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Abstract
Having assumed black Pentecostals are “otherworldly” or detached from politics and this-worldly concerns, many religious and civil rights scholars have ignored black Holiness-Pentecostals’ involvements in the Civil Rights Movement and instead focused on the roles of black Baptists and Methodists. Primarily guided by historical, sociological, theo-ethical, and hermeneutical methods, this dissertation examines Church of God in Christ (COGIC) members’ engagements in the Civil Rights Movement in Memphis, Tennessee, 1954-1968. I chose Memphis as the location to examine these assumptions because the most renowned Civil Rights leader, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., delivered his last sermon at Mason Temple Church of God in Christ (COGIC), the headquarters of the largest and oldest black holiness-Pentecostal denomination. The dissertation argues that Memphis COGIC members were not divorced from the Memphis Movement but endeavored to combat racial injustice and inequality through a diversity of means, including through politics, nonviolent direct action, and spiritual quest. I contend that despite being marginalized and treated as outsiders on account of their race and religious faith, prior to the Civil Rights Movement early saints affirmed their identity as United States citizens, valued American democratic ideas of freedom and equality, and endeavored to advance democratic principles through participating in civic life. Additionally, when the Civil Rights Movement came to Memphis in the 1950s, COGIC members joined and worked alongside black church leaders from other denominations and engaged in nearly every aspect of the struggle, including political campaigns, desegregation efforts, and the Sanitation Workers Strike. Furthermore, I argue that Holiness-Pentecostal theology informed the activism of Memphis COGIC Civil Rights activists. Affirming his Holiness-Pentecostal heritage, Bishop J.O. Patterson Sr., a prominent Memphis Civil Rights activist, sought to persuade blacks in general and to remind black Christian activists in particular of the indispensability of spiritual presence and empowerment for social struggle. My research findings provoke scholars of religion to rethink the meaning and implications of otherworldliness. Additionally, this research indicates that there is greater complexity to black churches involvement in the Civil Rights Movement besides the contributions of black Baptists and Methodists.

Keyword
Church of God in Christ; Memphis; Civil Rights Movement; Political protests; Activism; More...

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Prior to the Civil Rights Movement of 1955-1968, conventional strategies employed to abolish discrimination against American blacks included efforts at litigation and lobbying by traditional organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). These efforts had been the hallmarks of the American Civil Rights Movement from 1896 to 1954. However, by 1955, due to the policy of “Massive Resistance” displayed by the intransigent proponents of racial segregation and voter suppression, conscientious private citizens became dismayed at gradualistic ap The Civil Rights Movement. 690 words - 3 pages realize that they could have gone about their actions differently. The people of modern America are all about living live for the moment, taking risks, not making sacrifices, and never yielding to 'the long run'. Looking at the world of 2015, one can witness the apex of human civilization. Who can question the customs, morals, and nature of today's Americans, without arguing with results? Consider the Civil Rights Movement (1954-1991. The Civil Rights Movement - 1642 words. They were a notable band that performed Mae at the march on Washington and had an impact on the Civil Rights Movement and opened peoples' mind. The Freedom Singers. African American Civil Rights Movement Of 1955 1968. In 2007 the Church of God in Christ celebrated 100 years of existence. From the revival meetings led by Mason, and through the influence of the Azusa St. Revival, the denomination has swelled to 8 million members around the world in over 60 countries. Related Content. Article Info. Title. Church of God in Christ. Published. March 17, 2015.