the Changing Face of the Ghetto* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., 2002); Kevin Fox Gotham, *Race, Real Estate and Uneven Development: The Kansas City Experience, 1900-2000* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002); and John L. Rury, “Race, Space, and the Politics of Chicago’s Public Schools: Benjamin Willis and the Tragedy of Urban Education,” *History of Education Quarterly* 38 (1998).

was billed as a symbol of progress--both in its contemporary design and in its mission of giving its residents a “fair chance.”³³ In reality, it frequently uprooted communities and local businesses, whilst eliminating thousands of jobs, spaces for community engagement, and places that boasted racial and economic diversity. In their respective writings, social worker Ellen Lurie and activist Jane Jacobs suggested that, had Black residents been part of the decision-making process and plans for city housing, the function of urban renewal would not have been one of destruction.³⁴ Without taking into consideration the interests and needs of the people who would be living in the new housing, city planners, and architects designed structures that they deemed to be an improvement for Harlemites, but in actuality, the buildings were an improvement for municipal leaders, as they attempted to improve optics and eliminate urban blight.

White municipal leaders enjoyed a monopoly on financial resources from the federal government and the political clout dictated the direction of renewal. Because Black voices were minimized in the decision-making process (including everything from appearance of buildings to their location and who would be illegible to reside there), those who lived in the newly developed residential complexes often experienced detachment from each other and the rest of the city. The sense of community that came from the storefront, stoop front interactions was lost in the sterile, manufactured housing units. Recent scholarship from Brian Goldstein, however, adds an important layer to this narrative by demonstrating the agency and role of the Black community in the process of urban development through community development corporations

³³ Zipp, *Manhattan Projects*, 280.

³⁴ Ellen Lurie, “Community Action in East Harlem,” ed., Leonard J. Duhl, *The Urban Condition: People and Policy in the Metropolis* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1963), 249; and Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Modern Library, 1961).

(CDCs).³⁵ This interpretation suggests that while city developers and politicians were seen as the decision-makers in urban renewal projects in Harlem, local activism, and community-based organizations were also part and parcel of this process, both in the veins of protest and collaboration. While public housing accounted for only a fraction of the population, many of the other options for housing were problematic. HARYOU's report estimated that 90% of the residential buildings in Harlem were built over 30 years ago in the first half of the 20th century, and almost half were built before 1900.³⁶ Without the socioeconomic mobility to relocate or renovate, Harlemites remained spatially and socially segregated from the rest of the city, and in many ways, from each other.

While the industrial 'boom' incited higher wages and economic mobility for New York's Black population, the majority still occupied low pay positions. In other words, as historian Cheryl Greenberg demonstrates, despite the wartime economic upturn, the Black population experienced minimal opportunity.³⁷ During the post-World War II period, decentralization, or deindustrialization proceeded, while Black and Puerto Rican migrants still flooded the cities. Meanwhile, many whites fled the city living for the comforts of suburbia, further separating Tristate area residents along racial and geographic lines. The FHA promoted white suburban development by prioritizing new construction outside of cities, funding highway development and offering tax breaks to relocating businesses. The shift in industry produced a "spatial mismatch," or a gap between the establishment of white-owned businesses in the suburbs and the

³⁵ Brian D. Goldstein, *The Roots of Urban Renaissance: Gentrification and the Struggle over Harlem* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2017).

³⁶ HARYOU, *Youth in the Ghetto*, Vol. I, 4-103-4-104.

³⁷ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *"Or Does It Explode?" Black Harlem in the Great Depression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

dwindling of blue-collar work opportunities for the Black labor force in cities.³⁸ By 1960, Kenneth Clark reported “about one out of every seven or eight adults in Harlem is unemployed.”³⁹ With minimal political power in unions and an overall lack of educational attainment due to inequitable educational opportunities, many Black people remained in low-skill, service positions or they were unemployed.

HARYOU’s findings also revealed the absence of “economic power” in Harlem, identifying this as a major concern for future generations and underscoring the lack of Black operated businesses that would boost and sustain the local economy, “[T]here are no big businesses, industries, commercial, sales, or financial institutions which employ substantial numbers of individuals in the community.”⁴⁰ Clark reiterated this problem in the HARYOU report, explaining that, while there were 1,617 businesses in Harlem, the majority catered to “constantly renewable service[s],” or no “goods of lasting worth.”⁴¹ Differences in socioeconomic mobility for Black people and white people are further outlined in the 1960 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, which compared the occupations of white and Black men living in New York City, revealing that white men held positions in “professional, technical and managerial” fields at over three times that of Black men.⁴² For women working in the highest level of industry, the

³⁸ Surgue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 140.

³⁹ Kenneth Clark, *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965), 34.

⁴⁰ HARYOU, *Youth in the Ghetto*, vol. 1, 3-76-3-78.

⁴¹ Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 28.

⁴² HARYOU, *Youth in the Ghetto*, Bureau of the Census, Vol. I, 4-130. “U.S. Censuses of Population and Housing, 1960,” Final Report PHC (1) – 104, Part 1, Table P-3.

percentage of white women outnumbered that of Black women by over half.⁴³ Accordingly, average household incomes of Harlem residents were markedly lower than the average household incomes for the rest of New York City. In Harlem, 17% of the population's "family income" was below \$2,000 versus that of the city at large, which was 9%. Moreover, only 4% of Harlemites earned \$10,000 or more versus 18% of those living in New York City.⁴⁴ The inequities in the job market were not a coincidence. Employers used extra-legal practices to withhold opportunities from Black applicants, citing their lack of credentials or manipulating policies centered on diversity in the workplace to avoid hiring minority groups. Harlem was a "Blacklisted district," which meant that if Black business owners attempted to expand within the neighborhood, they would not receive the credit to make any forward movement.⁴⁵

Historian Eric Schneider discusses how the continued migration of Black and Brown people to Harlem coupled with the lack of socioeconomic mobility and substandard educational opportunities resulted in a "geography of inequality;" such realities supported an underground economy with heroin as the primary trade.⁴⁶ Harlem, which "had once sustained poor and working class families," spiraled downward in the 1960s and early 1970s.⁴⁷ In the absence of such key resources as jobs and fair education, Black and Brown youth were drawn to the drug

⁴³ HARYOU, *Youth in the Ghetto*, Vol. I, 4-134. Bureau of the Census, "U.S. Censuses of Population and Housing, 1960," Final Report PHC (1) – 104, Part 1, Table P-3.

⁴⁴ HARYOU, *Youth in the Ghetto*, Bureau of the Census, vol. I, 4-134. "U.S. Censuses of Population and Housing, 1960," Final Report PHC (1) – 104, Part 1, Table P-1.

⁴⁵ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 390-391. For studies that address this topic outside of New York, see Vincent P. Franklin, *The Education of Black Philadelphia: The Social and Educational History of a Minority Community, 1900-1950* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979), 27.

⁴⁶ Schneider, *Smack*, 116.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 124 and 203.

trade. Instead of ameliorating the negative affects heroin had on the community by instituting meaningful programs and services, city leaders and police addressed this issue by relying on incarceration. For example, instituted by Governor Nelson Rockefeller, New York’s Rockefeller Drug Laws (1973) included extreme mandatory minimums for the possession and sale of narcotics. For school-aged youth or minors, municipal authorities used what would subsequently be labeled the school-to-prison pipeline as the answer to improving society.

School administration and faculty were culpable in this process, too. They often discouraged students from pursuing academics and used expulsion to remedy misbehavior that is typical of children, instead of providing guidance and rehabilitation in schools. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the effects of federal, state and municipal policies and practices, some of which had been in practice for decades, became visible in cities like New York. The grave state of Harlem in the postwar period, especially in terms of schooling, begged the question: What was happening to respond to and prevent these disparities? Additionally, if the public schools were foundering, where was education flourishing? What evidence do we have of viable efforts focused on education in the community? St. Philip’s participation in education and its agency in establishing programming for Black Harlemites complement other 21st century scholarship that challenges the “deficit-model” of predominantly Black urban communities.⁴⁸

Part II: The Origins of St. Philip’s & Black Episcopalians

It is important to identify St. Philip’s relationship to “the Black church” – a moniker derived from W.E.B. Du Bois’ study, *The Negro Church* (1903), which was later used by a number of Black scholars, including by Carter G. Woodson in *The History of the Negro Church*

⁴⁸ Ansley Erickson, “HARYOU: An Apprenticeship for Young Leaders,” eds., Ansley Erickson and Ernest Morell, *Educating Harlem: A Century of Schooling and Resistance in a Black Community* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019).

(1921), E. Franklin Frazier in *The Negro Church in America* (1963).⁴⁹ Dating back to the late 18th century, the phrase symbolized, and in many ways, became synonymous with, denominations that had established independent churches, separate from white religious institutions such as Baptist, Methodist, African American Methodist, and Presbyterian. The term overgeneralizes Black churches' unique policies, practices, and histories and assumes that they are monolithic regardless of location, leadership, and membership. However, at the same time, it celebrates their roles in establishing autonomy and independence for the Black population. The extent to which Black churches effectively inspired an activist agenda in their congregations became a point of focus for religious historians, whose interpretations fell into two camps.

Pre-1960, intellectuals including sociologist E. Franklin Frazier, economist Gunnar Myrdal, sociologist Anthony Orum and journalist Charles Silberman portrayed Black churches in the postwar era as anti-intellectual, assimilationist, isolationist and solely concerned with sacred or priestly matters.⁵⁰ Collectively, this scholarship marginalized the role of Black churches in social, political, and economic life. Such interpretations identified Black churches as far removed from life beyond parish house doors, which was a problematic considering the marked demographic changes of the postwar period that effected Black urbanization. One noteworthy exception to the pre-1960 scholarship is St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton's sociological study

⁴⁹ W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Negro Church* (Atlanta: Atlanta University Press, 1903); and Carter G. Woodson's *The History of The Negro Church* (Washington, D.C., The Associated Publishers, 1921). Du Bois 'coined' the terminology "the Negro church" – or "the Black church" in his study. Because I am introducing this phrase for the first time, I have marked it quotes, however, I do not include quotes around this term throughout the dissertation given its common use.

⁵⁰ E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (New York: Schocken, 1964); Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York: Harper and Row, 1944); Anthony M. Orum, "A Reappraisal of the Social and Political Participation of Negroes," *American Journal of Sociology* 72 (July 1966); and Charles E. Silberman, *Crisis in Black and White* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964).

of the South Side of Chicago. They identified the Black church as central to the community in both the capacity of a religious institution as well as that of a social institution.⁵¹

While Drake and Cayton's publication stands as a seminal work, other Black religious scholars have since categorized their interpretation of the Black church under "the compensatory model."⁵² As scholars C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya argue, the compensatory model identified the Black church's "main attraction" as "giv[ing] large masses of people the opportunity for power, control, applause, and acclaim within the group which they do not receive in the larger society."⁵³ In other words, Drake and Cayton's analysis of the Black church situated it more in a reactive role; it was attempting to offset the social, economic and political challenges or disparities to which the Black population was subjected, but in an insular way. While the church was encouraging members to experience "acclaim and access," it was only a possibility in an isolated or segregated space.⁵⁴ In turn, Drake and Cayton's Black church was not facilitating uplift for the Black congregants in society at large. In summary, as opposed to identifying the varied missions of Black religions institutions and the range of activism, the scholarship pre-1960, overwhelmingly positioned Black churches as the antithesis of progressive, transformative institutions. Post-1960, revisionists such as theologian James H. Cone and historian Gayraud S. Wilmore offered new or revised interpretations of Black churches

⁵¹ St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1945). St. Clair Drake was also an anthropologist.

⁵² C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, Lincoln, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 11.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, Lincoln, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 11; and Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*.

that pushed back on the pre-1960 discourse. Namely, Cone and Wilmore were instrumental in carving out a place for Black churches at the center of activism and social change.⁵⁵

Understanding the origins of the Black church and the different interpretations of its involvement in civil rights is critical to interpreting St. Philip's educational activism during the post-World War II period. Regardless of St. Philip's Black leadership and service to the Black community, scholars overwhelmingly omit Black Episcopal churches from histories of Black churches in the United States.⁵⁶ Or, in many cases where scholars incorporate the Black Episcopal church, it is written about in the vein of criticism. There are some exceptions to this pattern, including the work of religious studies scholar Craig Townshend, who focuses on St. Philip's during the 19th century, and religious historian Gardiner Shattuck, Jr. as well as theologian Harold Lewis, who reference St. Philip's in their respective studies on race in the Episcopal denomination.⁵⁷ This scholarship was published around the turn of the 21st century and it has been instrumental in identifying the unique history, challenges and contributions of Black Episcopal churches in Black church history. Specifically, by examining Black Episcopalians efforts to eradicate the denomination's discriminatory policies and practices, Townshend, Shattuck, Jr., and Lewis respectively discuss the ways in which Black Episcopalians were civil rights activists. Building on the contributions of Townshend, Shattuck, Jr., and Lewis, this

⁵⁵ James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (New York: Seabury Press, 1969); and Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Examination of the Black Experience in Religion* (New York: Anchor, 1973).

⁵⁶ Du Bois, *The Negro Church* and Woodson, *The History of The Negro Church*.

⁵⁷ Harold T. Lewis, *Yet With A Steady Beat: The African American Struggle for Recognition in the Episcopal Church* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1996); Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr. *Episcopalians and Race: Civil War to Civil Rights* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000); and Craig D. Townsend, *Faith in Their Own Color: Black Episcopalians in Antebellum New York City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

dissertation is the first close examination of St. Philip's educational activism in the postwar period. Moreover, this research analyzes both the church's community activism in Harlem as well the church's activism in the national denomination. Revisionist interpretations of Black Episcopalians are critical to establishing a more inclusive, diversified history of Black churches. This scholarship also pushes back on the monolithic interpretation of the Black church, which portrays Black churches as uniform and overlooks their denominational differences, subsequently, overlooking their individual histories.

The history of Black Episcopalians in the United States is a valuable starting place for understanding what differentiates this religious group from other Black denominations that have been included in "the Black church" moniker such as Baptists, Methodists, and African American Episcopal Methodists. While Episcopalians and Methodists (and even Baptists) are affiliated with Western Christian faith, there are differences within in each denomination in terms of sacrament, religious texts, and church leadership (Episcopalians and Methodists followed a hierarchy of Archbishop, Bishop, Rector and Congregation whereas Baptists leadership was less structured with autonomous leadership on a congregational level). Yet, these variances do not account for why Black Episcopalians "have been accused of selling their spiritual birthright for a mess of pottage of rather dubious nutritional value."⁵⁸ The history of racism within the Episcopal denomination, which included the exclusion of Black Episcopalians from positions of governance and decision-making, and the status of Black Episcopalians as part of the bourgeoisie were points of contention for scholars, journalists, and non-Episcopalians. These constituencies saw Black Episcopalians as complacent with the white racial hierarchy of the denomination; they were accommodative to white values and white power as opposed to

⁵⁸ Lewis, *Yet With A Steady Beat*, 3.

advocating for Black values and Black power. This perception came to a crossroads during the postwar period amidst of the apexes of the civil rights movement: critics perceived Black Episcopalians as conservative in their civil rights strategies and far-removed socially, politically, and economically from activist groups that were pushing for radical social transformation.

“If a Black man is anything but a Baptist or a Methodist, someone has been tampering with his religion.”⁵⁹ Historians have ascribed this pointed observation to Black educator and scholar Booker T. Washington. It effectively captures the distrust and denigration that Black Episcopalians have experienced since the formation of first Black Episcopal church in 1792, when Absalom Jones established the African Protestant Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1787, over a decade earlier, Jones, alongside fellow Black Methodist preacher, Richard Allen, led an exodus of Black congregants from an historically white church, St. George’s Methodist (also in Philadelphia). Together, they formed the Free African Society. The fracture was a result of the white governance at St. George’s, which practiced racist policies such as segregated seating.⁶⁰ While unified when they split from St. George’s in 1787, Jones and Allen differed when it came to choosing a faith for the independent Black church. Jones gravitated towards the Protestant Episcopal faith whereas Allen reasoned that Methodism was the more logical choice since the Black congregants had already been practicing Methodists at St. George’s.

Scholars have identified compelling interpretations for origins of criticisms of Black Episcopalians from this juncture. Theologian Kortright Davis conjectures that the notion of

⁵⁹ Lewis, *Yet With A Study Beat*, 1.

⁶⁰ John H., Hewitt, Jr. *Protest and Progress: New York’s First Black Episcopal Church Fights Racism*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000).

Black Episcopalians challenged preconceived ideas about what Black identity and beliefs looked like according to a set of racial norms upheld by mainstream society:

Black people are always susceptible to the problem of having to explain why they are associated with styles of belief and patterns of social behavior which do not readily reflect their ethnic antecedents or *natural* tendencies. Anglicanism, it is said, is cold, stiff, moral, hierarchical – it lacks the warmth, flexibility, informality and communality of Africanism.⁶¹

While Kortright applies social constructs to analyze the affiliation of Black Episcopalians with elitism and whiteness, Wilmore attributes the criticisms to a series of fundamental decisions that Black Episcopalians made during the formative years of the church. He suggests that the criticism is a result of Black Episcopalians “not go[ing] as far as the Methodists and Baptists in breaking fellowship with their white brothers and sisters.”⁶² Namely, Black Methodists had a definitive split from their white counterparts in 1870 when they established the African Methodist Episcopal Church (hereinafter AME). Black Baptists experienced the same liberation when they founded the National Baptist Convention in 1895 (hereinafter NBC). In this way, the formation of the AME and NBC was another factor that reinforced the divide between Black Episcopalians and Methodists and Baptists: the AME and NBC were operating autonomously or independent of white governance. This stood in contrast to Black Episcopalians, who Wilmore describes as “less aggressively Black-oriented,” a characterization based on their choice to remain part of the white-led denomination.⁶³ Unlike Black Episcopalians, Black Methodists and

⁶¹ Kortright Davis, “Afro-Anglicanism and the Ecumenical Imperative,” *Linkage*, no. 6 (October 1986): 2.

⁶² Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 116-117.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

Black Baptists laid claim to a faith, culture and history outside of white peoples' influences. Wilmore argues that "[T]he real independence movement among Black churches – which adopted the name 'African' to signify its pride of ancestral heritage and solidarity – grew out of the mass appeal that the Baptists and Methodists had in both the free and the slave communities."⁶⁴ In other words, AME and NBC churches incorporated references to Africa and Ethiopia in their names. This nomenclature was immediately recognizable for AME churches as well as for NBC churches, for instance, Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem. Black Episcopal churches, including St. Philip's, dropped the reference to African in their titles. In this way, Episcopalians' decisions: to take a different path than Methodism, removing any reference to Africa in their congregation names, and staying under the Episcopal denomination's governance despite its racist practices, suggested that Black Episcopalians were viewed as accommodationist. Wilmore positions this narrative in opposition to that of Black Methodists and Black Baptists, who had formally separated from their respective white denominations, maintained geographical references to the history of the Black community in the United States and lead "the first radical thrust for self-determination."⁶⁵ Criticisms of Black Episcopal churches were only magnified amidst the major demographic changes of the post-World War II period when the role of Black churches in northern cities expanded rapidly as they were expected to meet the needs of a growing population. And, these needs were not exiguous. Accordingly, pressure on the Black Episcopal church — and in many ways, the Black church— would be at an

⁶⁴ Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 116-117.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

all-time high during this period when city-based institutions squared off with the “urban crisis.”⁶⁶ Before examining the role St. Philip’s played in Harlem in the postwar period, it is important to discuss its origins in New York City.

St. Philip’s mission, “to serve the community,” was at the forefront of its initiatives beginning in 1809, when it became the first Black Episcopal Church in New York City.⁶⁷ This mission continued to guide its work in Harlem throughout the post-World War II period. Its founding fellowship—an estimated 200 Black Episcopalians—sought autonomy from an all-white, male Episcopalian leadership. The race of the denomination’s hierarchy would last through the second half of the 20th century.⁶⁸ As late member of St. Philip’s and historian, John Hewitt, Jr. explained, a group of Black Episcopalians refused to accept “the second-class treatment they were getting at historic Trinity Church, the ‘Mother Church’ of the Anglican or Episcopal denomination in the United States, where their forefathers had been worshipping since long before the Revolutionary War.”⁶⁹ Seeking liberation from discriminatory practices that were characteristic of churches with interracial congregations in the 18th and 19th centuries, Black Episcopalians broke away from Trinity Church (located on Wall Street and Broadway to date),

⁶⁶ “Program to Expand to Meet the ‘Urban Crisis,’” St. Philip’s Church Newsletter, vol. XXIV, no. 1, p. 2, Box 13, November 1967, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

⁶⁷ Ramon Estrada, *An Evaluation of the Community Development Projects of St. Philip’s Church Final Report* (Cambridge: Abt. Associates, Inc., 1974) 2; *The 1933 Church Directory and Year Book of Saint Philip’s*, Box 37, St. Philip’s Church Records; and Albert A. Edwards, *Summer Program Report to the Board of Directors*, Box 12, 30 August 1968, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library. For more on early programming at St. Philip’s since the 1920s see Stephan McKinney, “Secularization Theory and Black Protestantism: Patterns of Differentiation in a Contemporary Black Church” (Drew University: Madison, New Jersey, 2010).

⁶⁸ As previously mentioned, Black leadership in the Episcopal denomination was nonexistent until the post-World War II period at which point one high-level position, Executive Director of Social Research and Education, was filled by St. Philip’s Reverend Weston.

⁶⁹ Hewitt, Jr., *Protest and Progress*, 58-59.

establishing the Free African Church of St. Philip.⁷⁰ Shortly thereafter in 1818, the church was renamed St. Philip's Episcopal Church and remained an independent place of worship for Black New Yorkers located on Centre Street in Lower Manhattan. The origins of St. Philip's in a city divided by pro- and anti-slavery constituencies magnified the importance of having a space, where Black congregants could practice faith and, importantly, meet as a community. The value of gathering together and engaging in dialogue about community concerns was invaluable in 1809, and it was a practice that endured through the post-World War II period.

The autonomous act of starting a church under Black leadership solely for New York City's Black communities must be underscored, given the history of racial discrimination in the city. In Manhattan, ideologies about white supremacy existed well before the 20th century, ever since the Dutch discovered the island in 1609. Such beliefs affected all aspects of life, including housing, education, jobs and city governance. After claiming the Southern end of the island as their trading post, the Dutch West India Company subsequently capitalized on the land's natural resources and harbor, using the Black population as their manual labor force to clear land, build wooden structures, dig canals, and clean streets.⁷¹ Policies restricting the socioeconomic mobility and political freedoms of the Black population were exacerbated by British rule, especially when New York City became the slave trading headquarters for America during the 18th century under the Duke of York.

⁷⁰ Hewitt, Jr., *Protest and Progress*, 58-59.

⁷¹ There were nuances for Black people living in Manhattan, in example, Land of the Blacks was a neighborhood outside the permits of New Amsterdam in present day Washington Square Park, where a group of Black men and women owned and operated farms while being employed by the Dutch West India Company.

Even after manumission in New York in 1827, city leaders remained ambivalent over the citizenship and rights of the Black population. As the largest shipping port on the Eastern seaboard, New York merchants and manufacturers played a key role in the international trade of cotton. In antebellum America, the success of the city's economy was inextricably linked to the labor of enslaved Black men, women and children in the South, with cotton serving as the largest export out of New York harbor. White southerners traveled to Manhattan to develop relationships with manufacturers and investors, but also to experience the city's culture and theater.⁷² The New-York Historical Society's has organized a wealth of information on the origins of minstrel shows and Blackface performances that used caricatures and stereotypes of Black people as entertainment for white audiences in the city.⁷³ During the post-Civil War era, as industrialization and immigration swept the city, the Black population continued to face the nation's deeply entrenched ideologies about Black inferiority, which were manifested in a highly competitive job market and by limited socioeconomic mobility. Accordingly, the second-class treatment of Black people was equally an issue beyond church house doors.

In addition to understanding the context surrounding the origins of the church, its geographic location in the city also has historic importance. The relocation of St. Philip's in Manhattan was a product of key demographic changes that altered the landscape of the island. From Centre Street, St. Philip's moved to Mulberry Street in 1856. In 1885, it relocated to 25th Street, before making its final move to Harlem in 1911. (It offered services in 1910 in the gym until the parish

⁷² Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); and Barnet Schecter, *The Devil's Own Work: The Civil War Draft Riots and the Fight to Reconstruct America* (New York: Walker and Co., 2005).

⁷³ "Theatrical and Musical." *The Herald*, July 10, 1853. Collection of the New-York Historical Society; and "The Gems of the Christy's." c. 1848. The Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. LC-USZ62-42475.

house was completed). Catapulted by investment in the northern part of Manhattan, St. Philip's relocated to 134th Street, between Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard and Frederick Douglass Boulevard in Central Harlem (where it currently exists today). The church worked with a Black-owned real estate company, Nail and Parker, selling their land on 25th Street—the church plot for \$140,000 and the churchyard, or cemetery, for \$450,000—in order to relocate.⁷⁴ Nail and Parker facilitated their acquisition of land for a church house and ten nearby apartment buildings on 135th Street. The neo-Gothic style church in Harlem was designed by Black architects, Vertner Woodson Tandy and George Washington Foster.

Historian Kevin McGruder identifies St. Philip's as one of four institutions that was instrumental in establishing Harlem as a 'home' to thousands of Black people at the turn of the 20th century. He argues that the real estate transactions carried out by St. Philip's leadership were pivotal in making this area of Manhattan, or what would become "the Black Capital of the world," accessible to a middle-class Black population.⁷⁵ McGruder's work on property acquisition remains one of the only histories to consider St. Philip's significance during the early 20th century, despite the fact that St. Philip's designation as the longest-standing Black Episcopal institution in Harlem.⁷⁶ And while McGruder concludes his study in the 1920s,

⁷⁴ Craig Steven Wilder, *In the Company of Black Men: The African Influence on African American Culture in New York City* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 194-195.

⁷⁵ Kevin McGruder, *Race and Real Estate: Conflict and Cooperation in Harlem, 1890-1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015). Several histories mention or reference St. Philip's, during the 19th century, including Carla L. Peterson's *Black Gotham: A Family History of African Americans in Nineteenth-Century New York City* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), 2012 as well as in the 20th century, including Gabriel N. Mendes' *Under the Strain of Color: Harlem's Lafargue Clinic and the Promise of an Antiracist Psychiatry* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2015). Yet, McGruder is the only narrative that discusses St. Philip's at length and places it centrally in the history of Harlem.

⁷⁶ In addition to McGruder, Harold T. Lewis includes St. Philip's in his study on the long-history of discrimination within the denomination, *Yet With A Steady Beat: The African American Struggle for Recognition in the Episcopal Church* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1996). While important

Harlem faced an increasingly uphill trajectory of challenges during the Great Depression and the post-World War II period. While the neighborhood started as racially and economically diverse, by mid-century, it became home to a predominantly Black population, where segregation (albeit never legalized) affected the economic, political, residential and educational experiences for the communities residing there.

Alongside McGruder, scholars have documented demographic change that played a part in the evolution of Harlem as an historically Black neighborhood. According to Census Tract Data, in 1910, Central Harlem's Black population accounted for 9.89% out of the 181,949 people residing in the neighborhood. The remaining 90.01% represented the white population. By 1950, the percentage of Black people residing in Central Harlem was 98.07% out of 237,468 people, whereas the remaining 1.76% represented the white population.⁷⁷ The Black population residing in Harlem, however, was anything, but monolithic. It was inclusive of southern Black migrants, Afro-Caribbean immigrants and Black New Yorkers who relocated from elsewhere in the city to Harlem.

One of the primary causes shaping Harlem's demographics in the 20th century was the Great Migration (1890-1970), wherein over six million southern Black people relocated from the South

contributions to our understanding of St. Philip's, neither study focuses on the church's contributions to education in Harlem.

⁷⁷ Sources: 1910 to 1940, Census Tract Data from National Historical Geographical Information System, Compiled by Andrew A. Beveridge and Co-workers; 1950, Ellen M. Bogue File, as edited by Andrew A. Beveridge and co-workers; 1960 through 2000, Tabulated Census Data from National Historical Geographic Information System; 2006 Data from American Community Survey, U.S. Bureau of the Census. Boundary Files from National Historical Geographic Information System 1910 to 2000, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006. "All data and boundary files available from Minnesota Population Center. Since results are tabulated from the sources indicated, they may not necessarily match Census published figures for population and race."

to northern cities in the United States.⁷⁸ This unprecedented population shift was a result of a myriad of factors. While the Civil War ended slavery, racial discrimination remained a pervasive force in the South, witnessed through such practices as the sharecropping system, which limited the Black population's socioeconomic mobility. Furthermore, post-Reconstruction acts of violence, the rise of Jim Crow, legalized segregation and political disenfranchisement continued to marginalize the Black population, pushing many families northward.

There were also factors drawing southern Black migrants to the North. The prospect of finding work and experiencing socioeconomic mobility, especially during wartime industrial booms, when northerners were actively recruiting a labor force, influenced African American families to head North. Seeking an environment free of intimidation and violence and full of the promise of civil rights and political mobility, southern Black migrants settled in northern cities with the goal of participating in politics and establishing “new political linkages.”⁷⁹ Chain migrations—networks of family and friends or local institutions such as churches, fraternal orders and benevolent societies—were instrumental in facilitating southern Black migration. Each assisted in the process of relocation, whether these individuals and institutions helped newcomers secure housing or employment.

Migration to Harlem also occurred within Manhattan. Black people who resided in Manhattan's Tenderloin and San Juan Hill neighborhoods (presently Midtown West) moved to Harlem in the 1900s. Several factors influenced their movement to northern Manhattan, including the construction of Pennsylvania Station, the violent riot of 1900, which left many

⁷⁸ Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010).

⁷⁹ Ira Katznelson, *Black Men, White Cities: Race, Politics and Migration in the United States, 1900-1930, and Britain, 1948-1968* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

Black New Yorkers feeling unsafe in Midtown, and the formation of the Committee of Fourteen in 1905, a political group comprised of white elites who forced Black people out of Tenderloin and San Juan Hill in an effort to rid the area of ‘crime’ and ‘vice.’ McGruder documents some of the pull factors that also influenced demographic shifts, such as Black community investment in Harlem. This included St. Philip’s property acquisitions and the completion of the first subway in 1904, which facilitated access alongside the West side of the city from City Hall in Lower Manhattan to 145th Street in Harlem.

Alongside migration from the South and from Lower Manhattan, as historian Irma Watkins-Owens reveals, Afro-Caribbean immigrants also relocated to Harlem in search of economic mobility amidst the push of plummeting sugar prices in their home countries and the pull of the World War I industrial boom in the United States.⁸⁰ Prior to The Immigration Act of 1924, the United States did not have any quotas in place for the Caribbean Islands. However, the cost of travel, which ranged from \$25-\$45 (with a required a \$30 deposit and the requirement that immigrants be greeted by someone upon arrival) meant that a disproportionate number of Afro-Caribbean newcomers were part of the middle or upper class.⁸¹ By the 1920s, some had established several of their own businesses in Harlem, and continued to occupy a middle-class status. However, Watkins-Owens is careful to point out how, because of their skin color, they were overwhelmingly relegated to service occupations. Another point of access for Afro-Caribbean immigrants from the lower economic strata was working directly for the United States’ government. Many people helped with the construction of the Panama Canal in 1914,

⁸⁰ Irma Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations: Caribbean Immigrants and the Harlem Community, 1900-1930* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996).

⁸¹ Marcy Sacks, *Before Harlem: The Black Experience in New York City Before World War I* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

whereas other worked for the United Fruit Company, both of which facilitated their relocation to the northern cities.

Immigration, migration and, eventually, outmigration also shaped key demographics in East Harlem where Eastern European Jewish people, Italian immigrants and Puerto Ricans migrants resided during the first part of the 20th century. With the Jones Act in 1917 legalizing Puerto Rican citizenship, migrants arrived in search of economic opportunities and political citizenship. While the Great Depression drastically reduced the number of new migrants, World War II and the accompanying economic boom pulled hundreds of thousands of Black southern and Puerto Rican migrants to New York by 1960, many of whom relocated to Harlem and East Harlem, respectively.

The history of demographic change informs our understanding of St. Philip's membership. The church was founded by Black men living in New York, many of whom were born in the city. As Harlem established itself as a Black neighborhood in the city, by the late 1920s, early 1930s, "some better-off Caribbean immigrants" were drawn to St. Philip's.⁸² The pattern of Caribbean immigrants joining Episcopal churches--whether St. Philip's, St. Martin's (another church in Harlem with a predominantly middle-class population) or other Episcopal parishes in the city--was a product of Anglicization in their home countries. Those being baptized or practicing faith at St. Philip's were among the city's Black 'elite.' As a prominent Black sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois wrote in 1901, "[T]he older families of well-to-do free negroes who count on an unspotted family life for two centuries gather at St. Philips..."⁸³ Du

⁸² Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations*, 58.

⁸³ W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Black North in 1901: New York," from *Dan S. Green and Edwin Driver, W.E.B. Du Bois, On Sociology and the Black Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 151-152.

Bois' observation alludes to the reality that the socioeconomic status of St. Philip's membership was a point of contention. To "count" or rely on an "unspotted family life" (a life free from irregularities or burdens), insinuates a degree of privilege.⁸⁴ Watkins-Owens explains this practice as follows:

St. Philip's, which largely attracted and perhaps even catered to the elite, was identified by some contemporaries as perpetuating differences in the Black community based on color. Certain pews, these observers claimed, were reserved for the lightest-complexioned and upper-class members. St Philip's was the only Black church in Manhattan which used the pew system – the assigning of pews to certain individuals and families based upon their contributions.⁸⁵

By the end of the 19th century, the pew system, problematic in nature, fell out of practice at St. Philip's.⁸⁶ However, the practice exposed a long and nuanced history of the Black Episcopal church and an immutable example of conservatism and elitism. By the post-World War II period, when the pew system became a quondam display of race and wealth, affiliation of Black Episcopalians with the bourgeoisie persisted. In Harlem, where class differences between the Black Episcopal church and the surrounding neighborhood were oftentimes stark, the perception of St. Philip's parishioners was that they were accommodative to white values and white power as opposed to Black values and Black power. Moreover, the majority of the Black population saw Black Episcopalians as focused inward on maintaining their socioeconomic status. By the

⁸⁴ W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Black North in 1901: New York," from *Dan S. Green and Edwin Driver, W.E.B. Du Bois, On Sociology and the Black Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 151-152.

⁸⁵ Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations*, 195.

⁸⁶ Willard B. Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite 1880- 1920* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2000) 287.

post-World War II period when St. Philip's membership reached 4,600 (the highest number in its history, which made it the largest Episcopal church in the country), Afro-Caribbean immigrants comprised of over half of the church population, including individuals and families from Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago, and Haiti.⁸⁷ As a result of the long history of British Anglicization of the Caribbean, it is unsurprising that newcomers sought membership at Episcopal churches in New York, where they joined Black Americans many of whom were born in New York and some of whom migrated from the South. In 1965, following a *New York Amsterdam News*' poll of Harlem's most prominent Black churches, Rev. Dr. M. Moran Weston revealed that St. Philip's had one white person on staff. While he "believ[ed] that integration should be one of the missionary frontiers of the church," St. Philip's had a predominantly Black membership during the postwar period.⁸⁸ It important to note, however, that St. Philip's identified its programming as inclusive, welcoming Harlemites to participate regardless if they were Episcopalian. In alignment with its pro-integration stance and its inclusivity in "welcom[ing] and encoura[ing] peoples of all races and backgrounds to join," the church did not keep a formal "record of the race" of its parishioners.⁸⁹

St. Philip's is an important institution, and Harlem is an important locality for understanding how autonomy operated in a cityscape rife with policies and practices that

⁸⁷ McKinney, "Secularization Theory and Black Protestantism," 225; "Harlem's St. Philip's," *Religious New Service*, January 7, 1952, n.p., The New York Public Library.

⁸⁸ Malcolm Nash, "White, Negro Churches Polled on Integration," *New York Amsterdam News*, September 25, 1965.

⁸⁹ Malcolm Nash, "White, Negro Churches Polled on Integration," *New York Amsterdam News*, September 25, 1965. See James L. Hicks' follow-up article stating his disappointment in Rev. M. Moran Weston's evasive response: "Another Angle: The Segregated Hour," *New York Amsterdam News*, September 25, 1965, 17.

marginalized Black communities and their access to--among many things--equitable education. St. Philip's participated in education as both an organizational base and an educational space. This is especially important, considering how, overwhelmingly, scholars take aim at Black churches, particularly the Episcopalian denomination, for being disengaged socially, economically and politically from Black communities, and hence, unwilling to address the challenges of northern cities in a post-industrial, residentially segregated era. Broadening the literature on Black churches and their participation in education, this dissertation examines the intersection of religion, race, community and education during the post-World War II period through the work of a Black Episcopal Church in Harlem.

Chapter II: “Procession of Witness”: St. Philip’s Educational Activism & Community Engagement⁹⁰

“There can be no doubt that for tomorrow’s world a thorough and comprehensive education is a must.”⁹¹ – Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited Report

In a newsletter to the parishioners in 1967, Reverend Weston framed St. Philip’s in-house programming at its community youth center in Harlem as a springboard for change in other Black neighborhoods, “[W]hat we do here will improve conditions and open opportunities all over the city. It will encourage similar action in other cities and communities. As Central Harlem goes, so goes America.”⁹² In much the same way that New York remained the largest metropolis in the country, a global city and the center of commerce, culture and innovation, beginning in the early 20th century, Harlem emerged as the center of Black America. Historians Jonathan Gill and Kevin McGruder describe Harlem as “the capital of Black America” and “the Black Capital of the world.”⁹³ The work of Harlem Renaissance writers Langston Hughes, a member of St. Philip’s, and James Weldon Johnson, underscored the significance that being at the center of Black culture and life carried, capturing both the promise and pain of the neighborhood. Johnson wrote that Harlem offered more “advantages and opportunities [...] than in any other place in the country, and that Harlem will become the intellectual, the cultural and the financial center for

⁹⁰ St. Philip’s Church, “St. Philip’s Church Marches for Better Community” Press Release, p. 1-3, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

⁹¹ Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc., “Education in Central Harlem,” *Youth in the Ghetto: A Study of the Consequences of Powerlessness and A Blueprint for Change* (New York: HARYOU, 1964), Volume I and II, Chapter 6, 161. Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited will hereinafter be referred to HARYOU.

⁹² “Program to Expand to Meet the ‘Urban Crisis,’” St. Philip’s Church Newsletter, vol. XXIV, no. 1, p. 2, Box 13, November 1967, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

⁹³ Jonathan Gill, *Harlem: The Four Hundred Year History From Dutch Village to Capital of Black America* (New York: Grove Press, 2011); and Kevin McGruder, *Race and Real Estate: Conflict and Cooperation in Harlem, 1890-1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

Negroes of the United States, and will exert a vital influence upon all Negro peoples.”⁹⁴ During the post-World War II period, community leaders such as Clark and Weston identified Harlem as an archetype for other Black neighborhoods in the United States, which were also navigating inequities in housing, the job market and education. Namely, Clark’s HARYOU report was aptly titled: “A Study of the Consequences of Powerlessness and a Blueprint for Change.”⁹⁵

As an historic Black neighborhood with a large, diverse population, Harlem was inclusive in terms of race, politics, religion, and class. Among the groups to which the neighborhood was home were Afro-Caribbean immigrants, Puerto Rican migrants, southern Black migrants and Black northern migrants, many of whom moved from Lower Manhattan to Harlem. Politically, Harlem enjoyed traditional bipartisanship with both Democrat and Republican consistencies; yet Communism claimed a strong presence in the neighborhood, and so too did Black nationalism, which flowered under Marcus Garvey during the early 20th century and became fortified during the 1960s through the leadership of Malcolm X. Harlem also enjoyed religious diversity, with beliefs ranging from Episcopalian, Baptist and Methodist to Yoruba; spiritual healers also included the likes of Father Divine and the Nation of Islam’s Wallace Fard Muhammad. In terms of economic classes, the neighborhood ranged from the poor to the affluent. Accordingly, early 20th century historians, Harlem Renaissance writers and community leaders pushed back against the interpretation of Harlem as “a ghetto,” a misnomer that gained traction during the Great

⁹⁴ James Weldon Johnson, “Harlem: The Culture Capital 1925,” ed., Alain Locke, *The New Negro: An Interpretation, 1925* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc.) from the National Humanities Center Toolbox: *The Making of African American Identity: Vol. 111, 1917-1968*; and *Survey Graphic* Vol. VI, No. 6 (1925): 635 – 639, 639; and Langston Hughes, “Down Under in Harlem,” *The New Republic* 110, no. 13 (March 27, 1944).

⁹⁵ HARYOU, *Youth in the Ghetto*.

Depression and stigmatized the neighborhood.⁹⁶ Instead, they emphasized a community that demonstrated resiliency when faced with challenges; a place where innovative ideas emerged and cultural contributions inspired. They pointed to Harlem as ‘the nucleus’ of Black communities nationwide. The notion that Harlem was a central ‘think tank,’ a leader in instituting change and an example for other Black communities was a principle to which St. Philip’s subscribed, evident in the language Weston incorporated in his writing and plans for improving conditions in the neighborhood.⁹⁷ And, while St. Philip’s influence on a national scale falls outside of the scope of this dissertation, it is important to highlight the perspective of the church’s leadership and the weight they placed on their in-house programming and initiatives beyond church house doors.

In order to understand St. Philip’s role in educating Harlem, it is important to distinguish education from schooling. This difference helps inform our understanding of St. Philip’s definition of education and, subsequently, separates the church’s model of education, community engagement (in-house programming and organizing), from the public school’s functions of teaching and learning. At the most fundamental level, St. Philip’s was an institution where people practiced religion and gathered in a private space that the church owned. Though St. Philip’s remained accountable to the Episcopal denomination, it was self-funded. As a private institution, St. Philip’s had the autonomy and resources to serve Harlem in ways that went beyond a space for worship. It functioned as a social institution, offering an educational space and organizational base for community engagement. St. Philip’s leadership and funding structure

⁹⁶ Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto: Negro New York, 1890 – 1930* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Publisher, 1963; 1996).

⁹⁷ “Program to Expand to Meet the ‘Urban Crisis,” St. Philip’s Church Newsletter, vol. XXIV, no. 1, p. 2, Box 13, November 1967, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

stood in contrast to the public school system, which was an institution specifically created for schooling and which operated in a space that the city owned. In contrast to St. Philip's, the schools were publicly funded, and teachers and other educational officials remained accountable to the Board of Education and Superintendents. Unlike the public schools, which had a prescribed curriculum, limited resources and bureaucratic structure that did not reflect the race of the students, the leadership of St. Philip's had an established relationship with Harlem that dated back to 1910.

As such, St. Philip's had the opportunity to offer authentic, meaningful learning experiences and programming that resonated with the community. Community engagement was the philosophy of education underpinning St. Philip's programming. The church's enterprising programming modeled meaningful community engagement: It was inclusive and accessible to the entire neighborhood, welcoming Harlemites regardless of faith, class or age. Moreover, it was differentiated according to the varied interests and needs of each constituency. Fostering confidence, resourcefulness and knowledge in children, youth and adults were life skills that would help them navigate New York—and theoretically, the world.

The 'skills' or 'lessons' cultivated by St. Philip's community engagement included developing a political voice, strengthening one's social and cultural awareness, affirming racial identity, establishing autonomy and empowering Harlemites in their academic, professional and personal pursuits. This type of education required action, involvement, investment, and of course, engagement from both St Philip's and from Harlemites. In other words, the extent to which community engagement was an effective means of education in Harlem was contingent upon the participation of the community. As church records revealed, the attendance and retention of the programming was high throughout the 1950s and most of the 1960s.

Following an examination of the literature on education in Harlem beyond schoolhouse doors, I structured this chapter in two parts: The first part considers St. Philip's as an educational space, while the second focuses on St. Philip's as an organizational base. Collectively, each part supports our understanding of how St. Philip's broadens historical discourse on education. Part I examines the robust in-house programming, including traditional education, such as classes and tutoring; creative education, such as teambuilding and sportsmanship through clubs and athletics; and practical education, such as college counseling or career guidance.

Part II documents the instances when St. Philip's became a central space in which the community gathered, engaged in dialogue and strategized over how best to overcome challenges, address issues and accomplish change. Examples range from forums, where guest speakers—considered experts in their fields—offered information, advice and answers to questions on pertinent topics such as undergraduate admissions and financial planning; to an annual neighborhood march to show the Church's unified front with Harlem and its commitment to improving the neighborhood. Part II also accounts for St. Philip's outreach and protest against the public school system as a response to the conversations and concerns of parishioners and the Black community at large. Through examining St. Philip's model of community engagement evident in its in-house programming that facilitated education, dialogue and mobilization, I argue that the church functioned as both an educational space and an organizational base.

Historical Discourse on Education in Harlem

In the process of documenting the myriad of local Black institutions and organizations, the diversity of economic class and ethnicity, and the long history of autonomy and community life in Harlem, historians have underscored the determination, resiliency and agency of the neighborhood in combating inequalities. Among the approaches to educational activism,

historians have identified a myriad of key activists, who were instrumental in driving change, including Black mothers, teachers, psychologists, students, local leaders and organizations. The approaches they used were varied; some were creative, some collaborative, some direct, some radical, some conservative, some behind the scenes. This literature captures the diversity of people and institutions working to improve education in Harlem as well as the scope of strategies. St. Philip's in-house programming broadens our understanding of how a secular institution participated in education in Harlem during the post-World War II period. The church's approaches extend the historical discourse beyond protest and political organization. St. Philip's used programming and dialogue to foster community engagement and activism. It was through these experiences that the church attempted to educate and empower the community. In order to understand how St. Philip's participation in education extends scholarship on Harlem, education and community, it is imperative to first review the literature on this intersection.

Several historians have focused on the work of specific institutions in Harlem that practiced different models of learning, albeit with no affiliation to the public school system. These take shape in institutional histories of the Northside Center and the National Urban League (NUL). The philosophies and informal education upheld by each varied greatly, however. The Northside Center provided mental health services that were grounded in psychology, therapy, counseling and treatment for Harlem children, with the goal of understanding how racial discrimination and segregation affected the psyche, social wellbeing and success of community members. On the other hand, the NUL espoused "acculturation," or the behavioral model of education that emerged during the first half of the 20th century, which often resulted in the placement of southern Black migrants in vocational guidance programs.⁹⁸ The importance of

⁹⁸ Reed, *Not Alms But Opportunity*, 2, 36 and 136. Interestingly, from *Children, Race, and Power* the

Black middle-class values shaped the direction and purpose of the NUL, inextricably linking social harmony and progress to the level of productivity and efficiency of Black communities, which meant that only some could experience racial uplift.

This scholarship is relevant to understanding St. Philip's participation in education, for, it is important to consider how institutions with no affiliation to the public school system incorporated educational programming. In thinking about the intersection of race, class and community and the phrase "respectability politics," scholarship on the NUL is an example of an organization that subscribed to a more conservative social philosophy grounded in respectability politics. This approach was oftentimes at odds with the more far-reaching goal of social transformation that was evident in other efforts, such as the community control movements of the 1960s and 70s, for example. St. Philip's participation in education incorporates aspects of both sides of the coin.

In addition to institutional histories, various other scholarship, including historian's biography of Ella Baker and Michael Johanek and John Puckett's study of Leonard Covello, account for the work of specific educational activists during the interwar period. Both of these educational leaders instituted meaningful resources to engage and empower the community: Ella Baker in her work Harlem's chapter of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People (hereinafter NAACP) and Leonard Covello through Benjamin Franklin High School (BFHS). Baker's approach to education involved engagement and mobilization of the

work of Kenneth and Mamie Clark at Northside was a key piece of evidence in *Brown v. Board of Education*. This book adds another layer to institution-based educational activism. Markowitz and Rosner are effective in encouraging their readership to consider the ways in which the Northside Center adapted its mission and programming to the needs of Harlemites.

community, increasing grassroots participation in politics during the interwar period.⁹⁹ Community-based initiatives, including Parents in Action and In Friendship, “empowered” Harlemites, helping them mobilize, strategize and gain political skills that were invaluable to pushing forward civil rights.¹⁰⁰ Public schools that benefited from educators and administrators who sought to create (and advocated for) educational equity is evidence of the type of activism that occurred within the schools. BFHS adopted a community-centered schooling model, opening “social and educational centers,” or sites of civic learning and “public work citizenship” that consisted of intercultural education, discussions of local affairs and recreational services.¹⁰¹ The centers fostered relationships within the community, offering a space for parents, youth and members to meet, organize and discuss. By creating the space and encouraging students to participate, observe and understand their neighborhood, BFHS encouraged “democratic participation” and “engaged citizenship” in a community that often functioned on the periphery of other reform efforts.¹⁰² Similar to Ransby, Johanek and Puckett, this dissertation emphasizes the leadership of a specific individual, Reverend M. Moran Weston, and his engagement with Harlem. In this way, my research echoes the importance of community engagement and cross-institutional collaboration examined in the existing scholarship. However, this dissertation will focus on a different time period than Ransby, Johanek and Puckett, namely, post-World War II,

⁹⁹ Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker & the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 9, 46 and throughout the book.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁰¹ Michael C. Johanek and John L. Puckett, *Leonard Covello and the Making of Benjamin Franklin High School: Education as if Citizenship Mattered* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007), 9, 28 and 170.

¹⁰² Johanek and Puckett, 153 and 252.

which engendered a different set of challenges for education in Harlem compared to the interwar period.

Another vein of literature on approaches to educational inequity in Harlem focuses on specific groups. Current scholarship accounts for the work of Black teachers, who used their unique position with access to schools, unions and the community to discuss problems in the public schools, research solutions and mobilize. Lauri Johnson's work on Black female educator activists in Harlem between 1930-1950 is important to note for its contributions to the historical discourse.¹⁰³ Through Johnson's profile of Lucile Spence, we learn about the Permanent Committee for Better Schools in Harlem (hereinafter PCBSH), which existed from 1936-1939. During Spence's role as secretary of the PCBSH, they held a mock trial of the New York City Board of Education at Abyssinian Baptist Church (hereinafter Abyssinia), another prominent Black religious institution in Harlem with a long history in the community. The "People's Trial" at Abyssinia held the Board of Education accountable for "discrimination and neglect of the school children Harlem."¹⁰⁴ While Johnson's work predates the post-World War II period – the trial takes place in 1937 - it is a powerful extension of this discourse, addressing the role of Black women as educators and activists, while also showing how other Black churches in Harlem were active in addressing educational inequity. Moving into the post-World War II period is Adina Back's study of "The Harlem Nine," nine Black mothers, who in 1958, contravened compulsory laws, keeping their children at home to boycott three junior high schools in Harlem that were failing to provide education equal to that of schools with

¹⁰³ Lauri Johnson, "A Generation of Women Activists: African American Female Educators in Harlem, 1930-1950" *The Journal of African American History*, Vol. 89, No. 3, Summer 2004.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 227.

predominantly white student bodies.¹⁰⁵ What started as a local boycott to call attention to inferior education escalated into an investigation into the conditions at the public schools and ultimately, a legal battle.¹⁰⁶ The histories of Black teachers and Black mothers demonstrate the multitude of strategies, including collaboration, ongoing dialogue and protest, which were implemented to create change. St. Philip's extends this scholarship by looking at the participation of Black Episcopalians in education in Harlem.

In 1966, community control emerged as a key strategy for combatting educational inequities. With the slow pace of desegregation, the period of community control represented the efforts of Black parents in conjunction with paraprofessionals to improve the state of public schools. Historians further defined the values and goals of community control in the 1960s, arguing that integration and nationalism operated within the overarching framework of movement. In other words, alongside Black power and empowerment were objectives that emphasized both “democratic participation and cultural pluralism.”¹⁰⁷ Historians have written about community control as an approach to educational activism through the lens of teacher unions, parents and coalition building. Influenced by facets of the Black power movement, Black parents organized politically, established community boards and demanded a say in the racial makeup of faculty and staff as well as the curriculum at public schools that many of their

¹⁰⁵ Adina Back, “‘Exposing the ‘Whole Segregation Myth’: The Harlem Nine and New York City's School Desegregation” in *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940 – 1980*, eds. Jeanne F. Theoharis and Komozi Woodard (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 74.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁰⁷ Russell Rickford, “Integration, Black Nationalism, and Radical Democratic Transformation in African American Philosophies of Education, 1965-74,” eds., Manning Marable and Elizabeth Kai Hinton, *The New Black History: Revisiting the Second Transformation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 289.

children attended.¹⁰⁸ In this way, community control was aligned to the more radical goal of social transformation. While critics of St. Philip's position its participation in education as more conservative than radical, its comprehensive in-house programming reposition its place on the spectrum of activism with the goal of sweeping change on one end and the goal of working within the status quo on the other end.

Other models in the literature document intergroup cooperation as part and parcel of community control. Insofar as integration was not a tangible reality given residential segregation and the Board of Education's refusal to attempt major desegregation, parents and community leaders tried to establish their participation in determining what was in the best interest of their children.¹⁰⁹ The collaboration across racial and ethnic groups and local and state lines adds another layer to community control, underscoring the importance of intergroup organizing to generate change. This literature informs my analysis in Chapter III as I examine the instances during which St. Philip's aligned with local institutions and national organizations as a strategy in participating in education in Harlem. In thinking about the other ways in which collaboration is instrumental in advancing a common agenda, my focus is exploring how it St. Philip's participated in education across class and religion.

In examining the various narratives that have documented the ways in which organizations, institutions, individuals, and specific populations, addressed educational inequities in Harlem, it is surprising that only one published work—Johnson's article, "A Generation of

¹⁰⁸ Jonna Perrillo, *Uncivil Rights: Teachers, Unions, and Race in the Battle for School Equity* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012), 13.

¹⁰⁹ Sonia Song-Ha Lee. *Building a Latino Civil Rights Movement: Puerto Ricans, African Americans, and the Pursuit of Racial Justice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 209. Another example is Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

Women Activists”—focuses on the role of a religious institution, namely, Abyssinian Baptist Church. Accordingly, St. Philip’s work during the post-World War II period further enriches this scholarship by accounting for education as interpreted by a religious institution located in the heart of Harlem. In alignment with the literature outlined above, St. Philip’s broadens notions of when and where education took place, the identities of those acting as educators and those acting as students, and the purpose of education and the range of protest, mobilization, organization and programming used to define progress and create change.

Part I: St. Philip’s as an Educational Space

“The Center is in effect a home, a club, a school, a recreation center, a playground.”¹¹⁰ – Reverend Dr. M. Moran Weston

One way that St. Philip’s manifested its mission, “to serve the community,” was by welcoming them to participate in programs at the Church.¹¹¹ Dating back to 1809, St. Philip’s operated Sunday school, offering religion classes and moral instruction. In the 1890s, St. Christopher’s Club organized activities for male youth such as basketball, boxing and track. From 1925 on, St. Philip’s started chapters of national organizations, facilitating access to the Boy and Girl Scouts’ recreational, teambuilding, and character development programs. During the Great Depression, when the well-being and public health of children and youth in the City was of paramount concern, St. Philip’s offered onsite services such as counseling as well as

¹¹⁰ M. Moran Weston, *Another Great Step for St. Philip’s – and You!*, p. 10, Box 12, November 1963, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹¹¹ Ramon Estrada, *An Evaluation of the Community Development Projects of St. Philip’s Church Final Report* (Cambridge: Abt. Associates, Inc., 1974) 2.

offsite recreation, including sleep away camp.¹¹² As former Reverend of St. Philip’s, Shelton H. Bishop—Weston’s predecessor—explained, the Church “was built with the idea that social activity was an essential part of parish life.”¹¹³ Opening the Parish House to the neighborhood, the Church continually interpreted its mission according to the needs of the community, adapting its programming and significantly expanding it during the 1950s and 1960s.¹¹⁴

Leading up to the post-World War II period, Reverend Bishop’s work continued this tradition with the opening of the Fun Center in the Parish House in 1944. Following the tragic death of a nine-year-old girl, who was stabbed by her peer on a public school playground, the community became particularly concerned with identifying safe, monitored spaces for recreation in the neighborhood.¹¹⁵ From 6:30pm – 10:30pm in the evenings, the Fun Center welcomed children from the ages of eight to seventeen to partake in board games, athletics, baking, and arts and crafts.¹¹⁶ Bishop described the Fun Center as “a project to harness the activities of children in the square block in which the church and parish house are situated, and to provide them with a wholesome place in which to play [...] under expert and sympathetic supervision.”¹¹⁷ In a

¹¹² Bishop, Shelton H. "A History of St. Philip's Church New York City." *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 15, no. 4 (1946): 298-317, accessed February 8, 2020; and Estrada, *An Evaluation*, 2.

¹¹³ Bishop, “A History of St. Philip’s Church New York City,” 313.

¹¹⁴ For more on St. Philip’s programming during the first half of the 20th century, see dissertations by McKinney, “Secularization Theory and Black Protestantism: Patterns of Differentiation in a Contemporary Black Church,” 2010; and Welty “Black Shepherds: A Study of the Leading Negro Clergymen in New York City: 1900-1940,” 1969.

¹¹⁵ Bishop, “A History of St. Philip’s Church New York City,” 316.

¹¹⁶ This age range expands during the tenure of the Fun Center to include three-year olds. Under Weston the range expands even further to include twenty-year olds.

¹¹⁷ Bishop, “A History of St. Philip’s Church New York City,” 315.

neighborhood where green space and social space was limited, the Center offered an alternative to after-school—an extended day program for school-aged students to participate in extracurricular activities or access learning support—which was effectively absent from the public schools in Harlem.¹¹⁸ Bishop’s Fun Center offered a topical set of ways and experiences to engage children and youth in the neighborhood. Yet, even with the beginnings of in-house programming for children and youth underway, Bishop recognized that the years following World War II would require greater participation from St. Philip’s in Harlem. In 1946, anticipating the rip current of changes surging towards cities, he wrote, “[T]hroughout its history St. Philip’s has always shown a just concern for [injustice]. Soon it must do more than discuss them. [...] [The Church will be expected to] take an active part in the struggle, and fight against racial bigotry, social injustice, and economic insecurity.”¹¹⁹ With the importance of education gripping the nation’s attention post-*Brown v. Board of Education* and demands from Black communities in New York City to bring written legislation to life, education became a primary focus of the Center’s in-house programming.

In the post-World War II period, in-house programming at St. Philip’s was implemented and overseen by Weston. In this way, it is important to understand his personal academic journey, from childhood to adulthood and how it fostered his interest in education in Harlem. Born and raised in Tarboro, North Carolina, Weston was all too familiar with segregation and the ways in which it limited his accessibility to equitable public schools. In fact, he attended a parochial school established by his grandfather, an Episcopalian priest, where his mother was his instructor. Upon finishing his high school studies at St. Augustine’s Junior College in Raleigh,

¹¹⁸ Bishop, “A History of St. Philip’s Church New York City,” 317.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 315.

Weston “yearned to escape the racial prejudice, sometimes violent, that he witnessed and experienced in the South. ‘I knew I'd never live to be a man in North Carolina, so I left.’”¹²⁰ He moved to New York in 1928, where he was one of five Black undergraduates studying at Columbia University. Weston was part of a small population of Black men to enroll at an Ivy League university with historically white leadership and enrollment, yet his academic accomplishments are a testament to the fact that he did not let this disparity become a hindrance. His deliberate choice to move North in search of education, coupled with his impressive career in academia, including a professorship, shaped the importance he assigned to the education of Black children and youth.

In addition to education, Weston was active in pushing for change for the Black community, “protesting lynching in the South, and whites-only clubs in New York. He wrote a column called Labor Forum in *The Amsterdam News* and helped organize civil rights rallies in Madison Square Garden.”¹²¹ Through his work as a real estate broker in a residentially segregated City, he understood the importance of economic stability in Harlem and the opportunities that came with property ownership. As such, he was instrumental in the establishment of Carver Federal Savings and Loan Association, a Black bank in Harlem that assisted over six thousand families access mortgages for homeownership. Bringing this opportunity to the Black community was pivotal, especially in considering the gross extent to which white banks, developers and real estate brokers redlined Black neighborhoods, flagging them as “hazardous” or too “risky” according to the Home Owners Loan Association appraisal

¹²⁰ Douglas Martin, “M. Moran Weston, 91, Priest and Banker of Harlem, Dies,” *The New York Times*, May 22, 2002.

¹²¹ Ibid.

standards.¹²² Among the “adverse influence[s]” on the ranking a neighborhood received was “infiltration” of the Black population.¹²³ Accordingly, neighborhoods such as Harlem were relegated to the margins of investment and the Black residents as unqualified to receive loans for investment outside of Harlem and the neighborhood as prohibitive for investment inside. Capturing the importance of Carver, the *New York Times* wrote that prior to its existence, “there was only one Black [person] above the rank of janitor working in a New York bank. Black [people] trained at Carver went on to work at other banks throughout the city.”¹²⁴ Carver gave Harlemites a source of financial stability and fiscal responsibility integral to their independence and security. It was in the role of a business savvy, finance expert that Weston first worked for St. Philip’s in the 1940s. As the Church’s Development Officer, he secured St. Philip’s credit union, overseeing business operations.¹²⁵

Alongside, his work at St. Philip’s, he enrolled in graduate school, earning a Doctorate Degree in Social History from Columbia and a Master’s Degree in Divinity from Virginia Theological Seminary.¹²⁶ During the interim between his position as St. Philip’s Development Officer in the 1940s and Rector from 1957-1982, he worked on a denominational level for the National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church as the Executive Secretary of the

¹²² *FHA Underwriting Manual* (Washington, DC: Federal Housing Administration, 1936); and Frederick Babcock, *The Valuation of Real Estate* (McGraw Hill Book Co.: New York, 1932).

¹²³ *Ibid*; and Lee, Hawthorne E. "The Board of Directors of Carver Federal Savings," *New York Amsterdam News*, March 23, 1968.

¹²⁴ Douglas Martin, “M. Moran Weston, 91, Priest and Banker of Harlem, Dies,” *The New York Times*, May 22, 2002. Carver is still in operation as of April 2020.

¹²⁵ This role primarily entailed managing the budget. Biographical Sketch, M. Moran Weston (Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the New York Public Library: The Saint Philip’s Collection, Box #53), n.d., p.1-2

¹²⁶ “Dr. Weston named Trustee of Columbia,” *The Episcopal New Yorker*, October 1969.

Department of Christian Social Relations and Christian Citizenship. His continued focus on social history in his academic and professional careers reflected the importance he assigned to understanding the lived experiences of marginalized groups—the challenges, milestones and everything in between—with attention to the role of race, gender, religion, class, education and employment. As a way to stay connected with the Black community in Harlem and to have a presence in neighborhood affairs, throughout his tenure at St. Philip’s, Weston was also a board member of over fifteen community-based organizations, including HARYOU, the Harlem Neighborhoods Association, the Leak & Watts Home for Children, the Council on Religion for Independent Schools, the Child Adoption Service and the New York City Mission society to name a few.¹²⁷

Weston’s background supports our understanding of his commitment to Harlem, specifically, education, which ranked among his priorities during his twenty-five-year role as Reverend. It was during these years that St. Philip’s solidified its role in Harlem as an educational space with the construction of the community youth center in 1967, expanding its programmatic offerings. In a 1963 blueprint for the new building located at 215 West 133rd Street near the Church on 134th Street, construction plans accounted for four floors, ten rooms for instruction and activities, two rooms designated for arts and crafts, a library, two nurseries, a dining hall, a garden plaza, a gymnasium and locker rooms for boys and girls.¹²⁸ In the early 1960s, Weston quantified the increase and interest in the programming by sharing, “[T]he

¹²⁷ St. Philip’s Church, “Community Services Forum,” May 22, 1963, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library; and “Columbia Names 2 Black Trustees,” *New York Amsterdam News*, August 2, 1969.

¹²⁸ M. Moran Weston, *Another Great Step for St. Philip’s – and You!*, p. 6, Box 12, November 1963, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

number of children enrolled and attending daily have almost doubled, the average attendance per month is more than 3,500.”¹²⁹ In comparison to the enrollment of children and youth in the 1950s, which averaged 1,600 per month, this was a significant increase.¹³⁰ During Weston’s rectorship, there was substantial growth in enrollment in church programs, which were expanded to include young adults up to twenty years in age. There was also adult-centered programming at the community youth center, from serving as a meeting space for committees, clubs and groups, to speaking engagements geared towards parents, to family counseling and to study groups for the General Equivalency Diploma.

Such growth over the course of the post-World War II period reflected the neighborhood’s interest in, and need for, educational and recreational experiences in the community. Church records indicate that throughout the post-World War II period, attendance at the Center remained closer to the higher monthly rate of 3,500 than the lower monthly enrollments of the 1950s Fun Center.¹³¹ In 1963, the *New York Amsterdam News*, described the church school’s student population as “sizable,” with around sixty educators, it was the “largest” community youth center in the city and among the most populous “church schools in the Harlem family of churches.”¹³² Retention of children and youth was also indicative of the extent to which St. Philip’s in-house programming at the community youth center resonated with Harlem. In

¹²⁹ M. Moran Weston, *Another Great Step for St. Philip’s – and You!*, Box 12, November 1963, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹³⁰ *St. Philip’s Newsletter* 1957, p.3, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹³¹ For instance, Albert Edwards, Director of Services, noted in report from 1967, “[T]otal attendance for the month of January was 2,719 average daily being 129.5. Of this total attendance, 985 were teenagers.” Albert A. Edwards, *Monthly Report to the Board of Directors by the Director of Program and Services*, p. 2, Box 12, 20 February 1967, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹³² Malcolm Nash, “IN OUR churches: Challenge,” *New York Amsterdam News*, November 30, 1963; and “400 Harlem Youth Served in Church Community center,” *New York Amsterdam News*, August 2, 1969.

Social Scientist Ramon Estrada's formal evaluation of the Church's programs published in 1974, he concluded that the "[C]ommunity[']s awareness and acceptance of St. Philip's youth programs is high and parents and program participants are enthusiastic... As many as 80% of the youths in the School Age Program return every year."¹³³ Importantly, the children and youth attending St. Philip's programs were doing so at will, there were no attendance requirements, City mandates or membership stipulations.

In addition to an increasing interest from Black Harlemites in utilizing St. Philip's programming, Weston's rebranded and expanded the in-house programming available to the community. Replacing the Fun Center with the community youth center represented an ideological and practical shift in the type, range and accessibility of programming. While the Church continued to offer activities for the enjoyment of children and youth, in-house programming focused on education, offering classes, day-care, structured experiences and support for children and youth such as remedial reading, tutoring, job placement and college advisement. Alongside such changes, St. Philip's Community Service Council, Inc. established in 1951, became the Community Service Council of Greater Harlem (The Community Service Council). The Community Service Council functioned as the umbrella under which St. Philip's programming, including the Community youth center, operated. The Council effectively eliminated non-sectarian affiliation between the Church and its in-house programming and many of its initiatives beyond the church house doors. This decision brought a level of neutrality, inclusiveness and scope to St. Philip's services, reinforcing its place in the entire Harlem community: its programming was accessible to everyone in the neighborhood regardless of faith

¹³³ Ramon Estrada, *An Evaluation of the Community Development Projects of St. Philip's Church Final Report* (Cambridge: Abt. Associates, Inc., 1974), 16.

and socioeconomic status. Acknowledging this practical shift, Weston stated, “[W]e have decided to sink our roots as deeply as possible by taking on *more and more responsibility for the whole community rather than less.*”¹³⁴ In other words, when the effects of the post-World War II period were amassing in Black communities in the North, St. Philip’s was taking a clear “step” towards, not away from, the challenges facing Harlem.¹³⁵

This commitment was evident in 1967, when after five years of planning and fundraising, St. Philip’s broke ground on a new, 26,000-square-foot building to house the Community youth center located on 133rd and 134th Street in a space adjacent to, but separate from, the Parish House. Construction costs, procured from a variety of public and private sources, hovered around 2.5 million dollars, which in addition to the Center, included a refurbished Parish House and a ten-story residential building with “moderate[ly]” priced housing for the elderly.¹³⁶ Only Black architectural firms, including Ifill & Johnson, were contracted for the development. Weston described the pipeline of projects as part of “the ‘new look,’ and ‘new approach,’ [...] necessary if the many alienated, angry and apathetic who live in overcrowded, low-income neighborhoods are to overcome handicaps of poor education.”¹³⁷ He identified the community youth center as “the most important single phase” of the construction project.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ M. Moran Weston, *Another Great Step for St. Philip’s – and You!*, p. 7, Box 12, November 1963, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ “Ground Breaking is Start of \$2 Million Youth-Parish Complex,” article from the *Episcopal New Yorker*, Box 38, June 1967, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ M. Moran Weston, *Another Great Step for St. Philip’s – and You!*, p. 7, Box 12, November 1963, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

St. Philip's recognized that the many of public school facilities were substandard and established a modern building equipped with the latest advances in construction, namely, air-conditioning. The end product was a tangible, well-equipped space for children and youth to access comprehensive programming. The church hired educators to oversee the Center's programming. Among the positions included the role of Educational Curate-Director of Christian Education, which encompassed planning for "not only [St. Philip's] members and their families, but the community around it."¹³⁹ While Christian Education is part of the title, the responsibilities of the role were secular aside from, of course, the fact the programming was being operated in a church. The job description explains that the Educational-Curate Director manages every division of the church school (Nursery, Primary, Elementary, Junior and Senior High), including the fifty volunteer teachers and teacher aides the supported the programming; works with the Educational Committee, which had representation from "most Parish organizations" to "develop policy, program, and implementation;" oversees the children and youth organizations; spearheads development of young adult programming; and expands the performing arts opportunities available to children and youth.¹⁴⁰ In explaining the rationale behind the development of the center, Weston underscored the limitations of the public schools and the need for different educational spaces.

Retention rates of Black children and youth at the center were not the only indicator that St. Philip's in-house programming appealed to the community and was filling a void in Harlem.

¹³⁹ St. Philip's Church, "Job Description for Educational Curate-Director of Christian Education in St. Philip's Episcopal Church – 1965-66," Box 12, Folder 15, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁴⁰ St. Philip's Church, "Job Description for Educational Curate-Director of Christian Education in St. Philip's Episcopal Church – 1965-66," Box 12, Folder 15, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

The Board of Directors, the Professional Advisory Committee and the Advisory Council for community youth center was brimming with endorsements from high-profile individuals, including executives at leading companies such as United Mutual Life Insurance Company and Shearman & Sterling to professors at prestigious institutions such as Columbia and New York University. Many prominent City leaders also expressed their support of the Center, applauding St. Philip's continued work in Harlem. The Commissioner of Welfare for the City of New York, James Dumpson, praised St. Philip's "local leadership" in Harlem, noting "[I]t is essential that direct services to youth and their families be neighborhood based."¹⁴¹ Having a space developed for the community by a local institution with a presence in Harlem since the turn of the 20th century was paramount. Judge Justine Wise Polier of the Harlem Nine characterized St. Philip's as a "leader" in offering "services to children and their families so desperately needed in this great an all too impersonal city."¹⁴²

In their respective careers, both Dumpson and Polier, were deeply aware of the inequities in Harlem's public schools. Hence, their approval was a testament to the fact that St. Philip's was filling a void in Harlem. The community youth center was also a source of inspiration for other Black churches in New York City. According to an external evaluation of the Church, three religious institutions adopted the Community center as envisioned by St. Philip's, establishing a similar resource for their own congregations at Morningside Church, Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and Salem United Methodist Church.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Weston, *Another Great Step for St. Philip's – and You!*, p. 16.

¹⁴² M. Moran Weston, *Another Great Step for St. Philip's – and You!*, p. 16.

¹⁴³ Estrada, *An Evaluation*, 16.

In order to contextualize the endorsements that the center received, it is important to carefully examine the programming itself. Capturing the scope of the center, Weston described it as “in effect a home, a club, a school, a recreation center, a playground.”¹⁴⁴ Courtney Brown, a life-long member of St. Philip’s, Clerk of the Church’s Vestry and teacher at the Center during the post-World War II period, echoed Weston’s description of the Center during an oral history interview in 2013, sharing that it gave Black children “a place to go [...] Rather than be on the street or standing on the stoop. In the center it was like your home” whether you were playing basketball, seeking counseling or taking classes.¹⁴⁵ The draw that the Center had on children and youth, and the experiences it provided, led St. Philip’s Director of Services at the Community center, Albert Edwards, to contrast the Church’s in-house education with that of the public school system:

Too few of our teenagers have been put into school programs which will lead them to a full and fruitful vocational or career adult experience. We are putting increasing effort into working with the youngest of our children in order to give them a good start... We can say that for the most part our children show a sense of happiness and growth within the agency program.¹⁴⁶

Edwards’ observation captures two aspects of St. Philip’s participation in education. St. Philip’s responded to the inequities facing high-school aged youth, whose needs were not being met by the traditional avenues of learning and employment accessible to them. For example, the Center

¹⁴⁴ M. Moran Weston, *Another Great Step for St. Philip’s – and You!*, p. 10, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁴⁵ Courtney C. Brown, interview by Jennifer Boyle, New York, New York, November 2013.

¹⁴⁶ Edwards, *Monthly Report to the Board of Directors by the Director of Program and Services*, St. Philip’s Church Records, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

had programming specifically directed to help youth, who left or “drop[ped]-out” of public school, whether they needed help finding employment or were seeking counseling.¹⁴⁷ Secondly, St. Philip’s was preventing inequity by providing the youngest of learners with the skill sets required to excel in the very school environments that were not meeting the needs of older learners.

As a school, the Center ran classes, offered tutoring and remedial programs and welcomed visitors into their library. During the school year, the programming was offered after dismissal and for two to three-hour windows of time, logistical pieces established with the children and youth’s schedules in mind. The content of the programming was one way that St. Philip’s responded to, and prevented against, disparities in the public school’s curriculum. Among the numerous shortcomings of Harlem’s public schools was adequate learning support for foundational skills such as reading, writing and mathematics. Classes also covered more differentiated topics such as Chemistry.¹⁴⁸ Children and youth, who were falling behind their peers as a result of overcrowded classrooms, substandard facilities, and disconnected and uncompassionate teachers, benefited from small group, individualized instruction. Furthermore, the public schools lacked an inclusive curriculum that accounted for Black history, an omission that was problematic for all students regardless of race. During the community control movement, many efforts were made to carve out a place for a diverse, equitable and inclusive curriculum in the otherwise white, westernized program of study to which the public schools

¹⁴⁷ M. Moran Weston, *Another Great Step for St. Philip’s – and You!*, p. 10. St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁴⁸ Malcolm Nash, "IN OUR Churches: M Luke," *New York Amsterdam News*, December 8, 1962.

subscribed. A St. Philip's pamphlet from 1966 included the following announcement under the heading "Tutorial and Study Program for Students offered by the Center:"

[C]hildren in 3rd through 7th grades may come for help in reading, mathematics, and homework Tuesdays through Fridays, from 4 to 6 P.M....Students in Junior High and Senior High School may come Mondays through Thursdays, 6 to 8 P.M. on Saturdays [...] students in all grades may come to a group that stresses the Negro's contributions to American civilization and includes trips to plays, museums and historical sites.¹⁴⁹

For Black children and youth in particular, they were not taught about the long history of advances, innovations and accomplishments of men and women with skin color similar to their own. In his oral history interview, Brown recollected one of the subjects he enjoyed teaching at St. Philip's, a topic that was certainly not covered in a public school classroom. The transcription reads as follows:

What I - what caught the kids off guard - they didn't realize there was Africa in the Bible. So how you going talk about Egypt and not talk about Africa or Ethiopia? So, this blew the minds of these kids who came from middle-class, mulatto type families, you know, who had disdain for Black people or if you didn't look a certain way. And Africa had - was not free. The only person who talked about Africa was Marcus Garvey Movement. So my point? [Laughs] I never forgot...Terrance [Sunday School youth] went to [the Reverend] and said, 'Where the hell did you get this guy from? He talks about Africa.'¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ St. Philip's Church, "Tutorial and Study Program for Students offered by the Center," St. Philip's Church pamphlet, p. 4, Box 1, 12 February 1966, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁵⁰ Courtney C. Brown, interview by Jennifer Boyle, New York, New York, November 2013.

This excerpt is important for two reasons: it is a sample of the content that was covered at the Center: race, religion, power, politics and geography. It underscores the dedication of the Church's educators, who taught about Black history in a neighborhood where public school history was whitewashed. Secondly, it captures the diversity of race in the Black community in Harlem. Brown was a second-generation Barbadian with a dark complexion; the children and youth had lighter skin according to Brown's description. It demonstrates how St. Philip's participated in education in Harlem, pushing back on social, economic, regional and racial hierarchies by teaching material that would encourage children and youth to think critically about ideas, their origin and who teaches them; questioning concepts, which they had previously accepted as fact.

En Theos, translated from Greek as the God within, was St. Philip's "interdenominational, cultural group" composed of highly credentialed Harlemites, from educators at universities to social workers, who worked in New York's Black communities for years.¹⁵¹ Courtney Brown referred to En Theos as a "brain group" with "every degree you could think of," who met regularly over breakfast to discuss Black cultural contributions and assess opportunities for continued conversations on such topics with Harlem.¹⁵² Examples of En Theos' meeting topics and guest speaking engagements included "Africa and Its Influence on the Western World" and how "the history of Barbados [...] has influenced present aspects of the island's culture."¹⁵³ In addition to groups and classes focused on Black history, the church also

¹⁵¹ Malcolm Nash, "IN OUR Churches," *New York Amsterdam News*, January 20, 1962.

¹⁵² Courtney C. Brown, interview by Jennifer Boyle, New York, New York, November 2013.

¹⁵³ Malcolm Nash, "IN OUR Churches," *New York Amsterdam News*, January 20, 1962; and Nash, Malcolm Nash, "IN OUR Churches," *New York Amsterdam News*, May 11, 1963.

sponsored field trips to sites that captured the contributions and history of the Black population in New York City, the church also sponsored annual street fairs or bazaars dating back to 1949, where among the goods sold for fundraising purposes were books and literature that were more representative of the community in subject matter and authorship.¹⁵⁴ St. Philip's also celebrated the contributions of Black people, from hosting guest speakers such as Dr. Kenneth Clark, Judge Thurgood Marshall, Whitney M. Young, Jr. (Executive Director of the National Urban League), Errol W. Barrow (Prime Minister of Barbados), Percy Sutton (Manhattan Borough President), Sir Clifford Campbell (Jamaican Governor General), Floyd McKissick (the Congress of Racial Equality's National Director).¹⁵⁵ Of import, Prime Minister Barrow's guest speaking engagement at St. Philip's in September of 1968 was "his first major public address in Harlem since he became the first Prime Minister of the independent [B]lack nation."¹⁵⁶ St. Philip's welcomed Prime Minister Barrow as part of their program "to build bridges of good-will and understanding between the people of independent nations in the Caribbean and the [B]lack people in the United States of America."¹⁵⁷ Rev. Dr. M. Moran Weston also visited parishes in the Caribbean as part of this relationship. The church also valued Black cultural contributions and announced poetry recitals in *The New York Amsterdam News* throughout the 1960s. Examples include an article in

¹⁵⁴ St. Philip's Church ministry, "Job Description for Educational Curate-Director of Christian Education in St. Philip's Church 1965-1966," p. 1-2, Box 12, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library; and Malcolm Nash, "IN OUR churches: A good start," *New York Amsterdam News*, June 20, 1964.

¹⁵⁵ "Young St. Philip's Speaker." *New York Amsterdam News (1962-1993)*, Apr 27, 1968, 31; "Barbados Minister St. Philip's Speaker." *New York Amsterdam News (1962-1993)*, Sep 21, 1968, 29; "St. Philip's Plans for 150th Affair." *New York Amsterdam News (1962-1993)*, Oct 12, 1968. 29; "Sir Clifford Campbell and Wife at St. Philips." *New York Amsterdam News (1962-1993)*, Aug 05, 1967. 27; "McKissick to Speak at St. Phillip's." *New York Amsterdam News (1962-1993)*, Mar 30, 1968, 40.

¹⁵⁶ "Barbados Minister St. Philip's Speaker." *New York Amsterdam News (1962-1993)*, Sep 21, 1968, 29.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

the “Education” section, sharing that “Hip, Black and Angry,’ an anthology of poems written by Black Americans” would be read at the church, Nikki Giovanni, a “[B]lack revolutionary poet.”¹⁵⁸

In addition to critical-thinking and inquiry-based learning skills cultivated with a more inclusive curriculum, there were other important educational tools fostered by the center’s programming. For instance, creativity was encouraged in such programming as fine arts, choir, cooking, dancing, and even puppetry. Collaboration—a skill invaluable to children and youth—was developed in activities that required teamwork such as basketball, camping or community service. The Girls’ Friendly Society participated in service work in the community, an experience that encouraged camaraderie. Continuing the purpose of Bishop’s Fun Center, the Community youth center made recreation accessible and safe in the gymnasium and in the playground. As aforementioned above, such basic facilities—arguably a necessity for children and youth regardless of location—were absent from the Board of Education’s priority list, which cut funding for the rehabilitation of public school playgrounds and after-school play spaces in school districts like Harlem in the post-World War II period.

Outside of the school year, St. Philip’s mitigated against the absence of playgrounds and recreational spaces during the summertime. Recall the summer memo at the outset of this dissertation. St. Philip’s facilitated summer plans for Black children and youth throughout the post-World War II period. In 1965, the church announced its “6-Point Program” in collaboration with the New York City Mission Society, the Fresh Air Fund and HARYOU-ACT, which included including day camp, a Play Street Program, a sleep-away camp, seasonal job

¹⁵⁸ "The Church World: Unhappy with Lindsay," *New York Amsterdam News*, August 19, 1967; "Giovanni to Read at St. Philip's." *New York Amsterdam News (1962-1993)*, Nov 08, 1969, 39.

placements, a Special Work and Cadet Corps.¹⁵⁹ In the first year, 400 Black children spent their summers outside of the City at sleep-away camp, a trend the continued through the 1960s.¹⁶⁰ By partnering with the Fresh Air Fund, an organization established in 1877 to make the outdoors accessible and safe for New York City children in lower economic communities, St. Philip's demonstrated the value it placed on bringing recreation and adventure to its youngest community members, free of cost. Fresh Air Fund experiences ranged from placement with "host families in rural and suburban communities" to the Fund's Sharpe Reservation in Hudson Valley, a sleep away camp, where children were surrounded by nature from lakes for swimming to woods for hiking and had built in opportunities for collaboration and critical thinking with team-building exercises.¹⁶¹

Day camp enrollment was also sizable. In 1968, summer day camp enrollment at the center totaled 2,990 children and youth over the course of eight weeks.¹⁶² This statistic accounted for attendance for day camp alone, demonstrating that engagement at the center during the summer months was comparable to that during the school year. Edwards explained the importance the church placed on bringing extended learning opportunities to youth, describing some of the activities the day camp offered, "[W]e constantly work on the business of providing our young people with enriching experiences" such going to the Opera at City Center to listen to "The Marriage of Figaro" or seeing *The Displaced Person*, a play adaptation of a short story

¹⁵⁹ "St. Philip's Works in Central Harlem," *New York Amsterdam News*, July 10, 1965.

¹⁶⁰ "400 Harlem Youth Served in Church Community center," *New York Amsterdam News*, August 2, 1969.

¹⁶¹ "Fresh Air Fund Means Vacation for a Slum Boy," *The New York Times*, June 18, 1967.

¹⁶² Albert A. Edwards, *Summer Program Report to the Board of Directors*, Box 12, 30 August 1968, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

from Flannery O'Connor's *A Good Man is Hard to Find*, at the American Place Theater.¹⁶³ Seeing a show in New York City, whether music or theater, was an extended learning experience that Harlem's public schools were not offering. Anecdotally, the report noted "discernible growth in their sense of appreciation [for theater]."¹⁶⁴ Moreover, shows like *The Displaced Person* were saturated in themes that forced the audience to reflect and think critically about the state of racial relations and the role of religion in America. Edwards described the Church's summer camp program as offering "an exceedingly fine schedule and [...] it did much to widen the children's horizons and reduce their insularity."¹⁶⁵

While many field trips were history, art or science-centered such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Lincoln Center, the Brooklyn Children's Museum, and the Bronx Botanical Gardens, there were also excursions to recreational spaces such as Central Park and Rockaway Beach. At the center, activities included basketball, dance classes and storytelling.¹⁶⁶ St. Philip's established a relationship with City College so that children and youth could access a swimming pool during the summer months.¹⁶⁷ The summer program was important for Black youth, for, Harlem's public schools were not adequately funded to improve their playgrounds or offer sufficient after-school, let alone, summer programming.

¹⁶³ Albert A. Edwards, *Monthly Report to the Board of Directors by the Director of Program and Services*, p. 2, Box 12, February 20, 1967, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Albert A. Edwards, *Summer Program Report to the Board of Directors*, Box 12, 30 August 1968, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ See Marta Gutman, "Race, Place, and Play: Robert Moses and the WPA Swimming Pools in New York City" *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 67, No. 4, December 2008.

In addition to the summer programs, St. Philip's offered meetings, information sessions, and workshops for students seeking acceptance into college, especially in the fall months during the application window. St. Philip's encouraged the community to visit the center when "college admissions officers from 18 colleges [came] to advise and assist students in terms of their academic program, scholarship, employment, and other opportunities."¹⁶⁸ Connecting admissions representatives from Amherst, Barnard, Colgate, Catholic, Lehigh, Vassar, Syracuse, Sarah Lawrence, Harvard, and Skidmore with the community helped Black youth, and their parents, obtain a greater understanding of the options for continued education. The high caliber of the institutions that came to speak at St. Philip's is noteworthy. It was also an opportunity for college-aged youth and parents to learn about scholarships or work-study programs that would alleviate the financial weight that accompanied enrollment at most colleges and universities. The church hosted the workshop on Sunday, a day of the week that did not pose conflicts for school and work. It was attended by over "150 high school junior and senior students who live in the Harlem area and their parents."¹⁶⁹ The church also raised money to gift scholarships, sponsoring benefits and events throughout the year such as a dinner at Riverside Church or a gala in the City.¹⁷⁰

In alignment with continued education, St. Philip's recognized the importance of communicating the possible career paths that existed to young adults. In a section of a church newsletter titled "Negro Architects," readers are told that the Center will be welcoming the

¹⁶⁸ Esther Clay, St. Philip's Community youth center, church letter, Box 12, October 1969, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁶⁹ "Harlem Students Briefed," *New York Amsterdam News*, November 22, 1969.

¹⁷⁰ "The Church World: Jazz in the Church," *New York Amsterdam News*, March 16, 1968.

“Council for the Advancement of Negroes in Architecture [...] They are anxious to make known the possibilities of this career to more members of our community.”¹⁷¹ In an effort to introduce young adults to the wide-range of careers that existed, St. Philip’s pushed back on the assumption that vocational work and service jobs were the only viable career paths. En Theos, in collaboration with the community youth center, was pivotal in coordinating the aforementioned career ‘panels’ and in launching annual career fairs. Starting in 1960, the church hosted “Career Clinics,” or networking events for young adults seeking information about employment opportunities.¹⁷²

In addition to guiding young adults as they chose pathways that would become formative experiences in their lives, the church celebrated the milestones of Black children and youth in the community that led them to such important decisions as college and employment. Every July, the church hosted a special service to honor the graduation of Junior and Senior High School students. This dedicated commemoration of academic achievement was an important moment; an acknowledgment of accomplishments as well as encouragement for continued education. As journalist Malcolm Nash of the *New York Amsterdam News* explained in his weekly column, the service was “one way, we think, of letting youngsters know their more matured relatives are concerned with their progress.”¹⁷³ The adults in the community had a vested interest in the academic journeys of younger generations, showing support for their commitment to learning.

¹⁷¹ St. Philip’s Church Newsletter, vol. XIII, no. 7, p. 8, Box 37, April 1956, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁷² St. Philip’s Church Newsletter, vol. XIII, no. 7, p. 2, Box 37, January 16, 1961, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁷³ Malcolm Nash, “IN OUR churches: Africa calls,” *New York Amsterdam News*, July 4, 1964.

Such moments were instrumental in preventing against a culture of apathy in education; graduation was an achievement that came with recognition.

For adults seeking involvement in groups or clubs, St. Philip's hosted various committees in the parish and community youth center facilities, including the Career Board, Credit Union, Episcopal Church, Parish Men's Association, the Civil Rights Committee, and the Red Cross and Cancer Committee. One of the most relevant to the Church's participation in education in Harlem was the Parent and Ministry Committee, which was one way that parents stayed abreast of and problem solved around inequities that their children were experiencing in the public schools. It was also an opportunity for them to learn about different ways for their children to grow, from scholarships for continued education to job openings. The church's objectives in forming a parent and ministry committee in 1961 were as follows: "1. Opening new career vistas to our young people. 2. Helping them make realistic choices. 3. Strengthening the *existing bond between home and school*."¹⁷⁴ Insofar as the public school was failing the community, St. Philip's expanded the responsibility of educating children and youth to parents in the community, providing the physical space in which the parents in the community could meet, reflect and strategize. Another group at the church attended by adults was the Civil Rights Committee. In an article from the *New York Amsterdam News* in 1963, St. Philip's called for "young men and women to work on [the Committee]" with a "focus" on "the unemployment plight of Negroes."¹⁷⁵ Since education was inextricably linked to employment opportunities, the Civil Rights Committee was responding to and preventing against this cycle of inequity. Black

¹⁷⁴ "Parents Forum," St. Philip's church pamphlet, p. 2, Box 37, 16 January 1961, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library. Italics my own.

¹⁷⁵ Malcolm Nash, "IN OUR Churches: Dr. Jackson Boosed," *New York Amsterdam News*, July 13, 1963.

adults in Harlem also used the center to achieve their own academic and career goals, including a group that studied for the GED, or their high school equivalency diploma.¹⁷⁶ Other adult-centered programs included leadership training and the development of workplace skills valuable to both entrepreneurialism and employment. Beginning in 1960, the church held annual career conferences welcoming “experts in many fields” to the parish house to share about their work experiences, including individuals with such job titles as civil engineer, chemist, dramatist, educator, doctor and banker.¹⁷⁷ The conference also included a special workshop led by Lillian Richards of the Hospitals’ Department. Thirteen women, including Phyllis Harewood, Florence Richards (of St. Philip’s vestry), and eight men, were part of the organizing committee that oversaw the conference.¹⁷⁸

In 1962, when St. Philip’s first announced its plans to construct a community youth center, its goal was “to meet the growing needs of Harlem’s youth.”¹⁷⁹ This first section of this Chapter demonstrates the ways in which St. Philip’s met this objective. The scope of St. Philip’s in-house programming shows the church’s commitment to making education accessible to the community in spite of the inequities of the public schools. Its programming was comprehensive, from classes and team-building activities to field trips and, and it offered year-round ways to engage the community regardless of religion, race or class. The center represents a viable way

¹⁷⁶ Albert A. Edwards, *Summer Program Report to the Board of Directors*, Box 12, 10 March 1970, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁷⁷ “St. Philip’s Second Career Conference,” *New York Amsterdam News*, May 20, 1961, 26.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ “St. Philip’s to Build Youth Center,” *New York Amsterdam News*, November 3, 1962.

that education took place beyond schoolhouse doors in Harlem during the post-World War II period.

Part II: St. Philip's as an Organizational Base

Beyond using the church as an educational space, St. Philip's also served as an organizational base for the Black community. Examples date back to 1809, including advocating for abolition, encouraging evangelism and campaigning for recognition in the Episcopal denomination in the 19th century, improving labor conditions alongside the Urban League in the 1910s, protesting police brutality in the 1920s, and gathering and distributing clothing and blankets during the Great Depression. In the post-World War II period, paralleling its in-house programming, St. Philip's functioned as an organizational base focused on improving education in Harlem's public schools. This manifested itself in two ways. The church facilitated dialogue and engaged the community in topics on education. By hosting community forums, panels and guest speaking events, St. Philip's underscored the importance of ongoing communication, information sharing and reflection, creating a collective, or rather, community 'think tank.' Turning dialogue into direct action, Weston—on behalf of St. Philip's—presented the community's concerns, petitioned policymakers and pushed for change.

Among the priorities listed in St. Philip's, "Program to Expand to Meet the 'Urban Crisis,'" was "improv[ing] the quality of education in the 3 schools nearby – Junior High School 136, Public School 92, and Public School 175."¹⁸⁰ Goals included achieving an integrated student population and a diverse faculty and staff. St. Philip's participation in PS 92—which replaced PS 119—is particularly interesting. It captures the church's multi-faceted approach to

¹⁸⁰ "Program to Expand to Meet the 'Urban Crisis,'" St. Philip's Church Newsletter, vol. XXIV, no. 1, p. 2, Box 13, November 1967, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

inequities in education and it is a poignant example of the recalcitrance and mismanagement of the Board of Education, School Superintendent and Mayor in bringing equity to public schools regardless of the race of the student populations they were serving.

PS 119 became notorious after Mayor Robert F. Wagner's infamous near onstage encounter with New York City's resident vermin—a rat—during his visit to the school. The incident brought city governance face-to-face, so to speak, with the problems of the public schools and essentially, they had no choice, but to address such egregious conditions. The first solution was rehabilitation of PS 119. However, the timeline for rehabilitation was problematic. The Harlem Parents Association, who had been pushing for improvements to the school building pre-Wagner-rat, grew increasingly frustrated by the city's poor management of the renovation process of PS 119. A major complaint was that the construction conflicted with the school year, “depriv[ing] [children] of a proper education by [forcing them] to attend classes that are continually shifted and disrupted by repair work in the building.”¹⁸¹ While conditions at PS 119 were in need of rehabilitation, revamping the interior while school was in session and at a glacial pace confirmed parents' suspicions that public schools with predominantly Black student populations were at the bottom of the city's list of priorities. Supporting community mobilization, St. Philip's Reverend Robert E. Hood, working under Rector Weston's leadership, joined the Parents Association in front of a group of nearly 200 Harlem families and the Board of Education to discuss the state of PS 119. Hood rallied the room with the following indictment:

[it was] highly questionable why the board didn't move on P.S. 119 until the Mayor visited it accompanied by TV cameramen and reports. The records for 119 and Harlem seem to get lost in the shuffle. The people of this community are tired of being treated as

¹⁸¹ Robert H. Terte, “Parents to Press P.S. 119 Boycott,” *The New York Times*, October 4, 1961.

second-class citizens by the Board of Education.¹⁸²

At the culmination of the meeting, 900 out of 1,300 students continued to boycott PS 119, protesting the slow pace of construction on the school building and nonsensical timeline for renovations. Having the support of community institutions with a long history in Harlem only aided the efforts and organizing of the Parents' Association.

In the mid-1960s, budgeting for an entirely new school building—PS 92—to replace PS 119 emerged as the latest 'solution' from the Board of Education. At first glance, a new facility was an improvement to the ongoing infrastructure issues of PS 119. However, the new school building was scheduled for construction directly next to the old building, effectively circumventing any possibility of achieving integration across race and class. Accordingly, one of the major debates between Harlem and the Board of Education was—albeit ironic—the fast-track construction of PS 92. Again, St. Philip's supported the Parents Association's efforts in protesting the Board of Education. Weston reached out to the Superintendent of public schools, Calvin Gross, directly to express his concerns.¹⁸³

In a series of letters, Weston cautioned Gross on moving forward with the construction without considering “the implications of the location of the scheduled new P.S. 92 for [the city's] goals in education and integration,” requesting that “construction be temporarily halted... until a full reevaluation can be made.”¹⁸⁴ The concerns that Weston outlined in his petition to Gross were shared by many Harlemites. They were also affirmed by CORE, who held the Board of

¹⁸² Robert H. Terte, “Parents to Press P.S. 119 Boycott,” *The New York Times*, October 4, 1961.

¹⁸³ Calvin Gross, New York, to M. Moran Weston, New York, Box 50, 26 March 1964, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁸⁴ M. Moran Weston, New York, to Calvin Gross, New York, Box 50, 3 March 1964 and 22 April 1964, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

Education accountable for approving and moving forward with such counterintuitive construction plans, namely, “[A]llowing the City Planning Commission to select the sites for construction which, since June 1959, produced 38 segregated schools out of a total of 45.”¹⁸⁵ Accordingly, the construction of a modern, safe space for learning was seemingly a guise for maintaining segregation, an issue that would become recurring in Harlem, in example, with the plans for IS 201. Weston’s efforts to interrupt the construction plans were twofold. Drawing from his experience in the real estate industry and as a developer, he shrewdly reminded Gross about the avenues the community could pursue in protest of the construction. One was less confrontational than the other: a reexamination of the construction site and its implications for the community conducted by the Board of Education or a legal approach “through an appropriate appeal to the courts.”¹⁸⁶ Ultimately, PS 92 opened in late February of 1966. It was timely that St. Philip’s community youth center opened in Harlem the following year. When construction on the center commenced in the early 1960s, Weston had the foresight to understand that the Board of Education was not an ally in improving education in Harlem. Accordingly, St. Philip’s prevented against the city’s failure to identify effective and long-term solutions for segregation by establishing nonsectarian, alternative educational opportunities for Black children and youth at the center.¹⁸⁷

PS 92 also became a focal point for the community when it came to the administration

¹⁸⁵ CORE, *Statement by New York CORE Chapters on School Integration*, New York, 16 January 1964, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁸⁶ M. Moran Weston, New York, to Calvin Gross, New York, Box 50, 222 April 1964, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁸⁷ Diane Ravitch, *The Great School Wars: A History of the New York City Public Schools* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1974), 312.

and faculty at the school. Another ongoing concern for Black adults and children alike in the district's public schools was the presence, or lack thereof, of Black administrators and faculty. Hiring Black administration was a primary goal of the community control movement and other parent groups in the city. In 1967, the Church worked with the Harlem Parents' Association, campaigning for the appointment of then interim principal, Carmen I. Jones, as principal of PS 92. The consensus among parents of children at PS 92 was that the continued presence of a Black administrator would lead to "more services for [their] children."¹⁸⁸ And, they subsequently demanded that Superintendent, Bernard Donovan, approve the Jones' appointment. The letter that the Parents Association issued to the community in search of their support read as follows:

Today you are needed to tell [...] Bernard Donovan that Harlem supports the parents and community of the Mary McLeod Bethune School (P.S. 92 Man.) in their demand to have Miss Carmen I. Jones, acting principal, named principal and our school made a Demonstration Pilot School.¹⁸⁹

On behalf of St. Philip's, Weston endorsed the petition. He sent a telegram directly to Donovan, calling for the "immediate appointment" of Jones and stressing that "failure to appoint [her] will seriously damage the educational program and progress in PS 92."¹⁹⁰ In this example, St. Philip's participated in education by supporting the goals of Harlem parents and communicating with those in positions to execute change. Having Black administration and faculty was one facet of

¹⁸⁸ Augusta Scriber, New York, to Parents and Community Friends, New York, Box 45, December 1967, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁸⁹ Augusta Scriber, New York, to Parents and Community Friends, New York, Box 45, December 1967, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁹⁰ M. Moran Weston, New York, to Bernard Donovan, New York, telegram, Box 45, 27 November 1967, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

achieving equitable education. In addition to supporting community efforts to push for Jones' placement, the Church engaged Harlemites on this topic by hosting forums on this topic. Furthermore, the church's very own vestry member, Constance G. Wright, served as a teacher (1957-1962) and principal (1962-1966) of PS 197 in Harlem on 135th and 5th Avenue and as an assistant principal of PS 161 in Harlem on Amsterdam Avenue and 133rd Street (retired in 1978).¹⁹¹ In an interview conducted by her grandson, Jordan Wright, she recalls the importance of being an educator in Harlem.¹⁹²

St. Philip's encouraged open dialogue and conversation around the importance of an inclusive faculty and staff, welcoming "[A]ll parents in the church and community to an open forum titled: 'Who Is Educating Your Child?'" led by Dr. Clark.¹⁹³ This meeting was one of series in which parents from the community were welcomed to participate in discussions about their child's education. St. Philip's hosted similar forums, including "What is Taught in our Public Schools and Why?" and "What is the Parents Role in Education of his Child?"¹⁹⁴ From why it mattered for Black children and youth to see their own skin color reflected in school administration and teaching staff to identifying who else can be an educator in a child's life, the forums were a way for parents to connect with each other and with experts – dialogue was a powerful tool for organizing. Clark had an impressive record of improving the state of education

¹⁹¹ "Constance (Connie) Emma Gray Wright Passes," *New York Amsterdam News*, July 19, 2018, 31.

¹⁹² Constance G. Wright, interview by Jordan Wright, New York, New York, December 28, 2007.

¹⁹³ St. Philip's Church index card, Box 37, 16 October 1958, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library; and Nash, Malcolm Nash, "IN OUR Churches: St. Philip's," *New York Amsterdam News*, May 25, 1963. Series dates back to 1955.

¹⁹⁴ St. Philip's Newsletter, New York, Box 37, November 1955, vol. XIII, no. 2, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

for Black children and youth, from establishing the Northside Center in Harlem to providing research critical to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Bringing in a Black guest speaker with a wealth of experience on the topic, St. Philip's facilitated an environment conducive to transparency and troubleshooting.

Understanding that the learning experiences of Black children and youth did not start and end with the public school system, St. Philip's held workshops for parents to support their understanding of the possibilities for their children post-high school. These workshops removed the turbidness around the admissions process and supported parents' learning of ways to ameliorate the financial behemoth of undergraduate admissions through scholarships. These workshops also encouraged conversation about the ongoing racial biases that Black youth and young adults seeking undergraduate admission, or a steady job might encounter. Some examples of these sessions included "Who Goes to College?" and "What Happens to the Child Who is Not College Material?"¹⁹⁵ A church newsletter posits the following series of questions in an effort to encourage parents to join an upcoming discussion:

Do you know that there are many college scholarships for competent high school graduates? Do you know where to get them? Do you know what courses your child should take in high school in order to qualify for a college scholarship? [...] Won't you and your friends join the Educational and Vocational Guidance Committee of the planning Council for a round-table chat?¹⁹⁶

The Educational and Vocational Guidance Committee was an active group of parents with

¹⁹⁵ St. Philip's Newsletter, New York, Box 37, November 1955, vol. XIII, no. 2, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁹⁶ St. Philip's Newsletter, New York, Box 37, November 1955, vol. XIII, no. 2, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

children enrolled in the public schools. They hosted meetings at the Center on a regular basis with the mission of “dealing with problems and questions of parents and their children concerning their school life in the present and in the future.”¹⁹⁷ The extent of St. Philip’s community engagement was marked, from opening the space to adults to discuss concerns about their child’s education to bringing in experts to help answer questions to helping children and youth obtain college scholarships and employment.

Weston was also quick to act on matters that may have seemed unrelated to the education of Black children and youth, but were, in fact, directly informing their experiences. In a 1966 telegram addressed to Mayor John Lindsay, Weston expressed concern about the transit strike’s effect on Harlem’s public schools. Organized by Michael Quill, head of the Transport Workers Union (TWU), the strike was a means of convincing Mayor Lindsay to raise the wages of the TWU.¹⁹⁸ And, it most certainly caught the Mayor, and the City’s attention, lasting roughly two weeks and disrupting the transit of residents and visitors alike.¹⁹⁹ In his telegram, Weston focused on the strike’s interference with the child’s school day:

Our school children have also been severely hit. The Board of Education’s plan to have high school students report to the nearest high school is entirely unsatisfactory according to reports from our members. As we have walked through the streets we have seen hundreds of high school age children in the street instead of school. The emergency transportation should also provide the high school and junior high school children the

¹⁹⁷ St. Philip’s Newsletter, New York, Box 37, December 1955, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁹⁸ Vincent J. Cannato, *The Ungovernable City: John Lindsay and His Struggle to Save New York* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 80-87.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

free emergency transportation that we are urging should be arranged independently of the negotiations now going on between management and the Union.²⁰⁰

Weston was openly critical of Mayor Lindsay's leadership during the strike. Yet, his message was also constructive as he offered tangible solutions to help mitigate the effects that the strike was having on children and youth. The telegram demonstrates the value Weston assigned to the uninterrupted learning of Black school-aged children. It also underscores the disparity in the location of junior and high school facilities, for, some Black youth relied on the transit system to access the public schools that they were assigned to.²⁰¹ The fact that Harlem did not have a public high school was also impossible to ignore under such circumstances.²⁰²

Weston used in-house speaking opportunities such as sermons and newsletters to outline ways that the Board of Education could improve the state of the public schools. Included in the Church's recommendations was the rezoning of public schools, fostering greater socioeconomic diversity in the families that choose a public school education, increasing community participation in the process, improving employment opportunities for youth and adults in the neighborhood.²⁰³ Leading up to the 1964 citywide school boycott, Weston criticized the Board of Education, telling parishioners that it "failed to develop and carry out an adequate program of desegregation and good education for all children" and it "failed to meet leaders of responsible

²⁰⁰ M. Moran Weston to John Lindsay, telegram published in *The New York Herald Tribune*, Box 50, 10 January 1966, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

²⁰¹ Robert H. Terte, "City School Integration: Dispute Centers on the Way to Improve Negroes' Education," *The New York Times*, October 22, 1963. Terte documents white parents' objections to token integration, one year prior to the transit strike.

²⁰² HARYOU, *Youth in the Ghetto*.

²⁰³ M. Moran Weston, "The Public School Crisis," statement, p. 1-6, January 30, 1964, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

civil rights groups in a cooperative spirit.”²⁰⁴ Weston’s condemnatory sermon positions the Board of Education as culpable for creating “the public school crisis” with education that is “neither adequate nor excellent and, therefore, does not meet the needs of the children nor the community at the present time nor it is preparing children and youth for effective democratic living.”²⁰⁵ Weston disagreed with sitting out of school as the most “effective answer to the poor and segregated public education which is a the heart of the crisis.”²⁰⁶ Here, Weston identified the issues of the public schools deeper problems.²⁰⁷ An article published in the *New York Times* affirms Weston’s stance, “[B]oycotts can only hurt the children whose education must guide them toward employment and equality.”²⁰⁸ While Weston questioned the effectiveness of the planned boycott, he offered the Community youth center as a space where Black children and youth could come during its duration. In this way, St. Philip’s supported Black parents in the neighborhood’s decision to participate in the boycott, offering the Center as a supervised space, wherein “guidance” and “meaningful interpretation” would be provided to Black children and youth from 8:30am to 3:30pm.²⁰⁹ The church recognized that if children were sitting out of

²⁰⁴ M. Moran Weston, “The Public School Crisis,” church pamphlet, p. 2, February 2, 1964, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

²⁰⁵ M. Moran Weston, “The Public School Crisis,” church pamphlet, p. 2, February 2, 1964, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library; M. Moran Weston, “The Public School Crisis,” statement, p. 2, 30 January 1964, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

²⁰⁶ M. Moran Weston, “The Public School Crisis,” church pamphlet, p. 2, 2 February 1964, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

²⁰⁷ Hicks, “How Wrong Can You Be?” 11.

²⁰⁸ “Dr. Allen Plays It Cool,” *The New York Times*, p. 34, Box 50, 26 February 1964, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

²⁰⁹ M. Moran Weston, “The Public School Crisis,” church pamphlet, p. 2, 2 February 1964, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library. Weston was quoted in *The New York Times* article “2 Harlem Pastors Split on Boycott,” published on 3 February 1964.

school, they needed or could benefit from a structured environment, where learning would still take place.

Even prior to the boycotts, St. Philip's implemented an annual march beginning in 1960. The timeline of the march is important to note as it predates the 1964 citywide boycott and accordingly, situates St. Philip's as a pioneer in educational and community activism. The goal of the "Procession of Witness" was to foster awareness and encourage community engagement in creating what the church envisioned as a "better" Harlem.²¹⁰ Participants included the Church choir, clergy and band as well as representatives from various groups that met regularly at St. Philip's community center such as the Red Cross and Cancer Committee, the Business and Professional Women's Group, the Clean Block Committee, the Housing Committee, the Church School and the Girls' Friendly Society. They processed from St. Philip's through the neighborhood as a physical demonstration of their commitment to Harlem. Throughout the march, participants handed out leaflets with messages of encouragement to residents, including the following:

HELP US MAKE THESE STREETS CLEAN, BEAUTIFUL, SAFE; HELP US MAKE
GOOD HOUSING FOR ALL; HELP US MAKE THIS A CITY WITHOUT
DISCRIMINATION; TOGETHER, LET US GET RID OF NARCOTICS, CRIME,
DELIQUENCY AND LAWLESNESS²¹¹

St. Philip's used unifying language in the leaflets, framing the role of addressing issues in the neighborhood as a collective, community-wide responsibility by using the pronoun "us" and the

²¹⁰ St. Philip's Church, "St. Philip's Church Marches for Better Community" Press Release, p. 1-3, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

²¹¹ Ibid.

adverb “together.” Every year, the “Procession of Witness” culminated at St. Philip’s with a sermon about the role of the church in Harlem. In Dr. Rev. Weston’s sermon from 1960, he focused on St. Philip’s “three areas of service and social action in the community [...]: work with children, housing, especially for senior citizens, and civil rights.”²¹² Here, he positioned the church’s efforts as a collaboration “with” Harlemites, identifying its “work with children and their families” as a main focus, or what St. Philip’s called the “front line” of its priorities.²¹³ The march was another example of how the church participated in education, engaging the community in a physical, auditory and visual capacity as a way to generate awareness about conditions in Harlem and demonstrate the collective front the church had with residents regardless of religion, politics, race or class.

In addition to spearheading an annual march in Harlem, St. Philip’s also supported civil rights marches outside of the neighborhood. In 1963, the Church facilitated the participation of 180 parishioners in the March on Washington in the District of Columbia.²¹⁴ Showing a unified front with national efforts to achieve equity, St. Philips shared the opportunity to participate with its membership, funded travel arrangements and made financial contributions to key organizations mobilizing the March, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the National Urban League.

²¹² St. Philip’s Church, “St. Philip’s Church Marches for Better Community” Press Release, p. 1-3, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ "Honor Pastor on His First Anniversary," *New York Amsterdam News*, August 10, 1963; and “Things You Ought to Know About St. Philip’s Church,” May 1966, p. 17, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

St. Philip's recognized that inequities in education were not exclusive to Harlem. The church prevented against insularity by becoming involved in, and encouraging community involvement in, national civil rights efforts. St. Philip's drew from its status as an historically Black church in Harlem, connecting parishioners and adults in Harlem to civil rights events in the city. Many of these gatherings celebrated milestones in the fight to improve education for Black children and youth. In a newsletter, the church offered to make "arrangements" for "a great delegation" of its membership to attend a service led by Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. at the Cathedral in honor of "the third anniversary of the Supreme Court Decision [which made] segregation in public school unlawful."²¹⁵ This service was "sponsored by a city-wide committee, interracial and interdenominational" of which St. Philip's was a member.²¹⁶ Along the lines of honoring landmark legislation like *Brown v. Board of Education*, another Church pamphlet invited parishioners to attend the 39th Anniversary Institute of the Legal Defense Fund of the NAACP, a luncheon about the "Law for Black Advance."²¹⁷ Sharing these opportunities with the community and facilitating their attendance were other ways that St. Philip's encouraged Harlemites' engagement in civil rights.

This Chapter demonstrates how St. Philip's operated as both an educational space and an organizational base in the post-World War II period. The church offered community education through in-house programming, including classes, counseling and college and career guidance. The church facilitated recreation and athletics in its community youth center as well as outside of

²¹⁵ Newsletter from St. Philip's Church, New York, Box 37, April 29, 1956, vol. XIII, no. 7, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ St. Philip's Church Pamphlet, Box 50, April 27, 1969, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

the city through summer camp, connecting Harlemites to experiences that were critical to their social and physical well-being. As an organizational base, St. Philip's facilitated community mobilization around educational inequity. The community youth center became a forum for open, honest dialogue about inequities in the public schools, job market and higher education, encouraging conversation, circulating information and supporting activism. The examples outlined in each section reflected the church's philosophy of education: community engagement. This theology was at the heart of church operations during the postwar period. The programming was accessible to the entire community regardless of faith or class. Moreover, it was differentiated, accounting for varied interests, ages and needs. Through analyzing the church's specific initiatives, I posit that St. Philip's strove to empower and equip Harlemites with knowledge, resources and strategies to navigate racist policies and practices (as a means of survival) as well as to challenge or change these racist policies and practices (as means of social, economic and political transformation).

St. Philip's participated in education in Harlem by creating an educational space and organizational base. The church was instrumental in bringing the community together, facilitating dialogue around important civil rights issues and empowering Black Harlemites as they navigated their own lives, but also as they strategized over how to improve the neighborhood. It was significant that St. Philip's offered varied forms of community engagement, or ways for Black children, men and women to become activists. Such points of engagement included annual neighborhood marches, committee meetings and forums. The church also acted as an envoy for Harlemites, petitioning school policymakers and city governance from the position of a community institution with a long history in New York City. In many ways, it was the center of Central Harlem (both literally and figuratively).

This narrative also challenges criticism of Black Episcopalians as disconnected and apathetic to the communities in northern urban neighborhoods in the postwar period. For St. Philip's, community engagement meant welcoming the entire neighborhood to participate in its programming or use its facilities regardless of class, age or political and religious beliefs. St. Philip's in-house programming represents a more radical approach to improving learning experiences for the Black community, creating a space for Harlemites to access education and resources that public institutions in the neighborhood were failing to provide. Whether leading an annual march, facilitating access to resources such as scholarships or experiences, hosting meetings or offering classes, St. Philip's engaged and empowered the community in their personal lives as well as mobilization and activism in the community.

Chapter III: In the Spirit of Collaboration: St. Philip's Partnerships for Education

*"Frontiers for Action and Service in a Changing City: The Role of the Community Church"¹ -
Theme from St. Philip's Church Community Services Forum*

Establishing relationships with other organizations, what St. Philip's defined as "cooperative work" or "community participation," was another strategy or "frontier for action," that the Church deployed in its efforts to address educational inequities in Harlem.² St. Philip's educational activism involved intergroup cooperation, working across class, race, regional and religious differences to reach a shared end goal. This Chapter analyzes some of St. Philip's partnerships with neighborhood institutions, city agencies and national organizations. The common goal or bridge uniting St. Philip's and its collaborators was improving education for the Black population, especially children and youth. For St. Philip's, effective cooperation involved working with organizations outside of its traditionally defined role – a place for worship - and prescribed network – Black Episcopalians.

The church interpreted collaboration or cooperation in various ways, including sharing resources whether access to facilities or finances, connecting children at the Community youth center with counselors and educators and mobilizing in front of city governance to effectively carry out change. Examining how St. Philip's used collaboration broadens the discourse on the history of education in Harlem by incorporating a religious institution. Since Black churches were criticized for being preoccupied with the priestly sphere in the postwar era, St. Philip's

¹ Albert A. Edwards, *Monthly Report to the Board of Directors by the Director of Program and Services*, p. 2, Box 12, 20 February 1967, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library; and St. Philip's Church, "Community Services Forum," May 22, 1963, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

² St. Philip's Church, "Community Services Forum," May 22, 1963, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

partnerships shed light on the connections that Black religious institutions established with the corporeal world with the goal of supporting Black life beyond church house doors. Lastly, the notion of intergroup cooperation takes aim at criticisms of the Black Episcopal church as solely concerned with maintaining the status quo as an elitist, accommodationist institution.

In the historical discourse on education in Harlem, collaboration and intergroup cooperation as a strategy for combatting educational inequities is explored in the work of Martha Biondi and Sonia Song-Ha Lee.³ In their respective histories, they demonstrate how coalition-building or intergroup cooperation was a strategy for Black and Brown families and students, who were seeking changes in the education that New York City was offering.⁴ Biondi documents student-led, direct action protest on college and universities in the late 1960s, using City College and Harlem as one of her case studies. Inspired by the efforts of the Black Panther Party and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Black students translated the goals of the broader Black Power movement according to their own experiences. Building intergroup coalitions to draw attention to inequities and demand change, Black students oftentimes worked with Puerto Rican students as well as some white faculty and white students.

³ Sonia Song-Ha Lee's *Building a Latino Civil Rights Movement: Puerto Ricans, African Americans, and the Pursuit of Racial Justice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014) and Martha Biondi's *The Black Revolution on Campus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

⁴ A prewar example of intergroup cooperation in Harlem as a strategy to improve education is Michael Johaneck and John Puckett, *Leonard Covello and the Making of Benjamin Franklin High School: Education as if Citizenship Mattered* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007). Located in East Harlem, Benjamin Franklin High School adopted a community-centered schooling model, wherein sites of civic learning, including intercultural education, became spaces for parents, youth and residents to meet, organize and discuss. Another example that is specific to East Harlem, however, not particularly focused on education is Johanna Fernández, "The Young Lords and the Social and Structural Roots of Late Sixties Urban Radicalism," ed., Clarence Taylor, *Civil Rights in New York City: From World War II to the Civil Rights in New York City: From World War II to the Giuliani Era* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011). Fernández explores how the Young Lords Party and the Black Panther Party had "shared common political and economic interests" (p. 159) that united them regardless of race.

They marched in protest on campus, conducted sit-ins and petitioned for open admissions policies, fairer distribution of Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK) funds and the addition of Black Studies and Puerto Rican Studies. Song-Ha Lee marries intergroup cooperation and community control. Black and Puerto Rican families mobilized with the support of the state in an effort to have a voice in the governance of the newly constructed public school in Harlem: IS 201. Insofar as residential segregation circumvented integration, parents attempted to control the curricula and administration that had the best interests for their children at heart, ultimately “bolster[ing] their civic engagement as American citizens.”⁵ The unlikely collaboration across racial and ethnic groups and local and state lines reveals the importance allocated to improving education in Harlem.

Accordingly, the historical discourse on collaboration or intergroup cooperation as a means to addressing the shortcomings of education reveals the collective investment in, or importance assigned to, creating meaningful change. A shared core value had the ability to supersede differences that would presumably divide groups, and, appropriately, it could also strengthen the bridge that already existed between two groups. Philip’s partnered with a number of organizations, including the Urban League of Greater New York, the New York City Mission Society, Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc. (hereinafter HARYOU), the Protestant Council of the City of New York, the City College of New York (hereinafter City College), the New York City Youth Board, Harlem Neighborhoods Association, Inc., the American Guild of Variety Artists, the Department of Welfare, the Manhattan North Inter-Parish Council, the Inter-City Council on Faith and the National Council of Churches, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (hereinafter NAACP) and the Fresh Air Fund. In some cases,

⁵ Song-Ha Lee, *Building a Latino Civil Rights Movement*, 209.

St. Philip's financially supported organizations with transformative agendas that included deep-rooted changes in the education system. Through monetary donations, St. Philip's participated, while simultaneously maintaining a degree of anonymity; a 'hands-off' approach. In other cases, however, St. Philip's teamed up with groups and institutions in order to provide programming and education to the community. Not only does this Chapter examine the range of St. Philip's partnerships, from financially supporting the NAACP (and their legal work in securing access to fair education) to connecting aspiring educators from City College, located in West Harlem, with children and youth at the Community youth center, but it also reinforces the church's philosophy of education: community engagement. The church's role as a partner or collaborator was inspired by its focus on education and connecting the community with experiences and opportunities.

With such a robust in-house program in operation at St. Philip's, the Church needed a diverse, knowledgeable team to lead classes, offer instruction, run committees and counsel children and adults. Accordingly, educators and professionals from St. Philip's partner organizations led many of the programs at the Community youth center. Examples included dance teachers from the New York City Youth Board, arts instructors from HARYOU Arts and Culture as well as the American Guild of Variety Artists, and the aforementioned placement of counselors and Physical and Health Education educators from City College.⁶ The relationship was cooperative insofar as the children and youth attending the programs benefited from the enthusiasm and expertise of the educators, and the educators gained classroom experience, the chance to practice their craft and work directly with students. Reflecting on the relationship that

⁶ Albert A. Edwards, *Monthly Report to the Board of Directors by the Director of Program and Services*, p. 2, Box 12, 20 February 1967, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library; St. Philip's Church, "Community Services Forum," May 22, 1963, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library; and Albert A. Edwards, *Summer Program Report to the Board of Directors*, Box 12, 30 August 1968, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

City College had with St. Philip's, Hyman Krakower, Chairman from the Department of Physical Health and Education, shared that the Church "provided the opportunity for professional growth and development through working with the Center's children under the dual guidance of college faculty and the St. Philip's recreation staff."⁷ For the aspiring educator, the practical aspect of the field, namely, teaching in the classroom with students, is something that must be applied and refined onsite; it cannot be acquired solely in the halls of academia, reading and learning about pedagogy. City College educators did not only come to the Community youth center to teach, rather St. Philip's day-campers used their aquatics facilities in the summer months. A summary of camp activities noted that "[S]wimming was done at City College, Colonial Pool and the Bath House. At CCNY [City College] a regular regimen was carried out so the children who participated in it made progress as a result of the instruction given there."⁸ In other words, the purpose of swimming at City College was not simply for playtime. Campers took classes led by the College's aquatics' team, wherein they learned about proper technique, movement, and coordination and the importance of confidence, safety and health.

In addition to City College, St. Philip's established other partnerships to diversify its summer programming and differentiate experiences according to the varied needs of the community. As previously mentioned in Chapter II, one of the summer experiences that St. Philip's offered to Black children and youth was sleep-away camp. St. Philip's considered sleep-away camp a formative experience for children and youth. In fact, through 1935, the church operated its own campsite. However, as the Great Depression continued to sink its teeth into the

⁷ St. Philip's Church, "Community Services Forum," May 22, 1963, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

⁸ Albert A. Edwards, *Summer Program Report to the Board of Directors*, Box 12, 30 August 1968, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

economy, St. Philip's lost the bandwidth to continue operating its own camp. Seeking out organizations such as The Fresh Air Fund, who had facilities to fill this void was an important. These experiences reinforced why St. Philip's partnered with The Fresh Air Fund.

Through working with The Fresh Air Fund, St. Philip's helped place children and youth in camps in upstate New York as well as with families, who lived in rural areas and qualified to participate in The Fresh Air Fund's home-stays program. St. Philip's understood the importance of outdoor recreation and value of summer experiences that cultivated certain characteristics in children and youth such as collaboration in recreational activities, citizenship in community-building activities and creativity in fine arts activities. Camp often encouraged feelings of confidence in children and youth as they left familiarity and comfort behind (the city, their home, their family and their friends) for a new adventure (outside of the city, in a different setting with new faces). These experiences reinforced why St. Philip's partnered with The Fresh Air Fund. Director of Program Services, Albert Edwards, underscored the extent to which St. Philip's worked with The Fresh Air Fund in the church's summer camp reports, noting that they "supplied 200 of the 251 places in [the church's] 1966 Out-of-Town Camp and Friendly Town Program."⁹ St. Philip's knew that The Fresh Air Fund helped expand its programming, giving parents and children one more option as they determined summer plans. The Fresh Air Fund valued its partnership with St. Philip's insofar as they relied on the annual attendance of children and youth from families who otherwise had limited access to financing these experiences. Furthermore, they invited Edwards to lead a workshop and attend workshops at their annual

⁹ Albert A. Edwards, *Monthly Report to the Board of Directors by the Director of Program and Services*, p. 2, Box 12, 20 February 1967, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

conference, a way for the Fund to progress monitor the effectiveness of their programming and gather feedback from their “cooperative” institutions.¹⁰

During the postwar period, many institutions and organizations shared the goal of improving education for Black children and youth. Oftentimes, smaller, newer organizations with this mission partnered with established neighborhood institutions in order to effectively address educational inequities. This happened because the neighborhood institutions had the resources to facilitate and house programs. The fact that St. Philip’s had a state-of-the-art space in Harlem with extensive programming accessible to the community regardless of race, faith, political position or economic status meant that it was already working towards many of the goals of the Urban League, the New York City Mission and HARYOU. Beyond having the physical space to accommodate programming, St. Philip’s also had a relationship with the community making the church an important cooperative partner for these groups. The League had chapters in other neighborhoods and cities, the Mission was a welfare agency that spread its services throughout New York, and HARYOU had created some of its own spaces for youth in the community, but understood the value of working with an institution like St. Philip’s.

In collaboration with the Urban League, St. Philip’s offered counseling and education to teenagers who had left high school, oftentimes referred to with the deprecatory descriptor: dropout. In a neighborhood where socioeconomic mobility was limited, teacher enthusiasm for the success of Black students in education wavered, and there were no public high schools, programming for Black teenagers, who had strayed from the conventional path was of paramount importance. The Urban League referred Black youth to St. Philip’s, who welcomed them into

¹⁰ Albert A. Edwards, *Monthly Report to the Board of Directors by the Director of Program and Services*, p. 2, Box 12, 20 February 1967, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

their in-house programs. In 1963, Executive Director of the Urban League, Edward Lewis, expressed his appreciation for St. Philip's efforts:

We at the Urban League of Greater New York are not only grateful, but often amazed by the varied number of services St. Philip's Church offers [...] A current example is the accommodation in your program this year of a number of high school drop-outs recommended by the League. These youngsters, because they lack job experience and also have multiple personal problems, especially need 'pre-work' experience under the careful guidance of sympathetic adults.¹¹

St. Philip's provided a local space and comprehensive program for Black youth to access social and emotional counseling, career guidance and compassion. Education in this sense was not traditional; rather it was focused on developing both career and life skills and providing mental health support, which is an invaluable tool for coping with anxiety, uncertainty and self-esteem. St. Philip's and the Urban League also protested the Board of Education on similar issues such as the fast-track construction of new public school facilities in Harlem without consideration of the fact that they would be located in "segregated areas" and, hence, fall short of integration goals.¹² In addition to petitioning City governance along the Urban League in an effort to actualize integration, St. Philip's teamed up with neighborhood-led groups to improve education the public schools. As mentioned in Chapter II, in the late 1960s, the Church rallied behind the Parents

¹¹ "Community Services Forum," St. Philip's church bulletin, Box 50, 22 March 1963, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹² Leonard Buder, "City Reviews Racial Patterns At School Construction Sites," *The New York Times*; and Weston's letter to Gross.

Association of P.S. 92 (Mary McLeod Bethune School) in an effort to secure Carmen Jones' position as Principal.¹³

The New York City Mission Society worked creatively with St. Philip's during the post-World War II period. As a citywide organization, the Mission Society oftentimes sought out neighborhood institutions, namely churches, with spaces for programming, a compassionate staff and an understanding of the community's needs. The Executive Director, Rev. Dr. David Barry, reflected on "[T]he effectiveness of a limited staff budget is multiplied many times when our staff can be related to ongoing institution such as St. Philip's, which is able to provide space, volunteers, and above all; a deep commitment to neighborhood service."¹⁴ As a long-established community institution, the Mission Society collaborated with St. Philip's in various capacities. For instance, the Church hosted the Mission Society's Cadet Corps, a training program that cultivated such attributes as leadership and collaboration in male youth ages nine to nineteen, in the Community youth center. Historian Paul Romita argues that the Mission Society's programs, including the Cadet Corps, "developed in young people a heightened sense of self-esteem, provided them with strong role models, and supported their academic growth."¹⁵ St. Philip's branch of the Cadet Corps "serv[ed] 200 boys, all of whom will have two weeks away at camp."¹⁶ The Church's partnership with the Mission Society helped make programs accessible to

¹³ Augusta Scriber, New York, to Parents and Community Friends, New York, Box 45, December 1967, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁴ "Community Services Forum," St. Philip's church bulletin, Box 50, 22 March 1963, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁵ Paul Romita, *The New York City Mission Society* (Portsmouth, Charleston, Chicago and San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2003) 59.

¹⁶ "Mission Cadets Set for Annual Review," *New York Amsterdam News*, April 3, 1965; and "St. Philip's Works in Central Harlem," *New York Amsterdam News*, July 10, 1965.

neighborhood youth. St. Philip's even incorporated the Mission Society's curriculum in some of its day-camp courses. For instance, in 1964, the "theme" was "My Church, My City and I," which was adapted from "The Changing City Challenges the Church, which was differentiated by grade level to support the learning of children as young as six and as old as fifteen.¹⁷ The willingness of St. Philip's to open its space to the Mission Society speaks volumes to the importance Church leadership allocated to offering a comprehensive educational program.

HARYOU, which had done extensive research on the inequities of Harlem's public schools, expressed appreciation for St. Philip's participation in education by way of the Center. Dr. Kenneth Clark, Chairman of the Board, noted that St. Philip's "assum[ed] a larger share of the burden of ministering to the youth" in the face of substandard facilities.¹⁸ The extent to which Dr. Clark found the Community youth center in alignment with HARYOU's goals was significant. Dr. Clark wrote that St. Philip's program "corresponds very closely to that which we envision for the future of Harlem and merits the attention of all who seek to serve youth."¹⁹ In addition to arts educators from HARYOU teaching some of the classes at the Church, the organization, also was involved placing youth in the Cadet Corps. Notes from St. Philip's explain, "Cadet Corps program, in cooperation with the New York Mission Society and HARYOU-ACT serves 200 boys all of whom will have two weeks at camp in addition the youngsters in the regular camp program."²⁰ It was apparent the value allocated to having an

¹⁷ "2,000 Kids in Summer Church Schools," *New York Amsterdam News*, July 11, 1964.

¹⁸ "Great Issues of the Day," St. Philip's church bulletin, Box 14, 17 March 1968, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

¹⁹ "Community Services Forum," St. Philip's church bulletin, Box 50, 22 March 1963, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

educational space in the neighborhood wherein the programs and learning could take place, and to have an institution willing to broaden its services to accommodate the entire community.

On broader scale, perhaps the most recognizable organization that St. Philip's worked with was the NAACP, which used legislation as a strategy to secure opportunities for Black people in education, most notably, *Brown v. Board of Education*.²¹ Following the *Brown* decision, Weston compiled a report on behalf of the National Council's Division of Christian Citizenship, in which he urged Episcopal branches nationwide to support school desegregation, arguing that "the Court's decision is just, right and necessary."²² Weston – alongside many other Black leaders at this time – advocated for the implementation of legislation that the NAACP was so instrumental in securing in the Episcopal Church. This was significant insofar as the Episcopal denomination has a long history of racism, which will be discussed further in Chapter IV. In 1965, Weston wrote a letter to Thurgood Marshall, top legal strategist for the NAACP during the *Brown* case, congratulating him on his recent appointment as the United States' Solicitor General. The personal relationship between the two men was evident in Weston's correspondence:

We rejoice that you are part of our larger Church as well as of our parish family, knowing that you carry into daily life and practice the great ideals of the dignity and brotherhood of man, the great principles of freedom, justice, and truth which too often remain lifeless

²¹ Jackson, "NAACP Victory in Name Case," 140.

²² Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race*, 67.

words in both Church and community. Naturally, we shall miss seeing you, but our prayers go with you where you are.²³

Marshall was one of many NAACP leaders that visited and spoke at St. Philip's, including local branch leaders like the Honorable William H. Booth.²⁴ In addition to welcoming NAACP to St. Philip's to speak to the community, the church also sponsored the attendance of parishioners at NAACP events, including the aforementioned "Law for Black Advance" luncheon celebrating "the 30th Anniversary Institute of the Legal Defense Fund."²⁵

St. Philip's support to the NAACP was also financial through its membership and donations. Church newsletters and sermons kept parishioners abreast to the national work being done to address segregation and one of the ways they could participate: monetary donations. In 1959, after committing to a 'life-long' membership with the NAACP, St. Philip's urged parishioners to sign up for individual memberships, "[St. Philip's] has set the pattern. This life membership covers us as an institution. It does not cover us as individuals. Why not follow the Church's lead? Join the NAACP yourself as soon as you can."²⁶ More often than not, it was accompanied by information detailing the Association's initiatives and where to pick up membership forms. Supporting the NAACP demonstrated that St. Philip's was also thinking beyond Harlem. For instance, a Church newsletter underscores the need for "moral, spiritual and

²³ M. Moran Weston, New York, to Thurgood Marshall, New York, Box 50, 26 July 1965, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

²⁴ "Great Issues of the Day," St. Philip's church bulletin, Box 14, 17 March 1968, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

²⁵ "The Parish Weekly Bulletin," St. Philip's church bulletin, Box 50, 27 April 1969, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

²⁶ St. Philip's church newsletter, vol. XVI, no. 9, p. 1, Box 38, August 1959, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

financial support” to Martin Luther King, Jr.’s work in Montgomery and Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Readers are encouraged to “take out a membership in the NAACP” to directly benefit efforts in the South.²⁷ Constance Baker Motley of the NAACP legal defense and educational fund wrote Weston a personal note in 1962, expressing the Association’s gratitude for St. Philip’s financial contributions.²⁸ While donations were seen as participating on the sidelines or secondary to the work of those active in campaigning for change, they were nevertheless a critical piece to the operations of civil rights’ initiatives. Following the Church’s annual community march, Weston concluded his sermon with a call to parishioners to donate to the Legal Defense and Educational Fund.²⁹

However, St. Philip’s was mindful that a financial contribution was not an option for the entire community. Hence, they outlined other ways that Harlemites could be involved and show unity, including attending “the National Deliverance Day of Prayer” at St. Philip’s, an initiative spearheaded by Congressman Adam Clayton Powell of Abyssinia Baptist Church.³⁰ St. Philip’s would hold vigils throughout the 1960s as a sign of solidarity with civil rights efforts in the South, opening church doors for fifteen hours at a time to welcome Harlemites in for a moment of their day to reflect. In this way, the Church varied ways of its support for the NAACP, from

²⁷ St. Philip’s Newsletter, Box 37, March 1956, vol. XIII, no. 6, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library; and Box 37, Newsletter from St. Philip’s Church on April 29, 1956, vol. XIII, no. 7 “Race Relations”

²⁸ Constance Baker Motley, New York, to M. Moran Weston, New York, Box 45, 15 November 1962, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

²⁹ St. Philip’s Church, “St. Philip’s Church Marches for Better Community” Press Release, p. 1-3, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

³⁰ St. Philip’s Newsletter, Box 37, March 1956, vol. XIII, no. 6, St. Philip’s Church Records, The New York Public Library.

monetary contributions, to moral support and ongoing dialogue about, and awareness of, the NAACP's initiatives.

While St. Philip's had expanded its in-house programming, it was also cognizant that working with other local, city and national organizations had the potential to broaden the experiences accessible to Harlemites at the Community youth center and beyond. This Chapter examines another strategy of educational activism that St. Philip's deployed in post-World War II Harlem. In addition to operating as an educational space and facilitating an organizational base for the neighborhood, St. Philip's cooperated with different organizations to diversify its programming and strengthen community engagement. Working towards the goal of improved education, the church connected Harlemites with experiences that met their varied interests or needs through its partnerships. These collaborative relationships facilitated swimming classes with certified instructors, sleep-away camp and the Cadet Corps to name a few.

Accordingly, St. Philip's identified cooperative work an invaluable component of education in Harlem. It was a form of educational activism and it helped the church cover more ground on the arduous road to equity than it would have operating in isolation. The same is true for the organizations with which it partnered. St. Philip's collaboration in the postwar period supports the "dynamic view" of Black churches put forth in C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya's study.³¹ Specifically, St. Philip's cooperative efforts offer an example of a Black church as it functioned in a this-worldly, communal and prophetic role (as opposed to functioning in an other-worldly, privatistic and priestly role). In other words, St. Philip's prioritized addressing the issue of educational inequity in Harlem as it affected the entire

³¹ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, Lincoln, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 10-16.

community. It is unsurprising then, that St. Philip's partnerships bridged the secular and non-secular, local and national, Episcopalian and Baptist, elementary and higher education, white and Black.

Chapter IV: Mining the Monolith: St. Philip's & The Black Church

*"The Episcopal Church has probably done less for people than any other aggregation of Christians."*³² – W.E.B. Du Bois (1903)

*"We have decided to sink our roots as deeply as possible by taking on more and more responsibility for the whole community [in Harlem] rather than less."*³³ – Rev. Dr. M. Moran Weston (1963)

W.E.B. Du Bois and Rev. Dr. M. Moran Weston's respective interpretations of the Black Episcopal church in the opening quotations for this chapter are separated by exactly sixty years. They are not only distinguished by context, but also by sentiment. Du Bois' remark was dismissive and critical of the church's absence in the lives of the Black population whereas Weston's comment underscored the church's commitment to, and investment in, the lives of the Black population. The history of the Black Episcopal church and its association with Black bourgeoisie or elite persisted as a recrimination of Black Episcopalians through the postwar period and was echoed by scholars, Black nationalists, non-Episcopalians and white activists. Furthermore, the Black Episcopal church's affiliation with a denomination marked by racist policies and practices also lingered as a criticism of Black Episcopalians. Yet, the educational activism that St. Philip's spearheaded during the 1950s and 1960s tells a different story of Black Episcopalians; one that is oftentimes lost in the babel of criticism. It is important to consider both Du Bois' view and Weston's view as we mine the monolith of the Black church and evaluate criticisms of Black Episcopalians as elitist and accommodationist.

³² W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Negro Church* (Atlanta: Atlanta University Press, 1903), 139.

³³ Community Services Forum," St. Philip's church bulletin, Box 50, 22 March 1963, St. Philip's Church Records, Courtesy of The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library (hereinafter St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library).

Mid-20th century writers, including sociologists Gunnar Myrdal and E. Franklin Frazier and journalist Charles Silberman, published and perpetuated defamatory interpretations of “the Black church,” concluding that it “could not perform the functions of the new types of associations necessary to life in the city.”³⁴ The consensus was that Black churches in northern cities were “less of a refuge” for the Black population during significant demographic changes that left neighborhoods without industry and racial diversity.³⁵ Black churches, once cornerstones of communities, had a new set of issues to address that extended beyond the priestly sphere. However, many urban Black churches, including St. Philip’s, had already pivoted from a predominantly priestly mission to a this-worldly or prophetic mission.

Nevertheless, amidst Black urbanization, white suburbanization and deindustrialization, churches in cities with historically Black communities and large populations faced the most demands from congregants and the most scrutiny from scholars. In addition to critiques from academic circles, Black nationalists and many white activists casted aspersions on Black churches during the post-World War II period. A microscope was applied to Black Episcopal churches as a result of the long-history of racism in the denomination and the socioeconomic makeup of its membership, realities that presumably made it further removed from, and unsympathetic to, the needs of urban Black communities. Such distinctions disqualified the Black Episcopal church from the traditional conception of “the Black church” insofar as they were ‘free’ of these internal dilemmas.³⁶

³⁴ Franklin E. Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (New York: Schocken Books, 1963), 76.

³⁵ Frazier, *The Negro Church in America*, 85.

³⁶ Du Bois, *The Negro Church* and Woodson, *The History of The Negro Church*.

During the post-World War II period, the total membership of the Episcopal denomination consisted of ninety-eight percent white parishioners and two percent Black parishioners.³⁷ The white majority represented more than a statistic for the denomination; it was also a reflection of the church's power structure and its priorities. Religious historian Craig Townsend explains how since its founding, St. Philip's balanced, "on the one hand, autonomy and independence as a Black congregation, and on the other, acceptance by a white hierarchy and a white denomination."³⁸ This "paradox" would "remain [a] source of conflict and creative adaptation for everyone involved."³⁹ For critics of Black Episcopalians, however, this reality was strictly the latter.

Du Bois — often referred to as one of the most preeminent Black scholars for his work on Black religious institutions, education and the Black experience — remarked that he "could not imagine how a church that had been so slow to recognize the 'human manhood and Christian equality' of African Americans could ever overcome its 'shameful' record in that regard."⁴⁰ As previously discussed in Chapter II, Weston was the only Black rector to successfully occupy an administrative position in the denomination during the 1950s and 1960s.⁴¹ Positions of governance were overwhelmingly assigned to white Episcopalians. Hence, questions of tokenism arise in considering that Weston's experience was an anomaly: he was the only Black individual

³⁷ Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race*, 167.

³⁸ Townsend, 1-3.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Shattuck, 21.

⁴¹ Ramon Estrada, *An Evaluation of the Community Development Projects of St. Philip's Church Final Report* (Cambridge: Abt. Associates, Inc., 1974) 2; and Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race*, 169.

to hold a top-level position at the time. With this understanding, the extent to which racial discrimination and marginalization effected Black Episcopal churches becomes more tangible: their voices in policy-making were restricted and their membership left on the wayside of diocesan and national concerns, priorities and programming.

Religious historian Gardiner Shattuck explains that the Episcopal denomination operated as a patriarchy with a record of racist policies and practices, including “second-class treatment of African American clergy” and favoring the knowledge of white reverends on “Black issues.”⁴² White clergymen tried to distinguish themselves from their Black counterparts: one was active, the other passive; one was driving the social gospel, the other was following it; one was providing benefits, the other was deriving advantage from those benefits; one was white, the other Black. During the 1950s and 1960s, instead of incorporating the insight and voices of its Black rectors and reverends in civil rights initiatives, the Episcopal denomination oftentimes excluded them entirely, regarding the Black population as “beneficiaries of the denomination’s largesse than [...] actors in their own right.”⁴³ Such disparities were no more apparent than when the Episcopal denomination established the Joint Urban Program in 1961.

The Joint Urban Program was the denomination’s first official attempt at identifying and addressing issues that Black Episcopalians were experiencing in post-World War II cities. The Program focused on urban neighborhoods with predominantly Black populations, including Jersey City and New York City. As opposed to entrusting Black clergy to lead the Joint Urban Program, the denomination assigned white clergy to carry out its goals. In this way, the concept of the white savior played out in the Episcopal denomination’s civil rights Program. Albeit

⁴² Shattuck, 169 and 173.

⁴³ Ibid., 170-171.

ironic, the Joint Urban Program was the antithesis of inclusivity and empowerment. As Shattuck explains, the denomination blatantly ignored the fact that Black reverends were most connected to urban communities, and, hence, better positioned to ascertain inequities, prioritize needs and offer solutions. Rather, in a top-down, white patriarchal point of view, the denomination determined “that nothing effective could take place until [they] ventured forth from their suburban enclaves and aided people who had no resources to help themselves.”⁴⁴ It was a program clouded by paternalism and racism, aligning improved conditions and progress to white leadership as opposed to Black leadership. Accordingly, while St. Philip’s was well informed and connected to Harlem, the Episcopal denomination was disconnected from its Black branches. Its favoritism of white leadership sabotaged programs that had the potential to bring about significant transformation in urban, Black neighborhoods.

In addition to inequities in governance, the socioeconomic membership of the Episcopal Church was a point of contention for scholars, journalists and non-Episcopalians. As discussed in Chapter I, St. Philip’s used the “pew system,” wherein parishioners were seated in certain pews to demarcate their financial contributions to the Church, a practice that existed throughout the 19th century and became a source of criticism in the Black community.⁴⁵ The middle-to-upper class socioeconomic makeup of St. Philip’s membership was a characteristic that continued to define parishioners in the post-World War II period when “Black Episcopalians were generally perceived to be the upper crust of the African American community. Educated and

⁴⁴ Shattuck, 170-171.

⁴⁵ Irma Owens-Watkins, *Blood Relations: Caribbean Immigrants and the Harlem Community, 1900-1930* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 195.

comparatively well-to-do.”⁴⁶ The educational and economic status of Black Episcopalians led those outside the Church to question their values. Specifically, because many of the challenges facing urban Black communities were connected to inequities in housing, education, the job market and politics, the very issues that presumably ranked low among the priorities of the “wealthiest [Black] church in America.”⁴⁷

Excoriation of its mission to address the ever-growing issues of the Black population were compounded by accusations that St. Philip’s was more concerned with sustaining and serving its middle-to-upper class membership. In other words, it was preoccupied with capital gains for its own benefit as opposed to gains for the Black communities it was serving. Historian Gayraud S. Wilmore explains that the Black Episcopal Church was “uncomfortable with their rough-hewn brothers and sisters from the South, [and] they became even less inviting and more selective than they had been.”⁴⁸ Such interpretations call the character of Black Episcopal Churches in northern cities into question, positioning its social and economic agenda at odds with that of the lower-class Black population in northern cities.⁴⁹

The accommodationist, elitist perception of Black Episcopalians also led critics to question their willingness to participate in more transformative civil rights strategies. *The Pittsburgh Courier* wrote that “the credibility of the Christian faith is severely tested” by proponents of Black Power and members of the Nation of Islam, who argued that Black churches

⁴⁶ Shattuck, 171.

⁴⁷ “If Plans New, You Can’t Tell,” *New York Amsterdam News*, December 19, 1970.

⁴⁸ Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religion of African Americans*. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998), 172.

⁴⁹ An exception to this is Harold T. Lewis’ *Yet With A Steady Beat*.

failed to meet the needs of the new population in northern cities.⁵⁰ Part and parcel of the criticism emerges from a larger controversy within the Black population; a conflict that dates back to Antebellum America: the practice of Christianity. On the one hand, believers translated Christianity according to their own experiences in America, establishing independent congregations that addressed the specific needs of their memberships. On the other hand, Christianity was linked to a system of oppression and seen as a socializing force that white people used to maintain a racial hierarchy during and after slavery. Historian Mark Chapman examines the evolution of this controversy throughout the postwar period. He argues that “Christianity was on trial in the African-American community” as Black nationalists inextricably linked Black oppression with white Christianity, labeling Black Christian churches as accommodationist and complicit in preserving the racial quo.⁵¹ It follows that Black churches — with Martin Luther King, Jr. as their poster activist — were oftentimes interpreted as standing in opposition to strategies of Black nationalists, Black Power proponents and members of the Nation of Islam. According to Chapman, many Black nationalists viewed Black clergy as “Rev. Sambos,” passively supporting ““the white man’s religion.””⁵²

Angela Dillard’s study of Central Congregational Church in 1960s Detroit explores the work of Reverend Albert B. Cleage, Jr. in carving out a place of Black Christian Nationalism as

⁵⁰ Masco Young, “Elijah Muhammad: Man Chosen for Leadership,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, November 3, 1959.

⁵¹ Mark L. Chapman, *Christianity on Trial: African-American Religious Thought Before and After Black Power* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996), 70; E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (New York: Schocken Books, 1963); Charles E. Silberman, *Crisis in Black and White* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964); Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religion of African Americans* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998).

⁵² Chapman, 75.

representative of a Black church's ability to uphold the ideas of Black Power and Black nationalism, keeping pace with "the fevered pitch of radical" organizing.⁵³ Other scholars underscore the tenuous relationship specific to Harlem's religious institutions, suggesting that there was a palpable divide between "established churches," who upheld an image of a white God and religious institutions or movements that upheld an image of a Black God such as Yoruba and Nation of Islam.⁵⁴ The resounding question was why, or to what end, would Black men and women subject themselves to the racist policies and practices of the Episcopal denomination?

The perception was that Black Episcopalians were complicit in the white patriarchy and focused on maintaining their socioeconomic status; two attributes — accommodation and prosperity — which Booker T. Washington identified as the most viable approaches for the Black population to experience socioeconomic uplift at the beginning of the 20th century.⁵⁵ Throughout the 20th century, Washington's conservative philosophy continued to operate as both a philosophical and practical strategy, influencing scholarship on respectability politics and operating as the mission for such institutions as the National Urban League.⁵⁶ It became a

⁵³ Angela D. Dillard, "Religion and Radicalism: The Reverend Albert B. Cleage, Jr., and the Rise of Black Christian Nationalism in Detroit," eds., Jeanne F. Theoharis and Komozi Woodward, *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 170-171.

⁵⁴ Juan Williams and Quinton Hosford Dixie, *This Far By Faith: Stories from the African American Religious Experience* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2003), 263; Cornel West and Eddie S. Glaude, Jr. *African American Religious Thought: An Anthology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 539; and Tracey E. Hucks, *Yoruba Traditions and African American Religious Nationalism*, (New Mexico: The University of New Mexico Press, 2012).

⁵⁵ Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography* (New York: Double Day, 1901).

⁵⁶ Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Netalanguage of Race," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17, no. 2 (1992): 251-274.

political target for critics of the Black Episcopal Church as the civil rights movement evolved during the post-World War II period. The accommodationist label and elite status was more aligned to conservative social philosophies of respectability politics than it was to radical approaches to meaningful change; a polarization that fails to account for the varied strategies of St. Philip's during this period.

The post-World War II context makes Harlem an important locality for understanding the extent to which the Black Episcopal Church conforms to, or complicates, these perceptions. In some ways, St. Philip's is a litmus test. It was located in a City with the largest Black population — in 1960, it far exceeded that of any other state — and it was serving a neighborhood in need of improved conditions. As Episcopalian and social activist William Stringfellow recalled, Harlem was a place of “squalor, depression, poverty, and frustration.”⁵⁷ Although Harlem was situated within the system of economic, political and social oppression characteristic of other northern cities, it was also teeming in Black culture and autonomy as outlined in Chapter I.⁵⁸ Harlem was the epicenter of Black culture and life: it “was institutionally rich, home to churches, political clubs, jazz clubs, and speakers’ corners that created a public space for the ‘New Negro,’ assertive, race-conscious, and politically engaged.”⁵⁹ The culture, autonomy and resilience present in Harlem was integral to the Black community’s ability to confront inequities in urban life.

⁵⁷ Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2008), xxvii; and William Stringfellow, “The mission of the Church in the Decadent Society,” *E.T.S. Journal* 7 (1962), 3-8.

⁵⁸ Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

⁵⁹ Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 13.

In addition to the long-established Black churches of Harlem such as St. Philip's and Abyssinian Baptist, Black migrants from the South, as well as immigrants from the Caribbean islands, "held [religious] gatherings in Harlem. This melting pot of people of African descent was reflected in diverse religious institutions throughout Harlem, from Protestant congregations to Father Divine cults, including denominations of Black Hebrews."⁶⁰ The religious sundry was further diversified with the advent of Black nationalist groups, including the Nation of Islam, which established Harlem's Temple 7 in the 1950s.⁶¹ Historian Thomas Sugrue commented on the varying degrees of activism in northern Black churches, noting that "[T]heir politics ranged widely – from those who were resolutely apolitical to those who used their pulpits to advocate racial equality."⁶² In the process of confronting discrimination in the job market, substandard schools education and exclusion from policy-making, Black communities embraced a myriad of philosophies, from Black Power to peaceful protest to more moderate approaches that incorporated both radical and conservative ideologies.

Yet, despite the scope of efforts to improve condition in Harlem, the complicated role of Christianity in Black life since slavery was as a recurring argument for those critical of Black churches during the post-World War II period, including St. Philip's. In 1967, *New York Times'* journalist William Shannon published "The Two Faces of the Negro Revolution," positioning the philosophies and strategies of "the new radicals, the Stokely Carmichaels and the Rap Browns"

⁶⁰ Aberjhani West and Sandra L. West, *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance* (New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2003), 65.

⁶¹ Williams and Dixie, *This Far By Faith*, 262.

⁶² Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 262.

as decidedly different, even opposite from those of the “older middle class Negro leaders.”⁶³ Shannon captures the climate of the postwar period as it pertained to civil rights. Society polarized Black activist groups, dividing them by age, class, strategy and political and religious beliefs. On the one hand, there was the more transformative goal of overhauling the social, political and economic systems in the United States. On the other hand, there was the more conservative position of working within the systems to advance the Black population’s position. This interpretation suggested that these groups were not in conversation rather they were operating in silos and static in their philosophies. While this particular article does not explicitly mention St. Philip’s, Black nationalists viewed Black Episcopalians as part of the “older middle class Negro leader” constituency.⁶⁴ They questioned the ability of Black Episcopalians, who were from higher economic classes, to understand and support the strife of the lower-class Black population in the postwar period. Moreover, Black nationalists were skeptical of the relationship between Black Episcopalians and the Episcopal denomination. They criticized Black Episcopalians accommodation to, or complacency with, a white racial hierarchy.

Historians Juan Williams and Quinton Dixie examine the power and influence criticism of the Black church had on the Black population, especially when they were espoused and upheld by the most influential individuals of Black nationalism. For example, Malcolm X “worked to find his members among those who felt rejected by established churches [in Harlem]... He said [Black churches] were brainwashing Black people to worship a white God.”⁶⁵ As a long-established church in Harlem, St. Philip’s qualified for this generalization, however,

⁶³ William V. Shannon, “The Two Faces of The Negro Revolution,” *The New York Times*, July 30, 1967.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*.

⁶⁵ Williams and Dixie, *This Far By Faith*, 263.

on a granular level, the Church was introducing its youngsters to the history of Africa in Christianity, Black history and culture. Nevertheless, “[B]lack Muslims [and] Black Jews, viewed Black Christians with absolute contempt.”⁶⁶ They questioned how a Black congregation could empower the Black community if it was ultimately under the control of white clergymen. In addition to criticisms from Black nationalists, white activists also argued “that only those who were most alienated from mainstream American society could truly lay claim to being ‘Black.’”⁶⁷ In other words, the middle-to-upper class status of many of St. Philip’s parishioners rendered it incapable of meaningfully participating in social change for the entire Black population.

In a neighborhood like Harlem, this political difference and philosophical divide was palpable. Accordingly, affiliation with Washington’s philosophy of accommodation within the established structures and self-help as the means to socioeconomic uplift — regardless of whether this was projection on St. Philip’s — became a point of censure during the post-World War II period. While St. Philip’s was a target of such criticisms, the nature of its participation in education and its community outreach offer a more nuanced narrative of radical versus conservative, non-Christian versus Christian, Black church versus Black Episcopal Church.

**When the Shoe Doesn’t Fit: A Dialectic Between Conservative & Radical;
Bourgeoisie & Community-Centered⁶⁸**

If we mapped the range of educational outreach during the civil rights movement with the

⁶⁶ West and Glaude, Jr., *African American Religious Thought*, 539.

⁶⁷ Shattuck, 172.

⁶⁸ Dialectic is a reference to the framework outlined in C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya’s *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990). They emphasize the importance of having a conversation about the polarizing categories oftentimes assigned to Black churches.

radical goal of social transformation on one end and conservative social philosophies on the other, St. Philip's position was gradated. Two different examples of St. Philip's participation in education and civil rights demonstrate that the Church practiced elements of both approaches: its stance on the 1964 citywide school boycott and its responses to racism in the Episcopal denomination. This set of examples presents a more nuanced narrative of St. Philip's; one that takes aim at generalizations that Black Episcopal Churches were disconnected from their neighborhoods in post-World War II cities. However, the examples are important as they also account for the ways in which St. Philip's strategies were also aligned to moderate approaches.

It was apparent that St. Philip's understood the increasingly secular demands of the Black church in the post-World War II period, for, there was a wealth of language regarding the "urban crisis" in the Church records, from sermons to newsletters to the Parish to newspaper articles quoting Weston or other members of the Church.⁶⁹ For instance, Thurgood Marshall, a Federal Judge and vestryman of St. Philip's, who spoke at the Church throughout the post-World War II period, emphasized the "civic responsibility" of Black churches in Harlem during one his guest speaking engagements:

We who understand the church, must go back to the original notion that the city is the parish of the church, and the citizens are the responsibility of the church. Racial segregation is the Achilles heel of the big city. We must find a way to keep our people together in the city.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ "Program to Expand to Meet the 'Urban Crisis,'" St. Philip's Church Newsletter, vol. XXIV, no. 1, p. 2, Box 13, November 1967, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

⁷⁰ "Judge Marshall, in Pulpit, Tells Harlem Its Civic Responsibility," *The New York Times*, November 26, 1962.

In an effort to bring action and a tangible response to the call for Black churches to serve their communities, St. Philip's interpretation of their "responsibility," or as Weston phrased, "urgent pastoral responsibility," to meet the needs of the neighborhood was comprehensive.⁷¹ From the Community youth center's in-house programming to the establishment of a Black bank in Harlem, Carver Federal Savings, and the development of housing for the elderly, St. Philip's-on-the-Park, the Church interpreted its role in Harlem as more than an institution for scripture and sacrament. In other words, it served the community in many different capacities beyond church house doors. St. Philip's made a concerted effort to expand and adapt programming according to the changing needs of the Black population living in Harlem. As Weston put forth, St. Philip's "must discover new ways of service to youth, creative approaches to people of older years and become increasingly engaged in the political, social and economic life of the whole community and city."⁷² As opposed to resting on its laurels and years of service to the community, St. Philip's was adapting and evolving its programming, a strategy that showed action and connection to the neighborhood. However, it is important to underscore instances during which the Church's participation was perceived as ineffectual or disengaged from the Black community. Du Bois' criticism that "[t]he Episcopal Church has probably done less for people than any other aggregation of Christians," did not disappear in the post-World War II period.⁷³

⁷¹ "Judge Marshall, in Pulpit, Tells Harlem Its Civic Responsibility," *The New York Times*, November 26, 1962; and Community Services Forum," St. Philip's church bulletin, Box 50, March 22, 1963, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

⁷² Community Services Forum," St. Philip's church bulletin, Box 50, March 22, 1963, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

⁷³ W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Negro Church* (Atlanta: Atlanta University Press, 1903), 139.

Accounting for both perspectives is integral in preventing against predilections or an overly romanticized interpretation of St. Philip's role in Harlem.

In 1964, Black communities throughout the boroughs boycotted the public schools. The citywide initiative had the support of the majority of Black religious institutions and organizations. St. Philip's, however, was one of the Black churches that did not participate in the protest, or, at least not in the same way as those who boycotted. Weston told a journalist at *The New York Times* "keeping children out of school is not an effective answer to poor and segregated public education.' He said the school crisis was 'the result of many factors within and outside the control of the Board of Education.'"74 As previously noted in Chapter II, on the day of the boycott, Weston opened the Church as a safe-haven for Black children and youth, announcing that they were welcome to continue their school work at St. Philip's with the support of educators.

However, St. Philip's stance on the boycott became a focus in the media and fuel for critics of the Black Episcopalians. Its decision to indirectly participate by giving school-aged children a place to learn did not bode well with the Black community in New York City. An article in *The New York Times* titled, "2 Harlem Pastors Split on Boycott," contrasted St. Philip's position during the boycott with that of another prominent Black church in Harlem, Abyssinian Baptist (hereinafter Abyssinia), who "100 per cent" endorsed the boycott.⁷⁵ This also positioned St. Philip's leader, Rev. Dr. M. Moran Weston, in opposition to Abyssinia's leader, Rev. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.. On the surface, the main differences between St. Philip's-Weston and

⁷⁴ "2 Harlem Pastors Split on Boycott: Powell for It '100 Per Cent' – Weston Is Opposed," *The New York Times*, February 3, 1964.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Abyssinia-Powell were straightforward: the former was Episcopalian, the latter Baptist; the former was anti-boycott; the latter pro-boycott. However, considering the long histories of both institutions in Harlem, it is imperative to extrapolate the underlying meaning of the newspaper article even further.

Powell was a prominent political figure in Harlem. In 1945, he was elected to the U.S House of Representatives on the Democratic ticket and he retained his seat through 1970. He was instrumental in pushing civil rights forward both on a local level, in Harlem he instituted the “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” campaigns in the 1930s, and on national level, he was involved in the legislation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.⁷⁶ Regardless of Weston’s impressive personal accomplishments and contributions to Harlem, Powell’s influence was celebrated in New York City and beyond. In this way, Weston was standing in opposition to a central figure in Harlem: a Democrat, a progressive civil rights leader, who openly espoused a radical approach to social change and simultaneously dismissed nonviolence as an effective approach to actualizing equality. While we know that Weston did not actually fit the role of Powell’s opposite, the tone of the newspaper certainly suggested otherwise. It was clear that frustrations with St. Philip’s position on the boycott did not start and end in Harlem. Francis V. Madigan, President of the Catholic Interracial Council of New York, described St. Philip’s stance in opposition to the citywide civil rights efforts as “a tragedy of the first order.”⁷⁷ For critics of Black Episcopalians, St. Philip’s anti-boycott stance, exposed disunity between Black communities in New York City at the very moment when solidarity and collaboration was paramount.

⁷⁶ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *“Or Does It Explode?” Black Harlem in the Great Depression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 114.

⁷⁷ “2 Harlem Pastors Split on Boycott: Powell for It ‘100 Per Cent’ – Weston Is Opposed,” *The New York Times*, February 3, 1964.

Another journalist questioned whether St. Philip's had an accurate read on the priorities of its parishioners. James Hicks of the *New York Amsterdam News* pointedly asked "[H]ow Wrong Can You Be?" in an article that suggested St. Philip's absence during the boycott was detrimental to Black New Yorkers' unified front and collective effort to securing civil rights.⁷⁸ In the article, Hicks posed a series of rhetorical question to readers, "[H]ow can a leader misjudge the feelings of his followers so badly? [...] [T]o be a Negro and LIVE in Harlem, or to be a Negro and PREACH in Harlem — and still misjudge the Harlem heart beats by 464,000 — that sounds almost incredible!"⁷⁹ According to Hicks' interpretation, St. Philip's was failing Harlem. Not only was it miscalculating the community's goals, but it was also ignoring the most effective way to achieve them. By using uppercase text, Hicks calls attention to the words "live" and "preach," suggesting that any Black male religious leader, who truly understood, *and experienced*, the inequities of Harlem, would — without hesitation — support the boycott on behalf of the congregation. The article suggested that it was only fathomable for someone far removed from Harlem to oppose the boycott, such as a white school-policy maker or someone with a different set of priorities than those fighting segregation in schools. Implicit in the implausibility that Hicks' assigned to St. Philip's stance on the boycott was the long history of the Black Episcopal church, namely, accusations of its accommodation to the status quo.

However, St. Philip's in-house programming, where they welcomed students during the boycott, was anything, but conservative. Moreover, St. Philip's self-identified as being part of

⁷⁸ Hicks, James L. "How Wrong Can You Be?" *New York Amsterdam News*, February 6, 1964.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

the “Black Revolution.”⁸⁰ The church had in-house programming for over a decade: an initiative that was more far-reaching as an independent space for learning about Black culture, facilitating dialogue about challenges and contributions in the community and identifying ways to enact change. Moreover, when the new Community youth center was completed in 1967, there was also a visual transformation of a religious institution into an educational space for the neighborhood, welcoming the community regardless of membership, class or race. In 1970, Weston delivered a sermon to the congregation in which he affirmed St. Philip’s stance on civil rights; it had a stake in eradicating inequities in all aspects of Black life:

Perhaps America can now understand why we have been part of the Black Revolution from the beginning. [...] The basic issue is, here in America is the right to live, the right to grow up, the right to learn, the right to work, the right to have a place to live in, the right to play — and the list can be as long as one chooses.⁸¹

In addressing America, Weston is covering the gamut of critics, from the white activists to the Black nationalists, sociologists and even the Episcopal denomination, who failed to support the efforts of St. Philip’s in any meaningful capacity during this period. During the 1964 boycott, the church identified “the right to learn” and uninterrupted education as the best way to meet the needs of Harlem children.⁸² The importance of making education accessible, continuous and meaningful lived and breathed in the fabric of the Community youth center’s programming.

⁸⁰ Gary Thomas, "Church Round-Up." *New York Amsterdam News*, May 23, 1970. From a sermon Weston delivered at St. Philip’s.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Gary Thomas, "Church Round-Up." *New York Amsterdam News*, May 23, 1970. From a sermon Weston delivered at St. Philip’s.

Just as Weston responded to, and prevented against, inequities in education in Harlem, he — alongside other Black rectors — challenged the policies of the Episcopal denomination. He continually pushed back on the racism within the denomination, speaking openly about shortcomings of the national Episcopal Church during sermons to parishioners and in interviews with the press. Weston took both conservative and radical steps to challenging discrimination in the denomination. On a local level, he initiated research and programming at St. Philip's, including a "special commission to make recommendations on how St. Philip's Church can develop through study and action a lasting and living memorial to Dr. King."⁸³ In a denomination where the voices of Black leadership were minimized, efforts from Black branches were a starting point for influencing change from the 'ground' up. Weston also established "a privately financed World Institute For The Study of Action Alternative To Violence, for Dr. King was committed to rooting out racism, poverty and militarism by non-violent-direct-action."⁸⁴ Given the history of segregation and racism in the Episcopal denomination and the reluctance of white leadership to empower Black congregations, the commission and study were means of self-education and self-help, and hence, examples of more moderate approaches to change.

At the same time, however, the efforts to eliminate racism in the Episcopal denomination did not stop with in-house, self-education. Weston regularly shared his condemnation of segregation in the Church in newspaper interviews, unafraid of how his outspoken stances would land with white leadership. For instance, in 1962, Weston was quoted in the *New York Amsterdam News*, championing the steadfast work of Catholic Archbishop Francis Rummel, who

⁸³ "Rev. Hughes Seeks AME Bishop Post," *New York Amsterdam News*, April 27, 1968.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

eradicated segregation of parochial schools in New Orleans despite threats and intimidation from white congregants and the Louisiana Citizens Council. Rummel not only excommunicated these congregants from the Church, but he also moved forward with integration. Weston reflected on Rummel's leadership in the following statement:

[I]n terms of the welfare of the nation and all its people, of every race and social situation, he has made a constructive contribution to human relations, to sound education and respect for law and order. [...] [H]e has made clear once again that the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and Bill of Rights are for all citizens.⁸⁵

This quote underscores the importance Weston assigned to education and equity not only in Harlem, but also in the entire country. Importantly, while white Episcopalian leadership in New York were unwilling to comment on the white Archbishop's decision, Weston responded without hesitation and in good faith. In the same year, Weston objected to segregation at St. John's Episcopal Hospital in Far Rockaway, New York. St. John's president of the board and Bishop, James Dewolfe, permitted segregation of patients arguing that they "enjoy[ed] 'greater peace of mind' if placed in rooms with members of their own race."⁸⁶ Taking a stand against a white member of the Episcopal Church with higher status and presumably more power, Weston inveighed against such discriminatory practices, pointing to both the law and ethics to support his stance:

I feel the policy of segregation in St. John's Hospital, or any other institution, public or private, is contrary to the teachings of the Episcopal Church and the State of New York.

⁸⁵ "Racism Gets Down On Its Knees To Church: Racist, On Her Knees Spurned By Archbishop," *The New York Amsterdam News*, April 21, 1962.

⁸⁶ Simon Aneweke, "Bishop Segregates Hospital Patients: Says Jimcrow Aids 'Peace Of Mind,'" *The New York Amsterdam News*, July 7, 1962.

Segregation is illegal, it violates the moral teachings of the Church and sets a bad example to the community.⁸⁷

Weston's straightforward response speaks volumes to his frustrations with racism in the Episcopal denomination and the slow-pace at which it was reconciling with civil rights. His interpretation of the Church's teachings did not accommodate racism and segregation. This was evident in his decision to use the word violate, which, by definition, is affiliated with a range of actions, all abominable.

In 1967, Weston, alongside other Black Episcopalians delivered "[A] Declaration by Priests who are Negroes," to the denomination, underscoring the fact that the national church was "lagging behind secular institutions in the inclusion of Black people in key positions in its corporate life."⁸⁸ In 1968, Weston hosted seventeen Black priests at St. Philip's to discuss the racist policies and practices of the Episcopal denomination. From the meeting, the Union of Black Clergy and Laity (hereinafter UBCL) was established with the goal of "remov[ing] racism in the church and in the community by any means necessary to achieve full participation on the basis of equality in policy making, decision making, program and staffing on the parochial, diocesan and national levels."⁸⁹ Prior to the UBCL, the denomination established the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity (hereinafter ESCRU) in 1959 as response to the momentum that the long civil rights movement was gaining in the post-World War II period.

⁸⁷ Simon Aneweke, "Bishop Segregates Hospital Patients: Says Jimcrow Aids 'Peace Of Mind,'" *The New York Amsterdam News*, July 7, 1962.

⁸⁸ Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race*, 169. The Union of Black Clergy and Laity would later be renamed as the Union of Black Episcopalians.

⁸⁹ George Dugan, "Negro Episcopal Priests Form Union," *The New York Times*, February 9, 1968.

However, much like the shortcomings of the Joint Urban Program, the Executive Director positions of ESCRU were assigned to two southern, white clergy members. While the board of ESCRU would shift throughout the 1960s to Black Episcopalians, there was a consistent question about “the willingness, and more seriously, the ability of the dominant society to reform itself.”⁹⁰ As religious historian Harold Lewis argues, the mission of ESCRU, cultural and racial unity, did not equate to appreciation and preservation of Black traditions and histories. On the country, according to white Episcopalians leadership, it meant the merging, absorption or assimilation of Black parishes into white parishes. It was a guise for the denomination. In reality, they were simulating inclusion and eliminating the “painful reminders” of the “age of segregation.”⁹¹ ESCRU was operating under two egregious assumptions: 1) Black parishes would willingly forgo their independence and merge with white churches, 2) centuries of racism and segregation could be eradicated through an initiative was premised on white superiority.

The UBCL represented a meaningful shift for Black Episcopalians. It was a conscious decision to create an autonomous, united group without the approval of the denomination; its formation was far-reaching and transformative. According to the minutes taken during an Ad Hoc Committee meeting at St. Philip’s, Weston assuredly made the decision to notify the Presiding Bishop John Hines and he contact the *The New York Times* to facilitate publication about the formation of the UBCL and its goals.⁹² Weston’s quote for the newspaper directly

⁹⁰ John Kater, “Experiment in Freedom: The Episcopal Church and the Black Power Movement,” *Historical Magazine of the Episcopal Church*, March 1969, 68.

⁹¹ Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 152.

⁹² Austin R. Cooper, “Minutes of the Second Meeting of Negro Clergy with the Presiding Bishop [John Hines] and other bishops and priests,” June 27, 1967; and Austin R. Cooper, “Minutes of Ad Hoc Committee of Negro Clergy,” St. Philip’s, Episcopal Church, Harlem, New York, February 7, 1968, Episcopal Church Center, New York City, Cooper Papers from Lewis, *Yet With A Steady Beat*.

implicated the Episcopal denomination for upholding racist policies and practices, from limiting Black Episcopalians access to positions of governance on the local, state and national levels to impeding the percent membership of the Black population within the denomination. Weston's transparency with Hines, who was known for moving with all deliberate slowness in addressing racism in the denomination, and Weston's speedy outreach to a prominent media outlet to secure publication of information about UBCL, exuded his confidence and conviction in the mission of the group.⁹³

With the understanding that racism was pervasive in the denomination regardless of stature, the UBCL incorporated the voices of both Black Episcopal clergy and Black congregants. At this point, the UBCL was renamed to better represent the scope of its membership: the Union of Black Episcopalians (UBE), which is in existence to date. Religious historian Reverend Edward Rodman, who wrote extensively about the UBE, surmised the establishment of the Union reflected "[B]lack consciousness within the Episcopal Church, and as a result, [the denomination] would never be the same again."⁹⁴ Two years after the UBE originated, John Burgess became the first Black diocesan Bishop consecrated in the Episcopal church. This milestone was followed by the appointment of other Black Episcopalians throughout the 1970s, including laymen and women to positions of governance. From in-house studies to educate the clergy, vestry and parishioners about racism in the Episcopal denomination to more transformative changes such as hosting and participating in a meeting wherein a

⁹³ H. Irving Mayson, "Minutes from the Ad Hoc Committee Concerned with Racial Inequities Existing in the Protestant Episcopal Church with the Presiding Bishop [John Hines], April 18, 1967. Courtesy of the Episcopal Church Center, New York City, Cooper Papers from Lewis, *Yet With A Steady Beat*.

⁹⁴ Edward Rodman, *Let There Be Peace Among Us: A Story of the Union of Black Episcopalians* (Lawrenceville, Virginia: Brunswick Publishing Corporation, 1990).

revolutionary organization was established to address racial inequities, St. Philip's strategies in combatting the white Episcopal patriarchy were varied.

St. Philip's activist role in the post-World War II period is mentioned in a handful of studies on Black Episcopalians as well as in histories about race in the Episcopal denomination. However, Black church histories have either overwhelmingly excluded St. Philip's from their discussions or criticized it as accommodationist to white values and ill equipped to identify with the experiences of the Black population in postwar northern cities. Yet, excluding or dismissing the work of Black Episcopal institutions such as St. Philip's merely reinforces an oversimplified, incomplete and misinformed narrative.

St. Philip's participation in education in Harlem brings nuance to generalizations about the Black Episcopal church as conservative in its philosophies and absent in the civil rights activism. Its community engagement in the postwar period challenges critics, who labeled it bourgeoisie, aloof and disconnected from the Black community in Harlem. In fact, St. Philip's philosophy of education was premised on engagement and education to empower Harlem and it was accessible to the neighborhood regardless of class, age and political and religious beliefs. Furthermore, the church continually sought to improve conditions and address inequities in the neighborhood, from its focus on education to housing and access to socioeconomic mobility.

St. Philip's is an example of a Black branch of the Episcopal church carrying out its own mission according to its the needs and interest of its neighborhood in Harlem. It is an example of a Black church in a northern city that did fall outside of the paradigm of Black religious activism. It enacted strategies that were aligned to conservative philosophies of self-help and accommodation such as sitting out of a school boycott as well as more revolutionary strategies such as establishing an independent educational space accessible to the entire community. St.

Philip's helps us unpack polarizing frameworks for understanding civil rights, the Black church and Black religious activism. The church's postwar educational activism expands the historical discourse in several ways: 1) it forces us to think beyond the organizing structure of 'either or' in analyzing Black religious activism, 2) it supports a more nuanced view of respectability politics, encouraging us to think critically about the complexities of an increasingly fraught term, 3) it challenges the monolithic interpretation of the Black church, 4.) it questions assumptions about Black Episcopalians as accommodationist and elitist.

Chapter V: Conclusion

“[W]ithout adequate histories of local churches, regional jurisdictions, and national denominations, no general synthesis and interpretation [of African American religious history] are possible.”⁹⁵ – Milton C. Sernett

Historically, Black churches have valued education as a means of social, political and economic uplift in an oppressive society. Yet, the intersection of religion, community, race and education, specifically the role of Black religious institutions in education, is a topic that is by and large understudied. This void is especially apparent in the discourse on 20th century northern cities when traditional avenues for learning, public schools, were foundering. Moreover, considering Harlem as the most historic Black neighborhood in the United States, “the mecca of Black America,” it is a significant locality in which to examine this intersection.⁹⁶

In the process of researching St. Philip’s educational activism in the post-World War II period, the following strategies emerged in response to, and to prevent against, inequities in the neighborhood: *in-house programming* – St. Philip’s designated the focus of its Community youth center on Harlem’s youngest of members, offering educational and recreational experiences; *organization* – St. Philip’s involved members and non-members alike in discussions about the state of education in Harlem, a dialogue that oftentimes resulted in mobilization; *protest* – St. Philip’s supported the work of parents in the community by petitioning city governance, hosting community marches and providing fiscal support to major organizations fighting for educational equity; and *collaboration* – St. Philip’s forged partnerships local, city and national organizations, setting aside faith, class and race differences to bring experiences and opportunities to Black

⁹⁵ Milton C. Sernett, ed., *African American Religious History: A Documentary Witness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 2.

⁹⁶ Sharifa Rhodes-Pitts, *Harlem Is Nowhere: A Journey to the Mecca of Black America* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2011).

children youth and adults in Harlem. These strategies were aligned to St. Philip's philosophy of education: community engagement. The church initiated meaningful ways to engage the community, however, its success or effectiveness was contingent on the participation and involvement of Harlemites. By engaging the community through programming, conversations, protests and collaboration, St. Philip's supported Harlemites active role and involvement in their own social, economic and political well-being.

St. Philip's story broadens a narrative that has overwhelmingly characterized Black religious institutions in northern cities, and particularly Black Episcopal branches such as St. Philip's, as disconnected from, and unable to meet the needs of, the community Harlem amidst major demographic changes. Accordingly, St. Philip's faced scrutiny for its middle-to-upper class membership and some of its strategies that were more aligned to conservative social philosophies. However, St. Philip's response to racial discrimination in Harlem counters negative images of the Black church put forth by militant Black groups and scholars who portrayed the Black church as passive toward securing civil rights for the community and accommodationist to the political and economic agenda of whites in a rapidly changing demographic. Moreover, its real and valuable contributions to the civil rights movement must be acknowledged; an omission of its participation in education results in an incomplete history of the Black Episcopal Church in the history of religion, education and community. Furthermore, this research broadens the conversation about the places in which education occurs and offer analysis of the viability of alternative spaces for learning. Accordingly, this dissertation supports several academic disciplines, including African American Religious Studies, Religious Studies, African American History, Urban Studies, and History & Education.

The limitations of this dissertation in terms of scope and topic support the need for future research on Black churches in Harlem. There are four areas that I have identified as opportunities for further investigation. Understanding how other Black churches participated in education in Harlem in the post-World War II would establish a more comparative framework. Examining the scope of St. Philip's work beyond education, from the Church's commitment to bringing affordable housing to the elderly to the establishment of Carver Federal Savings Bank would account for the Church's broader role in Harlem. A biography of Weston's life would be valuable considering he was such an instrumental figure in St. Philip's history, but also in Harlem's history. Lastly, researching St. Philip's programming as it unfolded in the 1970s and early 1980s, and shifted to address the newest needs Harlem, from the fiscal crisis to the drug epidemic, would extend the conversation about its work into a new period.

The extent to which educational programming existed in Harlem by way of religious institutions is a topic in need of further exploration. While St. Philip's participation in education helps inform our understanding of one of the many Black churches in Harlem active in the postwar period, it is also clear that other churches in Harlem merit consideration. In researching St. Philip's participation in education in Harlem, it was apparent that other religious institutions in the neighborhood were taking on the role of educator, for instance, by running after-school programs. An article in the *New York Amsterdam News* from 1962, includes "an urgent appeal for responsible adult teachers to help supervise and guide community children about two hours a week in after school center[s]" at Union Baptist Church, AME Zion Church, St. Luke's Episcopal, Bethany Baptist Church, Grace Congressional Church, Thomas Wesleyan Methodist

Church, Christ Temple and Emanuel AME.⁹⁷ This indicates that several churches in Harlem were responding to the need for educational programming in the 1960s. The newspaper article also shared that certain churches, alongside St. Philip's, had already established "after school centers" or "educational headquarters," including Friendship Baptist Church, St. Mark's Methodist Church and Union Congregational Church.⁹⁸ Accordingly, while St. Philip's had the most robust and developed programming with the most spacious community center in Harlem, it is clear that other churches were also participating and responding to the need for education beyond schoolhouse doors. An examination of these churches will help create a more comparative framework for understanding both the educational needs of the community and the strategies for responding to these needs.

Furthermore, this research would not start and end with churches given the diversity of Harlem's houses of worship. Did churches, mosques, synagogues and other faith-based institutions offer programming? What was the theology of education behind said programming? Was it accessible to all of Harlem or exclusive to members? Did other programs have similar attendance and retention to that of St. Philip's? These questions are a starting place for a history, which surprisingly, has yet to be written. Given the importance of faith in Black communities and the centrality of Harlem to Black culture and life in the United States, the nature of this work would be invaluable to not only the field of History & Education, but also African American Religious Studies. In order to effectively unravel the monolith of the Black church and add

⁹⁷ Sara Slack, "Reading, Writing & Arithmetic: Seward Park," *New York Amsterdam News*, January 27, 1962.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

complexity to the “King-centric” narrative, examining the work of other religious institutions is imperative.⁹⁹

The second area identified for further research is St. Philip’s initiatives in Harlem that were indirectly related to education, including Weston’s role in establishing the first Black bank in the neighborhood and St. Philip’s work in bringing housing to Harlem’s elderly. While I briefly incorporated Weston’s involvement in Carver Federal Savings Bank in this dissertation, the importance of operating a Black bank in a Black community and the specific ways Carver served Harlemites fell outside the scope of this research. Carver was an initiative spearheaded by Weston, but unofficially tied to the Church. Understanding the opportunities that Carver helped to facilitate is integral to the history of Harlem and the “political economy” of the neighborhood.¹⁰⁰ The history of exclusion the Black community experienced from federal policies that supported home ownership, property investment or relocation to suburbia is only one piece of the story. The extent to which Carver empowered the Black community with opportunities for investment has the potential to bring nuance to the notion that neighborhoods like Harlem and their residents were without access to real estate development and property ownership. Moreover, assessing the scope of loans and mortgages that Carver provided since opening in 1949 could inform the literature on the economy in Harlem during the post-World War II period. Some questions that could be a starting point for this research include: who was

⁹⁹ Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 6; and Charles Payne, *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 419.

¹⁰⁰ John L. Rury and Jeffrey E. Mirel, “The Political Economy of Urban Education.” *Review of Research in Education* 22, no.1 (1997), p. 98.

applying for loans and mortgages? Who was receiving them? What type of investment were the loans and mortgages supporting? Where was the investment located?

Going hand-in-hand with obtaining the capital for property acquisition, another interesting piece of St. Philip's in Harlem in the post-World War II period is the Church's investment in, and development of, housing in the neighborhood. Dating back to the Church's final relocation to Harlem, St. Philip's had identified land ownership as invaluable.¹⁰¹ And, the importance of this remained steadfast for Weston's tenure as rector. In addition to the construction of St. Philip's on the Park, an apartment building with "moderate[ly]" priced units allocated for Harlem's elderly, which was introduced alongside the new Community youth center, Weston also established non-profit development corporations to bring affordable housing to Harlem households in the lower economic strata.¹⁰²

The third area for further research is the life and contributions of M. Moran Weston. While I briefly addressed his upbringing, education and work prior to St. Philip's, the primary sources demonstrate that his influence predated the post-World War II period and went beyond Harlem. Between the archives at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library, there is a plethora of materials to support the compilation of a biography on Weston. Prior to becoming the rector at St. Philip's, Weston worked for the New York City Department of Social Welfare in the 1940s, connecting Black men and women with wartime employment opportunities and mobilizing civil rights rallies. While working in the Christian Social Relations and Christian Citizenship branch of the

¹⁰¹ Kevin McGruder, *Race and Real Estate: Conflict and Cooperation in Harlem, 1890-1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

¹⁰² "Ground Breaking is Start of \$2 Million Youth-Parish Complex," article from the *Episcopal New Yorker*, Box 38, June 1967, St. Philip's Church Records, The New York Public Library.

Episcopal denomination, he worked with churches in the South to implement *Brown v. Board of Education*. Additionally, Weston It is important that we continue to introduce new profiles to the discourse on religious activism in the post-World War II period.

Lastly, this dissertation is punctuated by the post-World War II period. The rationale behind the time period parameters was a result of focusing on the intersection of education, race, religion and community. Education of Black children and youth moved to the forefront of St. Philip's history during the post-World War II period. However, Weston's rectorship of St. Philip's lasted through 1982. Understanding how the mission of the Church shifted during the 1970s under his continued leadership yet amidst the fiscal crisis is important to African American Religious Studies and Urban Studies. Amidst the fiscal crisis and the War on Drugs, examining the Church's ever-evolving programming for the community showed how responsive St. Philip's was to Harlem. The greater focus on financial planning was evident in the evolution of the church's programming, which included financial advisement, or what St. Philip's described "money management."¹⁰³ In response to the need for drug rehabilitation, St. Philip's expanded its counseling services and offered experiences for the community to learn about the severity of drug trade and use. For instance, they hosted *King Heroin*, a play about drug addiction, in the church's Community Theater.¹⁰⁴ Further research on the church's programming during the 1970s could evaluate the extent to which St. Philip's was committed to meeting the specific needs of Harlem. Did the church keep programming accessible to the entire community regardless of membership?

¹⁰³ "Credit Confab March 3," *New York Amsterdam News*, February 27, 1971. 11; and Howard Thompson, "'King Heroin,' Play on Addiction, Returns to Harlem," *The New York Times*, March 16, 1971, p. 46.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

Segregation and educational inequality were pervasive in the northern cities during the post-World War II period. These racist policies and practices affected the social well-being, economic mobility and political power of many Black people residing in places like New York. How and who in Black urban neighborhoods responded to such disparities is significant to document, for, it captures the local efforts instituted to create change and it opens inquiry into the extent to which these efforts were viable. Out of all of the institutions in Harlem, during an era when religion was increasingly pushed to the periphery of American life and fell under great scrutiny in Black communities, it is critical to understand, and analyze, the role of a Black church. St. Philip's and its participation in education through the strategy of community engagement broadens the historical discourse by bringing together religion, race, education and community in one narrative.

This dissertation is the first comprehensive history to examine this particular intersection as it occurred in Harlem in the postwar period. Furthermore, St. Philip's active participation in education in Harlem takes aim at generalizations of the Black Episcopal church as accommodating to white values and disconnected from the concerns and challenges of the lower class Black population. St. Philip's education was accessible to the entire community regardless of religion, politics, age or class. In addition to challenging interpretations of the Black Episcopal church, St. Philip's also brings complexity to the monolith that is the Black church. Honoring the unique histories of Black churches, examining their varied missions and philosophies and analyzing the scope of civil rights strategies is imperative to bringing nuance to oversimplified, static and uniform narratives of the Black church and religious activism. St. Philip's educational activism in the postwar period bring complexity to this history, broadening the discourse by presenting a new definition of, and approach to, education. The viability of St. Philip's

philosophy of education and its varied strategies for community engagement are critical to consider as we reflect on the significance of community education across time and place.

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