

Interview Log

Interviewee: Rev. Darlene Dixon
Tape #: MAAF/KF/MD/FT6.15.416/501

Interviewer: Kelly Feltault **# of Tapes:** 1

Date: 6/15/98 **# of Sides:** 2

Location: Bellevue MD; in the church office

Topic: Bellevue, religion; women pastors;

Corresponding Photography Log #:

Comments: File name: Mdft416.doc. See Fieldnotes: FN06.15.98. *Italics* indicate emphasis; [brackets indicate additional information not on the tape or asides by fieldworker]; "quotations indicate direct transcription."

Rev. Dixon is the pastor for the church in Bellevue MD. I interviewed her at Peggy Moore's request.

BEGIN SIDE A

[ceiling fan going overhead]

BIO: born in Unionville, Feb 4, 1960; currently in Seminary school, grad. In May;

WHY CHOOSE SEMINARY: felt god calling her into being a pastor; ordained minister; personal narrative about that; took about a year; climactic part happened when on vacation as family; progressive thing, thought about it for a long time; story about that; husband saw her in this work before she did; people told her that they felt God was calling her to the ministry; felt she had the gifts: good ability to deal with people; likes helping people in need, those were the gifts

Had been a full-time wife and mother, 1/2 time school bus driver;

WOMEN: out of 15 in student pastor's group there are 3 women; numbers rising; but still staggered; reactions based on generation and age; also depends on relationships

BELLEVUE: appt'd by Bishop; app't by woman bishop; commutes to Wash D.C. for seminary; took that into account; may stay in Bellevue but will depend on the income ability of community; will stay on the shore; after grad will be sent by Bishop to new church if Bellevue congregation will be sent to new church-subsumed under large [white] church; hoping to stay in area until son gets out of H. S.; just started high school

FAMILY: supportive; beyond explanation; shaped selves into pastor's family; describes what a pastor's family is supposed to be; personal; helping around house and being at church, active member of congregation; no one definition; also changes between congregations especially if have more than one charge

WIFE, PASTOR, MOTHER: roles, balancing; being a student; sometimes only putting out the fires; deaths run in cycles, come in strings and must deal with them immediately, can't get to little things you want to do in addition; picking and choosing the most important thing

Aging of Bellevue: affecting community; thinks a lot about it; key leadership positions lost in church and not being filled; nobody rising up; voids; trying to help people see their gift of leadership; encouraging new leaders in the community; helping people decide; role as nurturer;

Stereotypes of women and characteristics working toward her disadvantage: hasn't pastored long enough; talks of team sports she played and how it built her team ability; thinks of we not I or you; giving team leadership; that is what she does in the church; work as team; pull them to task;

Parents' influence; family importance; role in life; as models; family in general;

RACE: minorities pastoring white churches, whites pastoring black churches; Haitians, Koreans etc. on shore within Methodist church; her feelings on working in one of these churches; does not want to work in a city church;

PREACHING: techniques, styles, purposes; stories; education, spirit lifting; have to mix it up and each requires different style;

Hispanic, Haitian and Korean churches; in Salisbury and Wilmington; nothing in Easton for these populations except for Mexican community; Christ's Church in Easton has spanish service;

GREATEST CHALLENGE IN BELLEVUE: developing the specialized ministries that go beyond the church; meeting needs of broader community; extend the vision of community's needs as a whole; deaths in past year makes it harder to do this;

Affected by same problems rest of world sees: murder, drugs, alcohol, all of it;

Changes in bellevue; economic; etc; leaving bellevue; brain drain; leaves empty homes and voids; biggest problems here; sees bellevue on its way back; not with the factories but in community taking an interest; Habitat for Humanity homes

Her memories of Bellevue from when it was busy: her home church, Asbury, was part of the charge that included St. Luke's in Bellevue; spent some time here; focal point was not

the occupations or buildings but the people, numbers of people who came and supported the church, church ctr of community; people shared gifts at church and helped a lot of people; next generation benefited from this foundation; that impressed her the most; parents found a way for children to have education and everything; many of this generation moved away and were educated and didn't come back home;

Homeplace; generation that moved away now retiring in the family homeplace; 4-5 that it is a summer place for them

Some sense of stewardship still; homecoming first Sunday in Sept.; describes day; service at 11 a.m.; then 3:30 service; in between is a delicious meal; fried chicken, crab cakes, home made ice cream, meaning of homecoming in community;

Choirs in church; very good, several choirs in little church

Describes her idea of sense of place as a pastor

END SIDE A

BEGIN SIDE B

Community boundaries and sense of independence as compared to other African American communities; self-contained and own identity; identity of community derived from church in these cases; she is looked at as pastor to community not just church; unique to black community;

Matching gifts to congregation; see what you have to offer a congregation;

Hopes for her children;

Insurance companies making them lock the church doors now, because of church burnings;

shore changing; people moving from city to shore; they want this "wholesome" laid back lifestyle for their children;

Affluence and lower income within congregations; source of contention; taxes;

Hopes for her years after seminary; wants to attend another school for another masters or doctorate within 10 years; feels led to open the doors of counseling in black community; crisis counseling; economic factors for lack of this; class issues;

END TAPE