While black Protestant preachers had been active since the 1780s, the first black Catholic priest was not ordained until 1854 when James Healy, born a slave in Georgia, was ordained in Paris. Healy and his two brothers, Alexander and Patrick, who also became priests, did not work among black Catholics. The first black priest to serve as a pastor to those of his race was Augustus Tolton. Tolton, who had escaped slavery in Missouri as a child, was ordained in Rome in 1886. Not until 1891, when James Cardinal Gibbons ordained Charles Uncles, was the first black priest appointed in the U.S. In 1920, a major step in the development of black priests was taken when the Society of the Divine Work opened St. Augustine's Seminary in Bay St. Louis MS, specifically to train black youths for the priesthood.

The scarcity of black priests denied black Catholics, even when separated into black parishes—an increasingly common pattern after 1870—the opportunity to be pastored by men of their own race. Organizations of black laymen partially supplied the leadership missing in black parishes. From 1889 to 1894 delegates from different areas of the country, including the South, met in five Colored Catholic Congresses to discuss religious and racial issues. In 1909, the Knights of Peter Claver, a black fraternal and benevolent society, was formed in Mobile AL. In 1924, Thomas Turner, biology professor at Howard University and Hampton Institute, founded the Federated Colored Catholics to protest discrimination within the Church.

As early as 1866, a special mission to convert blacks was discussed by the American bishops. Though urged by Rome to devise a plan, the bishops, gathered at the second Plenary Council of Baltimore, failed to develop a national strategy and left the issue up to the discretion of each bishop. Among the religious orders that answered the appeal for assistance in this mission field, the Josephites and the Blessed Sacrament Sisters were the most active among Southern blacks. In 1915, Mother Katherine Drexel, founder of the Blessed Sacrament nuns, laid the foundation for Xavier University of New Orleans, the single black Catholic university in the U. S.

Gradually, the number of black Catholics grew as black Protestants left the rural South and came into direct contact with Catholicism in the cities. The migration of black Catholics from Louisiana also spread Catholicism to black communities nationwide. In the cities, parochial schools became a major source of black converts to Catholicism. Between 1940 and 1975, the black Catholic population grew from 296,988 to 916,854, an increase of 208 percent. Between 1968 and 1970, the Black Catholic Clergy Caucus, the National Black Sisters Conference, the Black Catholic Lay Caucus, and the National Office of Black Catholics were organized to address issues of black Catholic concern. Today there are seven black bishops, three of them serving in the South.

See also articles on BLACK RELIGION; ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

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BLACK MINISTERIAL PROTEST LEADERSHIP, 1955-1970. The lack of extensive scholarly research into the origins and early years of the modern black civil rights movement in the South has left many of the movement's most important features relatively obscure. One of the most central of these was the role that young black ministers, often new to their pastorates but with solid collegiate training, played in starting many of the local protests against segregation that sprang up across the South throughout the 1950s and early 1960s.

One basic requirement for any black citizen who sought to take a public, front-

line role in antisegregation protests in the Deep South in those years was that he or she have some economic independence from local whites who otherwise could swiftly retaliate with a job dismissal, calling a note, or terminating credit. Although some black businessmen or professionals also had relative economic security from local whites, black pastors generally possessed both that independence plus the social prominence and rhetorical skill that often went with the ministerial role. Informed observers thus were not surprised when black ministers appeared as the leaders and spokesmen for notable local protest movements in cities such as Baton Rouge (1953), Montgomery (1955-1957), Tallahassee (1956-1957), Birmingham (1956-1963), and Danville VA (1963).

That generalization, however, should not be exaggerated. While young ministers like MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. and Ralph D. Abernathy emerged as the public spokesmen for the noted bus boycott in Montgomery, the moving forces behind the origin of the protest actually had been the Women's Political Council, led by young professors and teachers and a Pullman porter named E. D. Nixon. Similarly, when an energetic mass protest movement arose in Albany GA, in 1961-1962, the local black leadership was composed almost totally of young leaders from other professions—a doctor, a lawyer, an insurance and real estate agent, and a postal worker—rather than ministers. In Albany and in other towns such as Selma AL, where young activists from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee sought to establish early civil rights footholds, the young workers initially had trouble finding any pastor who would allow civil rights meetings to be held in his church. In many rural areas of Georgia and Mississippi that hesitancy was well-founded; many black churches that were used for such rallies soon were destroyed by arson.

In Montgomery, however, the women's council and Nixon immediately turned to the city's black ministers to organize and promote their idea of a bus boycott. While younger men such as Abernathy and the Rev. E. N. French took the lead in implementing plans, the formal calls to the initial protest meetings were issued in the names of the Baptist Ministerial Alliance and the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance whose officers initially presided. When the decision was made to establish a new organization to pursue the protest, the younger, more politically conscious ministers moved to the fore.

A similar pattern emerged in the subsequent bus protest in Tallahassee, which was initiated by students at Florida A & M University. The black Tallahassee Ministerial Alliance convened within 24 hours, endorsed the protest, sent representatives to see bus company officials, and called a citywide mass meeting at which a new civic organization led by activist pastors was established to pursue the boycott.

The general youthfulness of the ministers who stepped forward to take civil rights leadership roles also could be seen in larger cities such as Birmingham and Atlanta where many older, more conservative, and better-established black pastors chose not to assert themselves. Although many of these ministers who opposed "direct action" tactics, such as MARTIN LUTHER KING, SR. in Atlanta and J. L. Ware in Birmingham, could hardly be characterized as halfhearted opponents of segregation, leadership of actual protest efforts was exercised by younger pastors such as Fred L. Shuttlesworth, Edward Gardner, and Abraham Woods in Birmingham, or by students whose leadership included young men in theology school, such as Otis Moss and Fred C. Bennette in Atlanta.

As civil rights activism spread across the South during the early and mid-1960s, young ministers who believed in a politically active and socially conscious black church continued to emerge as leaders of local protest organizations. Men like A. I.

Dunlap, L. W. Chase, and L. G. Campbell in Danville, and L. L. Anderson and F. D. Reese in Selma comprised the vanguard of local movements that brought substantial racial changes to their respective towns.

When civil rights activism began to move northward, and to turn its attention to economic issues in the mid-1960s, young black pastors continued in the forefront of these efforts. One of the most effective and widely used tactics in this new era of the movement was a program called "Operation Breadbasket" by its sponsoring organization, the SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, which had adopted the concept from the Rev. Leon Sullivan of Philadelphia. The "Breadbasket" program consisted of black ministers organizing themselves to examine whether large companies whose products were widely sold in the black community actually offered fair job opportunities to prospective black employees. If they did not, and if private visits and ministerial persuasion failed to alter those practices, the ministers would urge their congregations not to purchase those manufacturers' products until their employment practices were improved. Companies in the bread, dairy, and soft drink industries quickly learned the power of the black church in this program, and the ministerial groups in cities such as Atlanta and Chicago were able to announce hundreds of new jobs for black employees as a result of the "Breadbasket" efforts.

From the beginning of the civil rights movement in the bus boycotts of the mid-1950s, up through the economically aimed efforts such as "Breadbasket" in the late 1960s and early 1970s, black ministers, most often young men and with the benefits of formal college training, supplied much of the leadership for the new activism of black Southerners. It represented an invaluable contribution by the black church to the political and economic well-being of its community and a further expansion of the church's role into matters beyond the religious and spiritual.

See also articles on BLACK RELIGION; CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

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BLACK RELIGION. Convention links the black experience in religion in America to the development of the English colonies. While this perspective is useful in the sense that it helps to explain a number of aspects of black religion, it ignores the fact that African Christianity antedates English versions in the New World by some 200 years. However, the relevance of such an observation is diminished by the more extensive and graphic autobiographical data of more recent history. In short, while the black experience of religion in the South may not be considered a significant aspect of world history, world history may very well need to be drawn upon to explain black religion in context.

Tradition has it that the black experience in America is to be reckoned from the summer of 1619 when 20 "negars" were bartered to the English settlement in JAMESTOWN by some Dutch adventurers