A study of one hundred Atlanta negro ministers’ concepts of social work

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A STUDY OF ONE HUNDRED ATLANTA NEGRO MINISTERS' CONCEPTS OF SOCIAL WORK

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

BY

CHRISTOPHER COOKE MELVIN

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
JUNE 1948
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

To the majority of the Negro people, the Church is a truly great and important institution. The Church is usually the center of Negro activity and it is the place of origin of practically every project launched by the Negro people. The importance of the Negro church is due no doubt to the peace, solace, comfort and promise of a better day which its teachings offer to various people. In the church, they find a refuge where they are free to think, to plan, to worship, to pray, to give vent to their feelings and to escape from the turbulent life which exists for them beyond its sacred walls.

The importance of the Negro church then, enables it to be regarded as more influential than the lodges, burial societies, or any other type of organization or institution which may exist in the community. It serves a multiplicity of purposes and its influence is recognized and felt in almost, if not all phases of Negro community life.

Today, the better educated and more youthful Negroes do not attend church in numbers comparable to the less educated and more elderly members of their group. Despite this fact, its importance should never be minimized.

It (the Church), is a social center, it is a club, it is an arena for the exercise of one's capabilities and powers, a world in which one may achieve self realization and preferment. Of course, a church means something of the sort to all groups; but with the Negro all these attributes
are magnified because of the fact that they are so curtailed for him in the world at large. . . . Aside from any spiritual benefits derived, going to church means being dressed in one's best clothes, forgetting for the time about work, having the chance to acquitted oneself with credit before one's fellows, and having the opportunity of meeting, and laughing with friends and of casting an appraising and approving eye upon the opposite sex. Going to church is an outlet for the Negro's religious emotion. . . . He is willing to support them (the churches) because he has not yet, and will not have until there is far greater economic and intellectual development and social organization, any other agencies that can fill their place.

The Negro Church is generally backward, but it is still the most powerful instrument in the lives of Negroes. It continues to occupy a place of prominence in Negroes' lives which is different from the position the Church occupies among any other group. When in quest of religious worship, most Negro churchgoers can find the compensatory, traditional, undeveloped, unrelated (to contemporary life) emotional sermons and literature which produce the complacency which those communicants seek.

The Negro minister who devotes his time to hollering and making queer noises while in the pulpit is slowly losing his prestige and influence. As Negroes receive more and better education, they require and accept better educated ministers.

Negro preachers are increasingly in competition with professionals, businessmen, politicians and labor union officials for local leadership. Competition is compelling them to try to do something positive for the Negro community. The social work programs of the relatively few churches which have them are mainly a development of the last decade or two, and we expect to see the trend continuing especially in the North. . . . These trends are making the Negro church a more efficient instrument for amelioration of the

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Negro's position at the same time as they are reducing the relative importance of the Church in the Negro community.1

It is obvious then that the Negro minister's role continues to be one of great prominence. Whether uneducated and emotional and possessing great prestige among the unlettered; or well educated and recognized by the educated Negroes as efficient, the Negro minister remains the most outstanding person in the Negro community. More and more, the Negro people are searching for efficient ministers, rather than for someone to supplant the minister. Other institutions and persons of fields other than the field of religion sponsor effective and worthwhile projects also, but in only a few instances is this done without engaging the services of the Negro clergyman or without resorting to the use, to some extent, of the great and important Negro Church.

Significance of Study

Many social work agencies in Atlanta in recognition of the role of the Negro minister, make use of the Church for the purpose of expanding their agency programs and for developing goodwill, securing funds or in interpreting the work of their agency. In many instances, their agency efforts have not been supported for one reason or the other. Moreover, many community churches have requested field work students from the Atlanta University School of Social Work to initiate some type of

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of programs of social work in churches. Frequently, these programs have likewise failed to gain complete church support in financing and in participation.

Purpose of Study

It is the purpose of this study to ascertain the Negro ministers' concepts of social work as a means of guidance which social work agencies in the community may use in connection with their own programs in the churches. When the agencies gain some idea of the social work concepts of the ministers, they will know what types of social work programs Atlanta Negro churches will probably sponsor or support.

The churches' programs of social work will be well known in their communities, and their programs when created out of limited concepts, will be ineffective. On the other hand, when originated from broad concepts, the programs can be effective and virile. In order to gain knowledge of the possible types of social work which Atlanta Negro churches might support, this study was made.

The general inhabitants of communities, because of the influence of the church, are more likely to accept the programs of social work which churches might offer. Therefore, if these programs of social work which churches might offer are not in accord with what is regarded in present day thinking as good, the members of the communities will very probably be misled as to what real social work is. Good social work programs in the Church can provide much needed help in reaching the people whom social
work agencies do not reach. If not planned however, the churches' programs might easily mean a duplication of services offered by social work agencies.

The presentation of these concepts was further deemed advisable because of the lack of knowledge which many persons possess concerning the social work agencies in the community. The Church then, has the opportunity to inform such people and to refer them to the agency which offers the type of social work services which they desire.

Scope and Limitations

The study was made of one hundred Atlanta Negro ministers. Included are a bishop, two presiding elders, pastors and non-pastors.

The thinking revealed in this study is not necessarily indicative of the thinking of all Atlanta Negro ministers. The reasons are, there are two hundred and ten organized Negro churches in Atlanta\(^1\) and the number of pastors interviewed may not be considered a fair sample. The expressions of non-pastors likewise may not be considered a sample, because the exact number of non-pastors is extremely difficult to determine. The reason is many are known as ministers to only a few persons of the Atlanta community and too, many are enrolled in the five

\(^{1}\)Statement by Staff Member, Butler Street Young Men's Christian Association, Atlanta, Georgia, personal interview, July 12, 1947.
institutions of higher learning in Atlanta.

Various degrees of education, different denominations and age ranges are also represented in the study.

Method of Procedure

The information for this thesis was obtained by contacting one hundred Atlanta Negro ministers and interviewing them from a schedule. The findings and information which they provided were analyzed and documentary readings were consulted.
CHAPTER II

A BRIEF HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT AND FIELD OF SOCIAL WORK

In order that a criterion may be established to determine how favorably the interviewed ministers' concepts compared to the present day concepts of social work, a brief history of social work is presented in this chapter in which may be observed old and new concepts.

The Church for nearly two thousand years, was the only institution which taught, advocated and even sponsored co-operating with one's fellow man. No State for that long period took any part in these activities. The first evidence of any state’s showing an interest in human relations occurred when the disintegration of the feudalistic system in England created a condition in which many persons were made homeless. This was because the feudalistic state, when intact and effectively functioning, was a type of state in which every person was dependent on the other.¹

The large problem which was faced as England's feudalistic system disintegrated resulted eventually in parliament's passing a law in 1536 which provided that alms be solicited by churches and that local authorities help relieve the sick, poor and afflicted.

This law was amended several times until in 1601, the

famous Elizabethan Forty Third Law was passed. This law provided for employment of the able bodied poor; it provided for almshouses for unemployed persons; it further provided that children whose parents could not support them be apprenticed until the boys reached twenty-four years of age and the girls twenty one years of age or married.

Constant revisions in and additions to the Law of 1601 have been made until today, the interdependence and mutual cooperation of the state and individual are viewed as compulsory for effective relief and aid programs.

In England, the State had eventually taken the initiative in alleviating social ills. When America's Colonists from England came to the shores of the New World, this concept of social work they brought with them.

America therefore inherited the almshouse, a disdain for pauperism, a resentment toward relief, and the belief of immorality as the cause of poverty. Newspapers and public documents contained the names of persons who received assistance because of the strong desire to hold the recipients before the public for ridicule.¹

Public funds in America were used for improving social conditions by the eighteenth century. The establishment of the orphanage, mental hospitals and public asylums started in that era.

The concept of social work then, had obviously broadened

¹Ibid., p. 11.
somewhat when compared to the concept which existed before the
Elizabethan Poor Laws were enacted. In America the responsibili-
ty was the public's responsibility, but all attempts were local.
They were made by the people of the townships or cities.

A noteworthy improvement was the attempt at coordinating
the services of the private social work agencies. This took
place in America in the eighteenth century. The origin of
such a system was in Germany however, when the Hamburg-
Elberfeld System came into existence during the seventeenth cen-
tury. The results of these attempts were seen in the creation
of the "Saint Andrews Society," the "German Society" and
the "French Benevolent Society," which provided assistance to
the English, German and French Settlers respectively. The
necessity of a more inclusive welfare organization resulted in
the formation of "The Association for Improving the Condition
of the Poor." Vocational training, temperance, and coordinat-
ing relief agencies' work were the main purposes of this orga-
nization.¹

Today social work is not confined to the giving of alms
and the rendering of moralistic speeches. It is now a pro-
fession which aims at assisting maladjusted persons to become
adjusted and capable of functioning effectively on their own
abilities. To accomplish this, the fields of psychology, psy-
chiatry, psychotherapy, and other fields are utilized.

¹ Ibid., p.16.
An adequate and presently acceptable definition of social work is as follows:

A professional service rendered to people for the purpose of assisting them, as individuals or in groups to attain satisfying relationships and standards of life in accordance with their particular wishes and capacities and in harmony with those of the community.¹

This definition provides the basis for the present concept of social work. The work is designed now to help people make adjustments in order that in their daily activities, they may prove self sufficient. Giving of alms and being moralistic which help temporarily, have given way to assisting people permanently.

Present day thinking likewise does not encourage the granting of assistance by the wealthy to the poor, upon whom the former group look with condescension and pity. There is now an awareness of the importance of a strong government organization which provides assistance for the needy. This type of thinking resulted in the passage of the Federal Social Security Act of 1935 which specifies that funds and care for the needy dependent children, the needy aged, the needy blind and the needy physically handicapped be provided. The American people supply the funds for carrying out this program, which means that each person deposits money which assures him of remaining socially secure. Therefore, the recipients of these funds do not experience the stigma attached to receiving

"charity" which was the case in the past centuries and in the earlier part of this century.

This brief history of social work which indicates the change from concepts of moralization to the general dignity of the individual and the society's responsibility for individual development will be used as the criteria for the analysis of the ministers' concepts. This change in concept has necessitated the development of specialization to produce more effective results in social work. Older professions such as law and medicine have undergone these changes and the results have been so favorable as to encourage such developments in the field of social work.¹

It is beyond the bounds of this paper to go into the detailed definitions of these processes. It is sufficient for this study, to indicate that social work has now developed a series of techniques and activities or methods, which are performed with individuals singly as in case work, or with groups as in group work or with a series of groups as in community organization.

CHAPTER III

THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MINISTERS STUDIED

In order that all important information of the ministers studied may be available, their age ranges, denominations, educational status and relationship to the church are presented.

The age distribution of the ministers was as follows:

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<th>Age Group</th>
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<td>20-29</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>30-39</td>
<td>51</td>
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<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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The ministers of the twenty to twenty-nine age group presented concepts which for the most part appeared to be very limited. One would expect the concepts of men from this group to be more in harmony with the current ideas of social work. Instead, for the most part, they appeared to be lacking in scope and understanding. Consequently, the programs of social work which they proposed appeared to be limited.

Their educational qualifications too, proved to be less than would be expected. They have for the most part been exposed to high school training, while a few have completed college and furthered their training beyond that point. Some of the ministers of this age group have not completed grammar school.
The reaction which these ministers exhibited to the study was favorable however. They readily consented to be interviewed and answered the questions freely and readily. Not one in this group demurred when approached.

The fifty-one ministers of the thirty to thirty-nine age group, while also apparently lacking to a great degree in their concepts of social work, exhibited a greater understanding and knowledge of the social work field than did the group previously mentioned. Probably this is due somewhat to their experience and to the educational experiences which they have had. This group also included a larger percentage of more highly trained ministers than did the twenty to twenty-nine age group. The programs which these men regarded as beneficial and effective were in direct proportion to the type of concepts which they entertained.

A small number of the ministers in this group have not completed grammar school. However, many have attended and have graduated from high school. A relatively large number have attended college and graduate school of theology, while a small number have attended college, graduate school of arts and sciences and graduate school of theology.

Only one minister in this group refused to be interviewed. He did so when his concept was asked, stating that he had no time to answer such questions. Another minister of this age group was sought and interviewed in the place of the one who refused to be interviewed.
Twenty-seven ministers who were interviewed were in the forty to forty-nine age group. For men of experience due to their age, and the educational opportunities available for persons of their relatively young ages, they too possessed concepts of social work which appeared to be rather poor for the most part. Some of the men in this group however held concepts which indicated that their thinking was in keeping with the most modern thought regarding social work.

A very small number have been exposed to a large amount of formal training, while there were many who have attended college. A few have received only high school training, while still fewer have received only grammar school training.

The programs of social work which they proposed were far better than their concepts. This too, is very probably due to the experience which these men have had in church and in civic affairs. They responded readily to the study.

Six ministers were in the fifty to fifty-nine age group. They presented concepts which appeared to be very limited generally. Doubtless, their concepts were influenced by thinking which was prevalent in past years. Conversely, their educational qualifications were very high. All except one have attended or completed college and graduate schools of theology. The one has not completed elementary school.

One minister in this group refused to answer the questions, because he felt that study and thought would be necessary prior to answering them. In his place, another minister of his age
group was interviewed.

Forty-nine of the one hundred ministers interviewed were Baptist; twenty-eight were African Methodist Episcopal; fifteen were Methodist; four were Colored Methodist Episcopal; and the remaining four were Church of God in Christ, Congregational, Holiness and Presbyterian.

The forty-nine Baptist ministers interviewed held concepts of social work which appeared to be generally poor. A small number presented seemingly good concepts however, and those ministers had been exposed to a large amount of schooling. The programs which they proposed appeared to be quite limited and in proportion to the apparently limited concepts which they presented. The ministers of this group were cooperative for the most part in consenting to be interviewed. The only two who refused to be interviewed were Baptist ministers however.

The twenty-eight African Methodist Episcopal ministers readily and enthusiastically consented to be interviewed. Possessing a rather high degree of formal training generally, they presented many apparently acceptable concepts. Their concepts were surprisingly similar however, and the programs which they proposed likewise were almost always the same. Even those ministers who had received very limited formal training proposed programs which were similar to those proposed by more highly trained ministers.

Fifteen Methodist ministers were interviewed. Their concepts were possibly the best concepts presented by any church
group. Their educational qualifications too, were the highest of any church group contacted. Their proposed programs appeared to be the best and showed more originality of thought and understanding. None of the ministers in this group refused to be interviewed.

The one Church of God in Christ minister who was interviewed presented a concept which may be considered broad. He was not reluctant when approached for an interview. His educational qualifications were high, but his proposed program would hardly prove an effective one.

The Congregational minister readily responded and proved to be well educated. His proposed program was apparently effective and in keeping with the concept which he presented.

The Holiness minister who was interviewed held a concept of social work which may be regarded as limited although his educational qualifications were high. He reacted favorably to the study and in proportion to his concepts, he suggested an apparently limited program.

The one Presbyterian minister who was interviewed possessed high educational qualifications, and he presented what appeared to be a good concept of social work. His proposed program appeared to be in proportion to the concept which he presented.
The educational status of one hundred Negro ministers was as follows:

Elementary School ........................................... 3
High School....................................................... 28
College............................................................ 31
Graduate School of Theology..................................... 25
School of Theology and no College training.............. 6
Graduate School of arts and sciences (in addition to other training).............................. 6
Other training (in addition).................................... 1

Total, ............. 100

The ministers who received no training beyond elementary school were very cooperative in consenting to be interviewed, but their concepts would hardly be considered other than very limited. They were for the most part statements which indicated their evaluations of social work. Their proposed programs likewise appeared to be very limited and ineffective. Probably the most impressive characteristic which this group exhibited was conscientiousness. They answered each question with an apparent feeling of responsibility and sincerity.

The twenty-eight ministers who have received high school training were apparently more broad in their concepts than the group previously mentioned. Their concepts were for the most part, ones which may be regarded as short of the present concepts of social work. They showed no reluctance in answering questions but they advocated programs which appeared to be somewhat limited.
Generally, the thirty-one college trained ministers possessed concepts which appeared to be more nearly in keeping with present day thinking regarding social work and more broad than those of the two previously mentioned. Also cooperative in providing information, these ministers proposed programs which were in direct keeping with the types of concepts which they offered.

Cooperative in answering questions and in giving information, the twenty-five ministers who have completed college and graduate school of theology offered seemingly acceptable concepts of social work for the most part. The programs which they advocated appeared to be strong ones in some instances. Their concepts may not be regarded very good ones in most instances however.

The six ministers who have studied theology but who have received no college training appeared to be quite narrow in their concepts of social work. They seemed almost entirely to have missed the point and to think in terms of concepts which have long been regarded as changed. Too, there was a vagueness in their answers which probably can be attributed to the gap in their education caused by not attending college. Their answers appeared to be attempts to say something which they could not fully express because of their apparent inability to comprehend fully what was being discussed.

When compared with the ministers who were high school graduates, ministers of this group seemed to have said no more,
but they said it loquaciously. The proposed programs were comparable to the types of concepts they expressed. There was no reluctance in their submitting to interviews, but they appeared to be condescending in giving their answers.

The ministers whose training included graduate work in arts and sciences in addition to the other training mentioned responded readily to the questions presented. They showed an eagerness to discuss the importance of Negro ministers' concepts of social work and they presented seemingly good concepts. The programs of social work which they suggested for churches indicate that they are keenly aware of social ills and of the effective measures which the Church can employ in ameliorating them. In their discussions, they mentioned seemingly pertinent facts concerning the field of social work and they discussed the change in concepts of social work.

There was only one minister interviewed who in addition to all of the schooling received by the previously mentioned groups, has received more training. He too gave a concept which appears to be acceptable. He was highly cooperative. In the discussion which he prompted, he gave details of the programs he proposed for churches to sponsor. The programs are the types which will probably prove beneficial to persons of all ages and of all conditions. The programs will probably be felt in the community as a positive and virile contribution of the Church.

Not all of the ministers interviewed were pastors of churches. Seventy-seven were pastors; nineteen were students,
teachers, or ministers with no charges. Two were presiding elders; one was an assistant pastor and one was a bishop.

The seventy-seven pastors interviewed answered the questions of the interviewer very readily and cooperatively. Two pastors refused to submit to the interviewer, however, which necessitated the contacting and interviewing of two other pastors. However, from this group came many apparently acceptable concepts and many apparently effective proposed programs. Many pastors who were very articulate discussed at length the importance and urgency of the Church's taking a more active part in and a more positive attitude toward sponsoring social work programs.

The one assistant pastor who was interviewed offered an apparently clear, modern acceptable concept and he offered no resistance when approached for an interview.

The bishop who was interviewed offered a seemingly broad concept and apparently effective program. Interestingly, his concept and proposed program were similar to most of the concepts offered by the ministers of his particular faith. He too, readily consented to be interviewed.

The two presiding elders were members of the same denomination of the bishop who was interviewed. One presented an apparently narrow, outmoded concept. Although both men were most willing interviewees, each one's proposed program of social work seemed commensurate with his concept.

The nineteen non-pastors interviewed, presented for the
most part, seemingly good concepts of social work. In keeping with the most modern thought of social work, their concepts were as a whole the type which would probably form the basis for better social work programs. Highly cooperative in answering questions, this group proposed programs which would probably prove valuable to the communities in which they would be launched.

In a few instances, lengthy detailed conversations on social work and its importance were prompted by interviewees from this group.
CHAPTER IV

AN ANALYSIS OF THE MINISTERS' CONCEPTS OF SOCIAL WORK

In presenting an analysis of one hundred ministers' concepts of social work it was deemed feasible to group the opinions. Five headings seemed adequate for the analysis. They were as follows:

Ameliorating social ills and helping maladjusted persons.
The outgrowth of Jesus Christ's teachings.
Economic security.
Promoting harmony among all peoples.
Limited concepts.
Ameliorating social ills and helping maladjusted persons.—

Forty-two of the ministers interviewed presented that concept of social work. They stated that the individual, small group and community are the objects of help by the social worker. They stated further that economically, physically, culturally and educationally, benefits are to be derived from the social worker's assistance.

Some of the interviewees stated in addition that social work may be termed social engineering, in that the work is designed to rebuild personalities which suffer as the result of facing social problems. They further declared that the eradication of destitution, poverty and all social ills is also the aim of social work.

These ministers also felt that both psychic and physical
problems are improved, and that this is attempted for groups and individuals, adults and children.

One minister when interviewed stated that it is his belief that the Negro Church must take a more active part in social work.

I believe that the average Negro social worker (I say Negro social worker because my contact is with Negro social workers), does not properly evaluate the resources in religion for social work. The dominant attitude is religion is out of touch with contemporary life and is of little value to social work. He seems to think that the techniques and the utilization of resources other than the Church are all that are necessary. He does not regard the orientation of religion as necessary in working with persons.

What is important is, after assisting a person to become self-sufficient, the person must be given some sense of values—some criterion—which enables him to remain self-sufficient. Without a sense of values, he may very easily fall to the depths from which he was assisted. No better thing can be given him than religion, for religion is dynamic and virile, and is always in touch with everyday activities. No doubt the social worker's attitude is justifiable, because religious activities have been and oftentimes still are, very poorly conducted.1

This group of ministers presented these seemingly broad concepts and they seemingly tried not to overlook any of the phases with which social work is concerned. Members of this group indicated an apparent awareness of social conditions, the importance of the Church in rendering assistance and they also seemed to be broad and comprehensive in their answers.

The outgrowth of Jesus Christ's teachings.— Two ministers expressed the belief that social work is rooted in the teachings

1 Statement by Reverend Lucius W. Tobin, Pastor Providence Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia, personal interview, April 29, 1947.
of Jesus Christ. Each stated in addition however, that the work is designed for human betterment and salvation. They both felt that it can not be separated from religion because the idea from which social work originates is a phase of religion.

Social work can not be divorced from or conceived as other than, essentially moral and spiritual in nature or implication. The social worker then, must realize that social work is a logical outgrowth of the teachings of Jesus Christ. Because of this, there is every reason to feel that there should be an integration of religions and social work. There is no way in which social work can be divorced from religion if it is to be effective.¹

These ministers concepts then, can probably be considered broad and inclusive, although they speak freely of social work's being strongly rooted in Jesus Christ's teachings.

Economic security.-- Three ministers offered "working for economic security" as their concept of social work. Two said that and nothing more, while one elaborated and said that social betterment and industrial progress for underprivileged persons are also the aims. He stated that "all social betterment grows out of economic security."

Promoting harmony among all peoples.--Five ministers said that to them, social work is the field which hopes to promote harmonious relations among people. While some limited this harmony to neighborhoods and communities, others presented seemingly broader concepts which included all peoples, colors and creeds.

¹Statement by Faculty Member, Clark College, Atlanta, Georgia, personal interview, May 31, 1947.
Limited concepts.--The remaining forty-eight ministers who were interviewed offered concepts which appeared to be quite limited. Their concepts may be regarded as antiquated and generally ineffective, because they failed to include more than one of the phases with which social work is concerned, or they were vague.

Some ministers felt that "Boy Scout and Girl Scout Troops" only are ideal for concepts of social work. Others stated "making brave, intelligent men for the future;" "the necessity of trained leadership in social work"; "preparing persons to live well"; "setting up desirable standards" and "helping people over life's hurdles" as their concepts of social work.

Some stated merely that "social work is important in urban and rural areas", while still others offered concepts which may possibly be considered appraisals of social work. These ministers said that "social work is a good and important work", or "it is a work which demands trained leadership.”

Some ministers thought of social work only "as a means of augmenting the Church's work" and "assisting the pastors in carrying out their duties." Ministers who entertained such concepts stated that "social work will prove helpful to the program of Christian Education", and "it is a field which makes the minister's role an easier one."

These concepts appear to be so limited in scope that they may be regarded as probably insufficient and ineffective when the accepted concepts are used as criteria of measurement.
CHAPTER V

PROGRAMS OF SOCIAL WORK REGARDED AS BENEFICIAL BY THE MINISTERS

The programs which the ministers proposed for their churches were programs which varied greatly in apparent scope and effectiveness. Many ministers suggested seemingly broad and effective programs, while others proposed apparently less broad ones. Still others proposed apparently limited programs in both scope and effectiveness.

One minister advocated a "complete Christian education program for persons of all ages, a training program for parents and leaders including home visitation and projects, and participation in community organization." Such a program, he believed, would prove most effective in assisting the individuals and community if taken in its broadest implications. Parents and leaders would be trained to assume the responsibilities which would be theirs. There would be an awareness of the importance of leadership which would enable community leaders to do those things which would benefit the inhabitants of the community. Parents would be motivated to do all in their power to rear their children in such a way as to make them desirable citizens in the future. In addition to all of the previously mentioned possible benefits, there would probably be a group of church people able to lead better Christian lives as the result of the Christian education program to which all of them would have been exposed.
Another of the seventeen ministers stated that he believed many desirable results would be obtained from his church's employing a trained social worker on a full time basis. The social worker's duties would be to serve as a liaison person between the church and community and report to the church, the needs of individuals of the community. Still other duties would include the supervision of all social work in the church, and the imparting of pertinent information to persons who are not aware of certain benefits to which they are entitled and other facts such as adoption procedures.

In his church, this minister also deemed advisable the establishment of a nursery which would operate during Sunday services. Such a nursery would prevent mothers' having to leave services to administer to their infants' needs, and it would also prevent the other communicants from being annoyed by babies' restlessness.¹

Such a program, he felt would leave little to be desired, because the social ills would be given thorough attention and treatment. His church would be actively engaged in community affairs and assisting the community. Through this program, the influences of this minister's church would probably be wisely and well utilized.

A non pastor who was interviewed stated that "pastoral calls, a youth recreation center, money for aged members

¹This minister stated that a day nursery in his church would be a duplication of services, because in his community many day nurseries already exist.
and forums for the entire community", would prove a helpful program. Such a program he thought, would provide the community with spiritual strength from the pastoral calls, a reduction in youthful offenders as the result of a recreational center, and more serious thinking on the part of adults because of the forums. The funds for aged members, he regarded as necessary to supplement the funds which needy aged persons receive from government sources.

Still another minister when interviewed, said that a program "which touches the lives of church members and arouses their social interest would produce splendid results." He emphasized the necessity of variety in the execution of such a program, however. Although no specific program was mentioned, the minister seemed cognizant of what the Church can do in a community for the amelioration of social ills. The arousing of the interest of the church members is probably a prerequisite to a successful social work program.

One minister suggested "a program including family case work and group work within the church family and in the neighborhood." The minister who proposed this program stated that family case work and group work in the community hardly exist, and benefits to be derived from them are so great as to justify their being established in larger numbers. He felt that these areas of social work can reduce family difficulties and the number of offenses which children commit.

The one assistant pastor who was interviewed said that
"a program which provides proper recreation for adults and children, and which promotes domestic happiness and better health and cleanliness, would be an effective and inclusive program of social work for a church." This minister also showed an apparent awareness of what is necessary to improve social ills.

The six proposed programs which have been mentioned were typical of the programs which appeared to be quite broad and inclusive. The benefits which would be derived from them would probably do much in improving maladjusted personalities, promoting education and wholesome recreation for the young and aged, promoting family unity and in improving the social conditions of the community in which the church sponsoring these programs would be situated.

Other ministers proposed programs which appeared a little less broad. They suggested "recreational activities for persons of all ages with proper supervision"; "all phases of social work which assist maladjusted persons"; "care of the aged and forums"; "programs for social, economic and spiritual improvement"; "educational, thrift and welfare clubs"; and "study clubs, recreation clubs and neighborhood clubs."

These ministers' proposed programs would bear significant implications for social welfare agencies existing in the various communities. These welfare agencies, which can never help all needy people, would be assisted by the Church in practicing social work. This logical outgrowth of the
teachings of Jesus Christ would consequently prove a great help to the social work agencies.

This means the doors of the church must always be open to all people, to all activities which mean welfare of the people and the advancement of the whole of their lives... The Negro minister must open the door of the church physically and spiritually, and his church will be effective in the community if he will put his church "on parade" with a program of activities which considers the purpose of the church to be the development of Christian personality and the organization of a Christian society. ¹

Other ministers proposed seemingly less broad programs, but programs which appeared to have many merits.

One minister proposed "recreational activities and clinics because of the great need for the improvement of health conditions among Negroes."

"The developing of youth and providing for the needy through the efforts of missionary circles and willing workers clubs", one minister stated would be a good program.

Another favored "case work and recreation", while "day nurseries and a recreational program," another minister suggested.

Many ministers suggested that the sponsoring of boy and girl scout troops and a social service program should be made possible by churches. One minister suggested "child welfare services" as his proposed program.

One minister said that "he was thoroughly convinced that the

¹Frankie V. Adams, "What The Negro Minister Can Do In The Urban Community," The Foundation, XXVIII (July, 1938), 11.
usual church organizations could modify their programs to provide excellent assistance to groups and individuals rather than to individuals only", which, according to him, is usually the case.

One other minister advocated "a Y. M. C. A., Y. W. C. A., boy and girl scout troops and clubs which assist the needy, as a really good program for a church to sponsor."

The remaining ministers of this group suggested programs "which can meet the needs when sponsored by Sunday schools", "missions carried on by the total church organized by the Sunday school"; "clubs which meet different kinds of human needs"; "playgrounds, libraries and nurseries"; and "health clubs and counseling services." One suggested "clubs which study problems of the local community."

However, the expressions of these twenty ministers probably indicated that they too were cognizant of what the churches can do in the field of social work. Although probably not the broadest, most inclusive programs were suggested, they seemed to touch on pertinent and important phases of human relations and their improvement.

Such programs if initiated, would in all probability, also involve the social work agencies of the community because, to the social work agencies, the church programs would have much significance. If in need of broadening, there would doubtless be some assistance rendered the churches by the agencies in broadening their programs, because the types of programs, though apparently somewhat limited, would probably
have been created by persons who would be receptive to ideas which would result in improvements. The social work agencies, readily recognizing the potential worth of the program, would just as readily cooperate in order that the community would be benefited.

Sixty-three ministers proposed programs which were apparently limited in scope and effectiveness. Typical of their suggested programs were "being sociable with people of the church by attending all social affairs"; "working with people to help them pass away time pleasantly and wholesomely"; "all types of social work"; "counseling bureaus"; "boy scout troops"; "a playground and a civic club"; "strong missions"; "a working relation between the church and community", and "a well organized Sunday school."

Those proposed programs too, seemed to have their merits but they appeared so limited in scope as to cause one to feel that they will hardly be known to the church members or to the community. Furthermore, probably only a few of those programs would be made effective enough to attract the people for whom they were intended.

Probably few social work agencies would know of such programs in churches, but those which did would probably offer to broaden and improve them considerably provided such improvements were deemed necessary. That this would be possible would depend on whether the ministers who proposed the programs would be receptive to ideas advanced by professional social workers.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The study of one hundred Atlanta Negro ministers' concepts of social work has led to the following conclusions:

Originally, social work was carried on entirely by the Church. The State assumed the responsibility of bettering social conditions in the sixteenth century. People who received help were helped temporarily and were viewed with disdain and scorn.

Private social work in America was begun in the eighteenth century.

Today, social work is designed to assist the total individual in taking his place in society. Government funds are provided to render assistance to needy persons.

Social work is divided into the processes of "social case work", "group work" and "community organization."

Sixteen of the ministers who were interviewed were from twenty to twenty-nine years of age. The majority attended high school, but only a few received college training. They reacted favorably to the study. Their concepts for the most part appeared to be rather poor.

Fifty-one of the ministers interviewed were from thirty to thirty-nine years of age. Their educational qualifications were high, but generally their concepts may be regarded as poor. One refused to be interviewed and another in his age group was contacted and interviewed.
Twenty-seven ministers' ages ranged from forty to forty-nine years. Their concepts appeared to be poor generally, and their formal education was quite limited. All men in this group who were approached consented to be interviewed.

Six ministers' ages ranged from fifty to fifty-nine. Their concepts appeared to be limited. These ministers had high educational qualifications.

Forty-nine of the interviewed ministers were Baptist. Generally, their concepts appeared to be poor. Likewise their proposed social work programs may possibly prove limited and ineffective. Two Baptist ministers refused to be interviewed, which necessitated two others' being interviewed.

Twenty-eight African Methodist Episcopal ministers were interviewed. They presented many seemingly good concepts which were very similar. They were highly cooperative in offering information.

There were fifteen Methodist ministers interviewed. They presented what appeared to be good concepts generally. Their formal training was high in most instances and there was no refusal to offer information when approached for the interviews.

One Congregationalist minister was interviewed. He was cooperative, well trained and apparently broad in his concept of social work.

The Holiness minister presented a seemingly limited concept, but highly educated, he proved to be.

The Presbyterian minister was a well trained man and offered a seemingly good concept of social work.
Three of the ministers had not received training beyond elementary school. Highly cooperative in providing information, they offered concepts which appeared to be limited in effectiveness and scope.

Twenty-eight ministers have received high school training. For the most part their concepts appeared to be limited.

Thirty-five ministers have completed college and graduate school of theology. The majority of their concepts may be regarded as acceptable ones.

The six ministers who have received theological but no college training were haughty and condescending when approached for an interview. Their answers seemed vague, but they were presented very glibly.

The six ministers who had received training in college, graduate school of theology and graduate school of arts and sciences presented seemingly good concepts. Very willing to cooperate, they likewise suggested programs of social work which might possibly prove effective.

The one minister who had received other training in addition to all of the previously mentioned training gave a concept of social work which appeared to be a good one. He was very cooperative and the program which he suggested appeared commensurate with his concept.

Seventy-seven pastors were interviewed. Two refused to be interviewed, so two others were contacted and interviewed in their places. Many apparently acceptable concepts were presented, but a large number of seemingly poor concepts were
also presented by the ministers.

One assistant pastor was interviewed, and he was easy to approach. He appeared to be clear on his thinking of social work.

The one bishop who was interviewed presented an apparently broad and acceptable concept and proposed program. He too, was very willing and cooperative.

Two presiding elders were interviewed. One presented a modern, seemingly acceptable concept, while the other offered a concept which appeared to be less broad. Each one was willing to cooperate and each proposed a program which was probably commensurate with his concept.

Nineteen non-pastors were interviewed, and their concepts seemed generally acceptable. Their proposed programs too, were ones which might probably prove effective.

Forty-two ministers regarded social work as "attempts to ameliorate social ills, and assist maladjusted persons to function on their own abilities."

Two ministers stated that "social work is an outgrowth of Jesus Christ's teachings."

Three ministers believed that "economic security is the aim of social work."

Five ministers regarded social work as "the means of promoting harmony among persons."

Forty-eight ministers possessed seemingly limited ideas regarding social work. Some said that it was "the sponsoring of
boy and girl scout troops"; others felt that "social work is preparing persons to live well"; still others stated that "it is setting up desirable standards", "making brave men for the future" and "helping people surmount life's difficulties."

Seventeen ministers proposed apparently broad programs of social work for their churches to sponsor.

Sixty-three ministers suggested programs of social work which appeared quite limited.
SCHEDULE FOR THESIS

"A STUDY OF ONE HUNDRED ATLANTA NEGRO MINISTERS' CONCEPTS OF SOCIAL WORK

1. What is your concept of social work?

2. Are you pastoring a church? What is your denomination?

3. What program would you regard as a beneficial program of social work in your church?

4. Do you think this program can be (is) effective and inclusive?

5. Age: 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59 or over.

6. Education: 1-7, 8-12, college (no. of years) graduate? graduate school of theology? graduate school? Other training—specify.
Bibliography

Books


Articles
