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**AFRICAN BAPTIST WOMEN AS ACTIVISTS AND ADVOCATES
IN ADULT EDUCATION IN NOVA SCOTIA**

by

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**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts**

at

**Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
April 2000**

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0-612-57291-9

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Abstract

The African United Baptist Association (AUBA), an umbrella organization for African Baptist Churches in Nova Scotia, founded in 1854, is the longest established Black controlled institution in the African Nova Scotian community. Meeting the social and educational needs of its members at the same time as fulfilling their spiritual needs, the African Baptist Church has played a significant leadership role in the development of African Nova Scotian communities. Women have been central to this development from the beginning.

Facing severe poverty, racism, unemployment and educational deprivation, leaders of the African Baptist Church at the turn of the twentieth century encouraged the development of separate women's and children's organizations as vehicles to promote education, race consciousness, community activism, social justice, and spiritual uplift. The AUBA established a Ladies' Auxiliary in 1917 to organize and coordinate women's work on a provincial level. Over the next forty years, auxiliaries were created in the twenty-two member churches of the AUBA. These activities coalesced in 1956 when all women's groups within the churches formed the Women's Institute of the African United Baptist Association. Along with the activities normally associated with women's church groups, such as charity and mission work, African Baptist women took on the struggle for racial equality and community betterment which evolved from the unique role the African Baptist Church has played in the Nova Scotian community.

This thesis focuses on the trail-blazing work of the Women's Institute, using a case study of their educational project on violence against women in the Black community to demonstrate how their activism falls within the framework of adult education. Such activities provided learning opportunities otherwise denied to African Nova Scotian women and increased women's agency in community development. It is argued that the long standing work of African Baptist women at the community level is not only about 'charity'; fundamentally, it is also about educating adult women to the importance of organized, collective efforts to bring about social change that is vital to the survival of African Nova Scotian communities.

Acknowledgments

Without the Black Refugees of the War of 1812, my ancestors, and the hardworking people of my mother and father's generation, it would not be possible for me to do this thesis and the other work that I do. It was their goal to create a society in which all people can live with dignity. I acknowledge that I am a beneficiary of this work and the sacrifices of the early generations of African Nova Scotians. From their earliest presence in Nova Scotia, African people have struggled to make a place for themselves, and it is with the greatest respect that I pay tribute to them and thank their guiding spirits.

I also want to express sincere thanks to my supervisors, Dr. Margaret Conrad and Dr. Ann Manicom, for their support and encouragement to complete this thesis. And thanks to my committee members, Dr. Frances Early and Dr. Sue Sherwin, for their interest in this work, which has taken several years to bring to completion. I am grateful for some financial support received from the special scholarship set up in memory of educator Dr. P.A. (Tony) Johnstone, who encouraged me to reach for larger goals, and whose clarity of vision, emphasis on setting priorities, and good humour were always an inspiration to me.

I have often been asked why I decided to go back to university at this stage of my life, to put myself through such a time-consuming process, especially given that I have had some of my work successfully produced and published. I was not always sure how to answer this question. One sunny afternoon while visiting my eighty-seven year old uncle, I found the answer. He was sharing his memories of his grandmother, my great

grandmother, Charlotte Grosse. Charlotte, her daughter Ida Grosse Hamilton, and her daughter-in-law Marie Waldron Hamilton did not have the opportunities that I had. It was because of their lives and sacrifices – their tramping the path – that I could go to university, and I feel obligated, for those who follow me, to make the most of my opportunities.

My heartfelt thanks and gratitude to my family, Bev Greenlaw and Shani Hamilton Greenlaw, and to my sisters, Ada Thompson and Janet Drummond, who have always supported and encouraged me to complete this work. And for brother Wayn, sister-in-law Rugiatu and nephew Kalifah, thanks for the home away from home.

I am grateful for the cooperation I received from the Executive and the Workshop Committee of the Women's Institute of the African United Baptist Association. Their dedication to the community and to the African United Baptist Church is an inspiration.

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Introduction

This study examines African Baptist women's activities beginning in the latter half of the nineteenth century, a period when there was a general expansion of evangelical churches, especially Methodist and Baptist, in the Maritime region and continuing to the present. Women's activities in these mainstream churches included the development of women's auxiliaries, missionary societies, as well as temperance and other social reform organizations.¹ While African Baptist women shared many of these preoccupations, race set them apart from their white "sisters" who did not have to concern themselves with issues of racial exclusion and discrimination. The specific role of women in the African Baptist Church has not been fully explored, a fact which underlines the significance of this study.

In 1917 the African United Baptist Association of Nova Scotia (AUBA) passed a resolution calling for the creation of ladies' auxiliaries in all churches of the Association. Over the next forty years auxiliaries (as well as other women's groups that took on specific tasks such as missionary support and charity) were created in the twenty-two member churches of the AUBA. The ladies' auxiliaries and other women's groups formed an umbrella organization, the Women's Institute of the African United Baptist Association (WI-AUBA), in 1956. Still in existence, the Women's Institute, and the ladies' auxiliaries that proceeded it, are characterized by consistent, committed social activism on the part of the women who became members of these church-based groups. Their work has been central to the educational and social development of African Nova Scotians.

Rooted in the African Baptist Church tradition, this social activism is based upon a particular interpretation of the Christian gospels. Theologian James Cone explains that, “...inherent in the Christian gospel is the refusal to accept the things that are as the things that ought to be. This ‘great refusal’ is what makes Christianity what it is and thus infuses in its very nature a radicality that can never accept the world as it is.”² This premise – often interpreted in the twentieth century as the gospel’s call for social justice – has been the underpinning of the Black struggle for equality and progressive struggles everywhere.

This thesis argues that African Baptist women, through their social activism, have carved out work that is fundamentally adult education in its conception and application. Indeed, their work is integral to the process of social transformation in Nova Scotia’s Black communities. While their work has been and is adult education in the broadest definition of the term – incorporating a model of continuous, or lifelong, learning taking place beyond formal educational institutions – it has not been previously examined from this standpoint.

My interest in this subject brings together my personal and academic lives. Raised and nurtured in the African Baptist tradition, I am a direct beneficiary of the work of church women. This research has allowed me to rethink and reframe my early life experiences and has fueled my desire not just to ‘do research,’ but to participate in and carry out research that draws upon my own experiences and those of other African Nova Scotian women. It also offers a historical and contemporary context for my varied work which has educational dimensions.

This study does not present an extended analysis of sexism or class bias within the

African Baptist Church. By not doing so in no way suggests that this church is free of such discrimination.³ I accept as fact that sexism and class bias within and beyond the Black community are simultaneous oppressors of Black women. However, what I have decided to address in this thesis is the way in which African Baptist women have worked not only for full personal equality, but for equality on behalf of all members of their community, using the African Baptist church as a vehicle to achieve their goals. I describe the trail-blazing work of these women and, using a case study of their educational project on the subject of violence against women in the Black community undertaken in the mid-1990s, demonstrate how their activism falls within the framework of adult education.

In Chapter One I locate myself, tracing the early influences that have led to my life work – which in itself has been educational and activist. I introduce my research process and the primary and secondary sources that have guided this study. In the secondary literature, I find parallels to African Baptist women's work and struggles for equality in many African American communities.

Chapter Two provides a historical context for my research by highlighting aspects of the development of the African Baptist Church and its women's organizations. The formation of the Ladies' Auxiliary in 1917 and the subsequent creation of the Women's Institute in 1956, which regrouped all women's groups under one umbrella organization,

is discussed from the point of view of organizational structure, activities and issues which have been the focus of their work from its inception. This chapter provides the necessary historical background for understanding the contemporary activist work on violence against women described in Chapter Four.

Chapter Three presents a context that frames the work of the WI-AUBA as adult education from a Black, feminist/womanist point-of-view. Writer Alice Walker, who coined the term, defined a womanist as one “committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health..[Womanist] is to feminist as purple is to lavender.”⁴ Drawing on the writings of Black feminist scholars such as Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, Patricia Hill Collins and bell hooks, the work on Black adult education by William P. Oliver and Harvey Neufeldt, and the Black theological writings of James Cone and Emilie Townes, this chapter will offer an alternative reading of what may be considered ‘traditional women’s work’ within a Christian church context, work that I define as adult education.⁵ I argue that although community development has for the most part been absent from the general literature on adult education, it nonetheless falls within this field. Both Black feminists and Black theologians present an analysis of the status of Black people as ‘active agents’ working collectively to transform society and its structures.

Chapter Four demonstrates the thesis argument of African Baptist women as adult education activists by examining a project on violence against women launched in 1997 by the African United Baptist Women’s Institute. The project involves a two part documentary film titled No More Secrets and A Workshop Guide on violence against

women in the Black community which is intended as a public education tool for the Black and wider communities. This chapter describes how the organization came to identify this issue as a significant area for educational development work and the specific activities relating to the project. The discussion shows the inter-relationship between African Baptist women's faith and the notion of 'faith in action' or 'praxis.'

My conclusion states that the work of women in AUBA may be viewed within the context of community development – a contemporary interpretation of the practice of adult education. Most importantly, it also concludes that the activist work of African Baptist women in Nova Scotia may be linked to the activist work of women in the African Diaspora and offers a model of how women have worked successfully as agents for social change within a traditional institution by advocating for transformation in the institution and in the society as a whole.

Two brief notes to the reader are in order here, one population numbers and one on terminology. Historically, Nova Scotia has been home to the largest population in Canada of people of African descent whose parentage dates back several generations. At the middle of this century, this population was variously estimated, either exaggerated or minimized, but probably reached about 15,000. The terms 'Black,' 'African Nova Scotian,' 'African American' and 'of African descent,' are used interchangeably, depending on the context of the sentence or the ideas being discussed. By 'community' I mean a physical or geographic location, or a group/collectivity of people who share a physical or geographic space or location. A community may also share common values and beliefs, ethnicity, or cultural and racial heritage. The term 'Black community' is

commonly used in its singular and plural connotations. One physical place identified by name, for example Beechville, may be referred to as a Black community. This 'community' and other similar ones may be referred to as the 'Black community.' In my use of these terms I do not intend to collapse the differences and variations among people of African descent, either individually or collectively, who live in Nova Scotia. Rather, the terms allow for discussion of some common historical experiences and shared activities.⁶

Chapter One: Establishing a Focus

Introduction

In this chapter I reflect on the early influences in my life that have had a direct bearing on my work and that place me within the tradition of the African Baptist women activists who I am examining. This discussion frames the research process that informs my thesis, that of participant activist, which I discuss in the second part of this chapter. I conclude with a survey of the major primary and secondary sources upon which my analysis draws.

Personal Beginnings

My personal story begins in Beechville, once called Refugee Hill, a Black community near Halifax settled by Refugees from the War of 1812. Several Hamiltons appear on land grant maps for the period. My father, Gerald Hamilton of Beechville, married my mother, Marie Waldon of Halifax. Her father, William Waldron, was a watchmaker from the Barbados; her mother, Hattie Kellum, was from Halifax. Charlotte Grosse, my father's grandmother, my great-grandmother, and my mother, Marie, figure in this story. Both of these African Baptist women were active in the Beechville Church (established in 1844) and community. My Sunday school teacher, my grade school teacher, youth counselors in the Baptist Young People's Union (BYPU) and the Canadian Girls in Training club (CGIT), were all Black women. Without my being conscious of it, from a very early age, I experienced African Baptist women as community activists. In this study I use my home community of Beechville as a reference point which helps to ground me in the work I do as a

documentary filmmaker who is also involved in various projects of community activism.

In 1968, I became the first person from the Beechville community to graduate from high school and to attend university. Twenty-one years after finishing my undergraduate studies, I decided to go back to school to continue my education in a more formal setting. July 1993 found me writing a paper to justify why I should be accepted into the Dalhousie School of Education to pursue a Master of Arts. As I began to write I remembered that Pearleen Oliver had once said to me: "I scrubbed a floor for every book I used in high school."¹ In comparison, along with my cousins, I picked blueberries and then hitch-hiked into Halifax to sell them in white neighbourhoods. With the money, I paid the rental fee on my high school textbooks. Throughout my growing years, I recall the admonition that education was the key to progress.

Black teachers who taught in Nova Scotia's segregated schools were community and church leaders. Many of those teachers, despite advancing age, continue to work diligently in the African United Baptist Church and its related organizations. My mother was a teacher and an active leader in what were called 'adult education programs' during the 1950s. She was a leader in the Beechville Church. She wanted to be a nurse, but chose teaching because until 1944 Black women were refused the right to train as nurses in hospital based programs in Canada. Growing up I did not know this. Nor did I know that Pearleen Oliver, our Church organist, youth leader, the woman who was always there in our Church, had led the fight to break the colour bar in nursing.²

Because of racial prejudice and severe economic circumstances, many Black people growing up in the first half of the twentieth century ended their formal schooling

before finishing Grade 9; some left before reaching grade 5 or 6.³ They, as I, attended segregated schools in Black communities outside the boundaries of the cities of Halifax and Dartmouth. References to race were removed from the Education Act in 1954 and by 1960 efforts were underway to dismantle segregated schools in Nova Scotia. Commenting on the repercussions of a segregated learning system, educator and African Baptist minister the Reverend William P. Oliver noted, “Segregated schools are a barrier to good inter-group relations. They are a visible symbol of separation, and a denial of the right ‘to belong.’ Such schools became a stamp of approval of the mental apartheid that exists in many white minds.”⁴

Having attended a segregated school for the first four years of my elementary school training, I understand the ‘mental apartheid’ of which Oliver spoke. I acknowledge that the material conditions in the Black schools were inferior to those in most white schools and that in many cases the teachers did not have the highest level of teaching licenses. Yet, these schools also had their advantages. The teachers understood their students and could relate to their backgrounds and circumstances because for the most part, they mirrored their own.

On a personal level, I cannot underestimate the importance to my later development of Marion Skinner, the Black teacher who taught me and my classmates during those formative elementary years. She was constant, hard-working and very caring. A day did not pass without her imploring us to study hard, to do well in school and to uphold the essence of Christian values -- loving your neighbour, respecting others and yourself, and finding ways to do good in the world. Nor did a day pass that she did not

teach us something we did not know. In stark contrast, my entry into the neighbouring white school could not have been more shocking, more alienating. The white teacher placed all Black students in one row on one side of the classroom. There were no Black people, teachers or anyone else, in teaching or administrative positions in the white school. This remained true for my high school years and through my university years as well.

My mother was one of a handful of Black school trustees. In this role, she was often called upon by parents and students to advocate on their behalf with the school administration and school board. Sorting through my mother's papers after her death, I found a petition calling for better housing, which in her capacity as Beechville Church clerk, she presented to Halifax County Council in 1967, on behalf of Beechville residents. The Petition's 'Statement of Priorities' very succinctly articulated the importance of proper housing to a community's overall development: "Better housing for Beechville residents is the basic and first need. It is a prerequisite to progress in education, health, employment, community responsibility, and other requirements of a sound and mature community."⁵

The learning environment, in which we were physically segregated, further restricted the potential of the Black learner and spirits were dampened through the required course materials. We faced daily insults and name calling often based directly upon the caricatures of African peoples portrayed in a geography textbook. Ours, though, was not the first generation to contend with racist content in the curriculum. For example, The Story of Britain and Canada written by Gilbert Paterson and published in 1933 is part of an Acadia University Archive collection of books used in Nova Scotia schools.

It had the following to say about Africa:

Africa is a continent which has no records, because except in Egypt, its people never got beyond the stone age in culture. Climate and manner of living brought a marked difference in colour and appearance [of] the black race. In the course of centuries they borrowed many things from Egypt, including the use of metals, but they have progressed more slowly than any other people in the world.⁶

Such views were prevalent in the society in which we grew up.

As I child, I accepted that the African Baptist Church in Beechville had always been there, yet I had no specific knowledge of the long history of African Baptists in Nova Scotia. This was not the only gap in my early learning. My grade seven history book briefly mentioned “the Negroes” and when they came. It noted that “in the 1700’s a few Nova Scotians kept slaves but public opinion was against slavery.”⁷ The reading of this and other brief passages often caused embarrassment for Black students who would later experience ridicule on the playground. Missing was any discussion of the origins of African people in Nova Scotia and Canada and their participation in the development of the province.

My classmates and I did not know that the earliest historical records show that Africans, both slave and free, have been in the area of present-day Canada for nearly four centuries. It is widely accepted that African people were part of the earliest exploration of Nova Scotia in the seventeenth century. Mathieu d’Acosta, an African man, is believed to have been employed by Sieur de Monts as an interpreter between the French and Mi’kmaq. Over one hundred enslaved Africans were at Louisbourg during the French regime and other Africans, free and enslaved, traveled to the port on various trading ships.⁸ African Americans were part of the New England Planter and Loyalist migration to

Nova Scotia and arrived as refugees after the War of 1812. Slavery was abolished in 1834 in the British Empire, but its legacy remained in the systemic practices of racism in Nova Scotia and elsewhere in North America.

In 1944, community leader B. A. Husbands, on behalf of the Coloured Citizen's Improvement League, wrote to then Premier A. S. MacMillan, objecting to the book Little Black Sambo used in Nova Scotia schools. He informed the Premier of a special resolution passed by the organization:

Whereas the little children of our public schools get their introduction to the colored race as far as public education is concerned, at an impressionable age, in the grade 2A, reader;

And whereas the references in the story of "Black Sambo" appearing where it does, holds the colored race up to ridicule, causing deep pain among our children, and presenting our race in such a manner as to destroy respect: therefore be it resolved that the Provincial Department of Education be asked to eliminate this objectionable material from the textbook;

And be it further resolved that the story be substituted by the authentic history of the colored people and stories of their great men and their contribution to Canadian Culture.⁹

As a result of an organized community-based lobby, spearheaded by Pearleen Oliver, B.A Husbands and others, the book was removed from provincial schools. Nevertheless when I attended school in 1958 we had Bunga and Simba who lived in trees in far away Africa. Later in the school yard – "Hey, you look like Bunga!" Or the ever-present, Topsy, whoever she was; I didn't know then, but I know now.¹⁰ Even Sambo made the occasional comeback.

The desire expressed by B. A. Husbands to have the authentic history of Black people

taught in provincial schools awaits fulfillment, not only for the benefit of Black learners, but all learners.

Concerns about representations of Black people in textbooks is not about censorship as some critics would have it. What was and is at the core of the case made by Husbands and his successors are questions of balance and fairness in representation. If the only material about Black people available to students presents stereotypical and racially offensive representations, it is not difficult to see how this might add to prevalent negative stereotypes of Black people extant in society in general. Educator P. Anthony (Tony) Johnstone, who in the late 1970s was the Director of Ethnic Services for the Nova Scotia Department of Education, analysed the impact of institutionalized, or systemic racism, on both the Black and white learner, saying:

racism in education results in substandard education for large numbers of Black children, by institutionalizing low expectations, diluted standards, inadequate conditions, little achievement, and psychological injury to many of them. It also seriously dehumanizes many White children through what one might call a spiritual lynching. In other words, racism destroys the giver as well as the receiver.¹¹

Johnstone advocated the teaching of human rights in public schools, believing that human rights and education were ‘inseparable’ and that the compartmentalized nature of educational training prohibits us from seeing the significant connections between human rights and education, education and culture, and education and development.¹² The influence of individuals from the Black community on my ‘education’ has been profound; they served as a buttress against the institutionalized racism Johnstone and others describe. They also served as role models for me as I made decisions about career direction. Examining my work over the past twenty-five years I find common patterns and

interconnections, many of which tie broadly into the area of education.

During the early 1970s, while working with the Company of Young Canadians (CYC), I was introduced to and educated in the principles and practices of community organizing and community development.¹³ Citizen participation and self-help were defining elements of the CYC's work. The range of development projects covered many aspects of rural and urban community life: tenant organizing, food cooperatives, women's health and rape crisis centres, child care, the fishery, the disabled, minority groups, and training centres. Traveling across Canada to research and write about these projects gave me a unique and first hand opportunity for learning and for direct participation. By 1975 when the International Year of Women was launched, my work naturally evolved into voluntary activities of particular concern to women; helping for example, to organize the Congress of Black Women of Canada meetings held in Halifax (1976), Windsor, Ontario (1977) and Winnipeg (1980).¹⁴

My work with Tony Johnstone brought me into direct contact with the public education system through research to create a data base on ethnocultural groups in Nova Scotia and efforts to develop learning materials for the Black Educators Association. My exposure to and involvement in gender and race issues comes from work at the community level as a member of women's groups and Black community organizations at the governmental level as a program manager. When I was responsible for managing the Women's Program of the federal Department of Secretary of State during the early 1980s, I often asked questions regarding the membership or constituencies of the women's groups seeking assistance. In one gathering held to discuss funding and program activities,

I explained my understanding of the Women's Program. In my explanation, race and ethnicity were key elements of the Program, which meant for example, that groups of Black, Asian or Aboriginal women would be eligible to apply for program funds on a equal basis with other groups. Interestingly, one of the responses at this meeting was that these groups should apply to the Multiculturalism Program since that was "their" Program (and, implicitly, the Women's Program, was not). It was often difficult to get groups to reflect upon the inherent contradiction of identifying as a feminist group lobbying on behalf of women, yet at the same time saying that particular groups of women should not have equal access to Women's Program funds. This contradiction reflected what was taking place (and continues to be a point of contentious debate) in the women's movement where women of colour, lesbians, immigrant women, poor women and women with disabilities challenged feminist language and practice by asking *who* was included in the definition of 'women.'

I have come to understand that the principles of citizen participation/activism, self-help, equality and social justice which have guided my work were first set in place for me by African Baptist Church leaders, many of whom were women. I accept that I have come full circle because my work in print and in film, which documents the experiences of African Nova Scotian women and the African Nova Scotian community, has served to inform, educate and challenge dominant stereotypes about us. In my film *Black Mother Black Daughter* (1989) we uncovered the hidden role Black women have played in assuring the survival of the home, church and community. *Speak It! From the Heart of the Black Nova Scotia* (1993) voices the concerns of African Nova Scotian youth as they

struggle with questions of identity, race and empowerment. *Against the Tides: The Jones Family* (1994) explores the long history of Black people in Nova Scotia, using an individual family as a point of departure, and shows the intergenerational nature of social and community activism.¹⁵ In *No More Secrets* (1998), I returned to a specific focus on Black women and their work to raise awareness about the issue of violence against Black women and their call for collective community action to combat the problem. The case study presented in Chapter Four details the process leading to the creation of this documentary and its accompanying Workshop Guide. It, perhaps more strongly than any other single project, demonstrates that African Baptist women, through the Women's Institute, function as adult educators, agents for social change-community developers, in their own right.

The Research Process

The development of scholarship which has as its specific focus the lives, experiences and work of Black women in Nova Scotia is a logical progression of my personal life and professional work. However, doing this research is located not only as part of the trajectory of my personal history. It is also conducted in the context of feminist scholars and activists who have brought into view the marginalization of Black women in mainstream historical accounts. Thus, the theoretical convergence points for this study are adult education-community development, Canadian history and feminist studies. Because African Nova Scotia women have been generally left out of these areas of scholarship, a special approach is required to understand their educational activities.

The framework, or lens, which I have chosen for this study derives directly from the experience of Black Nova Scotia women. Feminist theorist Patricia Hill Collins has underscored the importance of a knowledge based on the lives of Black women. She maintains that “Black feminist thought consists of specialized knowledge created by African-American women which clarifies a standpoint of and for black women...[it] encompasses theoretical interpretations of Black women’s reality by those who live it.”¹⁶ Similarly, John H. Stanfield argues for the necessity of creating what he terms ‘indigenized’ paradigms, theories and methods rooted in the experiences of people of colour.¹⁷ For this study I am in the fortunate position of being able to interact with my research subjects and draw self-consciously from personal experiences in the conduct of the inquiry. It involves a process of thinking reflectively, historically and biographically.¹⁸ The action research component is especially relevant to my work with African Baptist women in their efforts to produce the *No More Secrets* film and Workshop Guide.

In recent years, scholars have developed the concept of grounded theory to bring together the qualitative research that is rooted in experience and informed by participant observation. B.G. Glaser and A. L. Strauss, in discussing the credibility of grounded theory, state that “a field worker knows that he knows, not only because he has been in the field, and because he has carefully discovered and generated hypotheses, but also because ‘in his bones’ he feels the worth of his final analysis.”¹⁹ It is an analysis informed by the researcher’s “daily living.” Having attended annual sessions and other special services of the Women’s Institute and the African United Baptist Association over many years, I have knowledge based upon daily living, a knowledge, “in my bones.”

When a researcher chooses as a research site the locality from which she comes and when participants are known to her, as in my case, the implications of “prior knowledge” may call into question the researcher’s “objectivity.” This situation poses interesting questions regarding who normally does research and the sites selected. The “other” becomes researcher: presenting a construct of insider-insider, rather than outsider, investigating the other.²⁰ While the traditional concept of objectivity may be sacrificed in such an approach, much more is gained in terms of discerning meaning and obtaining “relevant” information that might escape the “outsider.” Researching this project from the inside was not without its drawbacks and challenges. The personal experience of violence was a subject not easily discussed. It added complications to the research which would not have been present had the study maintained a single focus on historiography and documentary review. Another factor related to many expectations and my ability to find new ways to view familiar situations and events. If I knew the women and the church so well, would there be elements I would miss? Keeping a journal and reviewing field videotapes were helpful in this process.

Reflecting upon the Women’s Day Service filmed for *Black Mother Black Daughter*, I realize it was not unlike the Women’s Day Service in my home community of Beechville, which I attended on Sunday, 8 September 1996, during my field research. My journal notes read as follows:

Early Morning. Very warm September day. The type of day you long for in a summer which has had all too few warm and sunny days. The first service at Beechville was for 11 am. At about ten minutes to eleven women were still assembling. Lots of people entering. The Ladies’ Auxiliary, dressed in white jackets and dark skirts, some wearing hats, most without, were gathering at the

entrance of the church door, making ready to parade. They enter singing. The warmth of the greetings, the care expressed for any family member undergoing problems—illness, death, which was there in abundance. The Speaker for the day bravely shares the story of her personal struggle with an eating disorder. Lots of hugging after all services. People share problems and ask for prayers and support of which they are assured. The personal connections strong, seems to be little distance among people. Men who attended helped to stack chairs after the meal was served and they provided musical accompaniment. There were other men in the congregation, one Minister and some deacons. Announcements of events taking place: a mainline of information into the community. All is listed in the Church bulletin; events underline the involvement of Baptist women in communities -- announcement of a meeting and training session for tutors for school children; announcement of planning meeting for women involved in Action Plan on Violence against women.

Later in the day, the North Preston Ladies' Auxiliary came to Beechville to give a service. They had celebrated their seventy-fifth anniversary in May 1996.

The guest speaker told of having been in the old Beechville Church, where the pulpit was, where the congregation sat. She spoke without notes. It was call and response. Amens, Ahas, yes Lords. Her voice rose and fell, emphasized words, her body moved and turned to the Choir at times. In the midst of her sermon, delivered in tradition African/Black Baptist style, she almost as an aside, commented that the women were the centre of the church and said 'we all know what would happen if the women were not there.' And later in getting correct names and addresses from Mrs. V. she smiled and said, 'your mother was my teacher.' Being here as 'observer' videotaping, I acknowledge one role. Yet there was this other role -- Sister Sylvia,' as most who came up to chat called me. Insider-insider. Objective-subjective. I acknowledge the dual nature of my presence.²¹

Discussing research as personal experience, authors Anna Neumann and Penelope

L. Peterson include researchers' conversations with others and their 'personal contemplation of remnants of such conversation' as source material.

They go on to point out that:

Through such conversations [with colleagues, participants, authors] and contemplation, researchers may form new thoughts, but they may re-form them as well; they may create and then re-create their subjects of study; they may rethink themselves as researchers. In sum, they may learn. But just as researchers change in what and how they know, so does their work change; sometimes, so does their field of study, and occasionally, so do their lives.²²

Consequently, my accumulated knowledge is the first component of my research design, which, along with the qualitative methods of observing, experiencing, recording and conducting archival research, yielded the framework for this study.²³

Reviewing the Literature

In my search for reference material, I have been particularly interested in finding work by and about African Canadian women. The broader movement to capture 'women's' history, memory and experience has only recently begun to include a 'diversity' of voices and perspectives.²⁴ While there has been a growing body of literature which has as its focus the examination of the many aspects of the lives, experiences and work of women of African descent in North America, there are few studies that focus specifically on African Canadian and African Nova Scotian women. The interlocking systems of domination as outlined by bell hooks is relevant here. The 'academy' is based upon European approaches, transported through the United States into Canada. Its hierarchy leaves aside Black women, who could not assume that if there were other women inside the walls, that they would necessarily throw a line over to them, or that if Black women threw the line up, and succeeded in having it land on the other side, that the line would not end up back

in their laps. Linda Carty writing about Black women in the academy asserts that :

The production and organization of knowledge by academicians linguistically and institutionally alienates Black women. Often the language used references [of] the white upper middle class world. It is often abstract since abstraction is part and parcel of the learned white male hegemonic discourse indicating academic knowledge.²⁵

As a researcher living for a time in both the academic and the every day worlds, I rarely escape dealing with the combination of race and gender. For example, subtle and not so subtle racist stereotypes of African people in general, and African women in particular, are still common. To illustrate this point, I refer to April 1994 newspaper articles revealing that during the 1960s, secret RCMP files and reports had been kept as part of a deliberate surveillance operation focused on members of the African Nova Scotian community who were considered to be 'activists.' The documents, released because of access to information requests, show the pervasiveness of racist categorizations that had been used by the RCMP to describe individuals and communities. In one report titled General Conditions and Subversive Activities Amongst Negroes-Nova Scotia, prepared in 1968, the author, commenting on the probability that population numbers were likely inaccurate, states "it may be borne in mind that Negro women are prolific childbearers." In a second report, prepared the same year, the author says: "There is little to worry about as far as most of Nova Scotia is concerned, however, Negro settlements in Halifax County could become headaches in the space of a few months with the influence of capable radical Negro organizers."²⁶ Such comments have historical parallels; in early archival documents it was not uncommon to find references to Black women as 'good,' and often 'uncontrollable' 'breeders.'

Such comments have their root in the treatment of African women as chattel slaves.²⁷

Canadian historians have until very recently ignored the presence and contribution of African Canadians in the development of Canada. General historical studies on Black/African Canadians subsumed Black women under “Black Canadians” consequently erasing gender differences. Similarly, African Canadian women have not figured significantly in early Canadian women’s histories which began to flourish in the early 1980s. Race and the dynamics of combined racial and sexual oppression were rarely accounted for in any meaningful way. We were invisible Black Canadians and invisible women. Whether intentional or not, such exclusion renders invisible the active participation of African Canadians and African Canadian women in the development of the society in which we have lived for many generations.

Debates both inside the academy and beyond it regarding race, ethnicity, sexuality and class have led to important changes and have begun to focus attention on the history and life experiences of African Canadian women. Nevertheless, even the most diligent researcher is confronted with difficulties in locating sources. Archivists are often ignorant of what their holdings offer on Black women’s history and written sources are often deeply buried in collections that focus on white people. In my work it has therefore been important to use a combination of sources in my research.

Despite these difficulties, I have accumulated a modest archive of primary sources relating to the topic at hand. These include notes, formal and informal interviews and recordings from my field work, and archival material relating to the African United Baptist Association. One of the richest sources for this study has been the Minutes of the African

United Baptist Association, located in the Acadia University Archives, which have provided the essential historical grounding necessary to understand the role and development of the African Baptist Church in the Black community. These Minutes, dating to 1854, coupled with the annual printed summaries of the activities of women's groups produced by the African United Baptist Women's Institute (held by the Institute) offer a vital community-generated source of information related to general African Baptist Church work and the particular activities of women's groups within this church.

As part of my field work, I recorded major segments of the Women's Institute sessions and its related meetings in 1996 and 1997 and between 1993 and 1998 attended various church services and gatherings informally speaking with members (males and females) from the various churches. The significance of oral narratives in constructing perspectives of African Canadian women's history cannot be underestimated. Dionne Brand's No Burden to Carry, Annette Henry's Taking Back Control, and Bernice Moreau's doctoral dissertation, "Black Nova Scotian Women's Educational Experience 1900-1945," effectively use the direct voices and experiences of Black women as the basis of their work.²⁸

Important published primary sources on African Nova Scotians include works by Pearleen and William Oliver, Peter McKerrow's Brief History of The Colored Baptists of Nova Scotia, edited by Frank Boyd, Grant Gordon's biographical work on Baptist preacher David George, and Savannah Williams' overview of African Baptist Work in nineteenth century Nova Scotia.²⁹

The growing body of secondary material on African Canadian women which

includes autobiographies, biographies, popular accounts and scholarly work, demonstrates the potential for the development of a comprehensive yet diverse picture of African Canadian women. I have found the work of Peggy Bristow on Black women's clubs and benevolent societies in Ontario of particular interest. She writes of women whose experiences are not unlike African Nova Scotian women.³⁰

While we seem to have made important advances in recording Black women's history, the same cannot be said for the history of education in the Black community. Despite a broad definition of adult education that could encompass much of the struggle for social justice in African communities, the history of Black adult education and its programming has been absent from most of the general literature on adult education. Work in the field of Black adult education has been taking place in Nova Scotia, and in African American communities in the United States, but general source material rarely documents this vital work. Joseph F. Kett's major 1994 study, The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties: From Self-Improvement to Adult Education in America, 1750-1990, makes scant reference to African Americans, and devotes no serious attention to the adult education innovations of Booker T. Washington, the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) or the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Virginia Lantz Denton, who has written extensively about educator Booker T. Washington, could find only two sources which recognized Washington's or any Black leadership in the adult education movement, in spite of the fact that Washington was one among a number of leading adult educators of his day. Lantz Denton argues for a general re-examination of Washington who, she feels, was a pioneer in the field of adult education

and social justice and whose work was copied beyond his home state of Alabama, in other states in the United States and abroad.³¹

The reference list in Cyril Houle's The Literature of Adult Education published in 1992 is equally silent. Of the 1,241 references provided, no listings were found relating to the adult education of African Americans. The list includes those (English language) books identified by professors of adult education in North American universities which were considered as outstanding books. Education and the African American Adult: An Historical Overview, by Harvey Neufeldt and Leo McGee, is one of the only comprehensive historical collections on Black adult education extant. The essays, which begin by tracing the history of Black adult education in slave communities, move chronologically to the post-Second World War period covering topics such as education and the Black press, literacy and African American women and adult education. The authors support my contention that the major United States writers in the field of adult education have ignored the comprehensive history and involvement of Black people in the field. They state that: "Despite the fact that adult education looms large in the history of African American education, little mention is made of this fact by most standard histories of African education or adult education."³²

Bernice Moreau points out, in her review of Black adult education, that the Black experience and Black adult educators, for the most part, have eluded researchers and scholars of the Canadian educational scene. Three studies, however, are worthy of note, and together they offer an informative reading of Black adult education in Nova Scotia. Colin Thomson's Born With a Call: A Biography of William Pearly Oliver and Heather

Frederick's Honours Thesis, "Pearleen Oliver: Indomitable Crusader for Human Rights," introduce two influential figures who have been at the centre of the struggle for educational and racial equality in Nova Scotia. This struggle was also championed by Carrie Best, an African Baptist Church woman and newspaper editor who took New Glasgow's Roseland Theatre to court in 1942, charging the owners with racial discrimination. Constance Backhouse's carefully researched article, "'I Was Unable to Identify With Topsy': Carrie M. Best's Struggle Against Racial Segregation in Nova Scotia, in 1942," recovers a significant piece of Canadian history involving one of Canada's most ardent advocates for human rights and equality.³³

Writing about the role of the Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NSAACP) in the area of education, Eugene Williams explains that between its founding in 1944 and 1968, when his work was undertaken, the NSAACP was a significant and influential community based organization in the educational field.³⁴ William P. Oliver as profiled by Thomson and in his own writings emerges as a pioneer in the movement to develop adult education, which he clearly saw as community development, in Nova Scotia's Black communities.

The invisibility of the Black experience and the work of Black adult educators from the general literature raises a number of fundamental questions about the accuracy and representation of the analysis and conclusions drawn in these works. For example, how useful is such an analysis to situations involving people of African descent, or others of colour? Would the analysis change if they were examined? How might this literature be informed by studies of Black adult education? As a researcher of African descent, I have

found it more than a challenge to be constantly faced with issues of absence within texts, which whether intentional or not, excludes African people and place so little value on people who look like me.

E.W.Gordon points to the problems faced by researchers from non-dominant cultures. He notes that:

Much of the minority scholar's time is consumed in efforts to refute or neutralize fallacious findings, questionable theories and inappropriate interpretations. Even worse, minority scholars find themselves in the schizophrenic bind of using ethnocentric paradigms that are generally accepted as truisms, but are lacking validation in the minority scholar's experiences/and or intuitions.³⁵

He contends that this "counter" establishment work is "frustrating and unrewarding." I would add that, more significantly, it drains creative and positive energy from the researcher and often forces a shift from producing the work itself to reactive defense, debate and critique and to the position of de facto "educator."

The literature produced by the academy echoes the epistemological, theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the disciplines and their adherents and shapes the work they undertake. Challenges to Western orthodoxy for the most part have come from outside the academy. John H. Stanfield points out that it is no accident that the most strident critiques of the social sciences in regard to the issues of ethnicity and race have come from intellectuals whose standpoint is outside the academy.³⁶ African American women feminists have been in the forefront of this critique, and it is their work which has contributed to my understanding of the specific ways in which Black women, and particularly Black church women, carry out their community educational activities. Patricia Hill Collins' interdisciplinary approach to Black feminist theory and practice,

Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham's study of Black Baptist women, Lillian Williams' work on Black club women and Bernice McNair Barnett's study of Black women leaders in the civil rights movement offer insights and parallels to the work of African Baptist women in Nova Scotia.³⁷

The perspective of Black women activists emerging from this work is one demonstrating concern not only for themselves, but for the entire Black community. This approach, evident in the work of African Baptist women in Nova Scotia, is one which has often served to sharply define the differences between Black feminists/womanists and white feminists. Theorist Hill Collins would name this "a process of self-conscious struggle that empowers women and men to actualize a humanist vision of community."³⁸ As this study shows, African Nova Scotia women have embraced such a vision and have shown courage in a great many ways, including their willingness to embrace new ideas and new ways of addressing the discrimination and racism to which they have been subjected since their arrival in the province.

Conclusion

African Nova Scotians have survived discrimination and racism, which are among the ongoing legacies of slavery, and the attitudes and practices of that institution. For African Nova Scotian women, the burden and challenge of sexism was an integral part of their life experience. The African Baptist Church became the one site where they could exercise control over their own affairs; in so doing, they brought into the church all issues which concerned the community. The African Baptist Church therefore became more than a

religious institution: it became the location of educational and social development for the Black community. By tracing the history of African Nova Scotia church women over the two centuries, which is the subject of the next chapter, we see how their consciousness as women leaders in the community developed.

Chapter Two: A Legacy of Activism

Introduction

Church social activism, women's voluntary organizations and adult education have a common root in the dramatic changes that swept the Western world in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. In this chapter, I survey the impact of these developments as they relate to the African Baptist Church in Nova Scotia and the role of women in it. I then analyze Black women's church-based activism within the context of adult education and community development and conclude with a contemporary snapshot of the Women's Institute of the African United Baptist Association (AUBA) in the late 1990s. Given the historical scope of this chapter, several key dates which mark these developments, are noteworthy here. The AUBA was organized in 1854. Sixty-three years later, in 1917 the Ladies' Auxiliary of the AUBA was organized. This was followed in 1956 by the establishment of the Women's Institute of the AUBA. In 1996, the Women's Institute adopted its plan of action to combat violence against women.

The Roots of African Baptists in Nova Scotia

When African Baptist preacher David George arrived in Nova Scotia in 1782 with his wife Phillis and their three children, they brought their African Baptist faith which would influence succeeding generations of Nova Scotians. A Black Loyalist, David George was a slave in Virginia when he responded to the British offer of 'freedom' to any slave who would desert the American patriots to fight with the British army. David and Phillis

George had both converted to the Baptist faith in Virginia where, at Silver Bluff, he became the first Black Baptist pastor at the first all-Black Baptist church in North America. He would later found the first Black Baptist church in what would become Canada and would also introduce the Baptist faith in the West African country of Sierra Leone.¹

At the close of the Revolutionary War, George and thousands of Loyalists, both Black and white, came to Nova Scotia. Arriving with the first wave of Loyalists in November 1782, George made his way to Port Roseway, later called Shelburne. The George family could actively practise their faith in Nova Scotia and in George's words, "We then had a day of hearing what the Lord had done; and I and my wife heard their experiences." The role Phillis played is open to interpretation. Historian Grant Gordon writes: "This description of Phillis' involvement may indicate that she shared in his [David George's] ministerial responsibilities, at least at the beginning. It may mean simply that, in keeping with the common practice in established Baptist churches, candidates for baptism gave their testimony to the members of the church, which here were only Phillis and David George."²

Regardless of Phillis George's precise role, her presence and participation would be a harbinger of the active membership and participation of Black women in African Baptist churches in Nova Scotia. David George preached in Shelburne and neighbouring villages to both Black and white adherents. He baptized both and, in his narrative, refers to "two coloured sisters" being among those baptized. George's ministry took him to other parts of Nova Scotia and to Saint John, New Brunswick. White racial opposition to his

preaching forced George to move from Shelburne to the nearby Black community of Birchtown. In January 1792 David and Phillis George and their family left Nova Scotia with the migration of 1200 Black Loyalists to Freetown, Sierra Leone, where he continued his preaching.

The exodus of 1200 Black Loyalists greatly depleted the total Black population in the Maritime region which would only increase with the arrival of two thousand Black Refugees of the War of 1812.³ By May of 1792, John Burton, a white Episcopal missionary, arrived in Nova Scotia and, after a year, traveled to the United States where he converted to the Baptist faith. By 1795 he returned to Halifax, where he established a Baptist church with a mixed race congregation. One member of this congregation was Richard Preston, a former slave, and a War of 1812 Refugee. Preston went to London, England, in 1831 to train for the Baptist ministry and upon his return to Nova Scotia in 1832 began developing African Baptist churches. In 1854 Preston organized twelve African Baptist churches into the African Baptist Association at a meeting held at Granville Mountain in Annapolis County. An abolitionist, Preston lectured against slavery while he was in England and upon his return to Nova Scotia. Using the African Baptist Church as a base, he organized an Anglo-African Mutual Improvement and Aid Association in 1842 and four years later the Negro Abolition Society.⁴

With the exception of the Cornwallis Street Baptist Church, African Baptist churches were located in rural, isolated Black communities which had been established on the outskirts of major towns in Nova Scotia. Cut off from the mainstream of economic, social and political life, the communities coalesced around their churches.

Given the racial hostility and bigotry, the African Baptist Church not only had to attend to the spiritual needs of its congregation but, out of necessity, became an institution which served the social, economic and educational needs of the communities in which it was located.⁵

Importantly, it was also their single institution which was beyond the control of whites, making it a significant element in the quest for self-determination. ‘Sister Esther,’ one of Bernice Moreau’s respondents writing in the 1980s, bears out this argument:

...it is the one place where the white man has not tried to enter uninvited. It is the one place where we are not treated with scorn, where we are not insulted, called nasty names like we are no-bodies. Our church is the only place where we are respected. We may be domestics, char women, wet-nurses, janitors, cleaners or what have you, in the white community [centre] in the week, but on Sundays we are some bodies. We are recognized, we are wanted, we are welcome.⁶

The AUBA itself acknowledged this centrality and its connection to “race uplift” in 1918 when the following notation appeared in set-off type on the first page of the Association Minutes:

An Important Message to Every member of an African United Baptist Church; in fact to every Member of the Race. The Colored Race in Nova Scotia has no other Institution to look up to but the Church. All our movements of uplift emanate from her, and the higher her vision and greater her foresight, the higher will the status of citizenship be for those who keep within gunshot of her aims. **The Ways and Means Committee** are seeking to bind the Churches closer, and through them to elevate the race to higher standards spiritually, morally, and socially. (emphasis in original)⁷

During this same session, Association Secretary J. A. R. Kinney presented a paper titled ‘The Negro and His Accomplishments’ which he opened by saying: “A race without race consciousness or race pride has lost its greatest incentive for it is something which makes one feel that one’s race is good and worthy of the respect of all other races.”⁸

African Baptist Church leaders recognized that education was an essential aspect of their social program. In 1907 the minutes record the following statement:

As the age demands education in every walk of life, we should encourage our people to take advantage of every means of advancement. Especially do we emphasize the early home training and the benefits of public schools... Your committee would urge upon the delegates to impress upon the Superintendent and the teachers of their Sabbath Schools the importance of doing the best they can in properly training the young under their care in the word of God, for the Sabbath School is the nursery of the church; the pupils of today are the men and the women of tomorrow whom we expect to fill our places when we have gone from labor to reward.⁹

In 1912, following a Report on Education, a recommendation was brought forward during the annual AUBA Session to invite noted African American Educator, Booker T.

Washington, or someone of his stature, to tour Nova Scotia. Three years later, a resolution tabled at the 62nd Association held in Digby Joggins, Digby County, aptly captures the commitment to education by pointing out the problems of access to proper education facilities:

Whereas the opportunities afforded our children for a rudimentary training in the public schools of the province is not fully appreciated ... And Whereas --There is no institution for the industrial domestic and business training of our young men and women; And whereas -- It is the duty of the race to produce its own leaders who shall be architects to carve out place in this western civilization; Therefore be it resolved:

1. That we urge upon our people by all lawful means to use to the limit these opportunities.
2. That we appeal to the government to see that all the rural schools are well manned by competent teachers and that a sufficient grant be given to guarantee good teachers and good results.
3. That we endorse by moral and financial aid the proposed institution that has been incorporated by the local government, known as the Industrial School of Nova Scotia for Colored Children.

4. That we most urgently request all of our pastors and leaders to organize an educational society, whose business it shall be to stimulate interest and education among our young people.¹⁰

Another essential element of the social program of the African Baptist Church at the turn of the century was the mobilization of its female membership.

Women in the Early Churches

When Richard Preston began organizing African Baptist churches in Nova Scotia, he met women as well as men who were eager to participate and who became active church members. While not always the 'named' leaders in the traditional definition, women exercised a particular type of leadership. Scholar Bernice McNair Barnett helps us to understand ways in which Black women exercised leadership. Analysing the reasons for the absence of scholarly work examining the role Black women played in the civil rights movement, she observes that:

Although seldom recognized as leaders, these women were often the ones who initiated protest, formulated strategies and tactics, and mobilized other resources (especially money, personnel, and communication networks) necessary for successful collective action....In their homes, churches, voluntary associations, political organizations, women's clubs, college campus organizations, neighborhoods, and work groups, southern Black women of differing backgrounds shared a common desire for freedom from oppression.¹¹

This analysis can equally apply to Nova Scotia's African Baptist women.

The presence of women in the first African Baptist churches is documented in the landmark book, A History of Colored Baptists in Nova Scotia, by Peter E. McKerrow, which was published in 1895. McKerrow, who was Clerk of the African Baptist Association, traces the establishment of each church and includes a list of church

members. He distinguishes males from females by listing the first name of females and only the first initial for males. In other cases he may list, "and wife," the title of "Mrs." or "Sister." For example, the original membership list of the Halifax Church, now Cornwallis Street Baptist, which Preston organized in 1832 included six women: Violet Gray, Ann Roberts, Charlotte Jackson, Phoe.(Phoebe) Lee, Ann Spriggs and Charity Williams. Subsequent revised memberships lists between 1854 and 1874 include additional women members.¹² The churches at Beech Hill (1844) and Campbell Road (1849) also included women on their original membership rolls. In the Digby Church, organized in 1853, McKerrow observed that "the sisters of this church take a lively interest in the work, and do their part in promoting its welfare. They also maintain a sabbath school."¹³ Writing about 2nd Preston Church, he singles out an older female member, ninety-year-old Sister Gross, known as Aunt Fanny:

She came here when quite a [young] girl, and experienced religion under Father Burton's ministry. Her intellect seems to hold well, with quite a reliable memory. She raised a large family of children, some of whom have grandchildren themselves...She prayed earnestly for the abolition of slavery in her native country. [She] was glad to think that her cries, with others, were heard.¹⁴

Having surveyed the development of the churches, McKerrow concluded that women were vital to their survival. In describing the Falmouth Church set up in 1876 he says: "Sisters Gray and Fletcher are most earnest workers.[They] manifest a lively interest in the cause of Christ and deserve to be encouraged. Rev. John [A] Smith has laboured with them, and found they were earnest [c]hristians contending for the 'faith.' *The women here, as in most churches, take the lead.*"(my emphasis)¹⁵ A review of Association Minutes between 1881 and 1916 reveals the work of women and their importance to the

churches. This is demonstrated by the frequent references to the deaths of older “sisters” and the notations regarding their contributions to their particular churches.

While the African Baptist Association began holding annual sessions beginning in 1855, women did not attend as delegates until 1891. Once they began attending, their presence was not a silent one: they spoke about issues such as temperance, mission work and education. The earliest organized women’s work began in 1895 with the Pastor’s Aid Society at the Cornwallis Street Baptist Church. Sabbath Schools and public education were continuing preoccupations of church women and, in the first decade of the twentieth century, Jane Hamilton, a member of the Cornwallis Church, served on the four-member Sunday School Committee. Women not only gave of their time and their personal resources to the church, they also made financial contributions, and in 1908 were the first to offer pledges for the development of a Normal and Industrial Institute for youth training and education. By 1913, concerns for mission work led to the establishment of Women’s Missionary Societies.¹⁶

By the second decade of the twentieth century women were increasingly being mentioned in Association Minutes. Moderator, Reverend A. W. Thompson, reflecting in 1916 on the origins of the AUBA, especially singled out sister Mary Thompson for recognition, noting that her death means loss of “her face and bright spirit.” At this same session, Sister Martha Jones, a school teacher and Secretary of the Sunday School Convention, asked permission to raise questions concerning Sunday School work. Jane Hamilton reported on the Women’s Work committee and its accomplishments.

Perhaps the range of women's activities prompted these responses from the AUBA

Moderator and Secretary:

The Moderator, Rev. A. W. Thompson and the Secretary, Rev. William A. White, spoke earnestly on the far reaching effect of Women's Work, and urged that the matter be taken up by each church of the Association seriously. It was regularly moved, seconded and passed: "That the delegates be instructed to ask each of the churches to send at least one woman to the Association next year for the purpose of organizing committees to deal with Women's work." It was also moved, seconded and passed: "That the Secretary be authorized to bring this matter to the attention to the churches by letter as soon as possible."¹⁷

While reading McKerrow and the AUBA Minutes, I recognized the link between family and community histories. Both contained references to my great, great-grandmother Charlotte Grosse whose leadership and influence in the Beechville Church and community was passed down to me through family history. In 1895, when McKerrow wrote about the membership of the church at Beech Hill (now Beechville), Charlotte Grosse was listed as one of the members.¹⁸ According to our family's oral history, Charlotte could read and write, though how much formal schooling she had is difficult to determine. Charlotte was one of the active church members between 1904 and 1906 when African Baptist minister Reverend Wellington States visited the church. She contributed to the annual tax allotment sent by church members to the African Baptist Association in 1904 and 1910. Pearleen Oliver explains that in 1909, Charlotte was sent by the Beechville Church as one of its two delegates to the annual meeting of the Association being held in Hammond's Plains. When the call came from the Association to establish ladies' auxiliaries in all churches, Charlotte Grosse was involved.

In 1918 Sister Charlotte attended the sessions of the African Association and was accompanied by Sister Margaret Hill. The Ladies' Auxiliary of the Association was

being organized and Sister Charlotte invited the organizers to come to Beechville and organize them. This was a novel idea for the time, however, the financial report of that year for the Association shows the women leaders did exactly that. In the published report of that period there is listed an expenditure of two dollars for a team of horses that brought Sister Margaret Upshaw and a group of women to Beechville to instruct them and organize them into a Ladies' Auxiliary. At that meeting Sister Charlotte was nominated as president of the Beechville Ladies' Auxiliary and she pledged that her group would work to raise funds toward the establishing of a home for orphaned and neglected colored children.¹⁹

In addition to her work with the women, for many years Charlotte also served as Superintendent of the Church Sunday school.

Baptist Women Organize — The Women at the Well

When the 64th Session of the African Baptist Association convened in East Preston in September 1917, Association Secretary J. A. R. Kinney noted that the weather was ideal for the more than a thousand visitors who attended the Sunday Session. It was a historic event. In his summary of the Convention, Kinney wrote:

The 64th Annual Session of the African Baptist Association passed into history as one of the greatest every held....The Sessions were largely attended....The adoption of the Report and Recommendations of the **Ways and Means Committee**, and the organization of a Ladies' Auxiliary mark a new era of progressiveness which should lift the whole Association to a higher sphere of usefulness.²⁰

This session was a significant one in three ways. Churches were organized into four districts to facilitate church growth and to maintain and develop church interest, a structure still extant; women delegates attended to organize the Ladies' Auxiliary; and a AUBA Committee was set up to pursue matters of adequate public school education for Black children. It heralded the growth and development of the AUBA and is especially

noteworthy since it took place at the height of the First World War when members of the Black community were at the front. The Minutes noted that prayers were offered for Reverend William White and members of the Number Two Construction Battalion and others who were overseas.

The Ladies' Auxiliary was organized during the session held on Monday, 3 September. While it is not recorded in the Minutes, the oral history has it that the women met outside at the well near the East Preston Church as there was not sufficient room inside the church for the meeting. A Constitution was adopted with the following broad objectives:

The stimulation of the spiritual, moral, social, educational, charitable and financial work of all local Churches of the African Baptist Association, so far as organizing Branch Auxiliaries in each church to carry out in each local Church the objects so named, and of which Society The Ladies' Auxiliary of the African Baptist Association shall be its Executive Head.²¹

The Constitution provided for the establishment of four Standing Committees designed to take responsibility for the Sick, Charity, Membership and Social Reform. The Social Reform Committee was instructed to "observe well racial conditions, and bring them before the Auxiliary in order that the Executive of the Association may deal with such questions if the occasion should demand." Provision was made for hiring an Official Organizer to establish local branches of the Auxiliary and to encourage existing branches to "greater effort."

The Ways and Means Committee, which also reported at this session, made a series of recommendations covering a range of issues facing the Church and community. The necessity of better public schools, the general care and support of children both

physically and spiritually, women's work, financial management and pastoral supply were among the topics covered. The Sunday School Association also met during the session, electing three women to the Executive.

The Ladies' Auxiliary was invested with much hope and responsibility for the expansion of the work of the African United Baptist Association: "It is to the future efforts of our women that we look for the greater success that must come in our forward movement for the uplift of the Race," the minutes recorded. Expectations were not disappointed. One year later, in 1918, Ladies' Auxiliary President Maude Sparks reported on the results of the year's organizing efforts, noting that nine branches had been established and three other communities expressed strong interest in doing so. After the war, organizing efforts continued and the community development approach was further emphasized.²²

When the Association met in 1920, the theme was "community effort...calling every man, woman and child of the colored race, doing their share toward the great uplift of the whole, which must come through regeneration, education [and] finance." It was reported that Margaret Upshaw, the Official Organizer of the Ladies' Auxiliary, had proved particularly active:

During the month of October of last year, Mrs. Maggie M. Upshaw, the Official organizer of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Association was given a permanent position to look after and encourage the Women's Work, and it has proved to be one of the most successful things that has been done by your Board. Sister Upshaw has been instant in season and out of season, absolutely tireless, and her accomplishment well merits the thanks of this convention. She has not only stimulated the work but has collected a large portion of the allotments, raised money by concerts, collected hundreds for the colored Home and general Association work, and on the minimum of expense.²³

As Official organizer, Margaret Upshaw, who was paid a monthly salary of thirty dollars plus expenses, had successfully organized fourteen branches. The Minutes informed the Association that due to these efforts, more had been accomplished to uplift the race than in any other one-year period.

The meeting of the first Colored Women's Convention organized by members of the Auxiliary was also recorded in the Association Minutes. Held in Halifax at Cornwallis Street Baptist, it was organized by women active in the Ladies' Auxiliary. The event attracted significant press coverage with a major article in the Halifax Sunday Leader, 13 June 1920:

African United Baptist Association, An Organization in Nova Scotia Should be Proud of: The First Congress of Colored Women to be Held in All Canada Assembles in Halifax--The Aims and Ambitions of This Special Band of Women Representing Nearly 40,000 colored People in Nova Scotia. ²⁴

Fifty delegates attended the Convention which included a business session, prayer services and discussions. Papers were presented on topics such as "A Call to Baptist Womanhood," "The Past and the Future," "Education," "Social Service" and "Domestic Girls' Needs."

Despite problems created by the Depression (which in Nova Scotia lasted for most of the interwar years) and the Second World War, the 'women's work' continued to expand. Muriel V. States, who succeeded Margaret Upshaw as Ladies' Auxiliary Official Organizer in 1922, was instrumental in keeping the pot stirring. Born in Avonport, Nova Scotia, in 1888, States was the only girl in a family of six brothers. Married to Wellington States, the two became active leaders within the African United Baptist Association:

Wellington as a pastor for several churches, Muriel as organizer of women's work within the Association, a position she held until 1960. She also worked as supervisor of girls at the Nova Scotia Home for Coloured Children during the 1920s. One of the original 'Women at the Well,' Muriel States not only organized women, but men as well. In October 1929 (the same year as the Person's Case), she organized the Men's Progressive Club, a church-based group, at Hammond's Plains Church in Halifax County. In 1945, a provincial Laymen's Council was held which built upon the organizing work with men begun by States. Her act of organizing men fits within a Black feminist perspective of social and political activism that focuses on the struggle of the collective as well as gendered groups. As we will see in Chapter Four, this aspect of Black Baptist women's activism continues to the present with the Women's Institute's efforts to involve men in the struggle to combat violence against women.²⁵

Church women often spearheaded efforts to maintain church structures. In 1947, the Second Baptist Church in New Glasgow was tentative in launching plans for renovating the church. Carrie Best reported in The Clarion that "due to wartime scarcities, the trustees have hesitated to undertake this work until such time as a reasonable guarantee could be received that material would be available."²⁶ As was the case with the majority of African Baptist Churches, the Ladies' Auxiliary of Second Baptist stepped in to assist by organizing a Pew Rally to raise funds. Best was active in the Church and used her newspaper to promote racial understanding and goodwill, to point to issues the community should address and to educate. In 1947, she editorialized: "Education is something that must extend beyond the schools. It must be carried into the

churches and the homes of each and every community.”²⁷

Newspapers played an important part in the adult education and community development movements in Nova Scotia and in the United States. Following the Second World War, The Clarion, originating in New Glasgow with an African Baptist woman, Carrie Best, as its founder and publisher, began as a single broadsheet in 1945. Best reported on a meetings of the Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured people (NSAACP), covered the “Jim Crow” laws which continued discrimination in local restaurants and theatres, and encouraged her readers to take an active part in Negro History Week. She was a constant advocate of education at all levels.

As the foregoing suggests, the Second World War marked a turning point in the history of African Nova Scotians and their churches. The war, itself a crusade against a racist dictator, laid bare for the world the inhumanity of racism and the abuse of human rights. A major result was the creation of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948) to which Canada subscribed. Yet in Canada and other parts of North America people of African descent, and ironically, Black war veterans, were denied the very rights described in this declaration. The Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NSAACP), which organized in 1945, resulted from the Black community’s desire to claim such human rights. One of the NSAACP’s most effective advocates and public speakers was Pearleen Oliver. Recognizing the track record of African Baptist women in fund-raising, the NSAACP set up a Women’s Auxiliary known as A Better Community group (ABC) in 1950 to raise funds for NSAACP activities.²⁸

Moving Forward: The Women's Institute Organizes

It was in this context that the Women's Institute was formed in 1956 as the umbrella organization for all women's groups within the African Baptist Church. On Thursday, 18 October 1956, at Cornwallis Street Baptist Church, one hundred and five women gathered for the First Women's Institute of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the African United Baptist Association. Official Organizer Muriel States told the delegates:

Today, we women of the African Baptist Association have taken another step which will go down in history as the first Women's Institute held this day at this church. We feel that we as women have accomplished much and are aiming to do great things in the future. We are already reaping the reward of untiring and united efforts in all that tends to the promotion of the church and community welfare.²⁹

At this inaugural session, the women chose the theme, "Building Better Communities."

Gwendolyn Shand, the Executive Secretary of the Welfare Council of Halifax, was the invited guest speaker who spoke on the topic "Steps for Building Better Communities."³⁰

Discussion groups were lead by Muriel Upshaw, Pearleen Oliver and Jean Clayton on such topics as improving health standards, raising educational opportunities, and strengthening family relations – all with a focus on developing these elements within the Black community.

Significantly, Pearleen Oliver, a key organizer of the meeting, showed a film called *Out Beyond Town*. This film and others like it were produced by the National Film Board of Canada for broad educational purposes during the 1940s. Muriel States gave a special address outlining the history of the work of the Ladies' Auxiliary and elections were held to install the first Executive Committee. The assembly passed a motion that the Women's

Institute would be held annually the third Saturday in October, at a location to be voted on by the assembled delegates.

Over the next two decades, the Women's Institute organized a number of special projects. These included social and educational activities for various age groups such as a 1967 Centennial Essay Contest for high school students. The winning essays reflected an educational focus: "The Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children," "The Beginning of the Negro in Nova Scotia," and "The Negro in a Changing Society." In 1970 a special memorial service honouring the memory of Dr. Martin L. King involved peace activist Muriel Duckworth and newspaper editor and civil rights advocate Carrie Best. When the International year of Women was launched in 1975, the Institute organized a number of mini-conferences with a focus on women's concerns. For the International Year of the Child, activities were organized for the children of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children.

Community development remained central to the Institute's focus. For example, in 1959, the theme was "Unity Within the Community"; a biblical reference, Psalm 133:1 was the text. Discussion groups explored this theme as it related to improved facilities, better educational opportunities and improved social relations. The theme in 1961 was "To Serve Christ Give Thyself" and in 1962, "Light for the Darkness." One of the morning speakers in 1962 was Reverend William Oliver whose topic was "Shedding Light on the Needs of the Community." He attended in his capacity as representative of the Adult Education Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Education. Later in this meeting, the members passed a resolution stating "that a letter be sent to Premier Robert L.

Stanfield from the African Baptist women expressing their appreciation upon hearing of the formation of the Human Rights Committee to deal with the social and economic problems of minorities and especially the problems of the Negro population in Nova Scotia."³¹ These early developments reflected the importance Baptist women placed on the social and educational, as well as the spiritual needs, of its members and of the Black community.

With the emergence of the Black Power and Women's Movement in the 1960s, this emphasis continued and was further shaped by issues being identified within the communities and within the society at large. The on-going emphasis on education combined with a desire to recognize the pioneering work of early Women's Institute leaders resulted in the creation of the Gertrude E. Smith Scholarship in 1981. The idea and name were introduced by Pearleen Oliver and Joyce Ross. Since the Institute wanted to award the scholarship to female students, it applied for and received exemption from the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission in 1994. Another initiative was an Apprenticeship Program to support two young women who were pursuing studies in broadcasting. By 1982 a Workshop Committee was set up to organize province wide sessions to address emerging issues, many of which were topics first raised at annual Institute meetings. Drug-alcohol abuse, teen-peer pressure, abortion, elder abuse, wife battering and media and race relations were among the issues discussed in workshop sessions. The district structure of the Women's Institute meant that workshops would be held in key locations which would allow for the greatest participation of member groups.

The Women's Institute – A Contemporary Snapshot

At the end of the twentieth century, the Women's Institute remains a vital organization. It continues to bring together all women's groups within the African United Baptist Association under one umbrella organization. AUBA member churches vary in the number of women's groups each has in operation. Groups include Ladies' Auxiliaries, Helping Hand Societies and Women's Missionary Societies. Each church sends official delegates from the respective women's groups to the annual Institute session and as many individual members who wish to are free to attend. The sixteen member provincial executive includes representatives from the four provincial districts. It includes a president, past-president, vice and second vice-presidents, three secretarial positions, a treasurer and assistant treasurer. Executive positions make provision for training and succession, thereby enabling members to take on increased responsibilities. At the annual Institute meeting, reports are presented from a variety of committees including the Workshop and Program Committees.

The Workshop Committee takes responsibility for specific projects, such as the violence against women initiatives discussed in Chapter Four, while the Program committee is charged with organizing an annual retreat as well as the program schedule for the annual meeting. A significant feature of the Institute is the process by which documentation is gathered on the activities of member groups. All groups are required to complete an annual one page questionnaire, which along with various reports, are provided in booklet form to all registered participants at the annual Institute meeting. The questionnaire covers the number of members, the total funds raised by the group, the projects and activities undertaken and resolutions and comments regarding future

programs. This data, especially the recommendations for future programs, is taken up by the Executive.

In October 1997, the total membership of all women's groups in the African United Baptist Association was 397 divided among 22 churches. Funds raised by member groups ranged from \$164.50 to \$3,837.75 with a total of \$31,794.53 being raised by all member groups. The range of activities and projects launched by individual groups was equally wide including visitation to shut-ins, sponsoring food banks, serving meals to the needy, funding children's summer camp programs, donations to a battered women's shelter, holding special prayer services, and purchasing utensils and appliances for the church.

The format for the annual meeting established in 1956 is still followed and integrates the spiritual and business components of their work. It begins with an informal testimonial service during which spirituals are sung, prayers are offered and women speak as they wish regarding their own personal spiritual matters. The formal opening is called to order by the President. Each session has a theme and a theme hymn. The Institute Prayer, printed on the program, is recited by all present as the session begins. During the day which begins at 9:00 am and continues through to 9:00-10:00 pm, there are more formal services (which include prayers, choirs and scripture readings), a business session and guest speakers. In 1973 a memorial service to honour deceased members was introduced.

The number of women participating at these annual sessions can number as high as two hundred over the course of the day. Numbers may vary depending on the location, and in the case of many of the older members, their health. It is of great interest to observe family and community patterns of participation. Taking the Beechville Baptist Ladies'

Auxiliary as one example, there are sisters who are members, and in turn their mother and grandmother before them were members. Ardith (Hamilton) Downey, her sisters Shelia (Hamilton) Kelsie, Germaine (Hamilton) Howe, and sister-in-law Bernice (Bundy) Hamilton are all members as was their Mother (or mother-in-law) Eulah Hamilton, and great grandmother, Charlotte Grosse.

Teachers are particularly prominent as members and leaders in the Baptist women's groups and in the Women's Institute. Doris Evans, a school teacher was guest speaker at the 27th Session in 1982. Patricia Riley, also a teacher was Women's Institute Membership chairperson between 1970-1972, and Gertrude Tynes served as Institute President during 1981-1984. Other school teachers whose names appear in Institute minutes include Edith Cromwell, Lalia Grant, Marion Skinner, Verna Skinner, and my mother Marie Hamilton.³² These women performed a variety of roles within the Black community. Educator Bernice Moreau explains that their position was one of great challenge and difficulty. She concludes: "Most of them perceived their role as an educational and religious mission for their people. They were the ones who stood between illiteracy and literacy, ignorance and knowledge, success and failure of the Black community's educational advancement." The respondents in her study of Black Nova Scotian women's educational development pointed to the importance of the church and its role in challenging white society's perceptions of the teachers and community. One respondent summarized the relationship: "The church and the school was one."³³

Cultural and feminist critic bell hooks points out that even with the faults of the traditional Black church, it has always been a place where Black women have dignity and

respect.³⁴ Moreover, as will be documented, African Nova Scotian women exerted a specific type of power and influence in the Black church, even though in the early period they did not hold the traditional leadership roles of minister and deacon. In 1996, at a gathering of African Baptist women, an elder member of an auxiliary said, “take the women from the church, there is no church.” At another church gathering, then AUBA moderator Brian Johnston echoed this same thought to an assembly of Baptist women.³⁵

Conclusion

In this chapter I have described how the early roots of the African Baptist Church in Nova Scotia and the pioneering work of its women laid the foundation for and are linked to the contemporary work of the African United Baptist Women’s Institute. Over time, the themes of racial uplift, community betterment and equality permeate the African Baptist Church and infuse the work of African Baptist women. The Institute’s work on violence against women fits within the tradition established by the founders of women’s work within the African Baptist Church. As Chapter Four will show in greater detail, in 1996, forty years after the Women’s Institute was established, it embarked on a major plan of action to combat violence against women in the Black community, an action demonstrating the willingness of the women to challenge inequality even within the ranks of their own community. Before presenting this work, in Chapter Three, I will discuss Black women’s activism as adult education and community development.

Chapter Three: Conceptualizing Black Women's Activism: Adult Education and Community Development

Introduction

The questions to be explored in this Chapter concern adult education, its definition and its correlation to Black women's activism within a community development context. I will discuss the scope of what has historically come to be included within the framework of adult education and show that in Nova Scotia's Black community, there were significant educational developments unrecognized and yet equally significant as other adult education initiatives, such as the Antigonish Movement, which are recognized as adult education for progressive ends.

Mapping the Territory

The pursuit of education has been a predominant endeavour for African peoples in the West for many years and has been inextricably linked to equality and liberation from Western systems of domination and oppression. To achieve this goal, African people have had to 'enter into the belly of the whale'; that is, to seek education and knowledge in sites and from sources that are part of these dominating systems. In Nova Scotia, as much as community and church leaders fought for equal access to the public education system, they also recognized the necessity of creating opportunities within the Black community itself to foster a desire and respect for education. The development of formal and informal community-based adult education initiatives were the direct results of this understanding.

Indeed, J. Roby Kidd, the Director of the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE), said, “ the setting for adult education is the community itself.”¹

Adult education and community carry specific connotations, depending on their users. What is adult education and who are defined as adult educators? Harvey Neufeldt and Leo McGee state that adult education “may include formal training provided by governmental or private agencies or it may include any agency seeking to improve the quality of life for any adult.”² Many activities would be encompassed by this definition including literacy, job training, health and civic consciousness, the study of cultural and racial history, activities of fraternal organizations, and efforts to educate through the press, radio and television. Cyril Houle explains that adherents of the practice of adult education hold a wide range of views about just what is encompassed by the concept. He points out that the first major definition of the field was published in 1919 by the Adult Education Committee of the British Ministry of Reconstruction in a document which strongly influenced American thought. The authors defined adult education as, “...all the deliberate efforts by which men and women attempt to satisfy their thirst for knowledge, to equip themselves for their responsibilities as citizens and members of society or to find opportunities for self-expression.”³

Houle’s own definition built upon this perspective when he stated that:

Adult education is the process by which men and women (alone, in groups, or in institutional settings) seek to improve themselves or their society by increasing their skill, knowledge, or sensitiveness; or it is any process by which individuals, groups, or institutions try to help men and women improve these ways.⁴

Gordon Selman and Paul Dampier allow that there remains no agreement on

definitions or terms employed in the field. They explain the situation is further complicated by three distinct applications of the term 'adult education.' It describes educational activities, the intellectual process whereby adults seek and learn, and the social system comprised of individuals and organizations involved in the education of adults.⁵ In 1946, Guy Henson, Director of Adult Education Division for the Nova Scotia Department of Education noted:

Adult Education means many things to many men. The process is as old as the name is new. Adult Education has however, but recently emerged as a broad movement; for various reasons it is today a social force and a personal urge which has never before commanded so much attention and, in many quarters, as much hope.⁶

Michael Welton points out the contemporary challenges to definitions of adult education and its history. "Of late, there have been many assaults on the doors of traditional historiography by women, First Nations and people of Colour,"⁷ Welton asserts, and

...each group had (potentially) its own history, and many of the historians writing about these groups rejected the conventional norms of non-committed, detached scholarship. A largely white, male historical profession now had to confront not only an intellectual challenge that went to the heart of their sense of craft, they had to face a challenge to their privileged way of seeing the world.⁸

Lawrence Cremin offers a framework for understanding adult education which is broadly inclusive. In Cremin's view, it may be looked at as the "deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, skills, values or sensibilities, as well as any outcomes of that effort."⁹ His position is interdisciplinary in that he draws from thinkers in anthropology, psychology, sociology and political science. Peter Jarvis, whose perspective is informed by political theory, writes that adult education is both a social institution and a process, one that involves formal and informal education taking place in

formal and informal and incidental sites. He identifies three elements which constitute the relationship between adult education and the 'civilising process': "adult education as an instrument in the process of change, education as a civilising process in itself, and adult education as a symbol of civilised society."¹⁰

Referring to a variety of programs undertaken by activists working in churches, trade unions and other voluntary organizations (both domestically and in so called 'Third World' countries) Jarvis states:

through these activities adult education has been both a political movement and an educational one trying to provide an opportunity for the people to be educated, so that they can play their part in making the society a better place in which to live. [Paulo] Freire understands education in precisely this way, though for him it has revolutionary implications: 'Human existence cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but only by true ones, with which men transform the world. To exist, humanity, is to *name* the world, to change it.'¹¹

Not surprisingly, Jarvis draws on Brazilian educator Paulo Freire as a source in this discussion of adult education as an instrument in the change process. (The quotation cited includes an example of Freire's sexist language which, along with his theories and those of other proponents of liberation theology, have been critiqued by some feminists.¹²) His work, especially Pedagogy of the Oppressed and Education for Critical Consciousness, has served to place his ideas and theories at the heart of what has become known as 'critical literacy.' Educators, community and cultural workers, and scholars in Europe and North America have embraced his ideas, applying them to a variety of reform initiatives. Selman and Dampier note that during the 1970s Canadian adult educators were strongly influenced by Friere and educator Ivan Illich to re-think their liberal approaches, most of which were service-oriented, rather than devoted to social change.¹³

American philosopher Cornel West, writing in the preface to a collection of essays about Freire's work, remarks that he "is the exemplary organic intellectual of our time, whose work was a world-historical event for counter-hegemonic theorists and activists in search of new ways of linking social theory to narratives of human freedom."¹⁴ What interests me is Freire's unshakeable belief in the 'ordinary' person's ability to make sense of their lives and to make history. His focus is on the sense of being grounded and rooted in the everyday world and experience. Describing Freire's work, West comments:

[It is] a unique fusion of social theory, moral outrage and political praxis [which] constitutes a kind of pedagogical politics of conversion in which objects of history constitute themselves as active subjects of history ready to make a fundamental difference in the quality of the lives they individually and collectively live.¹⁵

Freire's focus on social change is reflected in many adult education initiatives in the twentieth century in that the fundamental goal is human dignity and self-definition. His emphasis on the concrete everyday experiences of people is not dissimilar to Patricia Hill Collins and has influenced feminist theorist bell hooks who explains:

[I came to his work after having] lived through the struggle for racial desegregation and was in resistance without having a political language to articulate that process. Paulo was one of the thinkers whose work gave me a language. He made me think deeply about construction of an identity in resistance. There was one sentence of Freire's that became a revolutionary mantra for me, 'we cannot enter the struggle as objects in order later to become subjects.'¹⁶

Resistance implies participation and action, characteristics of adult education.

E.A. Corbett, the Founding Director of the Canadian Association For Adult Education (CAAE), in 1935 suggests:

The main characteristic of adult education is the active participation of the people in the study and action, and in the planning of topics and techniques. This is no pre-digested food handed out by experts. We have now discovered that an adult

education programme is only really effective when the people concerned accept responsibility for it and are active and interested in its promotion.¹⁷

What then constitutes an adult educational program? Huey B. Long notes that: “It is an activity, it has order and continuity, it includes more than one item or event, it includes educational objectives and events within the activity are related to every other event.”¹⁸

The literature in the field does not present a consensus on the definition and the fundamental elements that constitute adult education and its programs. However, adult education as an area of study does divide into what may be termed traditional and progressive streams, the latter, though a minority, offers challenges to the perspectives and practices of the former. In the progressive view, which informs my outlook, formalized adult education (often state driven) does not always encourage agency on the part of individuals, nor is its application inherently liberatory.

Adult Education in Canada: Origins and Influences

Between 1867 and 1920, Canada saw unprecedented industrial growth. Urbanization and immigration transformed a largely rural society in less than two generations. It was in this context that the concepts of ‘adult education’ and ‘community development’ evolved.

Michael Welton argues that during this period Canadians faced three distinct “learning challenges.” The first concerned the “peopling of the west” which brought large numbers of immigrants to the West who by their presence raised the question “what type of nation is Canada to become?” He points out that progressive leaders of the time such as J.S. Woodworth, a Methodist minister, articulated a preference for so-called ‘northern

racess. There were active efforts to exclude visible minorities from entering the country.

A second challenge advanced by Welton is that of the shift in the balance between urban and rural dwellers. "During this period Canada was becoming an urbanized country where people's livelihoods increasingly depended on industry, natural resources and service occupations."¹⁹ The movement from the country to the city areas left farms vacant and at the same time yielded a new urban population which was often without the necessities of life. It was the results of this movement that, according to Welton, caused social reformers to act on their moral, progressive and Christian beliefs. "Their social gospel outlook committed them to fostering civic, community and social justice. Knowledge was power, and adult education was the means to acquiring really useful knowledge about the environmentally rooted causes of human misery."²⁰

The role of the church in promoting the new social gospel was central to a new humanitarian outlook that gradually took root in Canada in the mid-twentieth century.

Lastly, Welton identifies the beginnings of various grassroots movements of people who were becoming aware of their own often exploitative situations. Such movements included the development of farmers' organizations and trade unions. He points out that "several historians of the agrarian movements have argued convincingly that farm men and women learned democracy by actively participating in meetings where they could learn to speak and act confidently." Women's voluntary organizations also began to organize at this time.²¹

White Canadian adult educators in the early twentieth century drew ideas from Great Britain and the United States. Selman and Dampier, in surveying the Canadian adult

education movement, note that models for mechanics institutes, university extension programs, YMCA's, Open Universities and Worker's Education Associations came to Canada from Britain. Among the American influences they cite are agricultural extension, Chautauqua, correspondence education and human relations training.²² Nova Scotia's earliest adult education activities began in 1889 with government-run Coal Miners' Schools and a year later night schools for adults.

These educators were also strongly influenced by Danish poet, historian and philosopher, Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig. Welton explains that during the 1920s and 1930s many Canadian adult educators sought inspiration in Denmark, the birthing ground for Grundtvig's vision. One of those who made the trip was Waldo Walsh, Nova Scotia's Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Marketing.²³ Born in 1783, the same year that twelve hundred free Black Loyalists migrated to Nova Scotia from the United States of America, Grundtvig became the leader of Denmark's national movement of regeneration, which took place during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The country was transforming, without bloodshed, from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy and a country with literate and free peasantry. Grundtvig developed the concept of the folk school whose "cardinal objective was to awaken, nourish and enlighten human life."²⁴ As Denmark was undergoing its transformation, Grundtvig believed that the peasants had to have more education to allow them to participate in the emerging democracy and to avoid the discontent and upheavals which most often results from the ill-treatment and exploitation of the masses of people.

Writer E. Stalber explains that ideas such as Grundtvig's were "audacious" in the

Europe of the mid-nineteenth century. Grundtvig visited England between 1829 and 1831, and was impressed with the practical side of British people as well as their creative energy. African Baptist leader Richard Preston arrived in England from Nova Scotia at about this same time to study with the West London Baptist Association and to raise funds to establish a church in Nova Scotia. While there Preston became much involved with the leaders of the abolitionist movement lecturing on the “abominations of slavery,” a practice he continued in Nova Scotia.²⁵ Grundtvig’s belief in the importance of enlightening human life is compatible with the views of the abolitionists regarding the dignity of all human beings. One wonders whether Grundtvig and Preston ever crossed paths or knew people in common in the London of the 1830s.

New notions about adult education were taken up by African Americans at the turn of the twentieth century. At that time there was a mass migration of African Americans from southern states to the urban areas of the north in hope of finding increased economic prospects. In addition to race prejudice, what they found was poverty, poor housing, and few educational opportunities. V. P. Franklin explains that, for many, the Black Church (in a variety of denominations) and religious institutions took on the responsibility for creating social welfare and adult educational programs. He notes:

There were large and famous black churches that sponsored social service and educational programs for black adults...The Abyssinian Community House sponsored numerous educational programs, and in the 1930's donated its facilities for adult educational programs sponsored by philanthropic groups and the federal government.²⁶

During this same period, the National Association of Colored Women in the United States was active establishing local and state educational programs.

New ideas about adult education and community development were most directly developed in Nova Scotia by the Antigonish Movement spearheaded by Moses Coady and his colleagues out the Extension Department of Saint Francis Xavier University in the 1920s. In his only published work, Masters of Their Own Destiny, Moses Coady explains the origin of the idea for what became known as The Antigonish Movement:

There were educators in eastern Canada who felt we must get down to bed rock and concern ourselves with the release of the energies and ideals of the people. We believed we must strengthen the attitudes to be found among the people themselves. Education has to do primarily with attitudes. Couldn't we help the people literally to march forward the good things of life? The people generally are for democracy, for example. Let us mobilize these attitudes, we said and help the people to build greater and better democratic institutions than we have ever had before.²⁷

Coady and his partner James Tompkins were both Roman Catholic priests employed by St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. Under their direction, the University's Extension Division began work in co-operative adult education which focussed on fishermen, farmers and industrial workers in eastern Nova Scotia. James Lotz and Michael Welton argue that it was not the methods used by the Antigonish Movement that were unique: "What was new was the development of a network that linked together scattered individuals and groups with common goals, and provided them with access to the information." Under Coady and Tompkins, adult education, cooperative techniques, and church-based delivery became the hallmarks of the Antigonish Movement.²⁸

Coady asserted that "education is what remains after we forget all we have learned in school. If anything does remain, it should be the ability to think straight."²⁹ He believed education to be the solution to the many crises facing humanity. If people of the world had

the ability to think straight, Coady felt we would not have wars or economic and political strife. Coady maintained that “people need to be put through some kind of process by which they would have the kinks ironed out of their minds as a woman irons wrinkles out of clothes.”³⁰ In late twentieth century terms, he wanted to raise people’s consciousness so that they could help themselves out of the poverty and oppression that were no longer considered acceptable in an age of material wealth and democratic political structures.

Taking up Coady’s own analogy, what role did women play in this unique movement? An active participant, Sister Marie Michael concluded that “some of our failures have been because we have not given women their rightful place in this movement.” Commenting on a major Women’s Conference held in 1942, she says that while Moses Coady stated the conference was set up to give women “the green light on a road where there is no speed limit—the road to progress,” the results were not all one would wish. There had been a women’s program in the St. Francis Xavier Extension Department but with staff being shifted and few resources, it declined to the point where women’s concerns were barely on departmental meeting agendas during period of 1944-47. “Women were not accorded any significant place in the Movement which was dominated by men,” Sister Marie Michael concluded.³¹

I found even less mention of racial issues in the Antigonish Movement. Given the general climate of racial separation during this period and the fact that most African Nova Scotians were Protestants, this gap should not come as a surprise. The constituency served by the Antigonish Movement was drawn primarily from the Catholic Roman Church. Nevertheless, eastern Nova Scotia is home to several long-standing African Nova

Scotian communities including Lincolntonville, Sunnyville, Upper Big Tracadie and Whitney Pier. Although at least one reference I found suggests that some members of the Black community attended a folk school and a few representatives from the Black community in the Halifax area traveled to Antigonish and Cape Breton visiting credit unions, housing and other co-operatives, the literature is silent about whether the Antigonish Movement had any impact on these Black communities, or if indeed there was any direct involvement or outreach to them. Yet, the fundamental principles of the Antigonish Movement, rooted in concepts of self-help, group action, Christian social gospel and social justice teachings, may also be found in the parallel work which took place in African Nova Scotian communities and which emanated from African Baptist Churches and their leadership.³²

Adult Education and the African Baptist Church

Examining the role of the African Baptist Church in adult education from the 1940s through to the early 1960s shows the interrelationship between the church and the newly forming secular organizations such as the NSAACP. Eugene Williams points out that several of the key leaders of the organization were church leaders and that its province-wide membership base drew from the African Baptist Churches. He goes on to explain that members, especially the Baptist ministers, had traveled to other parts of Canada and the United States which underlines the broad connections which were being made during this period:

With this aim [focus on youth], it was felt an organization was needed in Canada which would be doing the same work which was being done in the United States by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. It was

decided to set up a provincial association as a step in this direction.³³

The NSAACP was the first secular province wide organization in the Black community of Nova Scotia. Among other activities, the NSAACP focused on education at all levels, employment, housing and human relations. Rather than replace the church as a vehicle for social change, the NSAACP galvanized its members to heightened activity to ensure that African Nova Scotians would work on their own behalf to achieve equality.

Beechville was one of the locations for a chapter of the NSAACP. William P. Oliver, who was minister for the Beechville Baptist Church, was instrumental in helping to develop adult educational and community programs in Beechville. At the time he was also working for the Adult Education Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Education. Writing about Beechville and other Black communities in an article which appeared in the Division's newsletter, he stated that:

There have been many encouraging programs operating throughout the years. We think Beechville is a model in Community Education that is worth seeing and knowing about. The fifty or more families organized the Beechville Education and Community Development Association in 1963. The purpose of the organization was to enable the residents of the community to look at their community, to identify its needs, define these needs and through the process of self-determination to endeavour to meet these needs.³⁴

I know from my mother that many members of the community who were involved in the Association, were also involved in the Beechville Baptist Church. Neufelt and McGee state that the church and various reform groups played important roles in adult education, but these are roles which have not been fully explored and documented.³⁵ This remains true for the African Baptist Church in Nova Scotia.

Adult education was especially important for the Black community given the

historically blocked access to public education for Black students. As the Reverend William Oliver pointed out in 1949, many Black Nova Scotians had come out of a system of slavery which denied them access to education and those who did manage to learn to read or write did so under difficult circumstances.³⁶ One of the functions adult education played in Black communities was to provide the skills and knowledge needed for Black people to build their self-esteem and to enable them to challenge prevailing negative racial attitudes. When it came time to deliver adult education to the rural Black communities, the African Baptist Church was the only institution in the Nova Scotia Black community that could mobilize most of its constituents to action.

The significance of the African Baptist church was not unique to Nova Scotia, but reflected the role of the Black church throughout North America. Theologian Peter Paris comments that:

...the black churches in Nova Scotia reflect the pattern of community organization in black communities throughout North America. They combine a survival theology with an ethic of freedom through self-determination to liberation theology as surviving suffering is related to eschatological theology proclamation; as celebrative worship is related to prophetic proclamation; as political realism is related to revolutionary politics. Survival prepares the way for liberation.³⁷

Theologian James Cone points out that the enslaved Africans through their oratory, music and prayer created a kind of Christianity that differed “qualitatively” from that of their masters:

The distinctiveness of black faith is its focus on God’s will to liberate those who are oppressed. That is why the independent black churches were created in the North and the “invisible” (secret) churches were formed in the South. Black people were determined to fashion a faith that was identical with their political fight for justice.³⁸

The role of women in the church took second place to the Black struggle in Cone's theorizing, until he was challenged by Black and Third world women. They showed him that the women's movement was not limited to white women.³⁹ Nor was it limited to secular institutions. Emilie Townes in her introduction to Embracing the Spirit: Womanist Perspectives on Home, Salvation and Transformation explains why she decided to edit a companion to an earlier work:

The themes of hope, salvation, and transformation point to the liberating promises of God through the gospel of Jesus Christ found in traditional theo-ethical discourses. These themes move beyond history to help us imagine and then work to create spaces of justice. The aim of this volume is to explore some of the many dimensions possible in this search for justice through a womanist commitment to an interstructured analysis employing race, gender and class.⁴⁰

The 'spaces of justice' suggested by Townes were the same as those sought by African Nova Scotians through their desire for self-determination which they believed came from educational and community development.

In 1949, the Reverend William P. Oliver was instrumental in the establishment of the African United Baptist Association's Urban and Rural Life Committee. Outlining the reasons for its establishment, Oliver said:

- 1) because the Association is the most highly organized body among our people;
- 2) because there were social problems that urgently required a united approach on the part of our own people; and
- 3) it was felt that the church was morally obligated to give leadership to its people on matters of social change.⁴¹

Oliver's biographer Colin Thomson notes that he was "not content to deal only with the spiritual problems of his people. Their secular affairs – educational, economic, housing and employment – have occupied much of his talent and time. It was this same year that

Oliver traveled to the United States where he visited the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Tuskegee Institute, Howard University and Hampton Institute, among other agencies. This visit was supported by a grant from the Canadian Association of Adult Education (CAAE) arranged by Roby Kidd. Of the impact of his tour Oliver explained, "It was a revealing experience and has helped us tremendously in understanding our own problems."⁴²

Without a doubt, William Oliver and Pearleen, his wife and partner in the work, had many discussions about the problems faced by Black Nova Scotians and the possible remedies to these problems. While Pearleen Oliver's work is less well-known than her husband's, its impact and scope were equally far-reaching. Heather Frederick describes Pearleen Oliver's head-on-challenges to the racist medical system which denied Black women opportunities to train as nurses and to the educational system which housed racist curriculum material. According to Frederick, Pearleen Oliver's public speeches against the colour bar in nursing were characterized by three key points:

She spoke about the predicament that black women faced in trying to get into nursing; second, she spoke about her brothers fighting in the Second World War for ideals that they were denied in their native country; and third, she lectured about the discrimination that black Americans faced as tourists in Nova Scotia.⁴³

I was exposed to Pearleen Oliver's work in the Beechville Church where she helped organize various church and community programs. I learned from her about the early history of Black people in Nova Scotia and, from her writings, about early Black Baptists in Nova Scotia. During the filming of *Black Mother Black Daughter* I took her to Shelburne and Birchtown, the sites of early Black settlements and where David George

preached. I was struck that though she knew these stories intimately from her research, she had never been able to visit the actual locations. Her writing and public speaking engagements have served to educate a cross-section of individuals drawn from all sectors of the community.

During the 1940s Pearleen and Reverend William Oliver helped to establish a Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NSAACP) whose education committee would play a significant leadership role in the development of adult education. In 1948, the NSAACP sponsored a conference on Black adult education in Nova Scotia which was held in Halifax. Over the next few years, the Education Committee of the NSAACP would work closely with Guy Henson and his staff at the Adult Education Division to organize various programs in Black communities. As reported by Henson, the Division's first contact with the NSAACP was at the request of the organization itself. Of the NSAACP he wrote:

...While the Association has dealt with several matters involving discrimination, its chief positive effort has been the educational program among the coloured people themselves. The purpose of this is to develop solidarity, understanding, and the active desire for effective citizenship.⁴⁴

Reverend Oliver later worked with Guy Henson in the Adult Education Division of the Department of Education, all the while maintaining his work in various African Baptist churches. Pearleen Oliver worked with women, youth and children's groups.

A paper written by Reverend Oliver in 1949 offers a compelling snapshot of the status of Black people in Nova Scotia at that time. "The Cultural progress of Negroes in Nova Scotia," presented at a meeting of the Canadian Humanities Council in Halifax, is

direct and candid. He cited the number of people in various jobs and discussed the poor educational opportunities arising from the segregated school system such that, at the time of writing, he stated: "During 135 years of their settlement here, there is a record of only nine Negro university graduates, and of these nine, only three can really be called direct descendants of the early settlers."⁴⁵ Significant changes to this situation, evident in the years to follow, were the direct result of the adult educational work of Pearlleen and William Oliver and other leaders within the Black community.

Black Women's Activism as Adult Education

In the African American context, it was widely believed in the post-slavery period that if the women were educated, they would 'uplift' the race. In Canada, as in the United States, homes and churches were primary sites for learning among Black families. In her book Black Feminist Thought, Hill Collins argues that:

Education has long served as a powerful symbol for the important connections among self, change, and empowerment in African American communities...[and that Black women] saw the activist potential of education and skillfully used this Black female sphere of influence to foster a definition of education as a cornerstone of Black community development."⁴⁶

Peggy Bristow points out that the organizing work of Black women in the Buxton-Chatham area of Ontario was church-based and many of the community's women were involved in Church Sunday Schools. She explains that "It is not surprising then that Mary Ann Shadd would choose to deliver a sermon on the equality of women at a Sunday evening service in Chatham in April 1848."⁴⁷ In the United States, the Black Women's Club Movement developing from the belief in self-help and the role of women in uplifting

the race. Writing about this movement, historian Stephanie Shaw explains that the creation of these clubs was not only in response to the rise of severe acts of racism such as lynching and the attacks on Black women and the Black community, but resulted from a history of community activism.

Shaw's work presents a new interpretation of the evolution of the national Black Women's club coalition (National Association of Colored Women--NACW) of the 1890s, which related directly to the work of the Women's Institute of the AUBA:

First, the history of "voluntary associations" among African-Americans indicates a historical legacy of collective consciousness and mutual association; second, individual histories of different club women reveal early lessons in racial consciousness and community commitment; and third, the work of organized black women before the formation of the NACW was no different from the activities of the club women after the creation of the NACW. Altogether, the founding of the NACW did not mark the beginning of the important organized work of black women against racism, sexism, and their effects, as earlier studies implied. Instead, the creation of the national organization represents another step in an internal historical process of encouraging and supporting self-determination, self-improvement, and community development.⁴⁸

Writing about African American women and adult education in the Southern states, Cynthia Neverdon-Morton explains that education was seen as a means of escaping poverty and as a vehicle for dealing with social inequities and injustices: "Southern women focused on many needs of African Americans: the plight of working women, limited economic opportunities, inferior housing, severe health problems, the political straitjacket of Jim Crowism, care for the aged and programs for the very young."⁴⁹ The tradition of activism, which they identify, may be traced to the earliest enslavement and was manifested in acts of slave resistance. It was continuous through the post-slavery period, through the period of reconstruction, during the height of the lynching campaigns, and

was the underpinning of the civil rights movement. Neverdon-Morton argues that organizations such as the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) were central to this work. She notes that by 1913 the NACW was affiliated with organizations in Canada, Liberia and Madagascar and worked at state and local levels to improve the lives of African Americans. Thus, we see a continuum: that Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman and Ida B. Wells are the natural antecedents of activist women such as civil rights leaders Ella Baker and Fannie Lou Hamer and feminist/activist Angela Davis. This continuum is paralleled in Nova Scotia: the women in contemporary leadership of the African United Baptist Women's Institute are the natural successors to Charlotte Grosse, Margaret Upshaw, Muriel States and Pearleen Oliver.⁵⁰

The centrality of the involvement of Black women in the Black Baptist church is explored at length in Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham's Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church 1880-1920. She argues that the turn of the century was considered the "women's era" and represented the "nadir" of American race relations. According to Brooks Higginbotham:

...women were crucial to broadening the public arm of the church and making it the most powerful institution of racial self-help in the African American community....the church served as the most effective vehicle by which men and women alike, pushed down by racism and poverty, regrouped and rallied against emotional and physical defeat.⁵¹

She further argues that "Black women drew upon the Bible, the most respected source within their community, to fight for women's rights in the church and society at large" and maintains that "during the late nineteenth century they developed a distinct discourse of resistance, a feminist theology."⁵² The activism within the church as examined by Brooks

Higginbotham was not limited to the Baptist denomination. Cheryl Townsend Gilkes in her exploration of women's traditions in the Sanctified Church found that women in this church "created for themselves a variety of roles, careers, and organizations with great influence but with variable access to structural authority...In a variety of ways, their efforts are related to those of women in other Black religious and secular organizations." ⁵³

A further comparison may be found in Lillian S. Williams' study of Black women activists and reformers between 1900-1940 in Buffalo, New York. Williams argues that Black women were engaged in a persistent struggle for change and that these reformers embodied a protest tradition that had manifested itself in secular and religious organizations of Buffalo's Black community during the nineteenth century. Their work was not limited to charity activities. For example, club woman Mary Burnette Talbert, urged delegates at a 1916 National Association of Colored Women Convention to "take an active personal interest in everything that concerns the welfare of home, church, community, state...[and] country, for once [they] have struck out in this great work [they] are doing the work of God." ⁵⁴

This message strongly echoes the mandate of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the African United Baptist Association which was established one year later in 1917. The Auxiliary mandate gave it the responsibility for the "stimulation of the spiritual, moral, social, educational, charitable and financial work of all the local churches of the African Baptist Association." This objective became central to the development of communities which were organized around the Baptist church. ⁵⁵ Both statements reflect James Cone's analysis of the interrelationship of faith and praxis in the Christian context. ⁵⁶

It is intriguing to observe such patterns and commonalities in the lives of African women in the diaspora. Brooks Higginbotham's research explores the impact and influence of Black Baptist women's work on African American communities. Similarly, Cheryl Gilkes Townsend's investigations into the Sanctified Church in the United States, reveals the role played by Black women. In Britain, Beverly Bryan, Stella Dadzie and Suzanne Scafe explain that the churches set up by immigrants from the Caribbean provided services the newcomers could not expect to receive from the British government. For women, they became havens:

The churches provided Black women with one of our main sources of support and sustenance, offering some continuity with the forms of social and community organisation we had known in the Caribbean. For many of us, these churches offered the only form of recreation we had to relieve the pressures of our working lives, and to support an otherwise bleak existence... It is in the church communities too that the origins of some of our earliest social and welfare organisations are to be found.⁵⁷

Thus, fundamental to understanding the role of African Baptist women in the community is an understanding of the role and centrality of the Black church to the Black community: the Black woman is to the church as the church is to the community.

In 1956 when the Women's Institute chose as the theme of its first session, "Building Better Communities," they were demonstrating in a concrete way the theoretical notion of Black feminist or womanist thought as articulated by Hill Collins. While the Antigianish Movement shared this philosophy (that is the necessity of people to participate in their own education and in the re-construction of more democratic institutions) the role women played in that movement is in marked contrast to that in the Black adult education movement as spearheaded by Reverend William and Pearleen Oliver and others.

During the 1960s, when secular organizations began to develop, women were (and remain) active participants and leaders. Brooks Higginbotham states that “more than mere precursors to secular reform and women’s rights activism, Black women’s religious organizations undergirded and formed an identifiable part of what is erroneously assumed to be “secular”... Women included church work as integral and salient to their purpose.”⁵⁸

Conclusion

We have seen in this chapter that, within the African Nova Scotian community, the efforts to develop educational programs grew from a desire for social equality and social change, the same desires articulated by the early leaders of the adult education movement in Canada. Though not accounted for in the general literature, such efforts on the part of Black people in Nova Scotia and in the United States shared the fundamental goals of the broadly defined area of adult education. More specifically, the work of African Baptist women compares with that of women of African descent in the United States and elsewhere and thereby places them as part of the wider struggles for equality and dignity. Not only did the church encourage community development and women’s participation in it through its own organizations, it also produced the leadership that spearheaded many of the so-called secular initiatives which have been undertaken since the 1940s.

Chapter Four No More Secrets: A Case Study in African Baptist Women's Activism

Introduction

We have seen in the preceding chapters how the foundations of African Baptist women's work were laid. Further it was demonstrated that the perspectives of African Baptists fall within the Black theological model as articulated by Cone and others and fall within a definition of adult education which encompasses community development and empowerment. The interconnection between theological and adult educational practices can be historically traced. Further, this field has not been the exclusive territory of either male theologians or adult educators, regardless of their race. Emilie Towne and Jacquelyn Grant inform us of the particular perspective of Black women at these convergence points.

In this chapter I document the activist and educational component of the work of African Baptist women which is situated at these convergence points by presenting a case study which examines their work on the issue of violence against women and specifically through the use of film as an adult educational tool. I will describe my involvement in the creation of the documentary showing how I have come full circle. I contend that the early influences and pioneering work of African Baptist women have in part paved the way to enable me to now be in a position to do the work I do.

To begin this chapter, I present a brief discussion of the early use of film in adult education. I continue with an examination of the development of the *No More Secrets* project, which demonstrates that African Baptist women's work reaches beyond the individual, to the good of the collective, a basic philosophical and spiritual underpinning of

Black feminist/womanist praxis. It ties their work to the view of education not as a vehicle of indoctrination, but as a tool of liberation.

Film as a Tool in Adult Education

I have been associated with the National Film Board (NFB) in a variety of capacities over a number of years. At different times while I worked with the Company of Young Canadians we used NFB films. While working in Labrador, we used early films produced by Studio D (a special unit of the NFB devoted to developing films by and for women) in women's workshops and gatherings. I also recall that when I was young films were shown in Beechville at our two-room school house. Although the films I remember were for adults, there were also general entertainment films which were attended by all community residents.

The use of film in adult education in Canada predates the establishment of the NFB. In 1915, the University of Alberta was one of the first institutions to begin using film in adult education programs. The rural farm sector in Canada was one area where film became an integral part of farmer education and development. R. Alex Sim, Secretary of Rural Adult Education Service of Macdonald College in Quebec believed that education needed to serve all people consistently and therefore that education programs had to be developed for adults in the mass population. His assessment of the purpose of such programs, though written more than fifty years ago in the context of the developing use of film in farm extension programs, still has currency:

The end goal of any program must be to give people a voice, to develop skills in

tackling their own problems, to foster an understanding of the world (social, economic, and scientific) in which they live, and to train them that they may increase their control over this environment.¹

The 1930s through to the 1950s witnessed the widespread use of the emerging mass media – radio, film and television – in education in Canada at the public school and adult educational program levels. The National Film Society, established in 1935, identified its purpose as “promoting the study, appreciation and use of the motion picture as an educational and cultural factor in the life of the Dominion.”² School radio broadcasts were among the first programming efforts of CBC radio, established in 1936, and television continued this focus when it became part of the CBC mandate in 1954.³ The National Film Board, founded in 1939, was even more obviously a vehicle for community development. Together, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and the NFB were, according to Selman and Dampier, part of a nation building strategy and became primary vehicles in the evolution and expansion of adult education programs in Canada.⁴ J.R. Kidd, reflecting on developments in the field and the role of such public agencies has written that “the availability of public funds for these purposes has brought to adult education a wide variety of film and radio programmes that would and could not have been provided in any other way.”⁵

The potential of film for educational purposes was widely recognized. Leonard Chatwin, the Director of the Distribution Division for the National Film Board during the 1940s, concluded that:

Canadians have recognized the value of documentary film as an instrument of information and education...The film has become an important social force in the community. It is a means of bringing people together for a common purpose, its

realism is sparking group discussion which in turn is developing local leadership and responsibility. This is adult education.⁶

At this time, Chatwin explained, countless organizations were using documentary films in community work. These films, based upon people's lived realities, generated discussion and often led to self reflection and community action.⁷ Interestingly, he cited *Out Beyond Town*, the film that Pearleen Oliver showed at the first meeting of the Women's Institute held in 1956, as one of the most significant early adult education projects undertaken by the NFB.

The National Film Board's Challenge for Change Program launched in 1966 was even more ambitious, producing films that were rooted in community experiences and, as the title of the unit implies, were considered as "tools" for social change. An important characteristic of this Program was community access to the tools of production. Film making equipment was placed in the hands of people at the community level involved in community development activities. NFB's Studio D, the daughter of Challenge for Change, created in 1974, had a parallel mandate, but uniquely applied to women. Early films such as the Working Mothers Series (some of which I remember screening with women's groups in Labrador in 1975) were reflective of women's experiences and women's realities. They were vehicles through which women were able to reflect on their own lives. However, race and ethnicity rarely figured significantly in Studio D films, or any other NFB productions, until the late 1980s. Notwithstanding this gap, the widespread use of Studio D and NFB films in Canada and world wide in social change-community

development contexts, aptly demonstrates Chatwin's comment that "this is adult education."

The periods of the 1980s and 1990s saw questions of media production, representation, control and access become highly contested ground. While the moving image had revolutionized many cultures, mass media productions often replicated societal attitudes of the day and were criticized for perpetuating stereotypes of all kinds affecting women and racial, cultural and linguistic groups. Critics such as bell hooks pointed to an absence of a diversity of voices and viewpoints and, when such viewpoints were represented, they bore little semblance to the realities of those portrayed.

Over the past ten years media literacy has developed as a critical field of inquiry. Its proponents call for an analysis of media and its role in contemporary society and for the development of educated consumers who can call attention to matters of representation, power, politics and meaning in media productions. Filmmakers, cultural critics and activists from communities of colour in Canada and abroad have been in the forefront of current debates in this area.⁸ Public media organizations such as the National Film Board and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation have been especially called upon to address such matters. For my own part, I worked within the NFB's Studio D to develop initiatives to re-dress the balance and to develop equity policies. This experience put me in a unique position when the anti-violence initiative came from the Women's Institute in 1995.

“What Hurts One of Us...”: WI-AUBA Violence Against Women Initiatives

But God has so adjusted the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured all rejoice together. (1 Corinthians 12; 24-26)

This biblical passage reflects the perspective and motivation behind the work of African Baptist women in the area of violence against women. Over a three-year period, from 1992 to 1995, the WI-AUBA initiated a series of activities related to family and community violence. Several day-long workshops using professional and community resource people were organized in locations throughout Nova Scotia on topics such as abused women, child and elder abuse, teen dating violence, rape and incest.

The first workshops were set up as a result of a special project of the Ladies Auxiliary of New Glasgow's Second United Baptist Church. In 1993, the group commissioned a needs assessment to

investigate the reality of violence in black women's everyday lives; to gather information on existing services, organizations and agencies within Pictou County; to identify gaps in these services as assessed by black women; and to research, organize and facilitate kitchen talks with black women in the Pictou County area.⁹

Sixty-nine Black women, ranging in age from sixteen to over fifty, were interviewed, and surveys of church leaders, including the minister and deacons, were conducted. An unpublished report entitled, “Barriers: a Needs Assessment Around the Issue of Violence in Black Women's Lives” summarized the findings. While the project was sponsored by the Ladies' Auxiliary, this report notes that not all Auxiliary members participated in the survey. No reasons are offered for this lack of participation. Since this is a very sensitive, and in some cases, a personal issue, it is possible that a number of women may have had

fears about participating. The study's findings are revealing:

We see that violence against women is undeniably a problem in the black community, as it is elsewhere, but black women are not using the services open to them. The Minister-Deacons responses show that women coming to a Church leader with concerns around domestic violence could be met with a positive or negative reception, depending on which church leader she approached for help.¹⁰

This study provided the first snapshot of experiences and attitudes related to violence against women in the Black community. While based upon one geographic area, the Women's Institute decided to hold Workshop sessions in its four districts to elicit more information about the experiences of violence in the Black community province-wide. During 1996 the Women's Institute hired Consultant Carolyn Thomas to undertake in-depth work on this issue. Part of her work involved setting up more awareness workshops and conducting action research regarding the level of violence experienced by Black women in Nova Scotia.

Thomas prepared an Action Plan for the WI-AUBA's continuing work on this issue. It contained thirteen specific recommendations regarding the role of the church in combating violence against women.¹¹ To frame their work, the following Mission Statement contained in the Report was adopted along with the Action Plan at the 41st Annual Session of the Women's Institute held at Cornwallis Street Baptist Church:

The Women's Institute of the African United Baptist Association of Nova Scotia, Canada has awakened to the scope and nature of violence threatening the Black family. We will continue to seek ways to enable the Women's Institute, through its member groups, to advocate against violence both outside the church and within. We as God's people will learn and undertake strategies to confront this global crisis from which we are not exempt.¹²

No More Secrets

Based upon her research and discussions with Black women, Thomas pointed to the need for “our own videos and resource materials depicting Black people and our experiences and concerns.”¹³ The responsibility for following up on this need was given to the Institute’s Workshop Committee whose mandate is the development of projects and programs and whose members are drawn from across Nova Scotia. With the Institute’s blessing, this Committee began the process to follow-up on this recommendation. They approached me as a film maker to produce the documentary.

The Women’s Institute knew they wanted a video resource which could serve several audiences. With no experience in film/video production, the challenge became how to move from their knowledge of what was needed to the concrete product. In Chapter One, I referred to my documentary film *Black Mother Black Daughter* which contained sequences filmed at an African Baptist Women’s church service. The themes of Black women’s role in the development and survival of the home, church and community were threaded throughout this film. This documentary, along with my other work on the Nova Scotia Black community, naturally led the Institute to approach me to help them realize their goal. In my initial meetings with members of the Workshop Committee, we discussed the possible routes the project might take, the elements involved, time frames and their ultimate goals.

My involvement with Canadian women’s groups both from a volunteer/ participant point of view and from a Program Administrator’s perspective provided me with a grounding in the fundamental issues characterizing the broader women’s movement.

Health, economics, employment and freedom from violence have been and remain core issues of the Women's Movement in Canada. Among these issues, the struggle to end violence against women has been paramount. A woman may have a job, yet if she is not safe in her own home, the job counts for very little. Reflecting on my own background, I am conscious of the whispered stories of women who were abused, though the descriptive language of the mid-twentieth century was different. I recall my mother being summoned from time to time to go to the house of someone in the community to help. I also remember (as does my oldest sister), my mother's counsel. Simply and without embellishment she would tell us that a man may hit you once catching you unaware. But he should never be allowed a second chance to hit again. This counsel was given along with such advice as remember to eat properly and to make sure you have clean clothes.

As much as there is a 'thru line' in the work of African Baptist women over time, I find a similar 'thru line' in much of my work which logically brought me to the production of this documentary about violence against women in the Black community. I share the belief that 'what hurts one of us, hurts all of us.' I am also aware that it is the trailblazing work of the early African Baptist women which paved the way enabling me to gain the skills I have to place at the disposal of current African Baptist leaders.

Research-Script Preparation

As a starting point, I held a series of meetings with Workshop Committee members to clarify the objectives of the project, and to determine themes and issues to be covered. Foremost in the discussions was the importance of putting this issue of violence against

women on the 'agenda' of the Black church and the Black community in an open, public manner. Arising from their previous work in the Action Plan, members saw the African United Baptist Church as an entity with the ability and responsibility to initiate change. The role of the church and its leaders became a central theme to be addressed in the documentary which would be produced in video format. Committee members used their own personal experiences to identify other themes and issues to be raised and volunteered to be active participants in the production.

During my first meetings with the group, I listened to their stories and reflected on their shared language for discussing the issue. Meeting with Health Nurse Rose Fraser who had set up the Black Women's Health Project at Halifax's North End Community Health Clinic, I learned that violence was a present factor in the lives of women with whom she worked. Drawing on the experiences of aboriginal women, Rose Fraser and the group used a modified healing or talking circle as part of their program. In both cases I came away with the confirmation of the importance of framing the story from the point of view of Black women, since their stories were not normally part of the broader narrative of violence against women. I understood from listening to the women that the documentary needed to be rooted in the experiences of African Nova Scotian women in order to achieve the goals of the Women's Institute, women needed a tool which reflected their identities and their experiences. I needed to begin with their stories and relate this body of knowledge to the academic literature, not visa versa.

Using the information and stories gathered through the Committee meetings, research interviews with several women who had suffered abuse, the Women's Institute

Action Plan and a literature review, I wrote a set of objectives and a working script outline for the documentary. During this phase my research turned up little audio-visual or print resources in Canada or the United States with a specific focus on the experiences of women of African descent and violence. The Women's Institute endorsed the following objectives which I had developed:

to define violence against women, the forms it takes and the myths associated with it;

to uncover the existence of violence against women in the Black community;

to provide a cross section of African Nova Scotian women with an opportunity to tell their stories and experiences of surviving domestic abuse and violence against women;

to explore the reasons why this is a difficult topic for members of the black community and the African Baptist Church to discuss and why there is silence surrounding this issue;

to present the experiences Black women have had with social service and justice institutions to offer strategies for making changes — what individuals can do, what can be done collectively, and what role the Church can play.¹⁴

The potential audiences for the documentary were both the Black and wider communities:

Black women who want to help other Black women in abusive relationships;

church, community groups and agencies within the African Nova Scotian community;

individuals within a variety of the helping professions in the broader community including social service staff, police and officials within the criminal/legal justice system, educators and hospital staff etc.

anyone participating in the struggle to eradicate violence against women and children in society.

The Production

In conceptualizing the documentary and in developing my creative approach, I kept several elements uppermost in my mind. This presentation would be the first project of its kind in Nova Scotia. The women who agreed to participate would be breaking a 'taboo' within the community and in doing so, would be easily identifiable. Participation would require much courage for the individuals not only to speak about not only their personal experiences, but also about our collective responsibility in tackling this problem. Finally, I had to work with the understanding that family violence can be manifested in many ways. No longer can it be assumed that a woman who shows no outward signs of physical abuse is free of violence in her life. I decided not to present graphic images of women with obvious physical signs of abuse as a way of underscoring this point.

My structural approach to the video included: a) a group session 'Talking Circle,' during which a number of issues would be raised and discussed by all women participating; b) personal interviews with selected individuals including women who had been abused, professionals working in the field and church leaders; and c) additional sequences to evoke the issues and themes. The 'spine' of the completed work, planned for a length of twenty to twenty-five minutes, would be the 'talking circle,' which would also be the title of the video. This session which would be inter-cut with the interview segments. Those speaking on camera would do so from their respective points-of-view.

This was the plan. As with research outlines, much can change as the actual research begins. The researcher is on-site, facing the concrete realities of the subject or issue being explored. In documentary film making, this is often the rule rather than the

exception. After I screened the footage of *The Talking Circle*, it became clear on two fronts – educationally and artistically – that this segment not only could, but should stand alone. It needed to do so because of the dynamics within the group that began to unfold as the taping proceeded. The participants were speaking to each other, sharing some very personal memories and experiences, which in several cases were the first public words about these life experiences. The emotional level of the exchanges was very high.

Structurally and practically, this posed context challenges. From one perspective, this segment could have been edited and intercut following the original plan. A group wants a twenty minute program, and the producer presents what is wanted. A different director may have made this choice. Examining my own personal involvement and interest not only in the issue under examination but as it applies to the areas of adult education, lifelong learning and social change, I knew this would not be my choice. As noted earlier in this chapter, very little material on the subject of domestic violence against women of African descent exists. If only twenty minutes were to be used from all the footage shot, what would become of the unused material? What subjects might be left uncovered, or be covered only minimally? After reviewing the objectives of the project and acknowledging my own personal involvement, especially from an artistic point of view, the choice was clear: a two-part documentary which would allow greater use of the material taped. The *Talking Circle* would stand on its own to keep its dramatic impact, but would be supplemented by a second video, *Understanding Violence Against Women*, exploring some of the issues in greater depth. Together the project title would be *No More Secrets*.

The Workshop Committee agreed with this re-framing of the original plan. For them it presented greater potential for extended use in a variety of situations. Further, since the content itself would be viewed as sensitive subject matter in sectors of the Black community, the two part structure would provide opportunities for organized dialogue, and for an easing into the topic. From an adult educational development point of view, the division of the documentary into two parts would offer users the opportunity to organize a series of sessions during which the two-part program could be used.

The title, *No More Secrets*, derives from the attestations of participants that violence against women and incest within the Black family have been secrets, hidden from public view. One participant who suffered sexual abuse reported that the abuser told her never to tell anyone. Another participant who was abused in her marriage stated that she kept her abuse a secret out of shame. She could not tell her family. These participants agreed to appear in the video because they felt the first step to healing was speaking out publicly about the issue of violence against women in the Black community. Part one, *The Talking Circle* is designed to break this code of silence. Part two, *Understanding Violence Against Women*, provides a framework for understanding and analysing the problem.

Throughout the research, meetings and discussions, the single most repeated problem was identified as the reluctance of individuals in the community, and especially the African Baptist Church leadership, to speak openly about this problem. Tied to this was the denial that violence against women was a problem in the African Nova Scotian community. How to engage men in the issue was also paramount in the design of the project. The videos were constructed to bring the whole community into the dialogue.

In the *Talking Circle*, a group of ten women, who range in age from mid-twenties to mid-sixties, speak about six specific topics: They begin identifying the myths they grew up hearing regarding abuse of women such as “if a man doesn’t beat you, he doesn’t love you”; “if you make your bed hard, you need to lie in it.” Next, participants reach back into their own memories; “I Remember” reveals very personal and emotional incidents and experiences. The issue of the silence in the Black community, the experiences of young women and young men, the role of the church and making changes complete the discussion topics.

Part two, *Understanding Violence Against Women* provides a framework for understanding and analysing the problem. Once the silence is broken, the next step is beginning the process of understanding which may lead to social change. This part establishes the leadership role played by the Institute in bringing the issue to public attention. The definition of abuse against women is defined to include forms of abuse beyond the visible signs. It also incorporates the personal stories of two women who have experienced abuse but who have begun the process of healing. Two Black professionals working in the field and four African Baptist Church leaders, one of whom is the President of the Institute, complete the participants in this segment.

The Educational Package

From the earliest stage of the project, the Institute recognized the importance of a guide that would accompany the documentary; it would provide additional information and offer suggestions to facilitate its use within the African Nova Scotian community. Since the

issue had not been addressed within the community, a guide would be an important part of the project to be used by those having little information regarding the subject, or who had little experience in leading discussion groups. Similarly, those outside of the Black community would need to have some background on the community context out of which the film came. The decision to have a video and guide was also supported by their earlier research during which respondents placed strong emphasis on the need for educational and support material and tools wherein they would see themselves. The intention was not to replace what might generally exist on the issue, but rather to offer a culturally specific tool reflecting the experiences of African Nova Scotian women.

This approach, a video and workshop guide, is not like other educational material. What sets it apart is the specificity of the content. Films and videos which have been produced on the issue of violence against women have, for the most part, excluded women from racially and culturally diverse communities. Consequently, the exclusion, intentional or not, has at least two main effects: 1) women from racially and culturally diverse communities, upon seeing such material may feel excluded, and if they personally have experienced violence, may conclude that their experience is unique, and isolated; 2) in the broader societal context, their absence may lead to the erroneous conclusion that this problem does not exist in these communities. For the Women's Institute, the video and guide would allow Black women to see themselves, allow others to see them, and demonstrate that solutions to the problem of violence against women can also come from within the African Nova Scotian community itself.

In developing its educational approach to this issue, the Institute has emphasized

the importance of the involvement and re-education of men regarding violence. They have recognized that men have a significant role to play in creating change. In *No More Secrets*, several speakers address this topic calling on men to begin taking responsibility.

Participant and Dalhousie School of Social Work Professor Wanda Thomas-Bernard comments that “men must begin by challenging other men.” She explains that the jokes commonly told by men about women must stop; men need to take a stand about their unacceptability.¹⁵

The role of the wider Nova Scotia context is also acknowledged in the project. The complexity of the male-female relationship within the Black community is discussed within the context of an abusive relationship wherein the woman who is being abused may be reluctant to call in the police because she fears what might happen to her partner within the justice system which is not free of racism. Should she leave her abusive partner seeking shelter at a Transition House, she may find a safe haven from domestic abuse, but might find herself victimized by racism. The Barriers Report documents comments from Black women regarding such experiences and the low level of use of these services.¹⁶ General fears of dealing with the police and justice systems, neither of which are ‘race neutral,’ cause Black women to become further isolated. These examples demonstrate the specificity of the experiences of African Nova Scotian women and underline the fact that, in spite of a shared experience of abuse, the race factor sets in place other dynamics that are beyond their control and which often lead to double victimization. It is such context which the guide provides.

When the Personal is Truly Political

Women within the Institute used their own personal experience to validate the necessity of undertaking this educational advocacy work. The Barriers Report and the Action Plan provided further documentation reinforcing what they knew and experienced, but which has been rarely acknowledged broadly within or beyond the African Nova Scotian community. They recognized that educational work would have to take place within the community with women and with men, and externally, with agencies, police, social service and other professionals and volunteers who come into contact with Black women victimized by abuse. The work makes visible a group of women who have been invisible in the framing of the violence issue, either as defined by feminists working in non-governmental advocacy groups or by government agencies providing prevention education services.

This project thus challenges the dominant representations of who abused women are and who is involved in the struggle against violence against women. As a tool for social change, especially within the African Nova Scotian community, viewers can discuss the issues presented without having to immediately reveal their own private circumstances. The women participating emphasized the fear and the personal risks involved in speaking out about personal experiences of violence. For example, just after the completion of the video, I received a telephone call from a woman who had been in an abusive marital situation and who explained the difficulty she was having talking about her abuse and finding people to speak with she could trust. The size of the Black community and the fact that people are known to each other and often related (even if in a distant way) adds to the

fear and the shame; it means women are not anonymous. In many ways it is akin to shining a light, pointing a camera into the centre of a traditional family. It may be a necessary positive act, but not one without negative repercussions. Such is the analogy describing the actions of the Institute in taking the lead in raising this issue. The women who expose their personal experiences are by extension taking political action to promote change.

Public Health Nurse and participant Rose Fraser said, “when individuals are healthy, you have a healthy community.”¹⁷ Women of the Institute believe in fostering a healthy community by stopping the victimization of women and children. The healthy societal construction they aim for involves men and women. In *No More Secrets*, there is a call for services for men as well as for women. Feminists of African descent have pointed to this element, that is, the involvement of women and men together in re-building and re-constructing community, as a significant factor distinguishing Black feminists. While it may appear to be obvious, as Black women we cannot separate our race from our personhood. We are Black *and* female, not Black *or* female.

The commitment to the collectivity and group advancement is according to Brooks Higginbotham, a characteristic of the Black Church.¹⁸ The Women’s Institute shares this perspective.

In order to make their project effective, the Women’s Institute devised a plan to hold workshops in all of the Black communities in Nova Scotia, using *No More Secrets* as the vehicle for raising consciousness about family violence. Their plan also provides each African Baptist Church with its own copy (video and guide) to facilitate complete access and to encourage further community based workshops and discussions.

At the 1999 annual session of the African United Baptist Association, *No More Secrets* was screened in a workshop to which all those in attendance were invited. Requests for *No More Secrets* have come from public and university libraries, several correctional institutions in the Atlantic Region, and from a variety of social service and health related organizations including women's transition houses. During May 1999, the Institute partnered with the Pictou County Abuse Committee to offer workshops on violence against women. In this way, the Women's Institute goal of reaching the broader community with this educational tool is already being addressed.

Conclusion

We have seen in this chapter that mass media tools have been long used in a variety of educational activities taking place inside and beyond traditional classrooms. Accepting the notions that the 'community' itself is the setting for adult education, and that film can be used as a tool for social change, the development and use of the *No More Secrets* educational package may be viewed as an initiative falling well within this general tradition. The unique aspect of this project, however, is that it also falls within an historical tradition within the African Nova Scotian community because it grew out of the work of African Baptist women who have been labouring in an organized way for the educational betterment of their community since the early twentieth century.

Conclusion

This study has been concerned with examining the work of African Baptist women as adult educators and community education activists. I have argued for a re-examination of their work which is traditionally viewed as “women’s work” which most often focuses on charitable matters. African Baptist women do engage in such activities, but their work is not limited by these boundaries.

Having grown up the African Baptist Church, I was interested in using this research to learn more about the origins of the African Baptist Church in Nova Scotia and to reflect on the role that women have played over time within the church and community. I have shown that, not unlike Black churches elsewhere, the African Baptist Church in Nova Scotia was historically more than a religious institution. It served the social and educative needs of the community and encouraged the struggle for racial equality and dignity. My research demonstrated that women were integral in this process and their work falls within the educational concepts of community development, empowerment and social justice which are characteristic of the progressive sector of adult education.

There is no question that African Nova Scotians have been and continue to be victimized by racism. However, from my perspective and from the findings of this study, it is clear that African Nova Scotians, and specifically women, have worked against being victims and wherever and whenever they could, claimed agency for themselves and their communities.

The list of issues that concern feminists is long. One of the central issues is

violence against women. It is this issue which goes to the core of women's equality concerns here and around the world. If a woman does not feel, and is indeed not, safe either in her home, in her neighbourhood, in the streets of her city, or on the country roads of her community, then she is not a free person. She does not have this elusive equality, one of the fundamental tenets of a democratic society.

For a group of African Baptist women to directly engage this issue and place it uppermost on their agenda within their own community is a profoundly brave, and deeply feminist act. In the definitions advanced by Alice Walker and Patricia Hill Collins, it constitutes womanist/Black feminist activism. The vision of community as embraced by African Baptist women and advanced in their work on violence, involves women and men working together to create change. Their selection of film as a tool to help in the change process shows their understanding of the potential of this medium at the same time as responding to the need to have self-generated visual images of themselves which remain absent in the dominant society. *No More Secrets* has already begun to foster change; its use both within and beyond the Black community has achieved a first level of what the Women's Institute wanted to achieve: to have Black Women tell their stories and place the issue on the agenda of the Black community and of the helping agencies in the larger society. It has been used in workshops in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland, and requested by diverse organizations, including prisons, libraries and church groups. The launch of the documentary was covered by the print media and, in November 1999, it was recognized with an award at a international Black film and video competition in Columbus, Ohio.

As with any study, my scope was limited. Yet throughout I was reminded of the many elements and stories which present rich areas for research and further exploration. While the African Baptist Church still has a significant place in Nova Scotia's Black communities, its role and function has changed. Like churches in the larger society, it faces challenges and issues which are difficult to ignore: declining memberships, leadership structures, social issues such as sexuality and sexual orientation, drug abuse, and the economic realities of supporting buildings and ministers come to mind. These general areas and specifically, the involvement and perspectives of African Baptist women therein, present unexplored territory.

A thorough historiography of the Ladies' Auxiliaries/Women's Institute of the African United Baptist Association remains to be written. Such a history could trace the full development and evolution of these organizations and the key participants involved. The relationship with the parent organization, the AUBA, bears examination, as does the specific role the Women's Institute has played on behalf of Black women within the broader community.

African Baptist women have not only been involved in their church-based organization, but have also played significant roles in many other voluntary organizations within and beyond the Black Community. Studying the interrelationship among these many roles would add to our knowledge of how Black women have participated in the development of these organizations and how they have contributed as active volunteers to our society.

When the Women's Institute was organized in 1956, their Official Organizer, Muriel V. States, spoke about the women making history at that moment. In this study, I have tried to show that the work of African Baptist women on the issue of violence will not only have an effect now but will resonate long into the future.

Endnotes

Introduction

1. Margaret Conrad, Toni Laidlaw, and Donna Smyth, No Place Like Home: Diaries and Letters of Nova Scotia Women 1771-1938 (Halifax: Formac Publishing Company Limited, 1988), 20. The authors state that Nova Scotian women were in the forefront of setting up all-female missionary societies to support single women doing missionary work overseas. They note that "This leadership in areas of evangelical feminism" suggests a particular orientation among Nova Scotia women, whose feminism was defined by their Christian sensibilities."
2. James H. Cone, Speaking Truth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Company, 1986), 36.
3. For a specific discussion of issues of sexism in the Black church see Frances Beale, "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female" and Theresa Hoover, "Black Women and the Churches: Triple Jeopardy" in James H. Cone and Gayraud S. Wilmore, eds., Black Theology a Documentary History Volume One: 1966-1979 (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1993), 279-303.
4. Alice Walker, In Search of Our Mothers Gardens Womanist Prose (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), xi; see also Patricia Hill Collins, Black Feminist Thought, Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment (New York: Routledge, 1990), 37-39 for a succinct discussion of what constitutes Black feminism and womanist approaches.
5. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church 1880-1920 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Patricia Hill Collins, Black Feminist Thought; bell hooks, Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black (Boston: South End Press, 1981); William P. Oliver, "The Cultural Progress of the Negro in Nova Scotia," Dalhousie Review, 29, 3 (October, 1949): 293-300; "Beechville A Model in Community Education," Nova Scotia Adult Education, 12, 1 (n.d.); "Adult Education in the Negro Communities of Nova Scotia," Canadian Baptist Home Missions Digest 6 (1963-64): 146-49; Harvey Neufeldt and Leo McGee, eds., Education of the African American Adult: An Historical Overview (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990); Cone, Speaking Truth; Cone and Wilmore, Black Theology.

6. Oliver, "Cultural Progress," 293. William P. Oliver writing in 1949 states that the overall population of Nova Scotia was approximately 621,000 and that the 'Negro' population was just over two percent, 13,000. He says that "although generally found in distinct communities, there is scarcely a large center which does not have a few Negro residents."

Chapter 1

1. Pearleen Oliver, Personal Interview, October 1985, Halifax, Author's Files.

2. For an informative discussion of Pearleen Oliver's fight to end discrimination in nursing, see Heather N. Frederick, "Pearleen Oliver: Indomitable Crusader for Human Rights," (Honours Thesis, Mount Saint Vincent University, 1994).

3. Bernice Moreau, "Black Nova Scotian Women's Educational Experience 1900-1945: A Study in Race, Gender and Class Relations" (PhD. diss., University of Toronto 1996), 170-171.

4. Colin A. Thompson, Born With a Call: A Biography of Dr. William Pearly Oliver (Dartmouth NS: The Black Cultural Centre, 1986), 102.

5. Marie Hamilton, Report Beechville Church Clerk, 16 May 1967, Author's Files.

6. Gilbert Patterson, The Story of Britain and Canada: From the Earliest Times to the Present (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1934), xv.

7. Phyllis Blakeley, Nova Scotia (Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons Canada Limited, 1955), 114-115.

8. The exact date of Mathieu d'Acosta's presence with Sieur de Monts in Nova Scotia is under debate among historians and researchers. Author Elizabeth Jones writes that records do show he was at Port Royal in 1606-07.. Specific documentation of his presence in 1604 remains elusive. That he served as an interpreter, however, is not in dispute. See Elizabeth Jones, Gentlemen and Jesuits: Quests for Glory and Adventure in the Early Days of New France (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 10, 260-261.

9. B. A. Husbands, Correspondence, Colored Citizens Improvement League, 1944, Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (hereafter NSARM).

10. As recent as 12 August 1999, CBC Radio Reporter Jennifer Henderson in a report about offshore Sable Gas made reference to growing like Topsy. Topsy was a small Black girl in Harriet Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin.
11. P.A. (Tony) Johnstone, The Life and Thoughts of Tony Johnstone (Halifax: Four East Publications, 1990), 213.
12. Johnstone, 57.
13. The Company of Young Canadians was a federally established crown corporation set up in 1966 "to promote social change in Canada...it relies on volunteers who make their skills available to citizens' groups who have requested their assistance. The Company makes human resources available to the public to enable groups to set up community services, to create institutions in their area which are designed to meet local needs, and to free citizens from their dependence on the system." Annual Report 1972-73, Company of Young Canadians, Ottawa, Ontario. Author's Files.
14. The Congress of Black Women of Canada is a national organization advocating for equality on behalf of Black women and Black people.
15. Black Mother Black Daughter, Speak It! From the Heart of Black Nova Scotia, National Film Board of Canada; Against the Tides: The Jones Family, Hymn To Freedom Television Series, Almeta Speaks Productions, Toronto, Ont.1994.
16. Patricia Hill Collins, Black Feminist Thought, Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment (New York: Routledge, 1990), 22.
17. John H. Stanfield, "Ethnic Models of Qualitative Research," in N. K Denizen and Y.S Lincoln, eds., Handbook of Qualitative Research (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 176.
18. Handbook of Qualitative Research, 199.
19. B.Glaser and A.L. Strauss, The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research (New York: Aldine Publishing Company, 1967).
20. Michelle Fine, "Working the Hyphens: Reinventing Self and Others," Handbook of Qualitative Research, 70.
21. Author's Field Notes, September 1996.

22. Anna Neumann and Penelope L. Peterson, Learning From Our Lives: Women Research, and Autobiography in Education (New York: Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1997), 3.

23. Valerie J. Janesick, "Dance of Qualitative Research Design: Metaphor, Methodolatry," Handbook of Qualitative Research, 214-215.

24. General works on Canadian women have begun to take race and ethnicity into account. See Alison L. Prentice, et al, Canadian Women: A History, 2nd Edition (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1996), v. In the preface to the second edition the authors explain the reason for a revised text: "Our intention in writing a second edition of Canadian Women: A History was to update our account and to respond to the wealth of new material and interpretations that historians of women have produced since our work on the first edition was completed in the late 1980's". [They were unable to incorporate all of the material found and note that] "...the immense range of regional, ethnic, and racial responses to the fact of womanhood in Canada may always elude capture – at least in one volume."

25. Linda Carty, "Black Women in Academia: A Statement From The Periphery," in H. Bannerji, Linda Carty, Kari Dehli, Susan Heald and Kate McKenna, eds., Unsettling Relations, The University as A Site of Feminist Struggles (Toronto: Women's Press, 1991), 21.

26. Mail Star April 1994.

27. Sylvia Hamilton, "Naming Names, Naming Ourselves: A Survey of Early Black Women in Nova Scotia," in Peggy Bristow, Dionne Brand, Linda Carty, Afua Cooper, Sylvia Hamilton and Adrienne Shadd, eds., We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Us Up: Essays in African Canadian Women's History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 13-40.

28. See Dionne Brand, No Burden To Carry: Narratives of Black Working Women in Ontario, 1920-1950's (Toronto: Women's Press, 1991); Annette Henry, Taking Back Control: African Canadian Women Teachers' Lives and Practice (Albany: State University Press, 1998); Moreau, "Black Nova Scotian Women's Educational Experience 1900-1945."

29. Pearleen Oliver, A Brief History of The Coloured Baptists of Nova Scotia, 1782-1953 (Halifax Cornwallis Baptist Church, 1953); Song of the Spirit, An Historical Narrative on the History of Beechville United Baptist Church (Hantsport: Lancelot Press, 1994); Frank Stanley Boyd ed., McKerrow: A Brief History of The Coloured Baptists of

in Nova Scotia (1783-1985) (Halifax: Afro-Nova Scotian Enterprises, 1976); Grant Gordon, From Slavery to Freedom: The Life of David George, Pioneer Black Baptist Minister (Hantsport: Lancelot Press Limited, 1995); Savanah Williams, "The Role of the African United Baptist Association in the Development of Afro-Canadians in Nova Scotia 1782-1978," in Barry Moody, ed., Repent and Believe: The Baptist Experience in Maritime Canada (Hantsport: Acadia Divinity College, 1980), 46-65.

30. See Peggy Bristow, "The Hour-A-Day Study Club," in Linda Carty, ed., And Still We Rise: Feminist Political Mobilization in Contemporary Canada (Toronto: Women's Press, 1993), 145-172.

31. Joseph F. Kett, The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties: From Self-Improvement to Adult Education in America, 1750-1990 (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1994); Virginia Lantz Denton, Booker T. Washington and the Adult Education Movement (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993).

32. Cyril Houle, The Literature of Adult Education: A Bibliographic Essay (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992); Harvey G Newfeldt and Leo McGee, eds., Education and the African American Adult: An Historical Overview (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990).

33. Colin Thomson, Born With a Call: A Biography of Dr. William Pearly Oliver, C.M. (Dartmouth, NS: The Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia, 1986); Heather N. Frederick, "Pearleen Oliver, Constance Backhouse, "I was unable to Identify With Topsy: Carrie M. Best's Struggle Against Racial Segregation in Nova Scotia, 1942," Atlantis, 22 (Spring 1998):16-26.

34. Eugene Williams, "Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Colored People: An Historical Review of the Organization and Its Role In the Areas of Education" (Thesis, Halifax: Maritime School of Social Work, 1969, hereafter NSAACP).

35. E. W. Gordon, F. Miller, and D. Rollock, "Coping With Communicentric Bias in Knowledge Production in the Social Sciences," Educational Researcher, 19, 3 (1990): 14-19.

36. Stanfield, "Ethnic Models of Qualitative Research," 181.

37. Lillian Williams, "And Still I Rise: Black Women and Reform, Buffalo, New York, 1900-1940," in Darlene Clarke Hine, Wilma King, and Linda Reed, eds., We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible: A Reader in Black Women's History (Brooklyn NY: Carlson

Publishing 1995); Bernice McNair Barnett, "Invisible Southern Black Women Leaders in the Civil Rights Movement: the Triple Constraints of Gender, Race, and Class," in Maxine Zinn Baca, Esther Ngan-Lon Chow and Doris Wilkson eds., Race, Class, and Gender: Common Bonds, Different Voices (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996), 265.

38. Hill Collins, Black Feminist Thought, 39.

Chapter Two

1. Grant Gordon, From Slavery to Freedom: The Life of David George, Pioneer Black Baptist Minister (Hantsport: Lancelot Press, 1992), 35, 55

2. Gordon, From Slavery to Freedom 55.

3. For a discussion of the settlement of Black Refugees, see C.B. Fergusson, A Documentary Study of the Establishment of the Negroes in Nova Scotia Between the War of 1812 and The Winning of Responsible Government (Halifax: The Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1948)

4. Boyd, McKerrow: A Brief History of Blacks 8-28.

5. Not all early churches were African Baptist. There were African Methodist churches in Shelburne, Amherst and Halifax, and in Sydney, the African Orthodox Church. However, these churches were smaller in number and membership; they had no umbrella association in the province. For a discussion for these churches see Edward Matwanana, Three Nova Scotian Black Churches (Dartmouth, NS: Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia, 1990). Judith Fingard in her study of Black transport workers at the turn of the century notes that in cases where African Nova Scotian women married Caribbean men, the children of these families took on the maternal, that is the African Baptist faith, though the fathers would have been of other faiths. See Judith Fingard, "From Sea to Rail: Black Transportation Workers and Their Families in Halifax, c. 1870-1916," Adaciensis, XXIV, 2 (1995) 49-64.

6. Moreau, "Black Nova Scotian Women's Educational Experience," 157.

7. African United Baptist Association Minutes (AUBA), Maritime Baptist Archives, Acadia University, 1918.

8. AUBA Minutes, 1918.

9. AUBA Minutes, 1918.
10. AUBA Minutes, 1915.
11. Bernice McNair Barnett, "Invisible Southern Black Women Leaders in the Civil Rights Movement," 265.
12. Boyd, McKerrow 24.
13. Boyd, 54.
14. Boyd, 71.
15. Boyd, 55.
16. Pearleen Oliver, Brief History of Coloured Baptists of Nova Scotia
17. AUBA Minutes, 1916, 10.
18. Boyd, McKerrow, 46.
19. Pearleen Oliver, Song of the Spirit, 48.
20. AUBA Minutes, 1917.
21. AUBA Minutes, 1917.
22. AUBA Minutes, 1917.
23. AUBA Minutes, 1920, 20-21.
24. Sunday Leader, 13 June 1920, 17.
25. Sylvia Hamilton, "African Baptist Women Organize: The Women at the Well," in Linda Carty, ed., And Still We Rise (Toronto: Women's Press, 1993) 189-203.
26. Clarion, August 1947 (NSARM).
27. Clarion, July 1947.

28. Eugene Williams, "NSAACP," 65.
29. See Hamilton, "African Baptist Women Organize." 198.
30. Women's Institute of the African United Baptist Association Booklet 1955-1990, Private Collection of the Women's Institute.
31. Women's Institute of the African United Baptist Association Reflections Booklet 1990-1995, 18.
32. Women's Institute of the African United Baptist Association Booklets: 1955-1990; Women's Institute Minute Book 1981-1985.
33. Moreau, "Black Nova Scotian Women's Educational Experience," 152, 154.
34. bell hooks and Cornell West, "Breaking Breads, Insurgence Black Intellectual Life" (Toronto: Between The Lines 1991), 79.
35. Author's Field Notes, October 1996.

Chapter Three

1. J.R. Kidd, "Present Developments and Trends" in J.R. Kidd ed., Adult Education in Canada (Toronto: Canadian Association for Adult Education, 1950), 14.
2. Neufeldt and McGee, Education of the African American Adult, 249.
3. Cyril Houle, The Literature of Adult Education: A Bibliographic Essay (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992), 6; Gordon Selman and Paul Dampier, The Foundations of Adult Education In Canada (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, 1991), 3.
4. Cyril Houle, The Design Of Education (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1973), 32.
5. Selman and Dampier, The Foundation of Adult Education in Canada, 1.
6. Guy Henson, A Report on Provincial Support of Adult Education in Nova Scotia (Halifax: Nova Scotia Department of Education, 1946), 7.

7. Michael Welton, "In Search of the Object: Historiography and Adult Education," Studies in Continuing Education 15, 2 (1993): 133-148.
8. Welton, 134.
9. Lawrence A. Cremin, Traditions of American Education (New York: Basic Books, 1977).
10. Peter Jarvis, Adult Education and the State: Towards a Politics of Adult Education (London: Routledge, 1993), 139.
11. Jarvis, 139.
12. Jacquelyn Grant points out that liberation theology has itself been critiqued in the same manner as its practitioners have criticized classical theology. She says, "some liberation theologians have acquiesced in one or more oppressive aspects of the liberation struggle itself. Where racism is rejected, sexism has been embraced. Where classicism is called into question, racism and sexism have been tolerated. and where sexism is repudiated racism and classicism are often ignored. "Black Theology and the Black Woman," in James H. Cone and Gayraud S. Wilmore, eds., Black Theology: A documentary History Volume One: 1966-1979 (New York: Orbis Books, 1993), 323
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Appendix

No More Secrets Educational Package

...man charged
for violent crimes
against girlfriend
...to stand trial on
charges of abuse
...charges include
death threats

NO

MORE

Secrets

WORK
SHOP
GUIDE



...break the silence
...there is no excuse for abuse
...you are not to blame
...it is not your fault
...talk to someone
you can trust

Acknowledgments

This Guide was produced with financial support from The Women's Program, Status of Women Canada and from the Multiculturalism Program, Department of Canadian Heritage. This support is gratefully acknowledged.

A special thanks is extended to the African United Baptist Women's Institute, its Workshop Committee and its Executive for providing leadership and vision. To all those who appear in *No More Secrets*, a special thanks for your courage and commitment.

Writer: Sylvia D. Hamilton

Published by Maroon Films Inc.
Printed in Canada

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Hamilton, Sylvia, Date

No more secrets: a workshop guide

Accompanies the two part video, *No More Secrets*.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-9684946-1-7

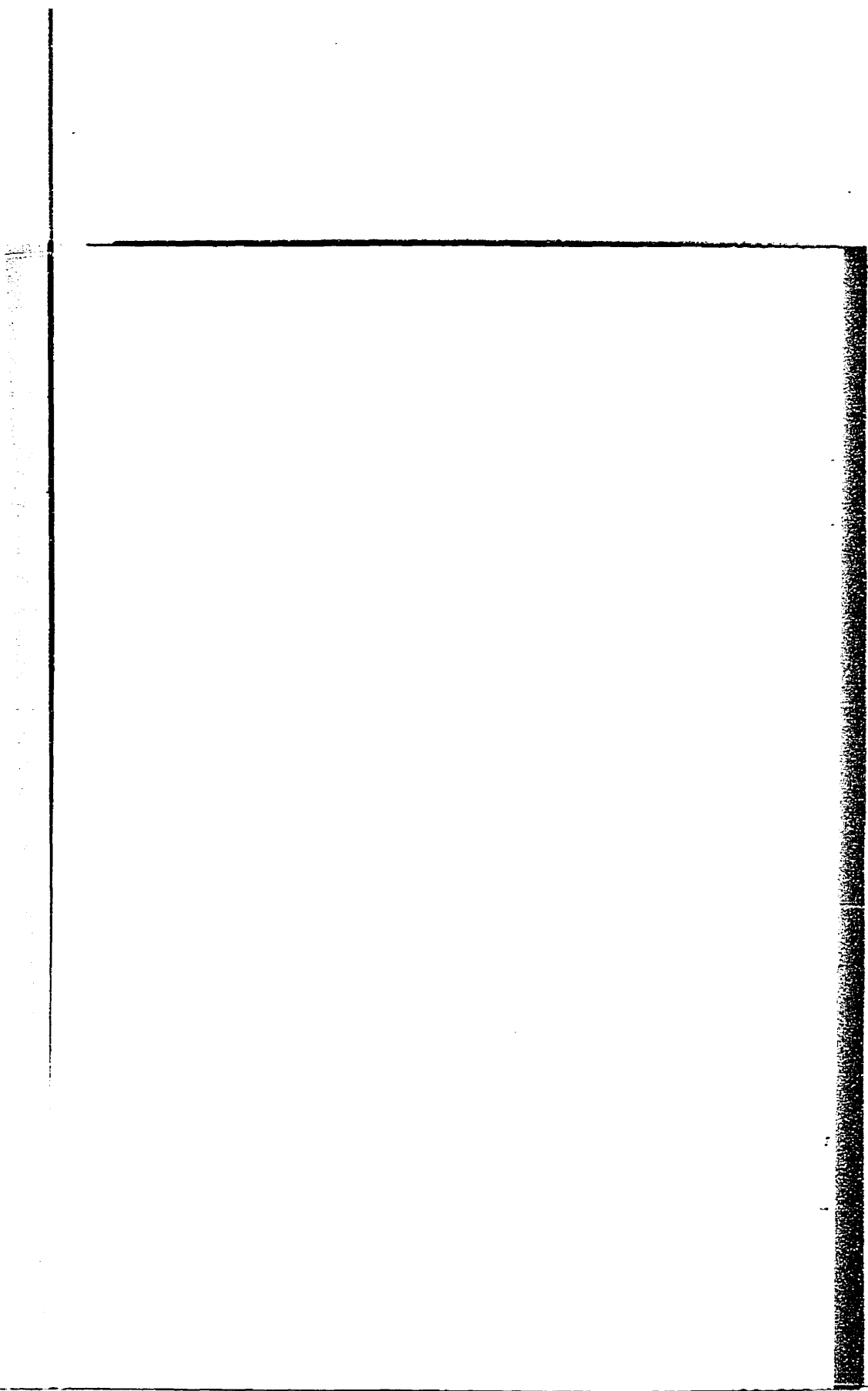
1. Women, Black—Crimes against—Nova Scotia.
2. Abused women—Nova Scotia.
3. Violence—Prevention. I. Title.

HV6626.23.C3H34 1999 362.88'082'09716 C99-900198-1

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Dedication

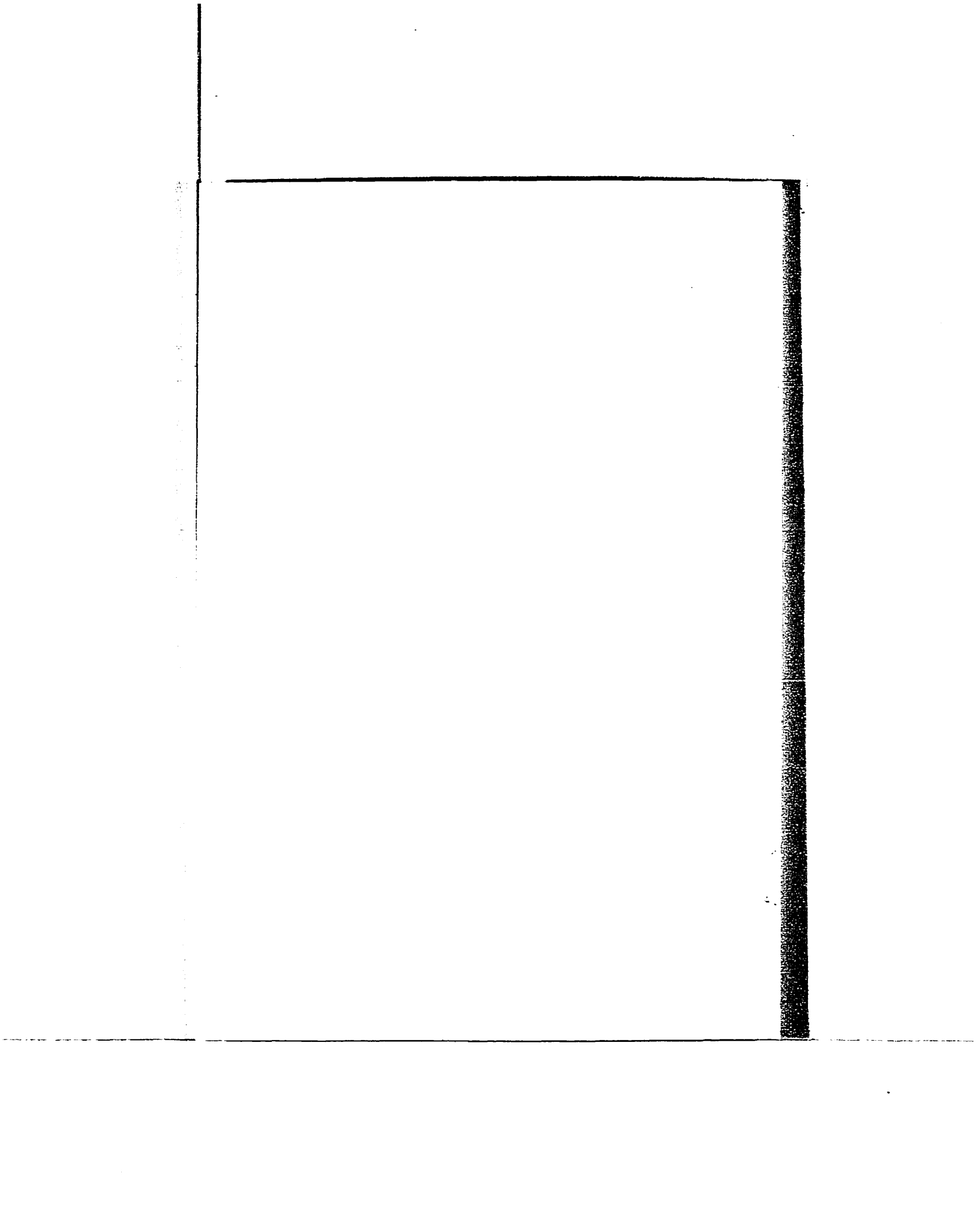
*Dedicated to all those sisters who have
suffered and are suffering from violence.
Know that you are not alone in the struggle.
If you need help, please call your
local Transition House.*



No More Secrets Guide

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Introduction

***T**his Workshop Guide is designed to accompany the two part video, **No More Secrets**, a public education tool designed to raise awareness about violence against women in the Black community.*

The issue of violence against women has received much public attention but it has been rarely talked about publicly within African Canadian communities. The African United Baptist Association Women's Institute of Nova Scotia (AUBAWI) believes the first step to combat this problem is breaking the code of silence which surrounds it.

Part one is the Talking Circle, and part two is Understanding Violence Against Women. The focus of the **Talking Circle** is the importance of breaking the silence around this significant issue. We begin to speak about it, then we need to deepen our understanding and analysis. Part two, **Understanding Violence Against Women** points us in that direction. Later in this Guide, you find a synopsis of each part with suggested discussion points. **Users are strongly encouraged to pre-screen the video before presenting it in group sessions.**

The principal purpose of this Guide is for use with **No More Secrets**. It is not intended as a general reference on the broad topic of violence against women. Readers and users seeking more comprehensive reference material are encouraged to consult the Resources Section on page 23.

African United Baptist Association Women's Institute (AUBAWI)

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN INITIATIVES

Background

The AUBAWI has been involved in educational activities related to combating violence against women since 1992. Between 1992 and 1995, it organized workshops on topics such as battered women, child and elder abuse, teen dating violence, rape and incest.

"During those years," says AUBAWI President Doreen Paris, "it became evident that violence is a major problem affecting the whole family and that the Church must become more educated and more comfortable talking about the issue, as a large percentage of women have been and continue to be victims of abuse."

In September 1996, the AUBAWI released a major "Provincial Plan of Action on Violence Against Women in Black Communities," prepared by Carolyn G. Thomas of CGRT's Consulting. Included were thirteen specific recommendations focusing on the role of the Church in combating violence against women.

The following Mission Statement contained in the Plan was adopted to guide the AUBAWI's work:



The Women's Institute of the African United Baptist Association of Nova Scotia, Canada, has awakened to the scope and nature of family violence threatening the Black family. We will continue to seek ways to enable the Women's Institute, through its member groups, to advocate against violence both outside the church and within. We as God's people will learn and undertake strategies to confront this global crisis from which we are not exempt.

During the opening sequence of **Understanding Violence Against Women**, Consultant Carolyn Thomas is briefly shown presenting this Plan and later the Mission Statement is read by Iona Crawley, Chairperson of the Workshop Committee.

In taking this leadership role, the AUBAWI demonstrates:

- 1) its awareness that violence is a major problem affecting women in the Black community and that it has an ongoing major effect on the whole family.
- 2) its belief that the African Baptist Church (its leadership and members) must become more educated and involved in dealing with this issue.
- 3) its willingness to develop plans, and initiatives to create change.

A Brief History

Established in 1956, the AUBAWI brings together, under one provincial organization, the various women's groups in African United Baptist Churches in Nova Scotia. This includes the Ladies' Auxiliary, the Women's Missionary Society (WMS), and the Helping Hand Society. Combined membership in 1998 was two hundred and seventy-five individual members and twenty-two member groups.

The location of the annual meeting, held the third weekend in October, rotates among member groups.



African Baptist origins in Nova Scotia are traced to 1782 with the arrival of David George, an African who had been enslaved in Virginia. By 1854 there were twelve African Baptist Churches in Nova Scotia organized by Richard Preston, a Black Refugee, who came to Nova Scotia after the War of 1812. Preston organized these churches into the African Baptist Association.

By 1917 this Association mandated that a province wide organization, 'a ladies' auxiliary,' be established to be responsible for "the stimulation of the spiritual, moral, social, educational, charitable and financial work of all the local churches of the African Baptist Association."

No More Secrets

No More Secrets has been designed with the following objectives:

- ◆ to define violence against women, the forms it takes and the myths associated with it
- ◆ to uncover the existence of violence against women in the Black community
- ◆ to provide a cross section of African Nova Scotian women with an opportunity to tell their stories and experiences of surviving domestic abuse and violence against women
- ◆ to explore the reasons why this is a difficult topic for members of the Black community and the African Baptist Church to discuss and why there is silence surrounding this issue
- ◆ to present the experiences Black women have had with social service and justice institutions
- ◆ to offer strategies for making change – what individuals can do, what can be done collectively, and what role the Church can play

INTENDED AUDIENCES

It is anticipated that the video and guide will be used by individuals and by a variety of professionals working in this field:

- ◆ Black women who want to help other Black women in abusive relationships
- ◆ church, community groups and agencies within the African Nova Scotian community
- ◆ individuals within a variety of the helping professions in the broader community including social service staff, police and officials within the criminal/legal justice system, educators and hospital staff etc.
- ◆ anyone participating in the struggle to eradicate violence against women and children in society

Defining the Problem

Two young mothers are murdered. A teenage girl is raped on a vacant commuter train. A young girl is sexually assaulted by a close relative. A male partner routinely takes his wife's pay cheque. A woman is prevented from seeing her family by her husband. A teenage boy kicks his girlfriend's cat. Violence against women—in a variety of forms—is a serious and pervasive social problem. It

affects women of all ages, from all backgrounds and from all countries around the world.

According to survey information from Statistics Canada, one in four women reported experiencing violence at the hands of a current or past marital partner. More than half of women surveyed, who were eighteen years and older, suffered physical or sexual abuse at the hands of men.

A study conducted in 1992 for the Cumberland County Transition House Association documented the level of violence experienced by young Maritime women, aged thirteen to twenty-six, who had been in abusive relationships. Of the fifty women who participated in the study, twenty had suffered emotional, physical and sexual abuse by their male partners; a further twenty reported both physical and emotional abuse. Female students in universities have begun to come forward reporting experiences of being forced into having sex. Commonly called 'date rape', some young women do not report these incidents because of embarrassment, feelings of self-blame and the belief that what happened was private, and not serious enough to be reported to police or university authorities.

In December 1998, the RCMP and women's shelters in Nova Scotia reported that the holiday season results in more calls of domestic disputes. An RCMP official explained that "excessive use of alcohol around the holiday season poses a threat to more than just drivers." Drug and alcohol abuse are intertwined with family violence—the abuse of women and children.

Black Community Context

One of the only surveys examining violence in the lives of African Canadian women was completed by the Ladies Auxiliary of Second United Baptist Church in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. Conducted in 1993, "Barriers: A Needs Assessment Around the Issue of Violence in Black Women's Lives," was carried out to investigate the reality of violence in Black women's lives, to gather information on existing services in Pictou County, to identify gaps in services from the point of view of Black women and to organize 'kitchen table' talks with Black women.



Fifty-one of the sixty-nine women surveyed believed that abuse of women is a problem in the Black community. Almost half of the women considered themselves to be abused. While this study covered one area of Nova Scotia, subsequent work by Consultant Carolyn Thomas, which included both individual and group meetings with Black women throughout Nova Scotia, indicates that the Pictou County research reflects women in Black communities throughout the province.

**TAKE
NOTE**

Other points of note raised by The Barriers Needs Assessment:

- ◆ Black women rarely used existing services.
- ◆ Few of the services and agencies had ever employed Black women, or had concrete plans to encourage them to use the services.
- ◆ Few of the staff working in service delivery had training in dealing with minority women in crisis.



There are common elements shared by all women who live with violence in their lives. There are also differences in their experiences based upon their racial/cultural or ethnic backgrounds. Their context and life experience is specific. That women of African descent live in a society that has institutionalized racism, as well as sexism, is a critical element which needs to be understood and accepted as a fundamental variable in their lives.

The negative experiences of racially visible people with the legal/judicial systems have been well-documented. A Black woman may feel great conflict over calling the police if she is being abused. As described by Rose Fraser in **Understanding Violence Against Women**, a woman may fear what will happen to her partner in the criminal justice system should she call police. Commenting on this dilemma, Dr. Glenda Simms, former President of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women said:

...I hope you will not find it difficult to believe that here in Canada there are minority women who choose to endure the violence inflicted on their bodies and their psyches by husbands, lovers, sons and other males in their communities. They endure because they know that the justice system does not offer rehabilitation—instead, their men-folk face horrific levels of violence in the systems that were designed to protect all persons in the society.

Black women and other racial minorities have long perceived elements in police and social services agencies as dangerous to their communities. They know by calling the police, they risk getting their men maimed, psychologically humiliated and often times killed. Systemic racism in Canadian society and in the institutions of justice, place racial minority women between a rock and a hard place—we have forced them to choose between their loyalty to community and their personal safety.

"The Barriers Needs Assessment" and the "AUBAWI Plan of Action" underline the importance of ongoing culturally specific sensitivity and awareness training for all those involved in service organizations (social, medical, legal/justice) dealing with family violence and abuse of women issues. Anti-racism workshops which help agency staff understand the dynamics of how racism operates within society and its specific effects on the individual, are essential components of this training. Carrying out reviews of intervention techniques, hiring and equity/diversity policies, and the cultural representation in public education materials, are necessary steps in the development of culturally sensitive services and practices.

WHY WOMEN STAY

"Why doesn't she just leave? Why does she stay there knowing what he might do?"

These questions are frequently asked about women in abusive relationships. The answer is complex, involving a number of factors which may be difficult for those not entangled in such situations to understand.

A primary reason is the pattern of abuse, often called the 'cycle of violence':

- ◆ It begins with a build-up of tension and anger; the woman may be subjected to verbal insults, intimidation, and efforts to have her behaviour controlled. She feels helpless and blames herself.
- ◆ The abuser becomes violent (hitting, choking, kicking) or threatens violence. He may hit pets, or threaten children or use other forms of abuse. It is during this dangerous stage that women may be sexually assaulted, injured or killed.
- ◆ A "Honeymoon or Make-up" stage follows during which the abuser may become kind, ask for forgiveness, or deny the incident. He may bring gifts and promise to never let it happen again. The period of calm is usually short, tension builds, and the cycle begins again.

- Gradually, the "Honeymoon" stage becomes shorter and may disappear completely as the level of violence intensifies.

Other Reasons Include:

- ◆ For some women their belief in Christian or other religious vows is a key reason why they stay. They believe the vows require them to stay in the marriage regardless of the difficulties: "until death do us part."
- Fear of what might happen if they leave may cause women to stay; they also fear recrimination.
- The social stigma and stereotypes attached to women who are separated, or who are raising their children alone, contribute to feelings of low self-esteem and helplessness.
- ◆ Poverty may mean they can't afford to leave. They have no means of support.
- Trauma of the court experience and the continuing threat of violence may prevent women from leaving.
- Lack of knowledge of options and resources of helping agencies, or previous negative experiences, may mean the woman opts to remain.
- Feelings of guilt and blame for the abuse; the feeling of "I must have done something to deserve this." Such feelings are tied to the prevalence of societal myths and attitudes which blame women for abuse.

Preparation

NOTES FOR DISCUSSION LEADER

Responsibilities:

- Decides the setting/location for the screening, equipment needs: television and VCR, or if in large group, video projector and screen; flip chart or other paper, refreshments, resource material, resource speaker.
- Decides on how much time will be allocated to the session: for example, one hour, forty-five minutes, two hours; the amount of time available for the session will determine how the programs may be used and what specific areas may be the focus of the discussion.

- ◆ Screens both programs to know the content well enough to make selection of the segments, should the videos not be shown in their entirety.
- ◆ Has a variety of hand-outs available by calling suppliers at least two weeks ahead to ensure enough material will be on hand for the session.
- ◆ In preparing for the screening, assesses the needs of the group by considering:

Is the purpose to raise the level of awareness, that is, will this be the first time for this group to discuss this topic?

What is or will be the composition of the group? Might there be women or men in the group who are or who have been touched by violence? What contingency plans might be needed for handling potential emotions or questions which may arise?

What on-the-spot information giving may be required after the session? (For example, names of counsellors and helping agencies, reading material.)

If the group has already been introduced to the issue, what is the best approach to use for post-screening discussion?

What might be the specific areas of focus for the discussion?

LEADING THE SESSION

Be aware of sensitivities which may arise in mixed gender groups. If males in the group feel that they are being 'blamed' for all violence against women, it may be difficult for them to feel their comments and opinions will be listened to.

People, regardless of gender, who feel they are being unjustly attacked, will not be very giving in a dialogue nor will they be able to listen effectively.

Similarly, women who may be in abusive situations, or who may have been in the past, might be particularly sensitive and may not speak during the discussion. In other cases some individuals are simply not comfortable speaking in a group, regardless of the size, or the topic under discussion.

It is important to remember that it takes a great deal of courage to speak about very personal matters in a public, group setting. Unless participants feel a sense of safety and comfort within the group, they may not wish to speak. Rather than trying to encourage participants to speak from a "personal point of view," it may be more comfortable for them, as their starting points, to use specific

references, or comments from the speakers in the video. The discussion leader can ask participants their thoughts and comments about what is being said.

For example:

"During the segment about young women and young men, Ann voiced the opinion that...what do you think?"

If people aren't speaking there may be a very personal reason, discussion leaders should be sensitive and observant.

Try to make sure that the discussion does not move into personal accusations or criticisms. While encouraging participation, remember the focus should be to:

begin a dialogue on the issue

understand the issue

find ways to combat it

develop support mechanisms for those who suffer from violence and for those who are using violence as a way of solving problems

To open and keep the dialogue going:

encourage sensitivity to and respect for the person speaking

avoid judging and blaming

avoid having participants interrupt each other

encourage listening

Generate a list on a flip chart of a woman's options if in an abusive relationship and the ways individuals and community agencies, including the church can assist/intervene.

The Talking Circle

NO MORE SECRETS: THE TALKING CIRCLE

Running Time: 37 minutes, 38 seconds

Appearing in alphabetical order

Anne Adekayode, Rose Brooks, Geraldine Browning, Rose Fraser, Rev. Tracey Grosse, Frances Harper, Lana MacLean, Doreen Paris, Evelina Upshaw and Evangeline Williams

**T
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The Talking Circle-An Important Note

The Talking Circle, as presented in this video was partly based upon the traditional Aboriginal sacred talking/healing circle. Health Educator Rose Fraser along with members of the Halifax based Black Women's Health Project, including Anne Adekayode, were introduced to this unique ceremony with its special protocols, by traditional Aboriginal women who have permission to conduct sacred circles.

It should be noted that the gathering presented in this video was not the traditional Aboriginal sacred ceremony. However, elements such as the holding of a special object by the person who is speaking, mutual respect for group members and the invocation of the Creator at the beginning of the Circle (to be in the midst of the group) were incorporated. Similarly, many gatherings within the African Nova Scotian community are often opened with a prayer for guidance; a prayer was spoken by Rev. Tracey Grosse during the opening of the Circle and may be heard as the video begins.

As the Circle comes to a close, a candle is lit at the centre of the group by Rev. Tracey Grosse and a purple ribbon is passed along to each participant in the circle allowing for a moment of quiet reflection and thus bringing closure to the gathering. Purple is considered a healing colour and has become symbolic of the struggle to eliminate violence against women.

Readers and users are encouraged to consult Aboriginal organizations and Aboriginal spiritual leaders for information and guidance regarding sacred circles.

SYNOPSIS

"If we are to survive as a Black community, we have to address these issues with passion."
Rose Fraser

No More Secrets: The Talking Circle profiles an intimate gathering of a multi-generational group of African Nova Scotian women, who for the first time, speak publicly about the issue of violence against women in the Black community. Sharing personal stories and experiences, these brave women uncover the complexity of this profound problem with honesty and care. They offer ever hopeful perspectives on the possibility that through cooperative work among women and men, changes will come.

The discussion covers a number of topics which are separated by a title card:

THE MYTHS
I REMEMBER...
THE SILENCE
YOUNG WOMEN, YOUNG MEN
THE CHURCH
MAKING CHANGES

Since this program is divided into segments, it lends itself to a discussion format where the leader may stop after the various segments for discussion. The program may also be shown in its entirety followed by a discussion.

Having pre-screened the video, the discussion leader can decide which approach best suits the group.

DISCUSSION POINTS

THE MYTHS

Examples:

If you make your bed hard you need to lie in it.

Marriage certificate and notion of wife being husband's 'property'.

Use of Bible scripture to justify male domination: 'wives submit to your husbands.'

It's a family affair.

Abuse is only physical, 'broken bones and bruises.'

1) Ask your group to identify which of the myths they had heard.

2) Ask participants to share any myths not mentioned.

Rose Fraser says:

"Myths become community norms." Do you agree?

How do we combat myths?

Do we have new myths which are replacing some of the old?

Examples?

I REMEMBER...

In this segment participants share memories from childhood of seeing abuse, though in many cases, as children there was no language to describe what they saw.

Such memories can have a lasting impact on children. There is the common feeling of helplessness on the part of children who see abuse taking place around them.

Other memories are of the way young female students were treated by young males during high school. Name calling and physical abuse tear at a young girl's sense of self. During the segment on Young Women/Young Men, it is made clear that such experiences are not just in the past: young girls today are being treated inappropriately and with little respect.

THE SILENCE

If abuse has been present within the community for a long time, why does such silence surround it?

- Speaking out may mean women are singled out and condemned.
- ◆ Community 'norms': don't take 'our business' outside.
- ◆ Additional layer of racism—don't draw more attention to our community because the wider community will think ill of us.
- ◆ Men in the Black community may not recognize abuse, or that they may be abusers, until their daughters are abused.
- ◆ Many people are related to each other in small communities; who can a woman turn to without fear, shame and condemnation?

There is power in breaking the silence: the experiences of women are validated and the realization comes that this is not an isolated experience. Women no longer have to 'suffer in silence.'

YOUNG WOMEN, YOUNG MEN

Violence is a reality in the lives of young people in the Black community.

- ◆ Young girls are robbed of a sense of 'entitlement to self' by being objectified early in life.
- ◆ Abuse in young relationships is a serious problem; strategies used in the past—call in a relative or the young man's Mother to intervene—are not working; some young men do not have fear of the police being called.

- ◆ Young women experience date rape and are in relationships where the young male partner has several 'girlfriends.'
- ◆ There is a pressing need for training in parenting skills and for re-education regarding the importance of values, respect and appropriate behaviour in relationships.

THE CHURCH

What is the role of the Church in addressing violence against women?

- ◆ Women need to become more involved in leadership and decision making.
- ◆ Male leadership may not want to become involved because this can be a 'political issue', however, Ministers must take a stand because women in the church are suffering.
- ◆ Women need to get louder and be bold in bringing this issue forward.
- ◆ Issue needs to be tackled by both men and women's groups within the Church.
- ◆ "One person can make a difference."

MAKING CHANGES

A series of strategies are needed to combat violence against women. It is not just a problem which affects women.

- ◆ Men in the Black community need to take ownership, become accountable and break their own silence on this issue and begin their own healing.
- ◆ Individuals and groups need to lose their fear of talking about this issue and begin to speak freely. More public discussion is essential.
- ◆ There is strength in coming together in forums to share stories and to break the isolation.
- ◆ As the centre of the community, the Church must name this issue and take a lead role.

Understanding Violence Against Women

NO MORE SECRETS: UNDERSTANDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Running Time: 28 minutes, 27 minutes

Appearing in alphabetical order

Anne Adekayode, Dr. Wanda Thomas-Bernard, Rose Fraser, Rev.
Tracey Grosse, Mesi Je, Brian Johnston, Rev. Lionel Moriah,
Doreen Paris, Carolyn Thomas

*"Many times we'd like to believe that violence is not in our
homes, not in our families, not in our churches, not on our
streets, but it is."*
Carolyn Thomas

SYNOPSIS

Understanding Violence Against Women presents a framework for understanding the problem. It establishes the role the African United Baptist Association Women's Institute has played in launching a public discussion on violence against women and profiles the very personal stories of women who have suffered violence and who have begun to heal. They hope to help others by sharing their experiences.

Black professionals who work in the field and African Baptist Church leaders who are raising this issue within the church community, issue a call for common action and transformation. A capella quartet, *Four the Moment's* poignant song, "Betty's Blues," the tragic story of one woman's struggle with domestic violence, is featured in this video. At the beginning of the program we briefly hear the voices of two women telling their stories. We hear their voices but there is no image. Later these women will be seen on camera. The end credits are inter-cut with closing comments from several participants.

This program gives an overview of the issue, using several individuals with specialized experiences:

Doreen Paris as the President of the AUBAWI which has undertaken extensive public education work on the issue in the Black community.

Dr. Wanda Thomas-Bernard is a Professor of social work and a working professional counsellor with many years experience working in this area.

Dr. Thomas-Bernard helps the viewer to understand the many forms violence against women can take. She also points out that Black women have experienced racism in dealing with transition houses. At the end of the video, she emphasizes the importance of women having a 'safety plan' should they decide to leave an abusive relationship.

Rose Fraser, Public Health Nurse, North End Community Clinic and Black Women's Health Project, speaks about the issue from the point of view of the wholistic health needs of women and the effect of violence on women's health. She speaks about the turmoil women face when their partners are charged and her role as a counsellor and helper to these women.

Two women speak about their personal experiences with violence. Ann suffered sexual abuse when she was a young girl. As part of her healing she creates dolls, such as her "Three Wise Women," who have special meanings. Mesi experienced domestic abuse in her marriage which she eventually left taking her two young daughters with her. Education has been a key factor in her ability to heal and create a positive life for herself and her children.

African United Baptist Association (AUBA) leaders, Rev. Tracey Grosse, Dr. Lionel Moriah and AUBA Moderator Brian Johnston, engage in a three-way dialogue about the role the church can and should play in efforts to combat violence against women.

DISCUSSION POINTS

THE TYPES OF ABUSE

Dr. Wanda Thomas-Bernard describes the types of abuse emphasizing that physical abuse is only one kind. She explains that abuse often comes in multiple forms and that at the core is the need of the abuser to have power and control over his female partner.

Identify the types of abuse spoken about. Are there other forms not described?

The publication **Making Changes** explains that some forms of abuse are crimes and the resulting acts are offences under the Criminal Code of Canada. These include:

physical assault: hitting, punching, choking

sexual assault

child abuse

threats to harm

withholding food and medical treatment

threats to kill

taking your pay cheque

stalking or criminal harassment (creating fear by repeatedly following, communicating, or attempting to communicate with another person or any member of their family)

It lists six categories of abuse:

physical, sexual, verbal, financial/economic, emotional/psychological and social

When does abuse start?

Dr. Thomas-Bernard comments that when examining the experiences of women who have been in long-term relationships where abuse occurs, it has been shown that the abuse often began during the dating relationship.

PERSONAL STORIES

MESI JE

"It's hard to like somebody after going through that, you can forgive and forget, but it is very hard to regroup unless you've been able to voice it."

Mesi Je

Mesi Je in telling her story explains that there were signs of abuse early in her relationship (which she entered once she had finished high school) but she did not recognize them. While her abuse happened twenty years ago, this is the first time Mesi has spoken publicly about her experiences. Mesi explains that having an education was an important factor in her ability to leave to create a new life.

Some points to note:

- ◆ At what stage did Mesi decide to leave?
- ◆ Importance of safe houses
- ◆ The impact of completely uprooting herself and her children and leaving her community and province
- ◆ Importance of education and the role her mother played in her life
- ◆ The trends she sees now in young boys of all backgrounds in the way they treat girls and women
- ◆ Her belief in the importance of teaching values of respect for self and others to children at a young age

Just yesterday I watched a Black boy child angrily punch his mother's friend with his fists again and again. His face was contorted with rage.

The two grown women laughed. The mother watched with delight as her little boy did his 'man thing'. This scene can only be viewed as playful if we ignore the links between what we learn about violence as children and how we act as grown-ups.
bell hooks

BETTY'S BLUES

This song, composed by Delvina Bernard and George E. Clarke, appears on the **Four the Moment Live** compact disc and audio cassette released in 1993. It was dedicated to the memory of Betty Flint-Sparks of Africville, Nova Scotia.

The following text is the segment of the song appearing in this video:

*I just heard the sad and bitter news
about the way your life's been losed
the very man you married once
now for your murder stands accused
someone told me that you had troubles
for him the same must have been true
something must have made him crazy
murder is nothing sane to do*

CHORUS

*I can't go on I can't go on
anger hardens my heart to stone
all I know is it's a crime
to give five life then lose your own*

Betty's Blues continues to serve as a reminder that violence is a definite presence in the lives of girls and women in the Black

community. Within the African United Baptist Church the elders have often said, 'what hurts one of us, hurts all of us.'

ANNE ADEKAYODE

"I know now I am not the blame".

Anne Adekayode

The experiences of Black women who were sexually abused when they were young girls has rarely been spoken about in public. Anne has chosen not only to share her experiences of sexual abuse, but to show how she has begun to heal herself through creativity.

TAKE NOTE

Some points to note:

- ◆ The pervasiveness of the secrecy and the burden the young child feels
- ◆ Fear of speaking to parents or anyone else
- ◆ Feelings of blame
- ◆ The importance of getting help and beginning the process of healing
- ◆ Anne's special dolls: The Three Wise Women who stand for self-love, self-respect and self-esteem, qualities Anne believes women in abusive situations need to empower themselves.

BLACK WOMEN AND INSTITUTIONS

Dr. Wanda Thomas-Bernard and Rose Fraser

- ◆ Black women have experienced racism in Transition Houses and often feel unsafe in dealing with the law enforcement and criminal justice systems.
- Fears and feelings of isolation are common among Black women who have been abused; women who have been abused need to know their voices will be heard.
- ◆ The lack of African Canadian professionals employed by the various agencies and institutions means that Black women will rarely find familiar faces or individuals who understand their cultural background and specific experiences and the impact of racism on their lives and on that of their families.
- ◆ Rose Fraser speaks about the conflict Black women face when dealing with the legal system and their partners. They fear the treatment their partner may face within the criminal justice, which as has been documented by the Marshall Inquiry, is not free of racism. While she understands the conflict women feel, her primary concern is the woman's safety and the implications for her and her children should she not seek help.

African American feminist author bell hooks comments on the issue of Black men as abusers. In an article titled, "When Brothers are Batterers," she offers the following observations:

"A few weeks ago I sat in a circle with Black women, all of whom work in the area of domestic violence. All of us had been hit or beaten by brothers who claimed to love us. Most of us came from families where physical hitting was an acceptable means of social control. We all agreed that it was only as we learned not to see hitting as a gesture of care that we were able to change or leave situations where we were hurt. We came to understand the links between sexism and male use of violence to dominate women and children."

- ◆ Near the end of the video, during the credit sequence, Dr. Thomas-Bernard explains that change strategies must involve services for men. She says, "We can't keep building more transition houses." The process of re-education about the inappropriate use of violence as a way of problem solving must take place for men and for women within the Black community.

THE CHURCH

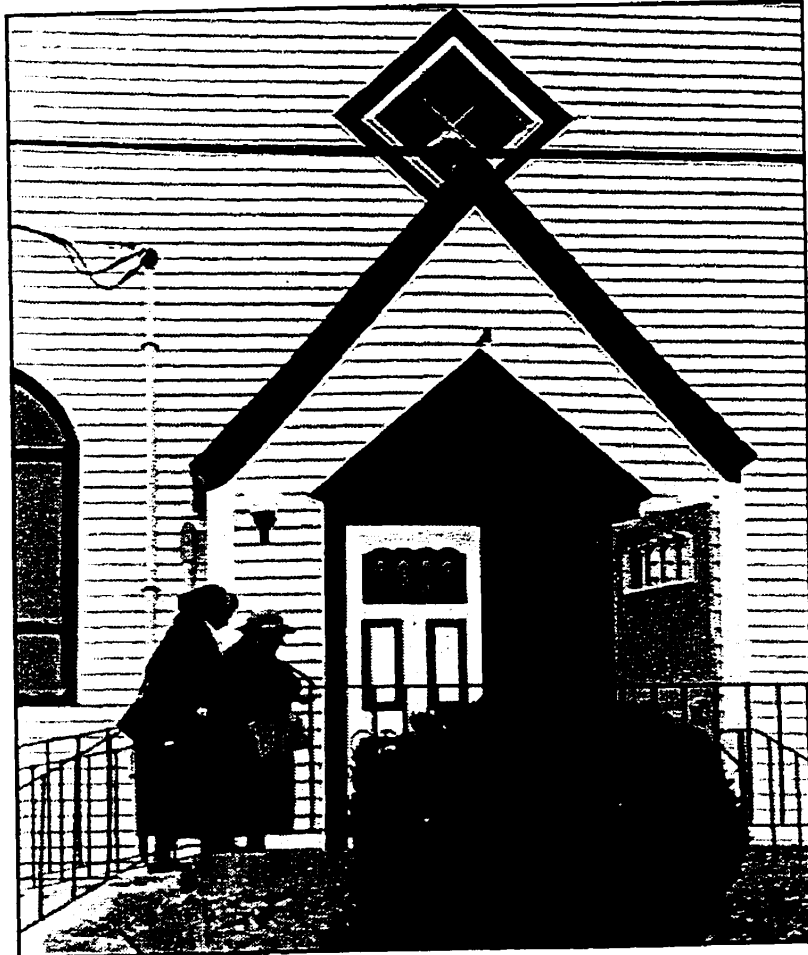
As a significant social institution within society and especially within the Black community, the Church can play a major role, in combatting violence against women. Doreen Paris as a layperson and leader of the African United Baptist Association Women's Institute believes the Church can and should do more. First of all, church leaders need to learn the 'signs of abuse.' Her contention is supported by AUBA Moderator Brian Johnston, Rev. Tracey Grosse and Dr. Lionel Moriah.

TAKE NOTE

Points to note:

- ◆ Rev. Tracey Grosse says 'the message must come from the pulpit'
- ◆ Need for focus on training and re-education of church leadership and membership
- ◆ Issue of sexual abuse needs to be addressed within the church
- ◆ Need for both men and women to participate in workshops and awareness sessions with trained individuals
- ◆ Importance of setting up counselling programs and services
- Need to make every home safe from abuse

"When individuals are healthy, then you have a healthy community."
Rose Fraser



"The message must come from
the pulpit."

Rev. Tracey Grosse

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RESOURCES/ORGANIZATIONS – A SELECTED LISTING

Making Changes

A comprehensive booklet, published by the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, is written for women who find themselves in abusive situations. It provides clear, easy to understand information about abuse and the decisions women must make when they find themselves in these situations. There is a section on making an emergency or safety plan and detailed listings of agencies, services and reading materials. Available free of charge.

The Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Box 745, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2T3

Phone: (902) 424-8662

Toll Free: 1-800-565-8662

Internet: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/staw/>

Body and Soul: The Black Women's Guide to Physical Health and Emotional Well-Being. Linda Villarosa, Editor. Harper Perennial. New York. 1994

(ISBN) 0-06-0555369-6. 578 pages, \$28.00 in Canada.

This is a self-help book with a specific focus on the health needs and concerns of Black women. Included are chapters on emotional health, violence and abuse.

The publication was developed with the support of the National Black Women's Health Project (NBWHP), which was founded in 1981 and is based in Atlanta, Georgia. The organization develops programs using a self-help/empowerment model.

Contact:

NBWHP

1237 Ralph David Abernathy Boulevard, SW

Atlanta, Georgia 30310.

Phone: (404) 758-9590 Fax: (404) 758-0661

Nova Scotia Family Violence Prevention Initiative

A cooperative program involving government departments and community agencies working together to address family violence. A variety of public education resources and current listings of programs and services available to both partners involved in abusive relationships are available free of charge.

Contact:
Family Violence Prevention Initiative
3rd Floor Johnson Building
5182 Prince Street , Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2T7
Phone: (902) 424-2345 Fax: (902) 424-0502

Transition House Association of Nova Scotia
Phone: (902) 429-7287

National Clearing House on Family Violence
Health Canada
Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1B5
Toll Free: 1-800-267-1291

For Youth:
Kids Help Line
Toll Free: 1-800-668-6868

Black Youth Hotline, Nova Scotia
497-9100 or Toll Free N.S.: 1-877-497-9100

" A Time to Tell: Teen Sexual Abuse" (video)
Contact:
Magic Lantern Films
775 Pacific Road, Unit 38, Oakville, Ontario L3L 6M4
Phone: (416) 827-1155

"Date Rape: No Means No" (video)
Contact:
B.F. A. Educational Media
47 Densley Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M6M 5A8
Phone: (416) 241-3311

No More Secrets Production Credits

Produced For:

The Women's Institute of the African United Baptist
Association of Nova Scotia

With Financial Support From:

The Women's Program, Status of Women Canada
Multiculturalism Program, Department of Canadian Heritage

Producer/Director/Writer: Sylvia Hamilton

Cinematographer: Bud Delaney

Still Photography: Sylvia Hamilton

Sound: Art McKay

Editor: Robert Tough

Production Assistant: Tandiwe Nyajeka

Make-up: Margaret Nyajeka

Recording Studio: Sound Market Recording

Post-Production Services: Creative Atlantic Ltd.

Music: Four the Moment

Video Jacket/Workshop Guide Graphic Design: Andrea David

Distribution information:

No More Secrets Video and Workshop Guide
Maroon Films Inc.

Box 10 R R 3
Grand Pre, NS
B0P 1M0

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