

Black churches and black clergy in cleveland

[Religion](#), [Christianity](#)



Black churches and their leaders have worked, individually and collectively, as candidates and advocates in campaigns for aspirants for political office in Cleveland for years.

“ The engaged black churches and clergy remained politically viable after peaking in the 1960s and 1970s.” (Chandler, 139) Their impact on Cleveland’s political process was self-evident.

Even so, an evolving political reality compromised cooperative participations by Black churches in time. The rise of candidacies within the church, affiliations, questions of clerical quests for political office and the church transforming would alter its positions on political matters.

A city with a significant Black population it’s evident to court and cultivate a viable relationship with the Black community requires developing linkages with the church. Native sons of Cleveland and church members themselves there was an inherent relationship between the church and Louise and Carl Stokes.

The election of Carl Stokes as mayor of Cleveland invited the refrain, “ The unity and solidarity shown by the Black clergy in Cleveland during the Stokes years are legend.” (Chandler, 139) Stokes drew ministers into his administration, in various capacities and often counseled with them in regards to shaping public policy. Under Stones tutelage there was a high degree of church presence influencing the dynamics of city government.

The Stoke’s era in politics earmarked the emergence of effectual political influence of the Black church as a cooperative entity. The end of their respective service marked a new era where new figures from within and

without the church appeared to vie for offices that once enjoyed a uniform support by Cleveland's Black churches. When Louis Stokes stepped down from the House the candidacies of Stephanie Tubbs Jones, Jeffrey Johnson and Rev.

Marvin McMickle exposed differences in Black churches. Stephanie Jones was a longstanding member of Bethany Baptist Church and had the enduring backing of her pastor and congregation. Mr. Johnson was a lifetime member of Abyssinia Baptist Church and Rev. McMickle pastored Antioch Baptist church. Their respective candidacies were lightning rods differentiating one group's support from others.

With the emergence of Black candidacies for political office, quests for elective positions have made certain a fractured profile of support of Black churches. As well, developing interests of respective groups in Cleveland's church community are influencing its range of interests and participations in the political process.

Associations like United Pastors in Mission, Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance and Future Outlook League have respective interdenominational and interracial memberships. There are various areas of interest focused on by these groups, e. g. racial reconciliation, employment, suburban and urban community issues, etc. With a changing dynamism in Cleveland's church community, it's unlikely it will ever again be the monolithic political entity it once was.

Works Cited

Chandler, Mittie Olion, Black Clergy Electoral Involvement in Cleveland

<https://assignbuster.com/black-churches-and-black-clergy-in-cleveland/>