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Interview with Pastor Grattan, Manhattan Pentecostal Church, 08 February 2007

Interviewers: Linda Lin and Eckson Khambule, Interview started at 1:15pm and ended around 2:30pm.

On how long the pastor has been serving in the church/es.

The pastor has been serving in other churches for 27 years. The pastor said that he joined the Manhattan Pentecostal Church after the former pastor who happened to be his friend had left. His friend served in the church for 11 years. While he, (Pastor Grattan), has only been in New York for two years. Prior to coming to New York he had always thought about the City as a "crazy place." Coming to New York City was a "culture-shock for him" he said. He brought his wife and two children. His children love NYC. Manhattan Pentecostal Church was incorporated in 1937. The Fellowship of the Pentecostal Church has about 20 000 pastors working in over fifty countries in the world.

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On the local community

The pastor said that the community in which the church is located is a low income community. It is mostly Blacks and Latinos who live there. When the church building was purchased about six years ago it was worth about \$700 000, but now it is worth about \$4000000.00. The pastor said that Magic Johnson brought Starbucks to Harlem. The Starbucks coffee shop is one of the busiest in the City. "Lord (sp) and Taylor" store is coming soon.

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Who do you serve?

Neighborhood

Did a survey in the neighborhood about parenting and finance. The pastor mentioned that domestic violence is one of the most serious problems in a "minority community." He said that he would like to start faith-based initiatives that would impact the youth. The youth are caught up in hip-hop culture (which disorients social solidarity, own interpretation).

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How do you reach out to the youth?

The pastor expressed concerns over generational differences. He stated, however, that there are good things in what the young people are doing thus, those things need to be incorporated into youth development programs. Hip-hop according to the pastor is "demeaning to women" and does not espouse family values.

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On youth programs

The pastor is planning to have a workshop for the youth that would directly address relationships in order to “produce health families.” According to the pastor, there is a lot of money in America that “the people” do not know how to access. Workshops will address such topics as how to live good life. On being asked what good is the pastor said that good life and living good life mean owning a home and having cars in the family. His programs will be geared toward teaching family values and economic growth. The pastor said that “America is hypocritical” with attention being paid to bad things in the media and less on important issues. “Society does not promote growth and development.” The pastor noted with mixed feelings that there are some rap groups in some churches.

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He asserted that he is astounded by the fact that kids do not learn things such as art and music in schools so much anymore. According to him these were fundamental aspects of his upbringing and education. On talking about video games he said that there was nothing wrong with video games. He argued that “kids are mall-rats” meaning that they love malls. In Mall of America, there is a high school.

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On education

Currently, there are no educational programs facilitated by the church.

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The pastor said that the Church can play a meaningful role in helping single parents. He envisages educational programs such as a day care and after school tutorials. Some other faith-based initiatives should be aimed at substance abusers. These individuals should be offered training so the pastor said.

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The pastor perceives giving the people meaning as an essential element of his ministerial work. He complained that kids in schools are no longer encouraged to pray anymore; consequently the people have lost meaning.

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There is a “Sunday” school every Wednesday. In relation to membership, people come and go. It is hard, according to the pastor, to maintain regular attendance in a low income community.

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He said the people should be given the venue to fellowship.

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He fellowships with the people.

He maintained that there were no structured education programs as mentioned above.

The children should be afforded an opportunity to fellowship since they are moldable when they are still young.

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Pastor’s son works with youth. He does soundtrack for the church.

The pastor stated categorically that he does not want his church to be “a hip-hop” church.

The pastor brought a very interesting point (my view), and that is, there is a need “to find translators” and described them “as the people that can speak the language of a culture.” This is someone that is adept in both cultures. To reach the youth there should be translators. This would help cultivate leadership among the youth. (The pastor made this point when talking about bridging the gap between the current hip-hop generation and the

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older generation that is always to put its values against the former. He talked more about how the “translators” and I think these are “cultural translators,” should mediate between generations....personal interpretation).

He said that he likes to listen to the youth and drawing them in so he can cultivate leadership.

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On the structure of the church.

The church is under the NYC metro district.

Structured almost the same as in other boroughs

There is a board of directors, trustees and the pastor who oversees the general functioning of the institution.

The pastor said that NYC district is very unique that the consent of the Attorney General is required to perform certain tasks in related to the church.

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On resources and challenges

It is a challenging task to build the church, the pastor said.

The church is conservative, thus, may not attract a lot of people. Offerings may be very limited. He used a metaphor “Leave George Washington alone” (this was in relation to offering).

He said that for the church to attract the people and overcome its challenges it needs to bless the people. The church choir sings nicely. He kept on saying “we are doing good, we are doing good” when talking about progress and challenges in the church. The people have faith in his leadership. He was voted in by 35 people to pastor the Church.

As for the future

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