



Point After Touchdown

By Chris L. Brown

Can I Get An Amen?! (Y'all- Dont Hear Me)

Ahh, yeah! One of the backbones of the African American community—the church. I mean, as kids (younger kids, anyway), we may have looked forward more to choosing a switch to get whooped with than donning that blue polyester suit and red noose-like bow tie, but hey — we wouldn't have done it differently if we could do it again. The church is like a weekend soap opera, though: so many characters, plots below subplots, dastardly deacons, gossipin' goober gobblers. It's kind of a shame that we have diverged so far from the original design of church, but I sincerely think despite all this stuff, the true

message still gets through.

But I'm a columnist, a self-proclaimed verbal sculptor of chuckles, so you *know* that I'm gonna pick on those people! So let's, as they say, git it started!

Hmm...where should I start? Decisions, decisions...ya see, I could talk about the Steeple Pushers. Those folk who never take off their dark overcoats, who always seem to stalk in the corners, who look as if they are doing a gospel stakeout instead of worshiping and serving. I don't know about your church at home, but mine is right down the street from a Holly Farms chicken joint, and I could set my watch by the sure bet of the Steeple

Pushers sneakin' (or so they thought) down for a quick bite. I always thought they had meetings with the devil. No, wait!! That's what my older sister told me to keep me from tryin' to go! That's ahhright. She'll hear from my attorney.

At my church, we had people who spoke in tons. Yes, tons, not tongues. I'm talking about the quasi-gossipers! These people should work for the CIA, because nothing escapes their scope of vision, *nothing*. We've heard it—and participated, some of us (you know who you are) — all before.

"Fanny! Ooooh weee! That's a mighty fine hat you got on this mornin', girl! Where'd you get it? They was a sale down at the flea market? Mmm-M! I'mo get me one. Oh! Look! There's that young

Pitts girl. Look at that tight dress! She's like to bust out of that any second now! And the way she switches...Lord have mercy! I saw her talkin' to Pastor Jenkins' son, too. Sho'nuff! I think she wants to 'baptize' him! And look! There go that little Brown kid. What's his name? Chris? Fanny, I think he got a problem. Always walkin' around talkin' to himself and those little army men...po' child! He needs some soul food and a good whoopin'..."

I've got a secret fact to share with you. Eighty percent of hip hop dance moves originate in church. Nolie. C'mon, now—you know that every Sunday, the choir was steppin' as hard as the head deacon was at Freddie's nightclub the night before! Gospel Expo — kickin' it live! We had drums, a bass and lead guitar, a multi-voiced organ, a piano (with an insane pianist, believe me), the nurse trainees offering an intermittent "Say what?", and the bald-headed elder beat-boxing in the back. The choir would move too, boyee! They would break it down and have you singing the 23rd Psalm the entire way home. There was always that one person up there whose voice had the tune of a rare African elephant, but that's all right, because those mugs were *saingin'* (not singing)!

And of course, the center of the attention, the recipient of the 'happy' throes (and the tithes), the preacher. I have always been amazed by African American people blessed with the ability to preach. It's like watching a car start, rev (no pun intended), shift gears, and burn the road up! Imagine your best preacher voice while reading this next part.

"Good morning, family. (Congregation: "Good morning, pastor.") It's always fulfilling and uplifting to see your glorious faces

here in church. The Lord smiles upon those who are eager to praise his name. (Congregation: "Amen.") And that's what I'm here to share with you about today, my brothers and sisters: praising the Lord. (Deacon's row: "Take yo' time, now.") Now, some folk think that they praise the Lord before they eat at, uh, McDonalds. (pause) Y'all don't hear me. I say (Shift into 2nd gear) some folk think that they praise the Lord before they eat a Big Mac! (Congregation: chuckles) Well let me tell you this: Food, Folks, and Fun ain't gon get it done. (Shift into 3rd; Deacon's row: "Preach!") And Ronald McDonald is not going to be there to answer your prayers! (Congregation: "Amen"; shift into 4th) You've got to pray! You've got to get down on your knees, and petition! You know why?! Cause He's got, He's got, He's got what you need? (loud "Amen", applause) Now y'all may as well wake up mornin', because I ain't gon let you snore! (Deacons row: "Waal!") Ain't that right, Brother Jones? (Brother Jones wakes up) The Lord is not going to let you rest, until you get down on your knees, and praise him! You got to say, 'Lord?' (Organ chords) 'Lord!' (Organ chords) 'Lord?' (Organ chords) 'Lord!' (Hold the first chord, then pump the second one) (5th gear — Sing Preaching) 'I need you Lord!' (Organ chorus) 'I ne-hee-heed you Lo-ooo-oooooord!' (Congregation gets happy)

They say not many of these kinds of churches exist on the West Coast. Well, I hope not, because my non-pork'n beans eatin', L.A. livin' (God willing), star spottin', non-Clippers likin' tail will be on the plane home every weekend! Because the church is where it's at.

& Entertainment

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-Candidates For All Campus Offices-

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