

**"FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS TO THE END OF TIME"**

When the Adventist movement came into being in 1844 (Revelation 14:6.12), most Blacks on the American continent were experiencing the rigors of slavery. By law, they were denied the right of learning to read or to write, not to speak of playing a role for the directing in the affairs of church, government or even domestic life. These opportunities were envisioned as "Cinderella" dreams as in storybook land, or as Biblical David, the son of Jesse, when Samuel sought a king for Israel. There was no vain imagination that one day the descendants of these domestics would one day be used of God to help with the preaching of, the teaching of, the directing of, or the telling of the message of God's saving grace for all mankind throughout planet earth to help make ready a people to meet Him when He returns for His church.

In 1844 the Methodists in America were moved by the Holy Spirit to declare that the enslavement of another human being was religiously wrong and sinful; thus, at their Philadelphia convention an action was taken which condemned the practice among its members. The Baptists also took a similar posture. However, because so many of these of African descent were incarcerated it was a matter of economic survival among those who lived in the southern part of the country where cotton was king. It became very difficult for these southern people who were slave-owners to accept this religious posture that had been taken by the leaders of the church and a division came not only among the people of the predominantly 'christian' persuasion, but also in the leaders of governments across the land. A civil war grew out of the dispute and thousands of lives were lost, but freedom was made for the Blacks of this land.

My country, tis of thee, sweet land of 'liberty'—Of thee I sing.

Land where our fathers died; land of the pilgrims' pride

From every mountain side—'let freedom ring'

Pope Gregory would not share these views of the abolitionists and the Seventh-day Adventist church, which was in its infancy, had some of its members who sympathized with the slave owners. How-

ever, some, such as John Byington, the first president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, worked feverishly with the liberation movement of these days since 1831.

William Foye, a free-born American Black, had been given visions from God which admonished the people to prepare their lives for an eventful meeting with the Lord which, they felt, was about to take place. Foye became, as it were, a John the Baptist for the afflicted child who was to become the prophetess for the Seventh-day Adventist church and whose visions and writings would help to change the thinking of mankind—religiously, socially, and politically in all parts of the earth. Her name was Ellen G. Harmon.

Not a few of the adventist believers had sympathies with slave owners when the emancipation came, to the extent that Ellen White made rebuffs to them on the positions that they had taken concerning these former slaves. She said: "... you have no right to deny them (Blacks) membership in your churches." "The black man's name is written beside the white man's name in the book of life" (SW, p 8, 13 IT; p. 254-264).

In her writings she expressed a concern for the work among the 'colored' peo-

ple and for telling them the message of God's love for all. On one occasion she spoke of a vision concerning the importance of getting the message to this group of intelligent people (9T: 199-203). Some of the stout-hearted began sharing the gospel with this downtrodden people and small beginnings of adherents began to be realized. E. B. Lane began preaching among them in Tennessee, Silas Osborne in Kentucky, James Edson White in Mississippi. However, before some of these came, Charles M. Kinney, a mulatto, was already blazing trails throughout this area among this people. Kinney went to Huntsville two years before the brethren from the General Conference to establish the Huntsville School. He found the spot on which Oakwood College presently stands. It is interesting to note that most of the original sixteen students who arrived at the school for the first time after its doors were opened in 1896, only a few were baptized members of the Seventh-day Adventist church. However, by 1900 A. D. some fifty Blacks had become members and began to share their faith with their fellow kinspeople who were sons and daughters of former slaves.

When Ellen White visited the school in 1904, she revealed to the workers and



*Early pioneers at the beginning of the 20th century*



*Joint workers' meeting during 1960's—Southwest Region, South Central and Central States Conferences*



*The Alabama Singers*

student body that this was the very spot that she had seen in vision and that not one acre of the 300-acre tract was to be sold. She also admonished the students to go from the school to work for the saving of their own people. Many were full grown men and women who had journeyed from across the United States and the West Indies to prepare themselves to take their places in life and to preach the gospel among their people. The work began to grow under these dedicated leaders; J. H. Laurence, F. S. Keith, G. E. Peters, M. G. Nunez, and W. D. Ford. Others joined in the Preachings later. These became successful preachers and teachers in giving the 'message' to their people.

Racial problems were not at their best during some of these times when the small beginnings were taking place. Lynchings, murder, and riots were constantly on the upswing. By 1909 these problems had reached such proportions that responsible Black leadership gathered at Niagara Falls, New, to establish the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in America. They sought to address and to deal with the problem. Some of those leaders were, W. E. B. DuBoise, James Weldon Johnson, Al White, Mary Church Terrell, Peter J. Smith, William E. Walling, Mary White Avington, R. R. Moton, Charles Androv, Oswald Garrison Vallaen and others. By this time there were some 900 Black members in the church and leadership sought to address the struggle that was taking place around them. During this year, 1909, they established a position for someone to relate to the crisis. A Haysmer, a former director of the work in the West Indies, was asked to serve in this post and to give his full attention to addressing problems and growth among the Blacks in America.

The year 1915 became memorable for the Colored people of America and of the Seventh-day Adventist church. During this year, Booker T. Washington, their great leader at Tuskegee, passed away as did Ellen G. White, the prophetess for the church. She had constantly stressed the importance of work being done among the large 'Colored' population in this country and the giving of the gospel to them. She wrote many letters and documents which addressed this challenge and how it should be approached.

After the prophet was taken from the church, it appeared that the only time that the needs of this group were addressed was when a crisis arose. By 1918, when World War I ended, there were 3,500 Black members in the church in America. This growth had come about through the leadings of the Lord with Black leadership giving their evangelistic thrust in witnessing. It was then that they began to express concerns for one of their own to lead at a higher level. W. H. Green, an attorney from Virginia, was chosen. Some of the leaders were: B. W. Abney, T. M. Fountain, E. Osterman, R. L. Bradford, J. G. Thomas, A. Stevens, W. H. Winston, C. A. Lynes, N. B. Smith, Anna Knight, and T. H. Allison.

By 1929 when the stock market crashed, Marcus Garvey had begun to promote the 'Back to Africa' concept. The Harlem renaissance had begun to change the minds of Blacks concerning themselves—it was for the good and for self-worth. In the Seventh-day Adventist church, requests were being made for some officer status for Blacks. Some of their congregations were larger than some of the state conferences. The membership in America had grown to 8,000. New leaders had appeared along with those who had blazed the trails before them. W.

*Elder and Mrs. B. W. Abney, Missionaries to South Africa at the turn of the Century*



D. Ford, J. K. Humphrey, A. Miller, M. M. Young, C. Chrichlow, A. R. Caruthers, W. Coopwood, O. A. Troy, G. E. Peters, and W. Baker. The leaders were told to not speak of this leadership role. It would not be forthcoming.

But restless 'youths' were coming behind them with desires to see the requests that had been put by their leaders come to pass. It must begin at the instruction level—at the school. This finally led to the famous student 'holiday' at Oakwood school in 1931. A large number of these demonstrators who later became soul-winners, and later some of the first blacks to hold officer roles in the church were, H. R. Murphy, W. W. Fordham, F. L. Bland, A. S. Rashford, J. H. Wagner Sr., F. B. Slater, and T. M. Rowe.

With the pressures that came from the Blacks in 1929 for leadership roles, the General Conference established the 'Colored' department to oversee the work among this group. They also chose a Black to lead it. The action which was taken at the Spring Council during that year was that (1) one of our representative colored ministers be selected to fill the office of secretary of the Negro Work, and (2) that in each union conference where there were as many as 500 colored believers, except in the Southeastern, Southern and Southwestern conferences, a Negro secretary could be elected.

Under the leaderships of G. E. Peters and F. L. Peterson who served in this department in the General Conference, the work continued to be strengthened in the Black sector of the church. The leaders were G. E. Peters, F. L. Peterson, Dr. Eva B. Dykes, Dr. Lottie Blake, Dr. D. Kimbrough, O. A. Troy, Harry Ford, T. H. Allison, A. B. Abney, J. G. Dasent, A. W. Clarke, L. E. Ford, J. G. Thomas, J. H. Wagner Sr., F. S. Keitts, J. H. Laurence,

and J. K. Humphrey. New congregations came into being, Riverside Hospital was established in Nashville, Tennessee, J. L. Moran was selected to serve as the president for Oakwood Jr. College, the *Message Magazine* was established, but the church still maintained a segregated system in its operations. Even the records were kept separate.

When 1944 arrived conditions were ripe for the establishment of Regional Conferences. World War II had come to an end and conditions for Blacks (in and out of the church) would never be the same again. A crisis at one of the hospitals brought the problems to a head. From this, the Spring Council of 1944 voted to organize Black Conferences in all areas of North America with the exception of the Pacific Union Conference. The membership had grown to 19,000. Blacks were restless and burdened. Oakwood College became a senior college, Riverside Sanitarium in Nashville became a 'hospital'; seven 'Regional' conferences were born with Blacks serving as their officers. The first presidents were L. H. Bland—Northeastern Conference; J. H. Wagner Sr.—Allegheny Conference; H. D. Singleton—South Atlantic Conference; H. R. Murphy—South Central Conference; W. W. Fordham—Southwest Region Conference; J. G. Dasent (the first to be named)—president of the Lake Region Conference; and T. M. Rowe—Central States Conference.

Tremendous growth was seen under these leaders in North America. Evangelism became their watchword. The membership stood at 19,008 and only 17,396 of these were holding membership in the Regional Conferences. The churches in the Pacific Union Conferences stayed under the 'old' system. The total tithe for all of these congregations then was \$1,098,743.59, the tithe for the North American Division was \$14,064.641, and the tithe for the world field stood at \$19,424,952.00. With the establishment of 'Regional' conferences the established conferences suffered a serious economic blow, to the extent that a number of the workers had to be terminated because 7.8% of the income had been taken away.

The work under the Regional Conferences has made rapid strides in the North American Division and around the world. Blacks began to reach out to their brothers in other lands to serve as missionaries. A. Branch and B. W. Abney had served earlier in the century, but now came N. G. Banks, C. D. Henri, P.



*Group of ministers gather for picture at 1936 General Conference*

Giddings, T. M. Battle, L. E. Daniels, Donald Simons, and Richard Simons. Others are serving in Africa on a regular basis as evangelists for the conferences.

Evangelism explosion came with the E. E. Cleveland era. When the Lord blessed his labors of soul-winning in the Southern Union, V. G. Anderson, the president, invited him to serve at that level and to train others in the art. Then came, E. C. Ward, J. M. Phipps, C. R. Graham, G. H. Rainey, H. L. Cleveland, L. G. Newton, E. J. Humphrey, C. E. Dudley, D. L. Crowder—all trained by Cleveland. In 1954 the General Conference invited Cleveland and his wife to join its staff to train people around the world in the art of soul-winning. They served on every continent and became known as Mr. and Mrs. Evangelism. Today 85% of the World church is made up of people outside of North America. Evangelism is paying off! Under the current leaderships in the Regional Conferences in North America the challenge is still being accepted to "go preach the gospel to every nation, kindred and tongue and people." And people are being added to the church daily. Today's leaders are C. E. Brooks—Northeastern Conference; L. Palmer—Lake Region Conference; Alvin Kibble—Allegheny East Conference; W. E. Lewis—Allegheny West Conference; R. P. Peay—South Atlantic Conference; Charles E. Dudley—South Central Conference; J. M. Doggette—Southeastern Conference; J. Paul Monk—Central States Conference; and R. E. Barron—Southwest Region Conference.

The Black church in the North American Division in 1989 represents 26% of the entire division membership and contributes approximately 16% of the total tithe income—\$65,700,000.00. The tithe income is 11% of the total income for the

World Church. In fact, the tithe income of the Black church in the North American Division is larger than that of any division outside of the North American Division. The Lord is with this work! Cries are presently being made for 'Regional Unions' in America and for larger representation in the elected post where decisions and policies are being made and monies are being disbursed. The feeling is that there must no longer be taxation without representation. Black leaders on the West Coast feel that their best progress for a finished work will be found in the establishment of Regional Conferences for the work there. It is meeting with resistance. Financial lessons have been learned from the past. From its 'small beginnings' the Lord has greatly blessed the work of the Seventh-day Adventist church in its Black sector in North America.

The wind of change cannot be ignored. The leadership roles must be addressed. Today there are four Blacks who serve as leaders for divisions of the world church: C. E. Bradford, North America; George Brown, Inter-America; Bekele Heye, Eastern Africa; and J. J. Nortey, Africa Indian Ocean. Eighty-five percent of the world church today is made up of peoples color. They must be accepted into positions of leadership to help the entire world know that Jesus Christ is Lord . . . to THE END OF TIME.

When the church came into being in 1844, Blacks were in slavery, no members of that small band were found outside of the United States of America. When the church was officially organized in 1863 it accounted for 3,500 members with still none outside of the country, and few Blacks. When Regional Conferences came into being in 1945, 36.88% of the membership was found in the NAD with

63.12% in other lands; 8.9% of the NAD membership was found in the Black Church. They contributed 7.8% of the tithe for the division. Today 85% of the membership is found outside of North America and 26%-30% of the membership within the North American Division is found in the Black church. This does not include those Black members who hold membership in the sister churches. The tithe dollar in the Black sector in the North American Division represents 16% of the income of the division and 12% of the income from the world field. William A. Henry, III, in his article in *Time Magazine*, April 9, 1990, sets forth food for thought for church leadership as he speaks to government leadership in America. He states:

"Someday soon, surely much sooner than most people who filled out their Census form last week realize, white Americans, will become a minority group. Long before that day arrives, the presumption that the "typical" U. S. citizen is someone who traces his or her descent in a direct line to Europe will be part of the past. . . .

Already 1 American in 4 defines himself or herself as Hispanic or nonwhite. If current trends in immigration and birth rates persist, the Hispanic population will have further increased an estimated 21%, the Asian presence about 22%, blacks almost 12% and whites a little more than 2% when the 20th century ends. By 2036 when someone born today will be 66 years old, the "average" U. S. resident, as defined by Census statistics, will trace his or her descent to Africa, Asia, the Hispanic world, the Pacific Islands, Arabia—almost anywhere but white Europe.

"A truly multiracial society will undoubtedly prove much harder to govern. Even seemingly race-free conflicts will be increasingly complicated by an overlay of ethnic tension. For example, the expected showdown in the early 21st century between the rising number of retirees and the dwindling number of workers who must be taxed to pay for the elders' Social Security benefits will probably be compounded by the fact that a large majority of recipients will be white, whereas a majority of workers paying for them will be nonwhite.

". . . The real question is whether or not our notion of diversity can successfully negotiate the color line."

As we move toward the 'end of time' it might be well for some study to be given for a sharing of leadership roles in the church to help carry out the commission that has been given by our Lord. . . . the

# The Editor's Desk

## Sweet Memories of the Past



Elder Bradford fondly recalls the days when the linotype typesetting machine ruled the printing world. When linotypes were introduced, they replaced the older system of hand-set type and revolutionized the printing trade. Eventually linotypes were superseded by the optical typesetting systems now in use.

Elder Bradford has played a role as important in the development and growth of the Adventist Church as the linotype played in the printing industry. His influence, energy and spiritual leadership have brought fresh ideas and a new vision to this work. As he moves toward retirement, our appreciation and love go with him!

## SUNSET CALENDAR

	June 29	July 6	July 13	July 20
Boston, Mass.	8:25	8:24	8:21	8:16
New York City	8:34	8:33	8:30	8:25
Buffalo, N.Y.	8:58	8:56	8:53	8:40
Atlanta, GA.	8:52	8:51	8:50	8:46
Miami, Fla.	8:16	8:16	8:15	8:13
Charlotte, N.C.	8:42	8:42	8:40	8:36
Birmingham, Ala.	8:01	8:01	7:59	7:55
Jackson, Miss.	8:12	8:11	8:10	8:07
Memphis, Tenn.	8:19	8:18	8:16	8:12
Louisville, Ky.	9:10	9:09	9:07	9:03
Detroit, Mich.	9:14	9:12	9:09	9:05
Chicago, Ill.	8:29	8:28	8:25	8:20
South Bend, In.	8:24	8:22	8:19	8:15
Minneapolis, Minn.	9:04	9:02	8:59	8:53
St. Louis, Mo.	8:29	8:28	8:26	8:22
Kansas City, Mo.	8:48	8:42	8:45	8:41
Denver, Co.	8:32	8:31	8:28	8:24
Little Rock, Ark.	8:26	8:25	8:23	8:20
Dallas, Texas	8:40	8:39	8:37	8:34
New Orleans, La.	8:05	8:05	8:03	8:01
Albuquerque, N.M.	8:25	8:24	8:22	8:18
Oklahoma City, Okla.	8:49	8:49	8:47	8:43

Add one minute for each 13 miles west; subtract one minute for each 13 miles east.

gospel must be carried to every nation, kindred, tongue and people before the end comes. Using every talented, christian member in leadership roles and using everyone who has been blessed by God with talents to get the job done. This is a must for Global Strategy. ". . . and the end will come."

C.E. Dudley

## SPIRITUAL BENEFITS OF REGIONAL UNIONS

The "Negro work" as referred to time after time by Mrs. E. G. White was regarded for the most part to be the work among blacks in the southern part of the United States. This view forged during the 1880s and 1990s was an understandable one. At that time, most blacks lived in the South. The church naturally concentrated its missionary efforts for black people in the area below the Mason-Dixon line. The Southern Missionary Society, formed by James Edson White in 1895, was the first organization set up by the church to promote the gospel among the nation's blacks. Edson White recruited white northerners to move south to help operate mission schools throughout the black belt. The beginning of the Adventist work in the south virtually coincided with the passage of the famous Jim Crow laws. These laws greatly reduced the black man's social and political rights and enforced a system of rigid race segregation. The first sustained ministry for black people began in the south in the 1890s which meant that the pattern of Adventist race relations was set in an area and at a time of strong hostility and conflict. This conflict severely hindered the work of the fledgling Southern Missionary Society. The leaders of the church struggled to avoid confrontation on the race issue to preserve the fragile beginnings they made among the black population. Gradually a system of separate churches developed in the south among Adventists. Mrs. White, commenting on this development, said "The best thing will be to provide the colored who accept the truth with places of worship of their own in which they can carry on the their services by themselves. Let them be shown that this is done not to exclude them from worshipping with white people, because they are black, but in order that the progress of the truth may be advanced. Let them understand that this plan is to be followed until the Lord shows us a better way" (*Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 206).

The organization of blacks in churches of their own proved to be a great blessing to the cause of Adventism. Mrs. White noted that there existed "workers to whom the Lord has given light and knowledge and who possess capabilities of no mean order." She stressed that "colored members of ability and experience should be encouraged to lead the services of their own people; and their voices are to be heard in the representative assemblies" (*Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 207).

In 1979, over 100 years after Mrs. White wrote this instruction to the church, there is not one single voice of a black person held in the assembly of the union presidents of North America. Consequently, when vital decisions concerning the finishing of the work are discussed at this level, the priority of the black work is not represented by one who is best fit to discuss it. All through the policies of our unions can be seen evidence that minorities are not considered to be an intricate part of the system. Currently, if the policies governing finances were followed by the black conferences, there could be practically no church building at all. Most large black church buildings are built outside of union policies and one of the policies clearly states that a conference administrator can be relieved of his office for doing this, yet there is no other policy in writing to accommodate the needs of blacks with 50 percent less income than our white counterparts. Referring to the early stages of the black work, it did not take long for the church to see that the black work grew much faster when it was directed by their own people. Consequently, the request for black conferences arose. The idea of black conferences was thoroughly debated. Some whites opposed the plan, desiring to retain the status quo. A number of blacks agreed with them. Some of these men favored integration at all levels and suggested that separate conferences would defeat that goal. However, in spite of the dedicated service of many whites, the black work in the Adventist church was generally regarded as an area of secondary importance. Its organizational structure was based on the southern experience. Beyond the church level, conferences were rarely administered by blacks themselves. Black leaders wanted to reverse these trends. They appealed over and over again until the spring of 1944. With the support of the General Conference president, Elder J. L. McElhany, the black conference resolution was passed and a few

months later black conferences were formed. Statistics will show conclusively that black conferences are the fastest growing work in the North American Division. Yet history shows that to gain them was a monumental struggle and many blacks opposed their formation. For thirty-three years now we have had black conferences and the work has grown tremendously. Yet the design and priorities of the black work is not always under the control of black leaders. The combined talents of several conferences working together is prohibited by union lines. Consequently, there are no chances for blacks to combine their small resources and ideas with union approval and promotion. The lateral mobility of local conference officials and departmental secretaries is a practically impossible task. Problems unique to our needs have no stage upon which to be presented. Our counterparts in the current union structures do not understand or share our experience in departmental or administrative work. The formation of black unions would eliminate the necessity of our well-meaning white leaders trying to force a black brother into a position of real leadership. Time and time again our best black leaders have been presented to nominating committees for consideration for the presidency. At no point has this approach worked even though it has been pushed by the strongest of our Christian white leaders. To do this is a most valiant and appreciated task, for Mrs. White states "When the Holy Spirit is poured out, there will be a triumph of humanity over prejudice . . . and the color line will be regarded by many very differently from the way in which it is now regarded" (*Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 209). This condition of prejudice can only be cured by the outpouring of the spirit of God on the human heart and not by ecclesiastical coercions. Consequently, Mrs. White commented regarding a similar situation in her day by saying "We are not to agitate the color line question and thus arouse prejudice and bring about a crisis" (*Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 209).

It is quite apparent that the context of this counsel referred to the organized structure of the church as it relates to the attitudes of the world. There are many of our brethren that simply feel that to place a black leader at the head of an already existing union would dull the public relations image of the church with the world and hold many from joining the truth who otherwise would. This explains how some