

Church

Black Churches In South Phoenix — Can They SAVE The Community???

It's difficult to talk to someone about saving his soul when his children are hungry and creditors are knocking on his door.

by Brian Keith Johnson
Special to The Informant

Stroll or ride between Roeser Road and the river-bottom and 24th and 32nd Streets in South Phoenix and you will behold as many as 27 churches. Incredible? Yes. Alarming? No doubt. Astounding? You bet!

Especially alarming is that this particular census tract in Phoenix is one of the highest crime areas. Without argument, the neighboring churches have their work cut out for them.

Last year, in the vicinity of Broadway and 24th Street, five homicides were committed. Police sources link heavy drug trafficking, illegal gambling, illegal liquor sales, and prostitution as major contributors to the high incidences of crime. Lieutenant Thomas Lannon of the South Mountain Precinct says drug trafficking is the number one illegal activity in the area. He speculates the burglaries and most other offenses are interrelated and drug connected. He thinks policemen will reduce the number of burglaries in the area if witnesses would assist more and notify the police.

Lannon commended the work of Reverend Karel McCray, of the New Testament Community Missionary Baptist Church, for his involvement with Total Management. Last year, Total Management secured 541 rental units within the community, 304 of which were unoccupied. Police reports show that 81 of the 304 unoccupied units were burglarized. Burglars stole toilets, sinks, fixtures, and other marketable appliances.

Rev. McCray could not be reached for comments.

Critics say the churches are playing too passive a role in the community where, as one local put it, "it's not even safe to stop if you have a flat tire."

Historically, particularly in the history of black Americans, the Church has

always been a very involved component of the community. The Church regulated the pulse of the community. In South Phoenix, the pulsation is waning. Generally, the churches are inactive in a location where developers and construction sites are constantly emerging. Newly created construction-related jobs that could benefit members of the community are going to outsiders. Ask any construction worker in the area where he lives.

By pooling economic resources, the Church can reestablish its role as an effective agency for social control within the community. A coalition of 27 such churches could demand a more active, effective, positive alliance between the police department and the community. Together, the churches and the law enforcers could keep illegal drugs out of the community - as well as the peddlers who bring in the drugs.

Are the churches supplying the community with responsible leadership?

Responsibility means the ability to respond. In the March issue of Ebony, a minister is quoted: "The church has a responsibility to the community. It's difficult to talk to someone about saving his soul when his children are hungry and creditors are knocking on his door."

In expressing their concerns, some residents of

the area suggested that a coalition of 27 churches could: pool economic resources, establish jobs, improve housing conditions, work together towards establishing economic and political clout for their district, increase the overall quality of education, and reduce the frequent occasions of crime.

Research shows that in high-crime areas, consumers pay up to 60% more for goods from local retailers.

When the majority of pastors, ministers, and reverends do not live near their churches in South Phoenix, visible leadership is absent. The community is being deprived when its leadership elects to live "on the other side of the tracks." Fence straddling is a luxury. If the leadership in South Phoenix is not part of the solution, perhaps it is part of the problem.

Does your pastor live near enough to be accessible to your community?

Theoretically, when the moral leadership of a community goes, so goes the conscience. The Bible tells us that as an expression of love and humility, God wrapped himself in flesh that He might dwell amongst man.

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Churches are urged to send their services and program announcements, typewritten, to the Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice Church Reporter, Mary Wilson, at 1201 South Eastern Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89104. Articles must be mailed or delivered to the above location no later than Monday noon of each week.

Effective leadership needs to be in the community as well as of the community.

In the "Agenda for the Black Church", C.D. Coleman says: "The Black Church must recapture its

historic relationship with the Black community; it must take its rightful place in the vanguard of Black revolution; it must utilize the potential of its young people; and it must lead youth beyond Blackness

to destiny."

However, it appears that in this census tract, where 27 churches rest, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

CHURCH NEWS

By Mary Wilson
Church Reporter

"Somewhere Over The Rainbow" -- An evening of fashion and fellowship will be presented by Victory's young Christians, auxiliary on Saturday, May 3, at 7:30. Won't you come and encourage the young church of today. Victory Baptist Church, 500 W. Monroe St. For more information call 649-6064 or 642-7727.

Supt. Lawrence Daniels and his congregation of the Trinity Temple Church Of God In Christ will be conducting a three day revival, May 7, 8, and 9th at 7:30 p.m. at the Grave Temple Church Of God In Christ, 4310 W. Bonanza. Elder Alonza McGee, pastor.

The Compassion Explosion, 304 E Lake Mead, will present An Evening Of Heaven On Earth, Sunday, May 4, at 3:00 p.m. Join them, won't you.

A fellowship and dedication of communion

robes, Sunday, May 4, at 12 noon -- at the Powerhouse Church Of God In Christ, 1216 Adams Ave. For more information call Trudy Freeman, 647-2133.

Bishop Robert E. Manuel, of The Manuel Church Of God In Christ of Los Angeles, California, will be conducting a one-day revival at the New Town Tavern. For more information call 649-6802.

The Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, 1240 W. Adams Ave., will have their pre-

women's day program, Friday, May 2, at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, May 4, at 3:00 p.m. The church is located at 1240 W. Adams ave. For more information call 648-5666.

The First Church Of God is presenting Minister Joseph and Viola Brazil, of Portland, Oregon, Sunday, May 3. Asking all to come out. 318 So. 11th street. For more information call 649-1976 or 648-3523.

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FREE CORSAGE

Submit in writing the name of the oldest mother of your church, who will receive a free corsage. Complete the following and mail or deliver to:

Petals of McRoy
1020 W. Owens Ave.
Las Vegas, Nevada 89106

Name of Oldest Church Mother _____
Name of Church _____
Address of Church _____
Phone Number of Church _____
Name of Pastor _____
Date _____



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SPECIAL! SPECIAL! SPECIAL!
The Mother's Board and Members
of the

True Love Missionary Baptist Church
are sponsoring their
1st Annual Olden Time Church Service.

We want you to come help us celebrate our service.

Time: 9:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m., then 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

A FREE DINNER will be served from 1 p.m. until 2:45 p.m.

Mother E. Stepps, President
Rev. I.W. Wilson, Pastor