

THE STORY OF AMERICAN
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS WITH
AN AFRICAN HERITAGE

**WE HAVE
TOMORROW**

LOUIS B. REYNOLDS

*Author of The Dawn of a Brighter Day, Look to
the Hills, Great Texts From Romans,
and other books*



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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In the story of the Pilgrim landing at what is now Plymouth, Massachusetts, there is no mention of a black presence in this early U.S. colony. But in the decade of the 1970s Marjorie Anderson, who grew up in Plymouth, discovered on a moonlit night four small grave markers encircled by the remains of an old wooden fence. They were burial places of four black settlers.

"Something came over me," she recalled. "Suddenly I knew, I had no doubt, that this place would mean a great deal to me. It was almost like a religious experience. I made up my mind to come back."

Marjorie Anderson did go back, again and again. With the zeal of an evangelist, in six years she converted that forgotten graveyard into an archeological treasure trove listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The cemetery, located four miles from Plymouth Rock, and in a town awash with historic sites, might easily be considered one more designated area of little import. Except that this one marked that strain of America's heritage that is black, right back to the Pilgrims.

"I grew up in Plymouth but never felt a part of the historical

community," Miss Anderson continued. "It was not that there was a conscious effort to exclude blacks, but it was as if everybody assumed that blacks just weren't here."

All the black schoolchildren who came here on class trips never saw a reflection of themselves. Well, now they will."

The cemetery that so moved Miss Anderson that moonlit night is called Parting Ways; the site is at a fork in the road. At one time it served a black settlement of perhaps thirty residents. Miss Anderson, a woman in her late twenties at the time the graves were officially recognized, said that although she had not previously taken time out to search for evidence of the old settlement, she had known about it from girlhood. Her parents had told her the story of its founders. They were four black men: Cato Howe, Prince Goodwin, Plato Turner, and Quamany Quash. In 1792 the four were granted freedom and ninety-four acres of land as a reward for service in the Revolutionary War.¹ When the last house in the settlement burned down in 1908, the land reverted to the town, its history forgotten.

"Ironically," Miss Anderson recalled, "the town had plans to turn the land into, of all things, a cemetery." Instead, the town has leased the land to the corporation Miss Anderson organized. That was after she pored over musty records, wrote letters, begged money, talked to more than forty archeologists and historians, and finally got Parting Ways excavated and studied. The diggers found pottery and other artifacts suggesting African origins. In the course of all her research Miss Anderson located, in California, a descendant of one Abraham Pierce. Records indicate Pierce to be the black slave of ship captain John Pierce, who arrived in Plymouth aboard the vessel *Anne* in 1623, when the colony was less than three years old.²

* * * * *

Like early accounts of American history, and indeed the narratives of most of the nation's social and religious organizations, Seventh-day Adventist history texts have some noticeable gaps in the record of the denomination's considerable black following. This book

is an attempt to tell the story of participation by these men and women, both laymen and ministers.

At a time when they were numerically few, Seventh-day Adventists touched the lives of many influential leaders in America and thus drew attention to important tenets of their faith. Henry Ford; Harvey Firestone; John D. Rockefeller, Jr.; Alfred du Pont; and President William Howard Taft were among those who visited Battle Creek Sanitarium or one of its satellite institutions. Also among the notables who came to Battle Creek was Booker T. Washington, principal of world-famous Tuskegee Institute.

Washington was especially fascinated by the invigorating baths and the diet therapy that had done much for people such as oil men Harry Sinclair and L. E. Phillips; Red Cross founder Clara Barton; and Edgar Welch, grape juice producer. Washington's wife arranged for one of the young men trained at Battle Creek to come to Tuskegee and set up treatment facilities for her husband, using Battle Creek techniques.³

Fortunately for the Adventist cause, Dr. Kellogg did not share the prejudice and discrimination toward Negroes that was so widely practiced in the United States of his day. Kellogg had adopted several black children among other orphans he raised, and thus his attitude and viewpoint were instantly recognized as that of an apostle of justice and impartiality. Booker T. Washington was no doubt impressed with this trait so evident in Kellogg.

Through many years Negro Adventists have come into prominence and held positions of responsibility out of proportion to their numbers within the community. Jim Pearson, a graduate of the old Battle Creek Health Institute, returned to the South and set up treatment rooms in Birmingham. When he was arrested in Birmingham for some minor offense, the judge learned of his treatment rooms and spread the information far and wide. The result was that Jim Pearson included among his clients many white judges, congressmen, and leading businessmen of the South.

In Los Angeles, Dr. Ruth J. Temple instituted a city-wide Health Week, a well-publicized physical fitness program that since has been adopted as the health plan for some forty major U.S. cities.⁴

Emma Dillard, a well-known mortician in Brooklyn, New York, was an ardent member whose business ability was readily recognized by conference leaders; her advice was sought both by her local church and the Greater New York Conference. The Dillard Funeral Home is still a flourishing entity in Brooklyn.

William H. Green, an attorney who joined the Adventist Church shortly after the turn of the century, argued cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. Early in her career as an educator, his wife had co-founded Vorhees Industrial School in Denmark, South Carolina.⁵

Wylene Sazonne Dorsey, a member of the Southwest Region Conference Committee, was an outstanding businesswoman in New Orleans, Louisiana. She was a leading officer in the Standard Life Insurance Company and part owner of the business.

Eva B. Dykes, the first Negro woman to complete requirements for the Ph.D. degree, became an Adventist shortly after she was graduated *cum laude* from Radcliffe College.⁶ She was widely heralded as one of the outstanding young women of the nation.

Frank W. Hale, who became an Adventist about 1935, began a salvage-and-used-book business in Topeka, Kansas, which came to be so prominently known that he was invited to conduct the March of Dimes drive for the city of Topeka. His son, Frank, Jr., was granted a Ph.D. degree from the University of Nebraska and was later president of Oakwood College. Later, as vice provost of Ohio State University, he made possible higher education programs for numerous Adventist young people who otherwise would not have been able to pursue this specialized training.⁷

In later years a larger number of people with high-level offices in government have arisen to make their contribution to the general society while witnessing for their faith. Wilbert Cheatham, of Silver Spring, Maryland, was made deputy director of civil rights for the

Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Helen Wiggan Beckett, of Dallas, Texas, became a field investigator for the southwestern office of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Her job included conferences with builders and developers who held government contracts in the five States, and on-site inspection to determine whether Federal guidelines were being violated. Jessie Godley Bradley, an Oakwood graduate with a Ph.D. degree from the University of Connecticut, in 1973 was appointed director of elementary schools for the city of New Haven. Perhaps the most outstanding city government position held by a black Adventist was that of Eunice Winston, treasurer of the city of San Diego.⁸ Judge Andrew K. McDonald, a graduate of Rutgers University Law School and a member of the Allegheny East Conference committee, was appointed judge of the family division of the Newark, New Jersey, municipal court.

Colonel Leonard Johnson, an Air Force flight surgeon, headed a special government mission to relocate thousands of Vietnamese left homeless after the fall of Saigon. Wilbur M. Cato was named Auditor of the Year in 1972 by the U.S. Army Tank Automotive Command for a money-saving procedure he set up that is used by government auditors around the world. In one instance alone the Army saved an estimated \$40.5 million by implementing Cato's auditing technique.⁹ Dr. Kenneth Singleton, who graduated with highest honors from Howard University Medical School, became an Air Force flight surgeon to Vice President Walter Mondale. Colonel Joseph T. Powell, at the time of his retirement from the Army, was the highest ranking black Adventist in their chaplaincy program.

In the building trades, Burrell Scott, a local church elder in Oberlin, Ohio, and a masonry contractor, has handled multimillion-dollar jobs as far away as New York State. Scott built the county building in Elyria, Ohio; an addition to the Oberlin College music building; and several Holiday Inns and housing projects. For many years Carter's Nursing Home, founded by Espie and Bessie Carter,

was the most prosperous business in Oberlin. In Greenville, Mississippi, Robert Seard, a church officer, had the largest house-moving enterprise in the entire State; recognition of this fact was noted in a story about his work in *Ebony* magazine.¹⁰ The story in this volume, while it takes note of the successes of black Seventh-day Adventists in business and the professions, is principally concerned with their spiritual loyalties. Certainly in the revelation of their lives the secret strivings of other lives come into view. We have traced a frail thread of chivalry and faith in the early efforts to spread the Adventist faith.

In times of necessity or crisis a resolve almost always forms among pioneer people facing rejection by a society to substitute for one another, to support, to save one another. These stories point out that the will to rise above environment, to live in harmony with one's professed faith, is really a family of emotions, a whole interconnection—not just the patriarch and matriarch, but all the children. All appear to be kin, and none of them is born to give up. If anything happens to cut one off, the remainder survive and tell the marvelous story. They become something new. In fact, they become, as the Scriptures declare, "a spectacle . . . to angels, and to men."

There are at times striking parallels between the story of Adventism and the story of the United States of America—as in the struggle with the issue of discrimination as a result of race, and particularly in the effort to place nonwhite members in leadership functions. The fact that unseen hands are said to have prepared the way for a great church mission to black communities has strengthened confidence in the movement in spite of a corrosive effect of acts by members who came to the church from areas where segregation was a way of life. The object of this book is not only to record the obvious—those things that have transpired—but to see them in the context of the entire movement, its aims and goals.

Quite possibly, for example, not a few of the regulatory procedures and practices in American social life were introduced by

churches; in this respect, certainly, Adventists have played a significant role. The U.S. Surgeon General's stand against smoking arose from the Adventist temperance effort and particularly the film *One in Twenty Thousand*, which in a hard-hitting script dramatically traced an advanced case of lung cancer as due to smoking. And it is well known that around the turn of the century Adventists, with their cornflakes and whole-bran bread, literally changed the eating habits of the world. Moreover, recent studies show that they live, on the average, seven years longer than persons in the normative population. Any black man or woman, therefore, who joins the Adventists cannot help but measurably enhance his health and thus his opportunities in life.

* * * * *

The manuscript for this book has been more than twenty-five years in the making, although two full years of the author's time were spent in a concentrated effort to do other significant interviews, writing and rewriting the story. We express deepest appreciation to Neal C. Wilson, who, as president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists personally sponsored the book before conference officers. His influence secured funds that would make its development possible.

We owe a special debt of gratitude to Harry Anderson, who worked patiently to reconstruct the great scenes that have meant so much to this minority segment of the church.¹¹ A world-famous artist, he took special delight in illustrating this book.

Many secretaries have assisted with the typing; but we gratefully acknowledge Rose Marie Tousaint, Audre Taylor, Daphene Reeder, Cynthia Nutt, Wanda McMullin, Debra Nullins, and Esther Nelsen, for whom at times the manuscript seemed to be a full-blown adventure, blotting out every other necessary task.

A special expression of gratitude goes to my wife, Bernice, a well-trained and dedicated teacher, who, with her constant concern for the variety of readers the work might attract, has been my sternest

critic. My older daughter, Dawn, a perceptive reader who appreciates finely recorded details, often acted as critic and sounding board for a book difficult in the making. Joan, my younger daughter, gave time to other aspects of the work and made valuable suggestions for improving the story. Jannith Lewis, librarian for Oakwood College; and Clara Peterson Rock, archivist, provided access to books and documents in their custody.

A special committee, formulated by C. E. Bradford, vice president of the General Conference for the North American Division, spent many hours critiquing the manuscript and supplying valuable information. The committee consisted of C. E. Bradford, chairman; R. L. Woodfork, vice-chairman; Ruby L. Jones, recording secretary; Jannith Lewis, Clara Rock, H. D. Singleton, W. W. Fordham, W. S. Lee, C. E. Dudley, and C. E. Moseley. To them is owed a debt of gratitude.

Frances Lewis Mouzon, teacher of journalism, also read and criticized the manuscript. Arthur L. White and Ron Graybill, of the Ellen G. White Estate, made available for inspection numerous letters and articles from their files that greatly enlivened the text. Bert Haloviack was most helpful in providing data on people whose contributions to the church had been all but forgotten. Warren S. Banfield, Eugene Lincoln, Charles E. Bradford, Wesley Curtwright, Walter M. Starks, Ethel Young, Robert H. Pierson, E. Earl Cleveland, Garland J. Millet, William E. Coopwood, Donald B. Simons, Earl Canson, and Major White have read all or parts of the manuscript and have made valuable suggestions.

Because of the limits set by its purpose, the book attempts a description rather than a chronicle. It is far from comprehensive, and some of the omissions will outrage those who know the epic as a whole. But the omissions, save for those that could be assigned to ignorance or faulty powers of selection, are deliberate. They have been made in deference to the main line of inquiry. A more complete Seventh-day Adventist history can be found in other books, notably

Arthur W. Spalding's *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*; Richard W. Schwarz's *Light Bearers to the Remnant*; and C. Mervyn Maxwell's *Tell It to the World: The Story of Seventh-day Adventists*. The *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, which is part of the Commentary Reference Series, gives the names of elected leaders and their periods of service. In all these volumes the work is admirably researched, is updated periodically, and covers virtually every phase of the subject.

The materials collected for this project represent perhaps the most extensive record of sources on U.S. black Adventists in existence. They will provide background reading for both academy and college classes in denominational history and, like the story of the Plymouth graves, will illuminate the past and make available an authentic and historically valid guide for all who would know more about this largest minority within the North American membership. The author hopes that the pages that follow may have something to say, not only to students of church history but also to the general reader, and particularly to those who today are seeking—by a fresh study of Seventh-day Adventist origins—a surer grip on the centralities of the faith and a deepening of their own belief in the providences of God.

—Louis B. Reynolds

NOTES

- ¹ Marjorie Anderson, *The Parting Ways* (The Museum of Afro-American Ethnohistory, Inc., 1976).
- ² *Ibid.*
- ³ Louis R. Harlan, *Booker T. Washington, the Wizard of Tuskegee* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 440.
- ⁴ Ruth J. Temple, "I Carry Them on My Heart," *Message*, February, 1957, pp. 16, 17, 23-25.
- ⁵ Jacob Justiss, *Angels in Ebony* (Toledo, Ohio; Jet Printing Service, 1975).
- ⁶ Louis B. Reynolds, "She Fulfilled the Impossible Dream," *Review and Herald*, Jan. 4, 1973, p. 15.
- ⁷ "Voices in the Wind" notation regarding a governor's citation for Frank W. Hale, Jr., *Message*, October, 1975, p. 7.
- ⁸ Eunice E. Winston, in "The World Is Mine, I'm Royalty," *Message*, September, 1978, pp. 24-27.
- ⁹ *Lake Union Herald*, April 4, 1972. The award to Cato was presented at Warren, Michigan.
- ¹⁰ *Ebony*, July, 1950.
- ¹¹ Harry Anderson joined the Adventist Church in 1943. His paintings that adorn the church's books and periodicals are known around the world. He has also painted for *McCall's*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, Exxon calendars, and numerous other publications.

We Have Tomorrow
Bright before us
Like a flame.

Yesterday
A night-gone thing
A sun-down name.

And dawn-today
Broad arch above the road we came

We march!

—*Langston Hughes.*

CHAPTER 1

The Millerite Involvement

The Revolutionary War, in addition to bringing freedom to the American Colonies, set into motion elements and forces that eventually brought about the end of slavery in the North and eventually reached into the South. Talk of liberty led the black population to believe that *freedom* would be extended to them, especially since the Colonies had agreed to halt the slave trade. One could well imagine how they felt when, by only a hair's breadth, Jefferson's proposal to outlaw slavery altogether was defeated. The status of Negroes being the lowest, they were, if anything, more ready than whites for a change. But upon the outbreak of the Revolution the authorities ordered detachments of soldiers "to guard against the insurrection of slaves." To capitalize on the unrest, the commander of the British forces occupying New York, Sir Henry Clinton, issued a proclamation promising complete freedom to runaway slaves. No precise records exist, it seems, of the numbers who went over to the British, but Jefferson's estimate of thirty thousand (from all sections) indicates the extent of the defection. Alarmed, the Colonials countered by also promising freedom to all

slaves who would serve three years in the Continental Army. Five thousand were in this way induced to join—after they had procured their master's consent as provided by law—and two regiments of black men were sent against the British.

Events of the Revolution aroused a fresh wave of antislavery sentiment. A growing number of people felt increasingly the inconsistency between talk of universal equality and freedom, and the glaring fact of slavery. Such a group met in the New York tavern of a Quaker and formed a "Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves and Protecting Such of Them as Have Been or May Be Liberated," with John Hay as its president. Hamilton, Duane, and Clinton, among other members, set forth principles that, in light of the long history of Adventist work directed toward the black population, should be of contemporary interest.

They declared it their duty "to enable them [Negroes] to share, equally with us, in that civil and religious liberty with which an indulgent Providence has blessed these States, and to which these, our brethren, are, by nature, as much entitled as ourselves." This statement proved to be no mere high-minded abstraction, for the Manumission Society, as the organization was commonly called, with branches in other Northern cities, launched a program designed to end slavery, protect Negroes from kidnapping, and provide education for black children. Through its efforts a bill was passed in 1799, beginning the gradual emancipation of slaves in New York State—more than a half-century before Lincoln's proclamation.

The first independent act of Negroes was to sever all connections with the white churches, which had assigned them to sections marked "B.M.," meaning black members. The movement, extending to every denomination, began when Negroes broke away from the Methodist Episcopal Church and started the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. To the Negro, his church was more than sectarianism, more indeed than religion—although outwardly it tended to follow the austere pattern of white churches. It was in

reality the center and stronghold of his independent existence; a refuge and a shelter for runaway slaves, a meeting place, and platform; it cared for the sick and gave food and other assistance to the destitute. Above all, it developed strong and intelligent leaders through whom black people learned to stand with self-confidence, united in a common understanding of their destiny.

This explains, in part at least, the reason approximately 90 percent of all black Americans who hold membership in churches today are identified with black denominations.

The Advent Awakening of the 1830s, initiated by the preaching of William Miller, attracted numerous free Negroes to well-attended camp meetings in various sections of New England. There was in early America a somber sense of religious destiny, and those who had left behind a Europe declining in religious fervor felt they had given history a second chance. Of course, old regional tensions between blacks and whites were also given a new edge by the motley crowd of immigrants. But Miller unfurled the shining banner of Biblical ideals and held his audience spellbound with prophecies of better times to come. For his black hearers this was indeed good news.

At least three Millerite preachers were of African descent: Charles Bowles, of Boston, Massachusetts; John W. Lewis, of Providence, Rhode Island; and William E. Foy, of Portland, Maine.¹ Charles Bowles, or "Father" Bowles, as he was often called, addressed large white congregations and was instrumental in establishing several churches. Records show that he preached up to 1843. John W. Lewis, in addition to his work as a Millerite preacher, wrote the biography of Charles Bowles.²

William Ellis Foy was the first of three persons in the Advent Awakening to receive visions intended to stabilize believers facing the Disappointment.³ That God is no respecter of persons was demonstrated in this servant whom He chose to bear the prophetic gift to the Adventist community. Foy, who lived in New England, is described in early Adventist literature as a mulatto; he was

remembered as being tall, with eloquent speech, and one who had visions relating to the Advent movement.⁴ Certainly no religious crank, as a young man in 1835 he committed his life to Christ. Records show that sometime thereafter he became a member of the Freewill Baptist Church. As he prepared to take holy orders as an Episcopal minister in 1842 he had two disturbing visions of Christ that dwarfed all his worldly ambitions. Prior to this, although clearly a devout man, he had been, by his own admission, "opposed to the doctrine of Jesus' near approach." But after the visions he joined the Millerites in heralding the message that Christ was expected shortly to return to this world.

The account of the two revelations given to William Foy, together with a sketch of his Christian experience, was published as a pamphlet bearing the date 1845, in Portland, Maine.⁵ The first vision occurred January 18, 1842, while he attended a prayer service on Southark Street in Boston. Those who witnessed the event reported seeing him in vision for two and one-half hours. The pamphlet includes the statement of a physician who examined him on the occasion. This doctor testified that he could find in Foy no appearance of life "except around the heart."⁶ As Foy later recalled the experience he said simply, "My breath left me."⁷

In the first vision Foy beheld the reward of the faithful and the awful judgment of the wicked. Although he felt it his duty to tell what he had seen, he begged off, saying he had not been specifically instructed to relate it. But then, because he could find no peace of mind, he had a description of the vision printed, an account that he considered to be "very imperfect." In a second vision, on February 4, 1842, Foy reported seeing multitudes of those who had been raised from the dead being brought together to receive the saints' reward.⁸ He also heard instruction that he was to reveal what he had seen, and that he should warn men and women to flee from the wrath to come.

Almost immediately criticism arose from Millerites who feared publicity concerning those in their midst who claimed to have divine

revelations. Because of this, Foy was even more hesitant to tell what he had seen and heard. Also he was aware, he said, of "the prejudice among the people against those of my color."⁹ It was a tormenting ordeal, and many times he pondered the reasonableness of his charge to relate the visions. "Why should these things be given to me, to bear to the world?" he said.¹⁰

To Foy came a certain relief when, two days later, on February 6, 1842, the pastor of the Bloomfield Street church asked him to describe the visions to his congregation. Reluctantly he consented to do so, but he was surprised by the large crowd that turned out to hear him the next afternoon. As he began to speak, the fear left. He then related with freedom the things he had seen and heard in vision.

After this Foy traveled widely, presenting his messages to crowded churches of many denominations. He wore robes of the Episcopal clergy as he described the heavenly place, the New Jerusalem, and the compassionate love of Jesus. He exhorted the unconverted to seek God, and many responded to his entreaties. Unfortunately, not enough money was contributed from churches to sustain him, pay his travel expenses, and support his family; accordingly, for a while he turned aside and accepted manual jobs to pay living expenses.¹¹ Three months later, however, feeling that at all hazards he must tell what God had revealed to him, Foy took up his public ministry again, expecting that shortly the Lord would return to gather His saints.

Ellen Harmon remembered riding as a young girl with her family in Foy's sled to Beethoven Hall, scene of his lectures in Portland, Maine.¹² According to J. N. Loughborough, Adventist historian, Foy had a third vision near the time of the expectation of 1844, which called attention to three platforms and which related to a development in the Advent movement beyond 1844. This he did not understand, since he had looked for the Lord to come in October. In perplexity he ceased public work, and not long after, he died.¹³

After Foy, visions were given to Hazen Foss and later to Ellen G.

Harmon. When Foss heard the first vision related by Miss Harmon, he declared that these revelations had been taken from him and given to her.

Loughborough said of Foy that his "visions bore clear evidence of being the genuine manifestations of the Spirit of God."¹⁴ And Ellen Harmon White, in a 1912 interview, reported that she had talked with Foy after she related one of her own early visions; that he had said her account revealed just what he had seen. Thus the Spirit of prophecy, bestowed upon Foy, had demonstrated early in the Advent movement that "God is no respecter of persons." It gave roots to faith that the Adventist Church, unlike other communions that were split over questions of slavery and segregation, offered a haven for those who had been objects of continual bigotry and discrimination.

Because of William Miller's Negro following, one is not surprised that later, when Seventh-day Adventist churches were formally organized, throughout New England congregations that were largely white included Americans of African descent.

Among the persons attracted to the faith in the East were some distinguished black Americans connected with the antislavery cause. Frederick Douglass, of Rochester, New York, was one obviously moved by what he heard of the second coming of Jesus and the signs of His return.

As a youth, Douglass had been seriously awakened to the subject of religion. After he saw himself a wretched, brokenhearted mourner, "traveling through the darkness and misery of doubts and fears,"¹⁵ he had felt a personal need of God. Only after weeks of anguished searching did he find the illumination he sought. Casting all his care upon God, he said, and having faith in Jesus as his Redeemer and Saviour, his yearning for a knowledge of the Bible increased. "I have gathered scattered pages from this holy Book from the filthy street gutters of Baltimore," he recalled, "and washed and dried them, that in the moments of my leisure, I might get a word or two of wisdom from them."¹⁶

Douglass witnessed the falling of the stars on November 13, 1833, and saw in this spectacle an omen of the coming of Christ. He wrote this account of it in his book *My Bondage and My Freedom*:

"I left Baltimore, for St. Michael's in the month of March, 1833. I know the year, because it was the one succeeding the first cholera in Baltimore, and was the year, also, of that strange phenomenon, when the heavens seemed about to part with its starry train. I witnessed this gorgeous spectacle, and was awe-struck. The air seemed filled with bright, descending messengers from the sky. It was about daybreak when I saw this sublime scene. I was not without the suggestion, at the moment, that it might be the harbinger of the coming of the Son of man; and, in my then state of mind, I was prepared to hail Him as my friend and deliverer. I had read that the 'stars shall fall from heaven'; and they were now falling. I was suffering much in my mind. . . . I was beginning to look away to heaven for the rest denied me on earth."¹⁷

Although he did not join the Adventists, his daughter, Rosetta Douglass Sprague, became a member of the First Church on Eighth Street NE., in Washington, D.C., some years later.¹⁸

William Still, of the Underground Railroad movement in Philadelphia, appeared in New England as another enthusiastic follower of William Miller. A native of Burlington County, New Jersey, Still was the son of Levin and Sidney Still, fugitives from a slave plantation on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. He had made a try at securing a formal education in New Jersey, but hostility among white students and their teacher made this extremely difficult; therefore at 17 he terminated the pursuit of a common school diploma. Buffeted in other ways by thoughtless neighbors, at 20 he decided to leave home and explore possibilities of a new life elsewhere.¹⁹

By the next spring Still had a job as a farmhand at Evasham Mount and spent a year in this work. Then his father died, and young William, distraught and lonely, went into the wilderness to assess his

own future and try to find God. By the middle of 1844 he had heard the preaching of William Miller and, according to his memoirs in *Underground Railroad*, had found his answer: Christ *must* come back to the earth. There was no other hope.²⁰ With this assurance he was ready for the disappointment and hardship of an unfriendly world. From this point he set out for Philadelphia, where after some trials and failures in business, he came into his lifework with the Anti-Slavery Society and the Underground Railroad.²¹

Though there is no record of Still joining the Adventists, his grandniece, Josephine Roberts, became a member, and her husband, Vincent L. Roberts, was a minister, president of Southwest Region Conference and treasurer of Southwestern Union Conference.

Sojourner Truth, who spent half her life in New York State and then some years in New England, visited two Millerite camp meetings in 1843.²² She identified herself with Adventists from that point to the end of her life.

Sojourner became a well-known figure, nationally famous and a heroine of the black community, but not much is recorded in biographies about her affiliation with Adventists. This is understandable when one considers that most blacks were either Baptists or Methodists and that Seventh-day Adventists were not yet organized as a denomination at the time of the emancipation.

Sojourner Truth, formerly Isabella Van Wagener, was born in Ulster County, New York, sometime during the late 1700s. Referred to as a religious mystic, she took to the platform as an itinerant exhorter and lecturer against slavery and on occasion represented women's rights and temperance. Emancipated in 1828, she set out for New England in 1843 to tell the people their sins, particularly the sin of slavery, and soon became the protégée of New England abolitionist leaders. She could neither read nor write, but her ready wit, her quaint speech, and her commanding personality could captivate any audience. She was known to quell a disorderly crowd by singing or to silence an opposer with sarcasm, as the case may

have required.

About 1856 she moved to Harmonia, Michigan, where friends from Ulster County had settled. Later she took up residence in Battle Creek, where she enjoyed the friendship of John Byington, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, and other prominent Seventh-day Adventists. Her age, which she did not know, was estimated at the time of death, in 1883, as close to 100.

Isabella gave herself the name Sojourner Truth when she started out for New England in 1843. Her legal surname, Van Wagener, was that of the last person by whom she had been held in bondage. Prior to this she had used four other surnames, which identified previous slave masters. For many years she held membership in one of the Methodist church bodies.

Cited as authority for her baptism into the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the recollection of James Lewis, an aged barber of Battle Creek. Born about 1859, he would have been approximately 24 at the time of Sojourner's death. He obviously had a clear mind when he made these declarations, and he was specific about where her baptism took place and who performed the ceremony: Sojourner Truth, he said, was baptized by Uriah Smith in the Kalamazoo River at the end of Cass Street in Battle Creek.²³ He also declared that upon her death, funeral services were conducted in the Battle Creek Tabernacle (also called the Dime Tabernacle), again with Uriah Smith officiating. Mark Bovee, grandson of Uriah Smith, confirmed that Sojourner Truth became a Seventh-day Adventist, as did C. Burton Clark, long-time historian of the denomination's early years, and William Price, a nurse at Battle Creek Sanitarium, who knew Sojourner Truth personally.

There is no clerk's record of Sojourner's Adventist membership, for all church records were destroyed when the Dime Tabernacle burned. However, statements attributed to her show her belief in temperance, in dress reform, in the Sabbath, and other teachings expounded by the Adventists. Another biographer states that in her

latter years she made a great change in her religious life, which seems strongly to suggest that she joined the Adventist Church.²⁴

The funeral of Sojourner Truth was announced on the day of her death by the Chicago Daily *Inter-Ocean*. The "Advent Tabernacle, which holds three thousand," it said, "will undoubtedly be filled." Other churches in Battle Creek probably held memorial services. And since, for recently emancipated people the trend was to belong to big and prestigious churches, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, with a worldwide membership at that time of only seventeen thousand, would have seemed to many to be not worthy of notice.

Seventh-day Adventist publications mentioning her death do not state that she was a member. But neither might an article about the death of any other well-known figure in the church. This would go without saying. On the other hand, Adventist publications do not ordinarily publish an obituary notice of nonmembers, even for a deceased president of the United States. Hence it would be difficult to account for the obituary of Sojourner's life appearing in *Sunshine at Home*, published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association in 1883, on any other basis than that she was an Adventist. The article ends with the typical phraseology used in obituaries of persons who were members of the church:

"Her remains were deposited in Oak Hill Cemetery, there to await the return of the Life-giver, who will reward everyone according as his works have been."

The grave of Sojourner Truth is listed in the Michigan Conference tour guide among the significant places in Adventist history. The location of the grave, near that of Ellen G. White and other pioneers, seems also to say something about her church affiliation.

Ellen Bradbury Paulson, sister-in-law of David Paulson, founder of Hinsdale Sanitarium, attended the funeral of Sojourner Truth at the old Battle Creek Tabernacle and made notes of this in 1902 on the back of a small photograph, a copy of the famous painting of Abraham Lincoln and Sojourner Truth. On it she gave the

approximate age of Sojourner; she also noted the fact that she had lectured at Battle Creek College, that Uriah Smith officiated at her funeral, that this was the first service held in the Dime Tabernacle, and that three thousand people were in attendance from all parts of the U.S.A. She also wrote this statement: "She was a good SDA."

The Millerite thrust was a widespread religious awakening in America, but after the Disappointment much of the interest faded. A new initiative was needed to get the Advent witness on track again. Around the turn of the century, therefore, numerous messages from Ellen G. White were addressed to the church regarding evangelism for the large black minority within the American nation. Since the greater number of these people lived in the South, her words were often specifically pointed to that field. These entreaties were read as eagerly in the North as in the South, and ministers and laymen took seriously the charge to reach a burgeoning population of blacks with Seventh-day Adventist teachings.

NOTES

¹ John N. Loughborough, *Rise and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventists With Tokens of God's Hand in the Movement and a Brief Sketch of the Advent Cause From 1831 to 1844* (Battle Creek, Mich.: General Conference Association of the Seventh-day Adventists, 1892), pp. 70, 71. Also LeRoy E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1950), Vol. IV, p. 705.

² John W. Lewis, *Charles Bowles* (Watertown, Mass.: Ingalls & Stonewell's Steam Press, 1852).

³ Loughborough, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

⁴ Ellen G. White letter 37, 1890.

⁵ William E. Foy, "The Plain of Paradise." The first vision was communicated to the Advent believers (see Appendix A) about 1842.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ John N. Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1905), pp. 145-147.

⁹ *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1976), pp. 474, 475.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement*, *loc. cit.*

¹² White, *loc. cit.*

¹³ Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement*, p. 147.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

¹⁵ Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York: Miller, Orton, and Co., 1857), pp. 166, 167.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

¹⁸ From conversations the author had with Mrs. Fredericka Douglass Perry, granddaughter of Frederick Douglass, who lived in Kansas City, Missouri, 1939. Also a confirmation was made with Mrs. Naomi Simons in 1973, who as a little girl remembered Mrs. Sprague coming to First Seventh-day Adventist church in Washington, D.C. Dr. Eva B. Dykes, a neighbor of Mrs. Sprague, remembered her as a Seventh-day

Adventist and a member of First church.

¹⁹ William Still. *The Underground Railroad* (Philadelphia: Porter and Coates, 1872).

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *SDA Encyclopedia*, pp. 1503, 1504.

²³ James E. Dykes, in "Lifted Lamp in the World's Wild Storm," relates a conversation with James Lewis, Battle Creek, Michigan. In *Message* magazine, February, 1958, p. 27.

²⁴ Dykes, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

Adventist and a member of First church.

¹⁹ William Still. *The Underground Railroad* (Philadelphia: Porter and Coates, 1872).

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *SDA Encyclopedia*, pp. 1503, 1504.

²³ James E. Dykes, in "Lifted Lamp in the World's Wild Storm," relates a conversation with James Lewis, Battle Creek, Michigan. In *Message* magazine, February, 1958, p. 27.

²⁴ Dykes, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

CHAPTER 2

A Beginning Out of a Tragic War

The vast malignancy of slavery, by which blacks were kept in the iron grip of bondage for nearly 250 years, seemed to have no end. Through the long decades there was apparently no human savior in sight. But when everything seemed hopeless, God worked, for He alone could deliver the slave from the hand of the oppressor.

The Civil War emerged, even in all its horror, as the means God permitted to set free the captives. In a statement entitled "Slavery and the War," published in 1863, Ellen G. White declared that God Himself was bringing judgment against America for "the high crime of slavery," and she affirmed that "He has the destiny of the nation in His hands." The reason for a protracted Civil War was twofold: "He [God] will punish the South for the sin of slavery, and the North for so long suffering its overreaching and overbearing influence."¹

The horrible curse and degradation of this bondage was revealed to her at Roosevelt, New York, on August 3, 1861, at a time when a degree of sympathy for slaveholders had emerged even among the ranks of Adventists. The occasion of her vision was an assembly of believers for a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer. "The Spirit of

the Lord rested upon us," she said, "and I was taken off in vision and shown the sin of slavery." If there were those in the North who considered themselves free from the plague but would consent to the return of runaway slaves, her words provided a dramatic jolt:

"The fugitive slave law was calculated to crush out of man every noble, generous feeling of sympathy that should arise in his heart for the oppressed and suffering slave. It was in direct opposition to the teaching of Christ. God's scourge is now upon the North, because they have so long submitted to the advances of slave power. The sin of Northern proslavery men is great. They have strengthened the South in their sin by sanctioning the extension of slavery; they have acted a prominent part in bringing the nation into its present distressed condition."²

She recalled the despicable slave system in Egypt and how Pharaoh had steadfastly refused freedom to Hebrew bondmen whose labor had also become an important factor in the economy.

"I was pointed back to ancient Israel, held in bondage by the Egyptians. The Lord wrought by Moses and Aaron to deliver them. Miracles were performed before Pharaoh to convince him that these men were especially sent of God to bid him let Israel go. But Pharaoh's heart was hardened against the messengers of God, and he reasoned away the miracles performed by them. Then the Egyptians were made to feel God's judgments. They were visited with plagues, and while suffering under the effect of them, Pharaoh consented to let Israel go. But as soon as the cause of their suffering was removed, his heart was hardened."³

In many ways the bondage of Egypt paralleled slavery in America. God's visitations upon Pharaoh became more severe each time he refused to let Israel go, but the Egyptian monarch would not acknowledge them to be significant. Southern landowners and slavemasters were reduced to poverty, yet they were not willing to let the captives go free. Like the ancient Egyptian kings, they put hindrances in the way even after the Emancipation Proclamation had

declared the slave free and no longer obligated to his former master.

When Egypt's armed troops pursued the Israelites, many of the fleeing fugitives feared that they would be annihilated, but God worked a miracle and opened the Red Sea, permitting His chosen people to pass through on dry ground. When the Egyptians rushed into the same channel, the Bible declares that "the sea returned to his strength," and the pursuing army of Egyptians was drowned as it struggled to overtake the former bondservants. Commenting on this vision, Mrs. White said:

"This scene was presented before me to illustrate the selfish love of slavery, and the desperate measures which the South would adopt to cherish the institution, and the dreadful lengths to which they would go before they would yield. . . . The consciences of these masters have become seared and hardened, as was Pharaoh's; and if compelled to release their slaves, their principles remain unchanged, and they would make the slave feel their oppressive power if possible. It looked to me like an impossibility now for slavery to be done away. God alone can wrench the slave from the hand of his desperate, relentless oppressor."⁴

The miraculous way by which God worked to free the slaves is a largely untold story of the Civil War. When the student of history understands this, the other perplexing events seem less baffling, for he realizes that before him is not the ordinary contest of man against man. Here is certain proof that the mortal being is pitted against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places. It is clear that supernatural intelligences played a part in the Civil War. "Very many men in authority," Ellen White declares, "generals and officers, act in conformity with instructions communicated by spirits."⁵ Men in the North who followed corrupt principles, who dealt in spiritualism and who would wink at evil, were placed in positions of trust. The result was betrayal and chaos and unnecessary loss of life.

"The spirits of devils, professing to be dead warriors and skillful

generals, communicate with men in authority and control many of their movements. One general has directions from these spirits to make special moves and is flattered with the hope of success. Another receives directions which differ widely from those given to the first. . . .

“The great leading rebel general, Satan, is acquainted with the transactions of this war, and he directs his angels to assume the form of dead generals, to imitate their manners, and exhibit their peculiar traits of character. And leaders in the army really believe that the spirits of their friends and of dead warriors, the fathers of the Revolutionary War, are guiding them. . . .

“Instead of the leading men in this war trusting in the God of Israel, and directing their armies to trust in the only One who can deliver them from their enemies, the majority inquire of the prince of devils and trust in him.”⁶

“I saw that the rebels have often been in positions where they could have been subdued without much effort; but the communications from spirits have led the Northern generals and blinded their eyes until the rebels were beyond their reach. And some generals would rather allow the rebels to escape than to subdue them. They think more of the darling institution of slavery than of the prosperity of the nation.”⁷

Apparently on numerous occasions officers of the Northern army leaked information about their strategy to Southern forces. Also vital secrets regarding Southern troop movements were funneled through to the Northern camp, sometimes by slave lookouts.

“Correct information has been given to Northern officers in regard to the movements and approach of rebels, which has been disregarded and despised because the informer was black. And by neglecting to prepare for an attack, the Union forces have been surprised and nearly cut to pieces, or what is as bad, many of the poor soldiers have been taken prisoner to suffer worse than death.”⁸

The Civil War did not begin as a fight to free the slaves. Although

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hailed by abolitionists as a step toward nationwide emancipation, the government's declared objective in the war was to save the Union. The Lincoln administration harbored anxieties that if emancipation were the stated aim, the conflict would be seen as an antislavery war and the wavering border States would be driven into rebellion. Undaunted, Negro leaders offered the government three regiments of troops—armed, equipped, clothed, and maintained for the duration of the conflict by the black population. The offer was declined. While the North thus gingerly handled the problem, the South made effective use of Negroes as laborers, and even as sailors and soldiers. But it took divine intervention to make it a war of liberation. This intervention began with the battle of Bull Run.

The First Battle of Manassas Junction (identified also in history books as Bull Run) was said to be one of the pivotal battles of the century. "There is nothing in American military history quite like the story," declared Bruce Catton in his *History of the Civil War*. "It was the momentous flight of the amateurs, the battle where everything went wrong, the great day of awakening for the whole nation, North and South together. It marked the end of the ninety-day militia, and it also ended the rosy time in which men could dream that the war would be short, glorious and bloodless. After Bull Run the nation got down to business."⁹

But it could have been otherwise. "For a time it seemed that the Confederate line would be broken and that the 'Forward to Richmond' motif would come to a triumphant crescendo. . . . Then came one of those moments of dramatic inspiration that men remember."¹⁰

Mysteriously, Confederate Brigadier General Barnard Bee's troops rallied. Fresh Confederate troops, just off the train from the Shenandoah Valley, "kept coming in." Because of their blue uniforms, Union troops mistook these new arrivals for allies and withheld their fire. The mistake was fatal, Catton says. "Suddenly the union offensive, which had come so near to success, collapsed."¹¹

He adds, however, that "there was no rout here . . . there was no panic." The panic came later, as a result of "the reckless Washington civilians who had supposed that the edge of a battlefield would be an ideal place for a picnic." Catton elaborates on the conduct of a sporting crowd that had followed the soldiers to what they imagined to be only an interesting skirmish.

"Hundreds of Washingtonians had come out to see the show that day. They came in carriages, wagons, buggies, and on horseback, they brought hampers of food and drink with them, and they were spread all over the slanting fields east of Bull Run . . . making a holiday out of it. . . . They got into their conveyances and went swarming out onto the highway which the army wanted to use."¹²

The Union troops, surprised by the strength of Confederate forces, fell back. With the North in retreat, the situation could have been chaotic. But the confusion was not unilateral. "The Confederates might have pursued, but did not. Jefferson Davis had reached the scene, and he . . . almost ordered a pursuit, finally did not; and, as a matter of fact, the Confederate Army was almost as disorganized by its victory as the Union Army was by its defeat."¹³

This bizarre encounter signaled that the war would be long and costly. It also insured that slavery, the real underlying issue, would be finally resolved, not glossed over and patched up. By prolonging the war, Ellen G. White said, God brought the North to the position where they were willing to free the slaves in order to win the war.

She also tells what happened behind the scenes at Bull Run to prevent a total disaster for the North: "The Southern army had everything in their favor and were prepared for a dreadful contest. The Northern army was moving on with triumph . . . [and] did not expect so fierce an encounter. . . . The Southern men felt the battle, and in a little while would have been driven back still further. The Northern men were rushing on. . . . Just then an angel descended and waved his hand backward. Instantly there was confusion in the ranks. It appeared to the Northern men that their troops were

retreating, when it was not so in reality. . . .

"Then it was explained that God had this nation in His own hand, and would not suffer victories to be gained faster than He ordained, and would permit no more losses to the Northern men than in His wisdom He saw fit, to punish them for their sins. And had the Northern army at this time pushed the battle still further in their fainting, exhausted condition, the far greater struggle and destruction which awaited them would have caused great triumph in the South. God would not permit this, and sent an angel to interfere." ¹⁴

The Confederate cause, which Gladstone had hastened to eulogize as "a nation created in a day," was doomed from the start. But a wide variety of circumstances contributed to the South's downfall, not the least of which was the eventual enlistment of black men as warriors. They were allowed to enter the Union Army also, but not until the government had made unsuccessful appeals to the border States to accept compensated emancipation. The alternatives, according to Lincoln, were these: "surrendering the Union and with it the Constitution, or laying strong hands upon the colored element."

Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862, effective January 1, 1863; he called it "a fit and necessary war measure for repressing said rebellion." It decreed that all persons held as slaves in States in areas of the Confederacy still in rebellion against the Union were to be freed, and those of suitable condition were to be "received into the armed service of the United States." ¹⁵

A tumultuous wave of enthusiasm greeted the news. Men, women, and children in New York jammed into the Great Hall at Cooper Union, where they cheered "Lincoln, our native land, the Stars and Stripes, and the abolitionists who for thirty years operated in the heart of the nation." Hastily composed poems were read and songs sung, one of them to the music of "John Brown's Body." The high point of the celebration came when Henry Highland Garnet intoned the proclamation.

Celebrations in the North were described as austere, but those in

the South reached the very souls of the people. Though many slaveholders attempted to suppress the news, the glad tidings swept down the "grapevine telegraph" almost like a streak of lightning. Everywhere it was said, "Marse Lincum done freed us slaves," and the phrase "free at last" was as sweet as any word in the Bible.

Back in New York on the morning that Negro troops were about to leave for the front, a feeling of uneasiness swept over the city. Steps had to be taken to protect their families from proslavery hoodlums. But a picturesque parade took place without disorder, with a large crowd of admiring blacks on the sidelines, many of them women who carried baskets filled with delicacies for the soldiers. James Gordon Bennett, of the New York *Herald*, was critical of a flag given the troops as "an emblem of love and honor" from the daughters of the great metropolis, but the fighting men were granted special recognition by the President. Lincoln afterward wrote, "Some of the most important battles would have been lost, if the Negro soldiers had not flocked into the Northern Army."¹⁶

In addition to service in the regular Union Army—in which more than 200,000 black men joined—Negroes were active throughout the conflict in Union espionage. Harriet Tubman, intrepid Underground Railroad conductor, was one of those pressed into service. Numbers of other escaped slaves were sent back as agents to the South. A Southern planter wrote a friend in New York that four of his runaway slaves had returned voluntarily after a spell of "Yankee freedom." But several months later he complained bitterly that the same four had run away again—this time taking with them two hundred other slaves. An interesting incident was reported in South Carolina. White people, becoming suspicious of the increasing number of Negro funerals, trailed a group of mourners to a cemetery. There they discovered that the coffin carried so solemnly by the Negroes actually contained arms that were being removed to a hiding place.

The end of hostilities marked the close of one epoch in the history of the United States and the beginning of another. Certain issues,

such as the nature of the Union, the right of secession, and the crucial problem of slavery, had been settled once and for all. But that the hand of God was over events of the Civil War from beginning to end cannot be discounted. It was His method of preparing the way for the gospel of salvation to be heralded throughout the South. Again and again this shaping of events by a divine hand is emphasized.

Before politicians considered the War Between the States as sufficiently serious to discuss, Mrs. White predicted its outcome. She knew the real issue in this country better than did leaders of either the North or South. J. N. Loughborough has related a story connected with those days when a vision of the future was given. In the fall of 1859 James White invited Loughborough to join him and Mrs. White at Detroit as they returned from appointments in the Eastern States. It was their plan that he should accompany them for a series of meetings in the churches of northern Michigan.

"I met them in Detroit, November 3," Loughborough states, "and we went by train to Pontiac. There Brother E. Higley met us to convey us by carriage to our first appointment in Lapeer. Before leaving Pontiac, we secured a newspaper. In it was an account of John Brown's raid, and the failure at Harper's Ferry. That was the opening of his scheme for the liberation of the slaves of the United States.

"As we read of his failure, we became somewhat mirthful over what seemed to us like a 'foolhardy enterprise.' Had we known what we afterward learned as to why his scheme failed, we would have felt differently. We learned that hundreds had promised to join him that day at Harper's Ferry, not for plunder, but with the one object of liberating the slaves. The people did not come. Like Gideon's twenty-two thousand 'fearful and fainthearted' they stayed at home.

"Sister White at once checked our smiles over John Brown's case. She said, 'Brown's motives in that movement were all right. His sympathies were aroused for the cruel treatment of the slaves. That led him to make the move he did to secure for them what our Declaration of Independence says all men are entitled to—Liberty.

John Brown's raid was not for plunder nor murder.'" ¹⁷

What Mrs. White saw that day was more than a revelation of the evil character of slavery; she saw the coming war that would lead to termination of the system. Loughborough has recalled the conversation about the Harper's Ferry incident and what was at that time the mood of the nation.

"She then gave us to understand that there yet would be a move made in this country on a much greater scale than that of John Brown's for the liberating of the slaves. Now be it remembered that this prediction and counsel of Mrs. White was given in the latter part of the year 1859. The war began in the year 1861. At that time the liberation of the slaves was not the issue. The war was undertaken to hold the States together. The South wanted to secede from the North, and the North wanted to hold the Union together.

"The fighting went on for two years; but in January, 1863, Abraham Lincoln issued his proclamation of emancipation. The country had asked the people to set apart a day of fasting and prayer that God would give the North success." ¹⁸

On January 4, 1862, in the midst of the fighting, Mrs. White received a vision with regard to the affairs in this nation. She wrote a significant interpretation of the events and her reaction to the current gestures of piety made by business leaders and politicians:

"I saw that these national fasts were an insult to Jehovah. He accepts of no such fasts. . . .

"And yet a national fast is proclaimed! Saith the Lord: 'Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?' When our nation observes the fast which God has chosen, then will He accept their prayers as far as the war is concerned; but now they enter not into His ear." ¹⁹

Loughborough discussed other implications of the Civil War and what he saw as a turn of events that could be described only as miraculous.

“Those who are familiar with the history of the war are aware of the defeats, disasters, delays, etc., connected with the efforts of the North to conquer the Southern forces up to the time the emancipation proclamation was made—January 1, 1863. Then how rapid were the conquests from that time to the close of the war! How evident, to those who were watching the progress of the work, was the fulfillment of that prediction of January 4, 1862. After the burdens were lifted, the bondage was loosened and the yoke broken from the slave! How evident that God heard the prayers of His people, and favored the effort to close the war when they chose the fast pleasing to Him!”²⁰

An additional confirmation of this idea came nearly nine years later in a speech by John P. St. John, ex-governor of Kansas. He addressed a crowd at Ottawa, Illinois, on the afternoon of June 29, 1891. Loughborough was in the audience and heard St. John’s reference to Bull Run:

“I was never so disappointed as I was when the [Confederates] whipped us at Bull Run. But it was all a part of God’s plan. Had we whipped the [Confederates], the politicians would have hatched up a peace, and the Union would have been continued with slavery, and we would have had it today. For two years the [Confederates] had the advantage; but after Lincoln issued the famous emancipation proclamation we had swung around to God’s side, and could not lose.”²¹

Someone has said that the Civil War generated a murderous hatred in the nation, requiring more than a generation to erase the scars. But have those scars yet been erased? President Lincoln foresaw in 1862 that the fiery trial through which the nation was passing would light lives down “to the latest generation.” Are those fires still burning?

In spite of Mr. Lincoln’s original preoccupation with saving the Union rather than freeing the slaves, his final assessment of the Civil War remarkably paralleled that of Mrs. E. G. White. Both viewed the

North and South as sharing the guilt of slavery. Both saw the war in all its ramifications as a visitation from God. Both seemed to sense that slavery had been abolished in the North primarily for practical rather than moral reasons, while the same racism continued to permeate both sections.

Reconstruction, another highly controversial period, followed the Civil War and added to the painful heritage, especially in the South. In his book *The Angry Scar*, Hodding Carter has noted that both the South in its bitterness and the North in its disinterest seemed unaware of the real achievements of the "Reconstruction invaders."

"The carpetbag administration," Carter notes, "did assure free school systems to both races, the first to be provided not only for Negroes but for many of the whites. Their record in public school expansion was, in general, and despite accompanying corruption, better than were the performances of the Redemptionists."²²

The fledgling Adventist Church was concerned primarily with saving the souls of men. As Arthur W. Spalding put it: "If, as Lincoln said, this terrible war was the woe God dealt out to North and South for the offense of slavery, if the conflict would determine whether this nation, dedicated to freedom, could long endure, there lay behind both propositions the character of the souls of men who made up the citizenry of both North and South."²³

Negroes held high hopes for the Reconstruction. Had not Lincoln said of the Negro that he "demonstrated in blood" his right to the ballot, and that Lincoln regarded himself as "the nation's guardian of these people"? But the great man lay dead of an assassin's bullet. Negroes were heartbroken. What appeared in store for them was suggested when Lincoln's remains arrived in New York on the way to Springfield for burial. Vast preparations were made by City Council for a funeral procession, but when black citizens sought to participate they were at first rudely barred. The decision was finally reversed, however, and some two hundred blacks took part.

Three legal enactments, over a period of six years, gave friends of

the black freedman a sense of security for the race: (1) the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution (1865) ended slavery and involuntary servitude; (2) the Fourteenth (1868) recognized the rights of Negroes to citizenship; and (3) the Fifteenth (1870) gave Negroes the vote. In practice, however, during the next forty years the status of the darker brother as a citizen steadily declined. Pharaoh was not willing to let the captives go free.

The black man's position was precarious. The abolitionists were dying off and the early Negro leaders had grown old and weary. Labor unions in the North called fifty strikes against the employment of Negro workingmen. In the South the Ku Klux Klan emerged, and laws were enacted that sharply restricted freedmen. Toward the close of the century lynching increased alarmingly. In addition, the freed slaves had been turned adrift without homes or jobs.

Even after emancipation attempts were made in certain quarters to return the Negro to slavery. Apparently this was a reaction by whites to the assertiveness of former field workers and house servants, some of whom had already gained a first hold on literacy, had seen service in the Union Army, and earned a little cash. These who suddenly felt themselves no longer the creatures of another's will insisted on being treated in a new way, no more as chattels but as people. "They meant no harm toward their former master," declared Nell Painter in her book *The Exodusters*. "They wanted simply to do for themselves and act in their own interests." We now know that the idea of a return to slavery surfaced in many places.

"In Texas it was reported that whites commonly told 'their former slaves, now free, that the proclamation of emancipation would be set aside.' And even after recalcitrant masters accepted the fact of the Thirteenth Amendment, they found it difficult to adjust to the substance of their ex-slave's freedom."²⁴

A people so recently emancipated were also annoyed at the ease with which so many rational Americans declared that the black man was not a human being, that he was in fact an animal and therefore

had no rights. A religious publisher in St. Louis issued a book called *The Negro a Beast*,²⁵ in which the author set forth at length his belief that a role of "hewers of wood and drawers of water" had been divinely assigned to the Negro because this was the level of his intelligence and the height of his performance.

For Seventh-day Adventists the close of the Civil War provided a clear signal to begin evangelism among the black population of the United States, for by far the greater number were ex-slaves, located almost exclusively in the South. Plantation owners had held unchallenged power over Negro field hands and could deny them conversations with anyone whose motives might be suspect. This rendered a gospel mission to the captive laborers almost impossible.

The entire South's economy strongly depended on the barbaric system of bondage, delicately balanced as it was—always tenuous, ever subject to insurrection by its victims. Slaveholders seemed little disposed to risk indoctrination of their work force by outsiders, especially by invaders from the North who might question the propriety of one man's holding another in a lifetime of unrecompensed servitude. Hard work for slaves was looked upon as a prime necessity, and anyone who advocated a rest day for them, a Sabbath as set forth in the Ten Commandments, or any free time other than Sunday, would do so at the peril of his life.

Unquestionably the Civil War, therefore, and its resulting emancipation of slaves marked a turning point in the development of Adventist work in America. Until the slaves were free, no effort to bring the three angels' messages to this vast population could have been successful. Without the Civil War there would not have been the glowing accounts of faith and accomplishments for God throughout America's vast Southland as enumerated in this book.

On the other hand, this setting free of captives was not an unmixed blessing, for "the angry scar," as Hodding Carter aptly called it, had not healed more than a century later. A mass release of slaves in any society would require a cataclysmic disruption of the

established order. Reconstruction, with all its abuses, followed, as did segregation laws, Ku Klux Klan raids, terrorism, lynchings, and widespread civil disorders. These tragic developments would affect the progress and direction of Adventist work through every decade. Church leaders faced heartbreaking decisions as they proceeded with plans to work in the same region, for descendants of former masters and descendants of former slaves.

Moses declared to Israel, not long after their freedom from bondage in Egypt: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these . . . [many] years" (Deut. 8:2). It was, therefore, a positive duty, an obligation, for God's people to remember God's dealings in all the circumstances and events of their wandering. They were to consider the bread of the wilderness, the miracle of the manna repeated every day except the Sabbath. They were to remember the perils of the wilderness, the chastisements of the way, and consider "that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." Every sorrow, toil, pain, and chastisement He sent was to bring His people in with joy, with glory, to make them rich for eternity.

"The Lord has declared that the history of the past shall be rehearsed as we enter upon the closing work. Every truth that He has given for these last days is to be proclaimed to the world. Every pillar that He has established is to be strengthened. We cannot now step off the foundation that God has established."²⁶ Those who have only a theoretical anchor in the faith will see nothing of a sacred character in the past history of this people. But it has made them what they are and has established them as earnest, determined representatives of their Lord in a sordid world.

"As the great controversy nears its end, those old hands in the cause, who have survived crisis after crisis that has come upon the work, will see the Lord bring His ultimate purposes to pass. To them and all the faithful these words of assurance are written:

"There is no need to doubt, to be fearful that the work will not

succeed. God is at the head of the work, and He will set everything in order. If matters need adjusting at the head of the work, God will attend to that, and work to right every wrong. Let us have faith that God is going to carry the noble ship which bears the people of God safely into port." ²⁷ Those whom He has brought out He will also bring in. Those who have emerged from darkness will see His great light, and they will be perfectly united to the end of time.

God has a church on earth made up of His followers from every nation and tribe, language and people. The message of God has come to lift them up, and those who have the patience of the saints, who keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus will be gathered from New York's Harlem, Chicago's South Side, Boston's Roxbury community, Atlanta's Auburn Avenue, and Los Angeles' Watts section to be with Him forever. He has people in all these places who have borne the heat and burden of the day, who have cooperated with Him to advance His kingdom.

Sometimes their work for the Lord appears more difficult than the task performed by others, but as they advance in faith, the salvation of God will be revealed and their efforts will prosper. Never are they to forget the way the Lord has led them; always they are to remember that their fathers were bondmen and that the Lord brought them out with a high hand. Though clouds may sometimes obscure His purposes, the faithful are never to be turned aside from duty.

"In the upbuilding of His work the Lord does not always make everything plain before His servants. He sometimes tries the confidence of His people by bringing about circumstances which compel them to move forward in faith. Often He brings them into strait and trying places, and bids them advance when their feet seem to be touching the waters of Jordan. It is at such times, when the prayers of His servants ascend to Him in earnest faith, that God opens the way before them and brings them out into a large place." ²⁸

NOTES

- ¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 1, p. 264. An illuminating discussion of divine intervention in the Civil War.
- ² *Ibid.*
- ³ *Ibid.*, pp. 264, 265.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 266.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 363, 364.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 364.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 366, 367.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 363.
- ⁹ Bruce Catton, *History of the Civil War* (New York: American Heritage Pub. Co., Inc., 1960), p. 93. A four-volume history of the Civil War, said to be one of the best-written books about the war.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 94.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 95.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 95.
- ¹⁴ White, *op cit.*, pp. 266, 267.
- ¹⁵ Bruce Catton, *The Army of the Potomac: A Stillness at Appomattox* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1953), pp. 19, 21, 52, 226-235.
- ¹⁶ Bruce Catton, *The Army of the Potomac: Glory Road* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1952), pp. 219, 249, 250.
- ¹⁷ Frederick C. Gilbert, *Divine Predictions of Mrs. Ellen G. White Fulfilled* (South Lancaster, Mass.: Good Tidings Press, 1922), pp. 216, 217.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 217.
- ¹⁹ White, *op. cit.*, pp. 257, 258.
- ²⁰ J. N. Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement*, pp. 341, 342.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 342.
- ²² Hodding Carter, *The Angry Scar* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1959). Stresses the social, economic and political aspects of the Reconstruction. Describes what the author terms the sinister or misguided efforts of the carpetbaggers, scalawags, and freedman's bureaus toward the South's beaten and humiliated people—and their retaliation with Black Codes and Ku Klux Klan.
- ²³ Arthur W. Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1961), vol. 1, p. 325.
- ²⁴ Nell Painter, *The Exodusters* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), p. 6. Stephen Powers, Cincinnati Commercial correspondent, reported on the move to return blacks to slavery. This idea gained considerable currency in the South, and Mrs. White urged a quick work of evangelizing the freedmen in case such a threat might be carried out. Mr. Powers summed up the report of the joint committee on Reconstruction (Washington, 1866) IV (Florida, Louisiana, Texas): 148. House of Representatives, 39th Congress, First Session, Report No. 30.
- ²⁵ Charles Carroll, *The Negro a Beast, or In the Image of God* (St. Louis: American Book and Bible House, 1900).
- ²⁶ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958), book 2, p. 390.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ ———, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 357.

The Hidden History

As cannon fell silent at the end of the nation's Civil War, the Adventist Church was still young and comparatively unknown. The organization of the General Conference had been effected only two years earlier, in 1863, and the entire world membership numbered less than five thousand. The vast number of health institutions was not to begin until 1866, there was no training school until 1874, and no legal corporation whatsoever existed, save for one lone publishing house at Battle Creek. Commencing in New England and New York, the movement had found its greatest following as it gravitated to the Middle West, and Iowa and Minnesota were then its frontiers. Curbed by slavery, which it unalterably opposed, it had made no progress at all in the South.

In 1865 Adventist leaders were faced with a winter of the nation's discontent, and an air of melancholia hung like a chill, especially over the South. Even for emancipated slaves, never had a new year been so bleak, so morose. Passers-by hurrying down the street were grim, joyless creatures, threadbare in old uniforms or clothes badly worn after four years of mend and make-do. What few buggies there were

moved about like fugitive phantoms, going, it seemed, nowhere.

The cost of the Civil War had almost wiped out the South economically. Her industry, never very strong, was severely crippled, her government bankrupt, her Confederate currency worthless, her treasury unable to pay her staggering war debt. Foundries and factories were closing in many localities. Since thousands of ex-soldiers and civilians were unemployed, very few noticed the plight of the ex-slave; only Union soldiers and Army chaplains saw him in his rags and frustration. Apparently these men were also the only ones who engaged themselves in the black man's behalf. Since Seventh-day Adventists, like the Quakers, were opposed to war on principle, few of their number had been in the Army. Of such as there were, probably none dated their connection with the body from a point in time before the war. Adventist members were, for the most part, poor, and their limited holdings seemed scarcely equal to the great things they had already set out to do. It did not appear the part of wisdom, therefore, for a group so recently organized and with such tenuous roots to take on the widespread and troubled field of the South.

But leaders would not accept this as an excuse to do nothing for the Negro freedman. Throughout its brief history the church had entered upon seemingly impossible programs solely on the strength of a divine imperative. It was thus their sense of responsibility, their personal initiative, their constraining zeal, that impelled them to move out into the unknown to work for the Master. Preachers did not wait to be paid to perform their service; they entered the ranks like good soldiers to do the work that the Lord had commanded. Considerable instruction on this order had been given to the church but it had not always been followed. An example is the exhorting of Ellen White found in volume 1 of *Testimonies for the Church*:

"The great work now to be accomplished is to bring up the people of God to engage in the work and exert a holy influence. They should act the part of laborers. With wisdom, caution, and love, they should

labor for the salvation of neighbors and friends. . . . The brethren err when they leave this work all to the ministers. The harvest is great, and the laborers are few. Those who are of good repute, whose lives are in accordance with their faith, can be workmen. . . . They must not wait for the ministers.”¹

The same view is presented in other counsel she wrote: “Brethren who wish to change their location, who have the glory of God in view, and feel that individual responsibility rests upon them to do others good, to benefit and save souls for whom Christ withheld not His precious life, should move into towns and villages where there is but little or no light, and where they can be of real service and bless others with their labor and experience.”² “We are to be interested in everything which concerns the human brotherhood. By our baptismal vows we are bound in covenant relation with God to make persevering, self-denying, self-sacrificing efforts to promote, in the hardest parts of the field, the work of soul-saving. . . . God says to those who profess to believe in Him, Go forth into all parts of the world, and diffuse the light of My truth, that men and women may be led to Christ. Let us awake to our duty, and do all that we can to help forward the Lord’s work. Let superficial excuses be blown to the four winds. Let decided action commence on the part of all who can help. Let them cooperate with the angels sent from the heavenly courts to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. Forget not the words, ‘We are laborers together with God.’ No longer grieve the Spirit of God by delaying.”³

Assurance was given believers that if they persevered in this course it would bring great results. And even with the small group that professed the truth in 1865, there was the possibility of a great work being done far out of proportion to their numerical strength in the community. The type of worker called for to undertake mission work in the South was one who could accomplish the most in such a Christian enterprise.

The initial efforts by Seventh-day Adventists in the South were

largely those of lay missionaries. Silas Osborn is mentioned as having been a leader in early missionary work. A native of Kentucky, he had moved to Iowa in 1851 and there had accepted the Adventist message. Longing to tell the good news, he returned to Kentucky to visit his brother. Osborn was not a minister, but because he had written so convincingly about his newly discovered faith, his brother made arrangements for him to speak on the prophecies of the Bible at the neighborhood school. When Osborn arrived he was amazed to find himself advertised in this manner, but his brother insisted he had to speak, that people were expecting him to do so. Though he had never spoken in public before, he did his best. Thereafter he was addressed variously by local residents as Reverend, Elder, Squire, Judge, and Colonel. Thus began many long years of gospel labor by Osborn in Kentucky.

It seemed the time had come for a concerted move into the South. Consequently, in the next few years work was begun by laymen and ministers in Tennessee, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia, as well as in Missouri, Arkansas, and Texas. But the work for the South's freedmen was not as simple as it appeared. What is not generally known is that in the South as early as 1860 there were some 250,000 free Negroes among 4 million slaves.⁴ The white South feared the freedmen even more than it feared the larger number of slaves, chiefly because it did not know them. Therefore it passed scores of laws to inhibit them and keep them as near to slavery conditions as possible. If there was, strictly speaking, a race problem prior to the Civil War, this was it.

There was, along a different line, the beginning of another race problem. This was inherent in the delicate breach between poor whites and blacks. Poor whites hated blacks because, though slaves, blacks stood beside and sometimes above them economically. And because the whites themselves often had to do menial labor either directly or indirectly in competition with blacks, blacks scorned them because of their pretensions of superiority. Hence when a pre-

dominantly white group such as the Seventh-day Adventists came on the scene to improve the lot of struggling blacks, poor whites came forward to resist this work with all the power at their command.

This is why real missionary effort for blacks in the South was slow getting started. The first Seventh-day Adventist school for freedmen was begun more than ten years after the close of the Civil War, and it was not in the deep South. In February, 1877, Mrs. H. M. Van Slyke sent an account from Ray County, Missouri, approximately twenty-five miles east of Kansas City, telling of a school she was conducting for blacks, both young and old.⁵ No further mention of this school appears in the records, but two or three reports were noted from a school in Texas that Joseph Clarke and his wife began, first in a tent and later in a permanent structure that the black people themselves had built.⁶

In Kentucky, under the preaching of Osborn, some blacks accepted the faith and were baptized.⁷ It is interesting to note that a lawyer and planter, W. K. Killen, who became a Seventh-day Adventist in 1877, brought with him into the church many of his plantation laborers, some of whom had been his slaves and bore his name.⁸ Among them was a minister, Edmund Killen, who began to preach the second coming of Christ and the Sabbath.⁹ The results of his work were not reported but W. F. Killen, who afterward began a self-supporting ministry, baptized a number of Negro believers into the faith.

At this point we take up the story of James Edson White, whose work and enthusiasm gave a major boost to the program in the South.

A glance at a portrait of Edson White, as he is known, a son of James and Ellen White—austere, unpretentiously barricaded behind steel-rimmed glasses, yet sensitively open and charitable—reveals the inner depths of one of Adventism's great humanitarians. Although he possessed an exceptional singing voice and considerable musical knowledge, Edson White was not an impeccable platform orator. As with many other profound speakers, it was the

content of his address that held his audience spellbound. He was said to have had a most unusual gift of making points of Scripture clear and simple beyond the shadow of doubt. His use of illustrations has been imitated by many evangelists throughout the world.

At age 44 Edson White, who was in business for himself in Chicago, experienced a noticeable transition in his religious life. The experience seems to have been as vivid and deep-seated as that of his boyhood conversion, and was followed by an all-encompassing feeling that he should leave his secular enterprise and return to the work of the denomination. In his early years he had been connected with the Sabbath school and public evangelism, and he had gained a fair reputation as a composer of music and a publisher. But his business interests had gradually usurped his time and attention, and the work of the church had often faded into the background.

By degrees and under the obvious influence of the Spirit of God, he began to cast about for a special niche in which he could again serve the Lord and His church. In a letter to his mother, then in Australia, dated August 10, 1893, he stated his perplexity:

"I have surrendered fully and completely, and never enjoyed life before as I am enjoying it now. I have for years been under a strain, with so much to accomplish, and it has stood right in my way. Now, I have left it all with my Saviour, and the burden does not seem to bear me down any longer. I have no desire for the amusements and pleasures that made up the sum of my enjoyments before, but have an enjoyment in the meetings with the people of God such as I never had before. . . .

"What I shall do in the future I do not know. . . . I want to connect with the work of the cause in some way as soon as possible, and to connect again with a worldly business would make this impossible."¹⁰

The problem haunted Edson White, especially in view of such wide areas of the nation lacking a gospel messenger or a witness for the truth. Weeks passed, and he was not able to get the vivid

implications of this need off his mind.

Unfortunately, people from the North knew little about the South. About the turn of the century, the Northerner usually was familiar with the tourist South: the Appalachians, especially around Asheville; Charleston; New Orleans at Mardi Gras. The Negro South was little known. Businessmen visited the cities, but during afterhours scarcely concerned themselves with the plight of those who lived in the throes of deprivation and poverty. Tenement housing in cities such as New York was bad, but tumbledown shanties looked worse than tenements. The tenement concealed its inadequate plumbing, but the shanty with its nearby malodorous outhouse, its unpainted, dingy walls, its sagging porch, proclaimed all its ugliness to the passerby.

Here, in the absence of medical attention, many blacks with physical deficiencies that could have been corrected earlier in life found themselves saddled with lifelong handicaps. And here, in the absence of early mental stimulation, minds that could have been awakened often settled into lifelong dullness. Some denominations were beginning to do something about these inequities. The Congregationalists established a school at Nashville, in barracks left over from the Civil War garrison, which later became Fisk University. Baptists and Methodists set up instructional facilities in Atlanta that blossomed into Morehouse and Clark College and, eventually, the sprawling Atlanta University complex.

The year 1893 seemed a propitious time for Seventh-day Adventists to do something about the south's distress and need. It was, as Arthur Spalding states, "a year of marked spiritual manifestations." Omens showed clearly that "the Holy Spirit was at work upon hearts, . . . indicating the time for a forward movement."¹¹

The evangelizing of the Negro masses thus came to be the great fascination of several earnest Adventists in Edson White's day. How was this interest generated? Spalding, at one time an assistant to Ellen G. White, discussed the problem in detail: "In December of 1892

there was a remarkable revival, wholly unplanned and unexpected, among the students of Battle Creek College, interrupting the regular school exercises and continuing for some weeks. Many indifferent and backslidden were converted, there was public and private confession of sins, and renewal of consecration. It was an experience, indeed, which the Lord wished extended and deepened, and which might well have been given even more room than was accorded it." ¹²

"The revival extended to the publishing house and to the church at Battle Creek and many were converted and set to work for others," Spalding says. More than this, Adventist believers in other states, nearby and far away, heard of the intense seeking after God in Battle Creek, and as a result, their lives were more deeply committed to His purpose and will.

"Among those who had been brought up in Battle Creek was Will O. Palmer, a young man of promise who had now, however, left the faith and was engaged in business in Chicago. One day in the spring of 1893, he received a letter from an old-time friend in Battle Creek, who had just been converted, asking him if he did not think he ought to make a change in his life, and if it were not time to begin, and suggesting the value of a class for training workers just then beginning in Battle Creek.

"Will Palmer took the letter home to his wife, not then an Adventist, and asked her what she thought was best to do about it. The letter seemed to touch her heart, and she answered, 'Go.' Within ten hours they had severed their connections in Chicago, and were on their way to Battle Creek." ¹³

By an unusual circumstance and what appeared later to be a divine ordering of events, Edson White went to Battle Creek on business the same summer. There he met Will Palmer, who with his wife was diligently caught up in the Bible training class. The two men conversed far into the night about the merits of the course and the conviction, mutually shared, that they should both enter the organized work. Edson White, considering his need to prepare for

whatever special ministry he would undertake, immediately enrolled in the class.

But a question remained of how he might be received once he offered his services to the denomination. Some looked upon him as a maverick and a drifter, with a lingering suspicion among them about the stability of his future ministry. Knowing this, White decided that if there were some totally unpromising field, a neglected place, all but hopeless in its prospects, he would gladly accept this as his vineyard to labor for the Lord. Hence there came to mind the great masses of recently emancipated blacks in the South for whom almost nothing had been done.

Pondering this opportunity, he wrote: "In regard to the future I do not know what to think. I find that there will inevitably be considerable of distrust and criticism in store for me, . . . and I have been thinking of going down into Tennessee to work among the colored people under Bro. Kilgore. I feel that I can come nearer to him than I can to most of the others. But I cannot decide at once. I shall go into the work somewhere in the spring, even if I have to go out on my own hook and expense."¹⁴

A week or two prior to this White had visited the South Side (later Shiloh) church in Chicago with C. C. Lewis, an Adventist teacher who had returned a few days earlier from a tour of the South. Lewis spoke to the congregation, outlining forcefully and dramatically the impoverished condition of the many former slaves who were struggling against odds to make a new life for themselves and their children. White listened intently to all that was said and from that time was persuaded he must do something for this neglected group.

By this concentration on the subject, it seems, and by his discussions here and there, Edson White was unconsciously arousing interest in others who were potential laborers in the South. He was beginning to set in order plans, however, without knowing precisely how or when they would be carried out.

His first concern was to wind up business in Chicago and move to

Battle Creek, a step leading brethren advised him to take immediately. This accomplished, he turned full attention to the Bible institute that was the center of an almost exclusive preoccupation among Battle Creek Adventists at the time. Lay workers from many parts of the nation had enrolled. Among them was Dr. Joseph E. Caldwell, an accomplished physician who held a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa and in 1880 had earned the M.D. degree. He had taught at Healdsburg College for four years and knew something of a testimony written by Ellen G. White in 1891 entitled "Our Duty to the Colored People."

Dr. Caldwell could recall only a few specific statements from the message, but he had an approximate idea of its contents and could therefore speak of its general aim and purpose. His personal copy, which he had loaned to a friend, he said, had been lost. Caldwell had worked for some months in the Negro community of Knoxville and had brought two black men to the institute, who apparently were new converts to the church. Will Palmer talked with these men, questioning them about conditions and prospects, learning as much as he could about chances of getting into the South and doing an effective work there for people whose situations were similar to their own.

The stage seems to have been set for some grand program. Edson White needed only this talk with Dr. Caldwell to be convinced he could accomplish something constructive for the Lord within the Southern field, and apparently the question was settled. He wrote this to his mother about Caldwell:

"From him I learned of the condition of the colored people in the South, and got warmed up in regard to the work. We had several meetings with him in regard to the matter, and it ended in Brother Palmer and myself feeling that the Lord had a work for us to do in this direction. I had a heavy burden on my mind in regard to the work for many days, as to whether this was really my duty, but one morning when we were praying in regard to it, my mind was cleared up in

regard to it, and I have not let myself have another doubt since. I have taken for my consolation in these matters the words of the Saviour in John 16:13, in speaking of the work of the Holy Spirit—'He will guide you.' I am relying fully on that, and intend to do so. If I can fully keep there, I have no fears of being left to run wild in the work I shall try to do for the Master."¹⁵

Recalling the statement of Dr. Caldwell about his mother's special testimony on black evangelism, Edson White set out to find this leaflet. His first inquiry was at the General Conference building, but no one there knew of it. It wasn't long, however, before he met a painter who was redecorating General Conference offices. This man seemed to have just the information White was seeking. He said the International Tract Society had recently moved out of a second-story room, and he had noticed on the floor manuscript pages that dealt with work among Negroes. White went immediately to the room, gathered the pages, and discovered he had four or five copies of "Our Duty to the Colored People," the special testimony he was seeking. This, of course, was his first opportunity to read it. Words such as the following seemed to have a stained-glass radiance, a special glow: "Is it not time for us to live so fully in the light of God's countenance that we who receive so many favors and blessings from Him may know how to treat those less favored, not working from the world's standpoint, but from the Bible standpoint?"¹⁶

And here was a pledge that numerous helpers would rally around such a project:

"God will accept many more workers from the humble walks of life if they will fully consecrate themselves to His service. Men and women should be coming up to carry the truth into all the highways and byways of life. Not all can go through a long course of education, but if they are consecrated to God, and learn of Him, many can without this do much to bless others. Thousands would be accepted if they would give themselves to God. Not all who labor in this line should depend upon the conferences for support. Let those who can

do so, give their time, and what ability they have; let them be messengers of God's grace, their hearts throbbing in unison with Christ's great heart of love, their ears open to hear the Macedonian cry.

"The whole church needs to be imbued with the missionary spirit; then there will be many to work unselfishly in various ways as they can, without being salaried. There is altogether too much dependence on machinery, on mechanical working. Machinery is good in its place, but do not allow it to become too complicated. I tell you that in many cases it has retarded the work, and kept out laborers who in their line could have accomplished far more than has been done by the minister who depends on sermonizing more than on ministry."¹⁷

White and Palmer were still in pursuit of ways to commence their work in the South when information came regarding a three-week institute to be held in Atlanta early in January, 1894. It seemed to offer just the methods they needed for work among the black population. Moreover, they could obtain from the brethren specific advice and answers to special questions. However, there was one hindrance: Neither White nor Palmer had the money necessary for fare or other travel expenses to get there. But the resourceful White was not to be outdone. Teachers in the institute needed copies of the special instruction to ministers from Mrs. Ellen G. White. The only material available to the class were manuscripts temporarily in their possession, and many were copying portions of them by hand. Edson White decided to print the entire manuscript.

A windfall some weeks before the close of the year helped to make the job possible. A printer in the city lost his business to his creditor, a lumber dealer, because he had mortgaged his plant too heavily. The creditor, a Mr. Clapp, who owned the building in which Edson White was located, proceeded to move the printing outfit there. Unfortunately, in the course of the drayage the horse became frightened, bolted, and spilled type all over the street. In short order it was shoveled up, and Clapp gave White and Palmer permission to use

both the type and the press to print their booklet.

The men worked for hours sorting out the type and proceeded to set by hand the copy they had of "Special Testimonies to Ministers." They printed at night until they had completed a run of all the sheets. The Review and Herald printing office bound them. White and Palmer sold numerous copies of the little book in the school but they could not sell them fast enough. When the day came for them to leave for Atlanta, they were considerably short of the needed funds. At this point Asa O. Tait, in charge of the International Tract Society, came to the rescue and purchased enough of the stock to provide them money for their trip.

The institute in Atlanta had been planned by Robert M. Kilgore, superintendent of the Southern field; Bible instruction was in the hands of Alonzo T. Jones. White and Palmer found the Biblical instruction valuable, but aside from that the institute was disappointing. The wisdom and experience they had looked for were lacking; there was no one to counsel them on how to begin work for Negroes. Edson White wrote to his mother this summary of findings:

"It has been a deep problem to know what to do. . . . Brother Kilgore has had this matter on his mind for years, but has failed utterly to get our people waked up to the necessity of *doing something*. And as matters look now, it seems as though, if anything is done in regard to this work, it will have to be done by individual sacrifice and effort. As I understand it, there is no fund to draw from to carry on the work, and I have no idea that any will be raised until some work is actually begun, and it can be seen what the work is to be.

"As the matter stands, there will have to be done one of two things in the education of the colored people—either some plan must be devised by which they can support themselves while in the school—an industrial method, if you please—or the cash will have to be poured in to carry this work of education forward. The latter plan is bad in two ways: first, I think it very doubtful if such a fund could be obtained; and, second, it would be the very worst thing possible

for the people themselves.”¹⁸

Edson White’s aim to foster self-reliance was a worthy goal. The idea of students working for their education, a plan followed by Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes, had appealed immensely to him, and he had already begun to plan for such a school.

“I have had this matter on my mind for many days, and have been praying over it, and at last came to the conclusion, firmly, that the plan I had been thinking out is the only really successful one. That is, to get a tract of land, away from any town or city, and get some good manager to come from the North to look after it, and instruct these people in successful farming, so that they can make their own living as they go to school.”¹⁹

There was still no exact blueprint for the enterprise White and Palmer envisioned as their missionary adventure. Obviously, if they were to go at all they would have to feel their way. The program of industrial education, or personal industry to subsidize an education, was undoubtedly a good plan, but even that would require a certain amount of capital. White and Palmer did not have the money required to set this in motion. There must be some alternative plan, they thought, some modest proposal by which they might at least get started, and this idea of a limited beginning was the route they chose. “The matter that has been troubling us here is, how can we get to work at once, and make a beginning, so that we can have something to show, and thus be able to call for others to come. I would not dare to try to have any one go into the big scheme until some kind of a work had been begun before. We have had two afternoon meetings of the ministers and workers to contemplate this matter. Light did not break in till towards the last of the meeting, when a few words seemed to open the matter so that immediate work can be begun.

“The plan is that work be begun in different cities and villages, where the opportunity seems to be favorable. The first opening seems to be in Nashville, where there are over twenty thousand colored people. There are several teachers who are willing to donate

their services; and a place for the school can be rented cheap. Then begin a free school for the children in the daytime, and the parents and older ones in the evening. Then have one or two medical missionaries at work looking up the needy, and others holding Bible readings, and doing such other work among them as seems possible and profitable. There are several in the North who are ready to do this kind of work, and after this school is working well, then start one in another city. I would not care if there were twenty such schools, for I can see that the complete line of work I have mentioned will get hold of the colored people as no preaching or mere Bible reading will or can do. This is the line of work I have in mind."²⁰

Support for such schools had taken a good share of discussion time at the Atlanta institute. White had also sought advice from individuals. One proposal that he and Palmer had considered prior to the Atlanta meeting, and which seemed to be not worthy of serious consideration, turned out to be the most dramatic and, in the end, the most successful. During the time White and Palmer were printing the *Testimony to Ministers* booklet in Battle Creek to secure money for Atlanta, they had talked of getting out a "gospel primer," which would be a beginning text for older persons seeking to read and write for the first time. They introduced this as a trial balloon before the brethren in Atlanta; they thought it a good idea but they were sure it would be a disappointment as a source of funds.

When White and Palmer returned to Battle Creek they began working on such a book. Palmer negotiated with the Review and Herald Publishing Association to use some of their old stock cuts for illustrations, and White provided the text to correspond with the cuts. Sometimes they worked till midnight on the copy and on the next day they would set the type. They secured permission from Clapp to trade the old type they had used on *Testimony to Ministers* for a new lot from a Chicago foundry, which made an attractive page for the primer. The plates were made by the Review and Herald, and their craftsmen ultimately finished the book.

Next, White and Palmer sent circular letters to Seventh-day Adventists throughout the country, urging them to sell *Gospel Primer* and turn in the full profit for mission work among Negroes. The plan was an instant success, and orders came so fast they had difficulty filling them. Before long White and Palmer found they had to make a contract and place large orders with the Review and Herald.

In conversations with Dr. Caldwell, Edson White had been advised of the difficulty he would encounter in finding a place to live should they follow the plan of working among the black population. To White, who had an inordinate love for boats, the idea of a missionary steamer seemed just the answer. He had worked some years previously in riverboat work on the upper Mississippi and reasoned that such a craft could be a home for the workers. It would also make possible a change at will in the place of labor. In Battle Creek White located a boat builder, a Captain Orton, who during the winter was willing to construct the frames of such a steamer in the large basement of his building. By early spring these pieces were ready for shipment to Allegan, Michigan, on the Kalamazoo River. Here on March 10, 1894, work was begun on putting together the steamer to be named *Morning Star*.

In this adventure, as in many others, Palmer and White did not have money to begin the work, but they devised a plan by which they could make a start. Palmer owned a lot in Battle Creek; White owed a plumbing bill of about a hundred dollars on the building he occupied, which he previously owned but which now belonged to Clapp, the lumber dealer. He persuaded Clapp to assume this debt on condition of paying it in lumber. Palmer turned in his lot on the deal. White and Palmer got the lumber; the plumber got the lot; and Clapp got the satisfaction of helping a missionary enterprise. With the carload of white oak which he furnished, work on the *Morning Star* began.

By this time the *Gospel Primer* was selling rapidly, bringing a substantial income for this ambitious mission to Black America. The project also attracted many donations of material, lumber, and

hardware. The two men were fortunate also to purchase some valuable plumbing material at bargain prices, and in this way built their own boiler. A fellow church member built the engine for the cost of materials only.

White and Palmer had secured the use of an old shed without cost for the express purpose of building the missionary boat. Since it was not long enough to accommodate the craft, one end of the shed was knocked out, and the exposed part let out the secret of what was going on. The boat builders slept, cooked, and ate in the upper quarters; their unforgettable job was always close by.

The *Morning Star* had one cabin deck, which provided living quarters for the company of workers; and in addition there was a boiler room. It was built seventy-two feet long, with a hull twelve feet wide at the bottom. White wrote this enthusiastic message when it was finally in the water but not quite finished:

“Our boat is a beautiful and substantial structure, and sits on the water as firm as a rock. Emma and I are living in it now, and have passed through some heavy windstorms, and although the boat is tied free, we have not felt a single motion from them. She has swung around with the wind, of course, but unless we looked at the land we did not know it. At the same time others of our company who have not been able to get into their rooms were afraid on account of the shaking of the building [in which they were lodged].

“The boat is nearly done, and is free from debt, and when ready to leave will go without a cent of debt upon it. We have five staterooms, an office in the bow, and back of this a main cabin, or salon, twelve by sixteen feet. Then we have a nice dining-room nine by twelve feet, and a kitchen off from that. The three large staterooms are all alike, and are six and one-half by thirteen feet. Two feet at one end of each is finished off into three compartments. One is a washroom, which is a combination washroom and closet. Next to this is a chest of drawers running from floor to ceiling, and by the side of this is a little clothes-press. The finish of the boat is in natural woods, hard-oil

finished. The floor is white oak, and the partitions and paneling under the windows are of beautiful quarter-sawed sycamore, and the trimming and casing are of red oak. It makes the handsomest and most solid finish I think I ever saw on a steamboat. And the flooring and the sycamore were a present to us from George T. Lay, who is much interested in the work. The finish is planned to go on easy, but is very effective, and very handsome. We have tried to avoid every unnecessary expense, but the way has opened before us so that we have had the best at our disposal from the start, and the boat is for river work every whit as good as the *Pitcairn* [the missionary schooner sailing in the South Seas]. Our upper, or hurricane deck, is capable of accommodating an audience of two hundred people, and we are arranging to have folding settees to seat that number. The boat is very light on the main deck, as the sides are made up of windows, only six inches apart, and there are six windows in each thirteen-foot stateroom. Under deck, in the hull of the boat, are arranged the coal bunkers, lockers for provisions, places to stow away trunks, etc., and ice chest that will carry a ton of ice, with separate compartments for water tank for drinking, and another in which to keep provisions; and each stateroom has lockers with plenty of room to store away various things. The hull of the boat is of solid white oak two and one-half inches thick, and does not leak a drop, and the hurricane deck is of sixteen-ounce duck painted two coats, and that also does not leak a drop.”²¹

Work on the *Morning Star* was finally completed in July, and the planned adventure of White and Palmer was approved by the General Conference. Their salary was to be eight dollars a week, to begin when they reached the field. They were given credentials as missionaries to the black population of the South. Their chief dependence for expenses on the way was upon their sale of literature in towns close to the river. For upkeep of the boat, and later for themselves and the people who would join them in the work, they looked to royalties from the little book *Gospel Primer*.

Nashville had seemed an attractive place to begin, and White and Palmer thought of doing their initial work there, because a school (forerunner of Fisk University) had already been established. Other institutions, such as Meharry Medical College, were also getting a start.²² But when the General Conference brethren decided to sponsor White and Palmer they assigned them the area of Vicksburg, Mississippi, as their place of labor. Nashville was at the time within the area of a local conference that included western Tennessee and Kentucky; the rest of the South was under direct control of the General Conference.

The *Morning Star* enterprise, although it began brightly, was destined for some difficult sailing. There would be ridicule and opposition almost all the way. This was in a measure to be expected, since they were at work for recently emancipated slaves in full view of former slaveholders still smarting from a resounding defeat at the hands of Northern troops. Some were prepared to cast in the way every possible obstacle to hinder the work. Edson White and his company were undaunted, however, for they had almost constant encouragement from Edson's mother. Written from Australia, her letters were laden with optimism, exhortations to patience, and counsels to be of good cheer:

"I received your letter last Thursday morning, and was made glad to see you coming to the position in which for years in the past the Lord has signified that He would have you. If you will walk in humility, I am sure that your mind will be fruitful in the knowledge of the Scriptures, and that in studying the life of Christ you will have special help through the Holy Spirit in expressing the ideas that are now so precious to you, and that the Lord will open the minds of those who hear, so that they will be able to grasp the precious things found in the Holy Scriptures. I am very much rejoiced that you can come to God in the full assurance of faith, through the blood of the crucified Redeemer. Ever reach upward, advance as Christ leads the way, and you will preserve the simplicity of faith, that living, active

faith that works by love, and purifies the soul.”²³

“You may not be praised or flattered, you may never receive the encouragement you expect from some men, because they are not laborers together with God, and do not wear the yoke with Christ. Several times in your life you have suffered from misrepresentation, and have felt the sting of words of discouragement, and you cannot expect that Satan will not attack you again in these same lines. Men may face courageously a grave peril, but become cowards in meeting petty annoyances. . . . Your only course is to lean your whole weight upon Christ. Ever bear in mind that we are now upon trial. In this life we are to form a character either after the divine similitude, or after the similitude of the rebellious one who lost his glorious estate, and forfeited his exalted position in the heavenly courts. . . . There is one thing you will always be safe in doing, and that is in loving God supremely, and in loving your fellowmen.”²⁴ “I would say to you and your boat’s company, as you go to your field of labor, Go in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.”²⁵

NOTES

¹ E. G. White, *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 368, 369.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 115.

³ ———, *Sowing Beside All Waters* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., n.d.), p. 17.

⁴ Peter M. Bergman, assisted by a staff of compilers under the direction of Mort N. Bergman, *The Chronological History of the Negro in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 263.

⁵ Mrs. H. M. Van Slyke, in her report “Among the Freedmen” (a description of her school for black children in Ray County, Missouri), in *Review and Herald*, Feb. 22, 1877.

⁶ Orlando Soule, in his reports of missionary work in Tennessee, in *Review and Herald*, March 22, May 17, and May 24, 1879.

⁷ S. Osborn, in his reports of meetings held in Greenup County, Kentucky, in *Review and Herald*, Jan. 1, 1875, and April 1, 1875.

⁸ C. O. Taylor, in his report from Reynolds, Georgia, *Review and Herald*, in Jan. 3, 1878.

⁹ Orlando Soule, in his reports from Edgefield Junction, Tennessee, in *Review and Herald*, March 14, 1878, and Aug. 30, 1881.

¹⁰ Arthur W. Spalding, “Lights and Shades in the Black Belt” (unpublished manuscript written about 1924, in Ellen G. White Estate Document File 376), p. 150.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 151.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ James Edson White, letter to Ellen G. White, August, 1893.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Jan. 30, 1894.

¹⁶ Ellen G. White, “Our Duty to the Colored People,” a tract incorporated into *The Southern Work*, reprinted with an introduction by Arthur L. White (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1966), p. 16. This basic appeal was read by Mrs. White to thirty leaders of the church on March 21, 1891, in connection with the General Conference session at Battle Creek, Michigan.

¹⁷ ———, *Sowing Beside All Waters*, pp. 44, 45.

¹⁸ Spalding, *op. cit.*, pp. 155, 156.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

²⁰ James Edson White, letter to Ellen G. White, Jan. 30, 1894.

²¹ *Ibid.*, May 23, 1894.

²² Fisk University in Nashville was established shortly after the War Between the States, using wooden barracks abandoned at the close of the war. What is now Meharry Medical College was also established in Nashville during this period.

²³ Ellen G. White, letter to James Edson White, June 28, 1894.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Nov. 6, 1894.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 4

Where a Few Were Gathered Together

While the *Morning Star* boat was being completed Edson White had taken the occasion to do missionary work, and by April of that year one person had been baptized. There were also hints of trouble on the horizon. Rumors had reached him that some members in Battle Creek had spoken of his raising money and building a boat as a needless extravagance and a waste of the Lord's money. In an attempt to justify his enterprise, White wrote a lengthy letter to L. T. Nicola, in Battle Creek, stating among other things that he conceived of the boat as his home. After all, didn't other workers have homes in Battle Creek? Certainly he would need a home in the South. Referring to the tract "Our Duty to the Colored People" (his mother's testimony written in 1891), he wrote, "You will find the matter fully laid out, and I rest my case on this testimony."¹ The church had committed a gross error; in fact, it had been in sin for three years, he said bluntly, because it neglected to take seriously its responsibility of working for the black minority.

Eventually the storm of criticism subsided and all was calm once more. A month later White wrote his mother that the General



Conference had accepted the *Morning Star* mission to Mississippi. At about the same time Ellen White formally appointed him her agent by allowing him to make use of abstracts from her letters and other writings that he thought might be helpful in his enterprise. With this as his authority, Edson put together a collection of her writings relating to work in districts where there was a heavy black population; he gave it the title *The Southern Work*.²

The *Morning Star* was launched at Allegan, Michigan, and began her journey down the Kalamazoo River to Saugatuck Harbor. From that point she followed the shoreline of Lake Michigan about three miles to Douglas, where another boat, the *Bon Ami*, waited to tow her across to Chicago. On board for the journey were J. E. White and W. O. Palmer and their wives; engineer B. F. Richards; Captain Reed, an old seaman from Saugatuck; and Professor F. S. Hafford. A storm was threatening, and the captain of the *Bon Ami* insisted that the ladies make the passage on his boat, for the little river steamer was ill fitted to brave the storms of the turbulent lake. It was already dark when the *Bon Ami* pulled away from the shore and headed across the lake with the smaller boat in tow some two hundred yards behind.

"After they had been out two hours," Spalding records, "the storm came hard. The huge waves pitched the little steamer fearfully, and within a few minutes the furniture was thrashing inside the cabin and staterooms, and waves were pounding over upon the decks and tearing in through the doors. Palmer set to work lashing the furniture down and trying to fasten canvas at the bow to ward off the heavy waves, but the canvas was stripped from his hands into the night."³ White stood watch at the wheel, trying to keep the bow straight on into the waves.

By early morning anxious passengers on the *Bon Ami* could see the little steamer tossing and pitching; more than once, as it mounted a great wave and then pointed its nose downward, the women saw the captain bury his face in his hands, sure that it was going to the bottom.

*James Edson White greets visitors to
the Morning Star near Vicksburg,
Mississippi.*

PAINTING BY HARRY ANDERSON.

The voyage took fourteen hours. Under ordinary conditions it would have taken only five. It was a haggard company that staggered onto the pier at Chicago the next morning. As they all stepped ashore Captain Reed said to them, "It's something besides human power that has kept that boat. Here's a thank offering,"⁴ and he handed White a ten-dollar bill.

The company remained in the Windy City for two or three weeks. During their stay they were joined by three young men—Walter Cleveland, Walter Halliday, and Louis Kraus. Kraus was to take the place of engineer under Palmer, who was expected to get papers as an engineer. Once these details were cared for, the *Morning Star* was passed through the Chicago Canal into the Illinois River and proceeded toward the Mississippi, stopping at the principal towns.

At Ottawa, Illinois, the boat was tied up for some time while its crew canvassed the city with *Gospel Primer*. Walter Halliday made a call one morning at the home of a young man who soon recognized the canvasser, from his words, to be a Seventh-day Adventist. He asked his name.

"Walter Halliday."

"Mine is Fred Halladay," said the other man. "Where are you staying?"

"On the boat."

"The boat?"

"Yes, the *Morning Star*, which is a missionary steamer that is on its way to work among the colored people in the South."⁵

Fred Halladay was invited to visit the boat's company, which he did, and he became so interested in their work that he decided to go with them as far as Peoria. His mother also became interested and gave to the company an old melodeon, which, with the organ donated by Storey and Clark (a music firm in Chicago), made the crew more harmonious, if possible, than before.

In the course of the hundred-mile trip to Peoria, Fred W. Halladay became acquainted with the boat's people and their mission and was

more impressed every day with its importance. At Peoria the company went out to canvass but Halladay remained on the boat and read through the testimony of 1891, "Our Duty to the Colored People." This became the deciding factor for him; when the canvassers returned, "instead of bidding them good-bye and going home he said, 'Boys, I'm going south with you.' Whereupon they all shook hands with him, and shouted their welcome. Thus was added to the enterprise a man whose name has honorable mention in connection with this work through its every experience, who has served in every capacity from mechanic to preacher and teacher, who never was known to desert his post in the face of any danger, and who is remembered for his quiet and earnest service, by hundreds of the people to whom that solitary afternoon he dedicated his life."⁶ Some years later, when he was on the faculty of Oakwood and presented glowing and fervent sermons, students said it seemed angels were standing by his side as he talked.

The *Morning Star* company held Bible studies each day, and its members grew in Christian life and consecration and in enthusiasm for their work. Three of the young men had not been Adventists when they joined; one was a Catholic and two made no religious profession. The others were either new in the faith or without previous experience in religious work. The leaders themselves had not been in denominational employ. Thus for this untried enterprise they were drawing off no workers from the older established lines of church endeavor but were creating a new corps of laborers who were, moreover, paying their own way.

New recruits though they were, these young workers were soundly converted. Edson White wrote to R. M. Kilgore: "I have felt that we had God with us, and so have stuck to the determination that we will not fail nor be discouraged, and we have pushed through all obstacles until we have, by the blessing of God, got this outfit ready for its mission and on its way to its field."⁷

The first days of November the *Morning Star* ran down to St.

Louis; after a little time spent there they took a pilot to Cairo, Illinois, at the junction of the Mississippi and the Ohio rivers. Here the company remained about six weeks, canvassing the town. They had expected at this place, just before they entered Southern territory, to meet R. M. Kilgore, superintendent of the district, and H. S. Shaw, director of the Negro work. But circumstances made these men postpone the meeting to a later date, in Memphis.

When the group was ready to leave Cairo a pilot could not be found. Among the eager youth seeking jobs around the docks was a Negro boy in his teens. After helping them in their vain search for a pilot, he told Palmer that he had worked on the government snag boats, knew every inch of the river, and could safely take them down. He had no license as a pilot (that being the "white man's job") and besides, he was too young. But he said if they could not get a pilot and they merely wanted to go safely down the river he could, for a consideration, get them there. His name, he said, was Finis Parker. That seemed to settle it: If a boat must go, and to go must have a pilot, and a pilot could not be secured but one is found who is a pilot in all but the name, and his name, moreover, is *Finis*, there is an end to the matter.

Finis Parker climbed to the pilot house and on the 300-mile trip to Memphis proved sufficiently the truth of his assertion that he knew every inch of the river. He was as competent a pilot as they could have secured, his only drawback being that when they came in sight of another boat he thought it prudent to turn the wheel over to Captain White. Then he dropped out of sight until the other vessel had disappeared.

But trouble lurked in the situation. Federal laws required every steamer to carry a regularly licensed pilot. So the *Morning Star* group was fined \$500 for violation of the maritime laws. These missionaries set to work to get a reversal of the decision, however, feeling they did not come within the provisions of the law, which related to boats carrying passengers. White appealed to the Navy Department

through Senator Burrows of Michigan. Intercession was also made through M. R. Patterson, a federal officer and son of a senator, to whom they were introduced by a friend of Palmer.

Meanwhile they began work in and near the city, the canvassers going out with their books and the others visiting churches in black neighborhoods. A first-day Adventist church with a black membership was found. The pastor, a man by the name of Freeman, welcomed them into his pulpit. For several weeks, while their case was pending, they studied with him and his congregation. Finally the pastor and most of the church accepted the seventh-day Sabbath and the other distinguishing truths taught by Seventh-day Adventists.

Here in Memphis the *Morning Star* workers gained their first experience in meeting some of the practical difficulties of the Negro work. White sent an appeal to the Tennessee River Conference for a Bible instructor to come and follow up what had been begun; and after the *Morning Star* had left, a minister and some other workers arrived in the city. Freeman, who had recently been baptized, appeared an earnest, sensible man with considerable ability; it appeared he might develop into a good worker for the Memphis area. But his little church was poor and times were hard. This combination of facts kept the pastor in financial straits; he had not received enough from his church to pay even his board. Now that he had accepted the Sabbath, some of his small flock were alienated from him altogether.

He might have been told to go to work with his hands and support himself, but that would have been a severe test even to the most consecrated minister. White felt this man was not much more than a fledgling in the Adventist cause and should not be left without sympathy or temporary support.

After some consideration White decided to pay Freeman two dollars a week from his own slender income, that he might be able to attend the meetings and assist with visiting and instructing interested people.

(Some weeks after leaving Memphis, White received word that Freeman had acknowledged he did not attach much importance to the Sabbath and asserted that it was impossible for working people to keep it, that he himself had not been keeping it. Upon further instruction on the obligation of God's law, however, he admitted his fault and promised reformation.)

The matter of the fine finally came to court. The owners pleaded innocence through ignorance; moreover, some men of influence had been impressed with White's mission. M. R. Patterson, who had been appointed to decide the case, called the accused before him and said, "I have received word the matter is left for me to decide. I decide that there is no cause for action, and the case is dismissed."⁸

The delay over the fine, which seemed at first a disaster, had served to give time for work in an important city, a place where they had the most favorable opportunity to learn of the work in which shortly they would be engaged.

From Memphis, the company headed for Vicksburg. During the Civil War this city overlooked the river, but in 1876 the Mississippi changed its course, forming a new channel and leaving the city two miles away. The old bed of the river, however, just below the bluffs of the city, remained to form Centennial Lake, whose southern end is still connected to the river by a narrow waterway. This, in turn, is connected with the Yazoo River by a canal.

About a mile from the center of the city the bluff above Centennial Lake culminated in Fort Hill, on which one of the principal batteries was erected in 1862. The steep sides of this hill were cluttered with modest homes occupied by black citizens. Mount Zion church, the center of a Baptist community that covered the hill and the inlying district, stood on the crown of this hill.

The Baptist faith was by far the most popular among black churchgoers of Vicksburg; there were no fewer than a score of their churches within the city limits. But being church members did not mean they were all saints.

Emmanuel Churchwell, a good old gentleman and an exceptionally thoughtful and upright leader, served as a pastor of Mount Zion church. He had never used either tobacco or liquor, and in practical godliness his had been a positive influence among the people from his early life. As a slave he had received five hundred lashes on his bare back for possessing a hymnbook (which, being illiterate, he could not read). Though deprived of this badge of spiritual authority, he had continued as an exhorter among his people and after his freedom had become their minister.

Of even greater influence than their minister were two white women, Maggie Scott and M. M. Osborne, who had been sent as missionaries to the black population of Vicksburg by the Women's Baptist Home Missionary Society. These two women had been working, the one for six, the other for two years, in Mount Zion church and in various other Baptist churches throughout the city. They taught practical piety, going from house to house and instructing the people in public gatherings. They organized Sunday schools and during the week held Bible classes with representatives of the different congregations. In the face of all sorts of difficulties caused by poverty, ignorance, and the negligence of their people, these tireless workers pressed on, refusing to be discouraged or turned aside.

They organized mothers' meetings, in which they taught the women their duties in their homes, in neatness and order and in the care of their children, teaching them always to base their faith upon the Bible. They created sewing classes for the children, and in various groups throughout the city enrolled a thousand girls and boys. And always there pressed upon them the call for Good Samaritan work, because of sickness, poverty, and distress in the homes.

In 1893 there began in the Mount Zion church a deep but quiet work of reformation. "A sense of great need for more truth and a higher life took possession of many church members, and some began special meetings in their homes, to pray that the Lord would

send them truth and truth-bearers.”⁹ They felt the degradation of the people and the iniquity and hypocrisy that stained the profession of religion. They knew ministers whose lives were a disgrace, who drank and swore, lied and stole, who debauched women and quarreled with men. They knew preachers who constantly carried their whiskey with them in special leather-covered bottles, out of which they would sometimes take drinks even in the pulpit between the acts of stirring up their people in the terrible frenzies they called “getting religion.” They knew that some ministers told to licentious men, who yet were financial pillars of the church: “It’s all right! Have your fun, but keep quiet about it, and nothing will be said.” And the souls of these pious members, hoping, groping for light and truth and purity, revolted at these things.

Leaders among these earnest ones included Katie Holston, deaconess and teacher; and with her, her friend Hannah Washington; Lavina Nash; and Sylvia Cyrus. There also was Louise Jackson, and Will Maxey with his mother and her married daughter, Madaline Shipp. And there was old man Astrap with his sober, serious-minded son William; and Jennie Dickson and her two daughters, Belle Cromwell and Cynthia Evans. Over in King Solomon church was old Uncle Creasy, the shoemaker, whose large family had been greatly stirred by a book called *Bible Readings for the Home Circle*. “His son-in-law, Joe Street, a fireman on the railroad, had found the book in the home of a family somewhere in Louisiana. As he was examining it, they said to him, ‘You can have that book if you want it; we ain’t no use for it.’”¹⁰

“That’s just what my folks will want,” said Street, and carried it home, where it was a Sunday study for many months. If it did no more, it led them to earnest prayer. And there were young men such as Grant Royston, who hated the evil about them; and Tom Murphy, the barber, who despaired at last of the Baptist Church and went over to the Presbyterians, hoping to find greater purity but kept on praying for the greater light he felt there must be.

To Vicksburg a year or so before had come an independent black preacher from Arkansas. He was not connected with any church or creed but preached the Word as he found it in his Bible, aided by that same book Joe Street had found—*Bible Readings*. His name was Alonzo Parker. He possessed marvelous power as a preacher of righteousness, and at first he had a great following, despite the fact that he never induced nor sanctioned the usual wild orgies of emotion. He saw evil eating out the heart of the church and home, and he fearlessly preached against the licentiousness and drunkenness and theft and lying that marked both preacher and people. "The truth shall make you free," he cried, "but not unless you take it into your life and live the things you say and preach."

Parker preached in several churches that opened their doors to him, but as his words cut into the hearts of deacons and preachers they turned their congregations against him and shut the doors of the churches in his face. Next he hired a hall, which was packed with eager hearers, till that was closed against him. Then he preached in the streets and labored from house to house, but the people rose against him. His following grew smaller; he was met with cold sneers and hateful glances. The climax came when he was set upon by a furious mob and beaten so hard that he died. But before he expired he uttered this prophecy: "There will come to you people of Vicksburg just one more chance from God. He will send you other messengers, who will have a stricter message to bear than I have borne. And if you shall refuse to hear them, your fate will be sealed."¹¹

"Bury me," he said, "with my Bible upon my breast. It shall be a witness in the resurrection against the evil men of this city. And it will be a witness in the mouths of those who come after me. I charge you: Hear them, if you would be saved."¹²

His words were yet in the minds of the people when, on January 10, 1895, the *Morning Star* came steaming up into Centennial Lake and cast anchor just below Fort Hill. The first Sunday the *Morning Star* workers, spying the meetinghouse above them on the hill, went

up to Sunday school. There they became acquainted with Miss Scott and some members of the church. After their visit the word quickly passed through the city that the steamer had brought men and women to teach them the Bible, that thus the dead preacher's prophecy had been fulfilled; these were the ones who were to give the colored people of Vicksburg their last chance.

Some weeks afterward great opposition became manifest; consequently, the *Morning Star* left for a short trip up the river. Word flew via the "grapevine telegraph," and in a few minutes the hillside was covered with men, women, and children shouting and waving and crying, "She's going away! Our boat is leaving us! Oh, God, we ain't got no more chance!"

The *Morning Star* workers returned and, by invitation, met with the praying band at Katie Holston's house. There, with seventeen students, they gave the first Adventist Bible study in Vicksburg.¹³ But a private house could not contain the number who wanted to attend, and Mount Zion church was thrown open for the studies. Subjects covered included "The Word of God," "What Faith Is," "Love," "The Mission of Jesus," and incidents in the lives of such men as Daniel and Joseph. These studies were hailed with delight by those who had long prayed for help. They found that their new friends were not only ready to tell them Bible truths but to help them gain greater power to learn and to live a higher life.

Few could read at all, and they for the most part but imperfectly. Hundreds of children were unable to attend the overcrowded city schools, and many old people wanted to learn to read their Bibles. So the *Morning Star* people inaugurated a night school, with classes on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

Fifty-two were present the first night of classes, and rapidly the number increased to more than one hundred. Forty-five minutes of the session were given to reading and spelling, in which Edson White and his helpers had their first opportunity to test the value of their *Gospel Primer* as a textbook. Then came fifteen minutes given to

music—learning to sing gospel hymns; for the musical ear of Edson White had been oppressed by “one drawling, snakelike tune for long meter, one for common, and another for short meter—a repertoire of three tunes to which they fit all the hymns they sing.”¹⁴ Prayer and a half hour of Bible study closed the school for the evening.

They soon had twelve classes in this night school in which many old people were learning to read, children were becoming more orderly and progressive, and good talent was being developed in the most advanced classes. One capable young woman, about to graduate from public school, was deeply interested in the Bible studies. When a night school was requested a mile and a half up the road, she offered her help there, gladly walking both ways twice a week to teach.

During the day the boat’s workers quickly found themselves employed in giving Bible studies in various parts of the city. These studies, bringing out not only the simple duties of Christian life but the glories of the reward to come, were wonderful revelations to these poor souls. With many, delight and devotion seemed to grow together.

Nothing that the *Morning Star* workers could say or do was now escaping these people of the Fort Hill prayer bands. They attended every class and Bible study; they caught every word of instruction that was given, and they took home with them the outline lessons that were furnished and pored over them for hours. More than that, they watched with eager senses every word and look and action of these whom they counted their God-sent teachers.

The Sabbath was not mentioned; the people did not guess that the boat people kept any day other than Sunday. White and his associates felt it unwise to hurry that matter. But on the Sabbath they themselves gathered in the *Morning Star*, which was now moored out in the middle of the lake, and there held Sabbath school and preaching services.

One Saturday Katie Holston, out hoeing in her garden, heard

singing from the *Morning Star*. Will Maxey was patching her roof.

Surprised, she exclaimed to him, "We're working on Sabbath."

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Hear that singing?" she replied. "They sure are keeping Sabbath down there."¹⁵

As these two stopped their hoeing and hammering to listen to the singing out on the lake they discussed the reason for it (for this was not Sunday), and they decided that these people must be keeping this day as the Sabbath. They earnestly discussed that afternoon what Bible they knew bearing on the subject. Then the two went seeking for facts in a characteristic way. After Sunday school the next day Maxey asked Edson White, "How is it that we are keeping Sunday for the Sabbath?"

"Why do you ask me that?" White replied.

"Why, I don't know, but I've been thinking about it, and I thought I'd ask you."

"Well, Will, when was the Sabbath made?"

"When God made the world."

"What was it meant for?"

After finding a Bible, Will read that the Sabbath, the seventh day, was made to commemorate Creation.

"Have you ever read in the Bible of any change being made in it?" White asked.

He replied, "No. But why, then, are we keeping Sunday?"

"We are not," said White. "We are keeping Sabbath down on the boat."

"Then I'm going to keep it too," Will Maxey vowed.¹⁶

When Katie Holston saw White and asked him, "On what day did the Lord begin to make the world?" he answered, "What does the Bible say about it?"

She replied, "The first day. Well, then, what day was it He rested and made the Sabbath?"

"Count up," he suggested.

She counted on her fingers: "Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. *Saturday!* Well, then, why are we keeping Sunday?"

"I don't know," he said. Then he went on to explain to her what the Sabbath really means, and how man had pretended to change it, but that it never could really be changed.

Then she spoke up: "And to think I've been keeping the wrong day for the Sabbath all this time!"

"Don't let that worry you, because you didn't know of it. Your only question is, What are you going to do about it in the future?"

She looked startled as though the thought of her obeying the commandment had never come to her, but she said, "I reckon I'll have to think about it."¹⁷

Will Maxey had been out of work for a long time, but toward the last of that week he found employment in a shingle mill. He pushed hard to get his job done by Friday afternoon, but then his boss asked him to work the next day. Meeting Captain White on his way home, Will told the preacher he didn't know what to do, but he thought he would go back that night and try to finish the job.

"That will not do," White replied, "because the Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday and closes at sundown on Saturday. The first chapter of Genesis tells us when the day begins."

Will was troubled. "I'll lose my job if I don't do them," he said.

He followed White's advice to see whether the foreman would let him off. Surprisingly, the foreman granted his request.¹⁸

The next day Maxey came to the boat and joined in the meeting. Katie Holston had also made up her mind to keep the Sabbath, but that day she was ill. She could only announce afterward that she "kept the Sabbath in bed." The next Sabbath she was preparing to go out to the boat when her friend Hannah Washington came up and asked her where she was going. Katie Holston explained to her about the Sabbath and that she was going to a meeting out on the boat.

"I'm going too," announced Hannah Washington, and hurried

away to get ready. But Katie, wondering whether she should take anyone else without notice, left without her. Hannah Washington, was not to be put off in any such fashion. Going down to the shore, she found a boat and went out to the steamer, where she soon settled in her mind that she, too, would keep the Sabbath.

Albert Green, a young man who had joined the company at Ottawa, Illinois, acted as cook on the boat. Less cautious than the rest of the *Morning Star* people he had begun talking about the Sabbath to some he had met in the city. Among these were two thoughtful young men, Grant Royston and Duncan Astrap. They, too, arrived this morning to join the boat's company in worship. Here, then, were five new and unexpected Sabbathkeepers.

Thus begun, the company rapidly grew. Palmer, with his wife and Walter Cleveland, had been holding Bible studies with the Sunday school teachers of King Solomon church in another part of the city. As they presented the necessity for obedience to God's law and the importance of every word God has spoken (though they were striking at the common evils of society and were seeking to avoid new points of doctrine) the minds of some of their hearers, going over the Ten Commandments, were quickly attracted by that violated fourth. They too propounded the question, "Why are we keeping Sunday for the Sabbath?" Palmer had no choice but to present the truth, and from among them almost immediately ten declared they would keep the whole law of God. So the second Sabbath from the one when Will Maxey stepped upon the boat's deck a Sabbathkeeper, a company on the *Morning Star* was large enough to make three Sabbath school classes.

In the meeting that followed there was great rejoicing. Scarcely had the prayers been offered when the new converts rose, one after another, to testify to their joy in the new-found truth. Said Will Maxey, "This is the third Sabbath I have kept, and the light it has made on my path is growing brighter every day." Said Hannah Washington, "This is the second Sabbath I have kept, and it seems to

me twice as good as the first." And then rose another who had come but that day, and said, "This is my very first Sabbath, and it's a brand-new day to me, bless the Lord!"

The hearts of the *Morning Star* workers were filled with emotion. It was an early and unexpected harvest of the Lord's ripening and reaping, they felt. Edson White said to them at the close of the meeting, "It is a wonderful day to us. For over a year we have been preparing to come down to do this work. We have had disappointments and hindrances at every step of the way, but at last we reached our field of labor. And now we have been toiling away here for weeks, not daring to open to you the Sabbath and many other truths, for we felt, as the Saviour expressed Himself, 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.' But we have found out that the Lord has a hand in the work, and when His time came, He pressed the question upon us through you. And now to see so goodly a company of Sabbathkeepers present on this day, who have come to a knowledge of the truth through our labors, is such a joy to us as you can hardly understand.

"To you, also, is given the privilege of being standard-bearers for Christ, showing by your lives—your every word and thought and deed—that you are the children of God. Let the Sabbath be over you a banner, the emblem of King Jesus whom you serve, and let no act of yours ever put a blot upon its sacred folds."¹⁹

And the little congregation gave hearty Amens that floated like sacred cheers up the heights of Vicksburg.

NOTES

¹ The document "Our Duty to the Colored People" was first circulated in manuscript form and then printed in a leaflet. It was this that stirred the zeal of James Edson White and led him to launch evangelistic and educational work among the neglected black population of the South.

² *The Southern Work*, which includes "Our Duty to the Colored People," was first published as a pocket-sized book, stapled and bound with a blue or green linen cloth. It contained special counsels for the developing work among the recently emancipated people in the South.

³ A. W. Spalding, "Lights and Shades in the Black Belt," p. 164.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 177, 178.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ The singing described by James Edson White referred to generally as "common meter" is still practiced among many rural churches of the South.

¹⁵ Spalding, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 183, 184.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Spalding, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

CHAPTER 5

*Into the Lion's Jaws**

The increasing work of the *Morning Star* called for a strong financial base, and White and his workers were compelled to rise to the occasion. The Southern Missionary Society, a loose association of workers in 1895, with an aim "to carry the principles of Christian education to the people of the South," found it had to own land to set up schools, pay workers, and make legal transactions. With the approval of Ellen G. White, they incorporated in 1898 to do this. Fred W. Halladay, F. H. Schramm, C. W. Smouse, Fred R. Rogers, and James Edson White formed the first board of directors, with White as president. In 1899 they added two new directors: Edward A. Sutherland and Percy T. Magan. The headquarters of the society was moved to Nashville in 1900.

There was continual anxiety about finances to support the organization, especially to provide salaries for people who worked full time and to generate funds for the erection of churches to house the growing congregations in Mississippi.

* The author is heavily indebted to Ron Graybill, author of *Mission to Black America* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1971) for much of the material in this chapter. Used by permission.

Sabbath school offerings for specific mission projects were a relatively new innovation. But as a response to Ellen White's moving appeal in articles written for the *Review and Herald*, the Sabbath schools had collected during the first two quarters of 1896 a special offering for work among black people. Prospects looked extremely bright. Within a relatively short time \$10,878 was raised, and in the months that followed another \$527 came in.

This total amount, \$11,405, was deposited at the Pacific Press and credited on their books to the General Conference Association account. It seems that before reorganization of the work of the General Conference in 1901 the International Sabbath School Association (with offices at Pacific Press in Oakland, California) directed the Sabbath schools. For many years C. H. Jones was both general manager of Pacific Press and president of the International Sabbath School Association. Until 1893 Pacific Press served as the treasury of the association, assigning the treasurer work to one of its employees.

For unknown reasons, perhaps the pressures of work in preparing for the General Conference session, or some uncertainty concerning the relationship between the General Conference and Edson White's work in Mississippi (or prejudice or dishonesty), these monies were not dispatched south.

Aside from the Oakwood school at Huntsville, which had just been opened, Edson White's missions and schools constituted virtually the only systematic work under way in the South. Naturally he expected the projects of his society to receive a substantial portion of the Sabbath school funds. But as the months went by, his happy anticipation turned to uneasiness, his uneasiness to fear, and his fear to dread. At last he received word: The entire \$11,405 had been appropriated for other denominational work. White's despair mounted with his sense of outrage.

He wrote his mother, explaining as best he could what seemed to be a blatant mishandling of funds. "You ask me what you shall do,"

she wrote back, "for so little help is given to that portion of the field where you are working. Trust it all to the Lord. There is a way open for you in regard to the Southern field. Appeal to the people. This is the only course you can pursue under the circumstances. Send no statement of the situation through our religious papers; because it will not be honored. Send direct to the people. God's ways are not to be counterworked by man's ways. . . .

"Human beings in their suffering humanity are crying unto God, and their prayers are just as surely coming up before God as did the blood of Abel. Christlike men will not employ their time in devising to profit self, and promote their own interest. God is not indifferent to the pressing need of white or black in any place where they may be. Who is saying, 'Be thou warmed, and be thou fed and clothed,' yet do nothing to relieve the situation?"¹

The matter would probably have gone unredressed except for a vision given to Ellen White. She made no effort to avoid the issue, calling the transaction dishonest and fraudulent. After she brought it to their attention, the General Conference leaders were horrified to discover that these funds had never reached their intended destination. In the careful investigation that followed, the General Conference officers set about to restore what they could, and in spite of dire financial circumstances, they managed eventually to replace about a third to half of the offering.

The whole incident made clear the urgent need for church reorganization. This did take place in 1901, when all interests were drawn together into the General Conference and its departments.

Edson White accepted the grim fact that the General Conference had dispensed the money to meet other pressing needs of the cause, and he realized that they were operating without budgets and were hounded by indebtedness resulting from a severe national economic recession. Meanwhile in Mississippi the work went on. Edson White had to find other ways of raising money to feed the missionaries and help people for whom they labored.

Ellen White had said, "Appeal to the people," and appeal he did. In a flurry of promotions and calling attention to attractive merchandise, the *Gospel Herald*, a paper Edson published, urged its readers to buy "Albright cloth" for cleaning mirrors and silver, a "Twentieth Century New White Sewing Machine No. 4" (for which White had secured some sort of discount rate), puzzle maps, rubber stamps, and a large assortment of other items.

When yellow fever broke out in Yazoo City and Vicksburg, Edson White began to appeal in the *Gospel Herald* for a relief fund to help those who were stricken. He set up an account for the new church in Yazoo City and an allocation for chairs in the Lintonia chapel. Every Adventist in the North was asked to help, if not with money, then with food. The *Morning Star* workers called for wheat, beans, potatoes, honey, graham flour, strawberries, cherries, raspberries, grapes, peaches, dried fruit—such fruits were plentiful in Michigan—and "we would not fail also to call attention to dried sweet corn." Mississippi was basically a "one-crop" State—cotton. The workers found the sparse diet in the South unsuited to their palates. Edson White was also waging a vigorous campaign for diversified agriculture in the delta. But though his agricultural principles were sound, he learned too late that his diplomacy was poor. His efforts contributed to the violence he was soon to encounter. The same letter in which Ellen White told him to appeal to the people had further counsel concerning the situation which he faced:

"I do not know, Edson, how many things ought to be said, and how many things should be left unsaid. I know you have had a hard time. I know that you are in a difficult and a most dangerous field, made thus because of the prejudice of the whites against the blacks, and because our brethren have not interested themselves personally in that field to decide how it should be worked. Our brethren do not yet have correct ideas, and they button up their coats over their hearts, hearts that should go out in sympathy and tenderness and encouragement to the laborers in

that poor, destitute, neglected field. . . .

"It was presented to me that God in His providence was measuring the temple and the worshipers therein. There are those who, in the providence of God, have been placed in positions where they have received many blessings. With self-denial and self-sacrifice these could do a good work, in imparting to the most needy and suffering ones, to those who have few blessings and but little encouragement. This is the work which God has laid upon every saint to do, and for the neglect of which they will be held accountable. The Lord marks the longing of many souls for privileges that they might become better informed and better clothed. . . .

"In the Southern field, small churches are to be built. If they are burned, this act will stand as a witness against the men who oppose the work of God when the judgment shall sit and the books be opened. . . .

"If the work is made dangerous in one place, go to another and labor. But discreetly, so that the work shall not be destroyed."²

Ellen White counseled leaders of the church as well: "I inquire of my brethren, What are you doing for the colored people, who, as it were, are in the very shadow of your doors? Why do not your enterprises embrace those who have suffered so greatly through oppression? God claims of our brethren in America much more than they render to Him in service. They are to work in behalf of those who cannot help themselves."³

Edson White knew his mother could put his talents to good use in Australia, where she, too, was undergoing the trials of pioneer work. She even invited him to come, but he determined at all hazards to remain in Mississippi. "I am not a young man," he said (he was 49), "and am getting gray and on the shady side of life." At one point he had thought seriously of going to Australia but said, "It would be a beginning all over again and learning the work all over again. I dread it unspeakably."

To his mother he wrote: "In your field you have a strong band of

workers. You have ministers and teachers and canvassers. We are absolutely destitute in nearly everything of this kind. . . . There are seven millions of black people here who must have the truth; and, outside our company, where are those who are sacrificing and working for this people?"

But at this point too much was happening for him to indulge in self-pity. The chapel in Lintonia was erected, built in panels made at the *Morning Star* landing, then brought to Lintonia and bolted together. The members were fond of saying, "It was just like the Jerusalem temple, put together without the sound of hammer and ax." The General Conference sent a tent for meetings at Bruce's Landing. Its fabric was only eight-ounce duck, and it leaked badly in rainstorms, but the people crowded in. Edson White rigged up an acetylene light, and meetings went on.

When White told his mother about the numerous plans he had and about Brother Smouse in particular (who had devised a "wall pocket" as a means of raising funds to keep the work going), she replied, "Brother Smouse is engaged in a good work, and the Lord will freely give to all who will receive to impart. I thank the Lord for this work. . . . I believe the Lord has put it into his heart to do this work. Your father would have instituted ways and means to have helped the work in a field for which anyone had a burden and was doing so much as you are doing in the Southern field. But let me tell you, there are warm hearts that beat in sympathy with the work in this field. . . .

"When means which is raised in answer to appeals made in behalf of the Southern field is otherwise appropriated and not sent to that field, the Lord will send means through other sources. Praise His name! Whenever other efforts to raise means fail, it is your privilege to create an interest wherever you can."⁴

Encouraged by his mother, White hit on still another idea. Gathering together the *Review* articles she had published in 1895 and 1896, her initial testimony and other testimonies she had sent out

concerning work among black people, he printed a little book to which he gave the title *The Southern Work*. The title employed the common term used at the time to designate the Adventist efforts among black people in the South. Later some confusion arose over it. When money sent for the "Southern work" ended up sponsoring evangelism among white people, Ellen White took time at a General Conference to clear up the misunderstanding:

"In writing in regard to the Southern field, I have said, 'The Southern work,' supposing that our people would certainly understand that I meant especially the work for the colored people. I wish it now to be understood that this is what I have meant."⁵

Soon the pages of the *Gospel Herald* carried regular advertisements for the new compilation of Ellen White's writings. (The little book was reissued in 1966 and is now available as a regular denominational publication.) Meanwhile Edson White had written a new book, *The Coming King*. To make it as up-to-date as possible, he made a quick trip to Battle Creek to include news of the Spanish-American War in his chapter "Wars and Rumors of Wars."

Sales were good from the start—eight thousand copies in the first ten weeks of circulation. Six months after the book had been released it had gone through eight editions and seventy-five thousand copies.

With his usual interest in added details, White noted that for that many books the paper alone weighed more than fifty-one tons. The price in a cloth binding, embossed in gold: \$1.30. The cost appears small until one remembers that Fred and Ida Halladay were renting an apartment for \$1.50 a month! The royalties could not flow to the South, however, until Edson White paid off a debt of \$2,500 he had incurred on engravings and plates for the book.

But on another front things began to look threatening. By September it was obvious that the cotton crop had nearly failed. Floods had been worse than usual, and the soil became hard to work. Although cotton plants were very large, the bolls of cotton were small. Worms attacked the crop in many areas, and late rains rotted

much mature cotton. Sharecroppers, unable to reckon with the sharp bookkeeping of their bosses—and forced to borrow seed, equipment, and food from the company store while their crops were growing—faced total privation when their crops failed. Edson White never ignored these physical and economic realities. As far as he was concerned, no gospel was complete that did not materially help the poverty-stricken and those living on a marginal subsistence.

“As men and women embrace the truth in this field,” his mother had written in 1895, “there will be abundant opportunity for relieving their present necessities. Unless this can be done, the work will largely prove a failure.”⁶

Edson White kept a close eye on the agricultural situation, and when autumn came early with a biting frost, he knew deep trouble threatened. In issues of the *Gospel Herald* he urged farmers to care for bees, raise chickens, plant peanuts, strawberries, tomatoes, cabbage, Irish and sweet potatoes; but it would be years before these advanced ideas would take hold. Meanwhile winter drew on.

Speaking three to five times a week, White worked furiously thirteen to eighteen hours a day. The Yazoo River was running swiftly, a pale green ribbon among the willows. The current was too strong for a large river boat, and the *Morning Star* had suffered a near-disaster already. White began to use a little tugboat, the *Glad Tidings*, placed at his disposal without cost.

In mid-September he sustained an injury that probably contributed to the severe headaches he suffered the rest of his life. Coming from the post office to the boat one evening, he was caught in a blinding storm so dark he failed to see a pile of heavy timbers left by workmen in the road. As his foot struck the pile, he tripped and fell forward. He put out his hands to check the fall, but his hands went between two timbers and his head doubled back onto his shoulders as it struck one of the timbers.

“I thought every muscle was torn loose, and my neck broken. I could not rise for a time, and when I did so the blood was running

down from my forehead. . . . All night I could sleep little, for I could get into no position that would give me any ease or relief. I have not been free from headaches since, although it has been nearly ten days."

In November, when the Lintonia chapel was finished, Fred R. Rogers, his wife, Minnie, and their small son, Chester, arrived in Yazoo City from Walla Walla, Washington, to begin teaching. For Rogers this was the beginning of fourteen years of ministry to the black population of Mississippi and Alabama.

Rogers was a stocky, pleasant gentleman with a slick, black mustache. A few years in Mississippi, hard work, and a low salary changed his demeanor and appearance, taking off some of his polish. He even grew an almost-shaggy little beard! But in spite of these trying years he maintained his daring and adventurous qualities. His service ended only when, because of poor health caused by too many summer malaria attacks, he went to Michigan; he later died there.

Chester Rogers grew up to serve as secretary to many prominent Seventh-day Adventists of his day: Dr. David Paulson, Arthur G. Daniells, Irwin H. Evans, William A. Spicer, J. Lamar McElhaney, and Charles H. Watson.

The frosts of autumn finally stopped the wave of yellow fever that threatened to reach epidemic proportions. G. A. Irwin, president of the General Conference, sent word that he would visit Yazoo City early in December. Visits from General Conference leaders were crucial events in the developing work, for to a considerable degree they determined the amount and regularity of the funds that followed.

But as the men waited for these important visitors an unusually heavy winter's grip tightened on the Delta, and conditions worsened. In Vicksburg a woman froze to death on the steps of Mount Zion church, presumably trying to get inside. Another, attempting to keep warm, got so close to the tiny fire in her home that her thin dress ignited. She burned to death. The *Gospel Herald*

urgently appealed for fifty barrels of clothing—coats, socks, boots, hats—and other necessary items.

Describing some of the little cabins in which numerous of his believers had to live, Edson White wrote: "They are nearly all put together very loosely, admitting the cold winds in a hundred places. The floors are usually made of common twelve-inch rough boards, not matched. These soon shrink, leaving cracks all the way from one-eighth to half an inch wide. The sides are made the same way. . . . It is easy to see that no amount of fire can make such houses comfortable."

Before long fifty-five barrels of clothing were secured on board the *Morning Star*, and word came that twenty-five more were on the way. The boat made its way down to Calmer, and White announced that clothes and bedding were available for the needy. Within an hour destitute families nearly mobbed the boat. Not knowing the people, White found it necessary to send them first to Brother Olvin, who would give orders to the families he knew to be most destitute. Months before, when Brother Olvin had first begun keeping the Sabbath, his church had disfellowshipped him. His minister then had warned him that he would soon be hungry, his stock taken from him, and he would have no clothes to wear. Then, the minister had assured him, Olvin would come begging from the members who had stood by "the right."

The first part of the prophecy came true enough: Brother Olvin did find himself, along with almost everyone else, destitute. But the last part was ironically turned upside down, for there sat Brother Olvin, writing out orders for members of his former church so they could obtain clothes to keep their scantily clad children warm. Not only did the *Morning Star* supply the community with clothes, but it also distributed meal, flour, and molasses.

"Women would come bringing their families of almost naked children," Edson White wrote, "and it was a joy to see the gratitude expressed in their countenances as they received the relief which we

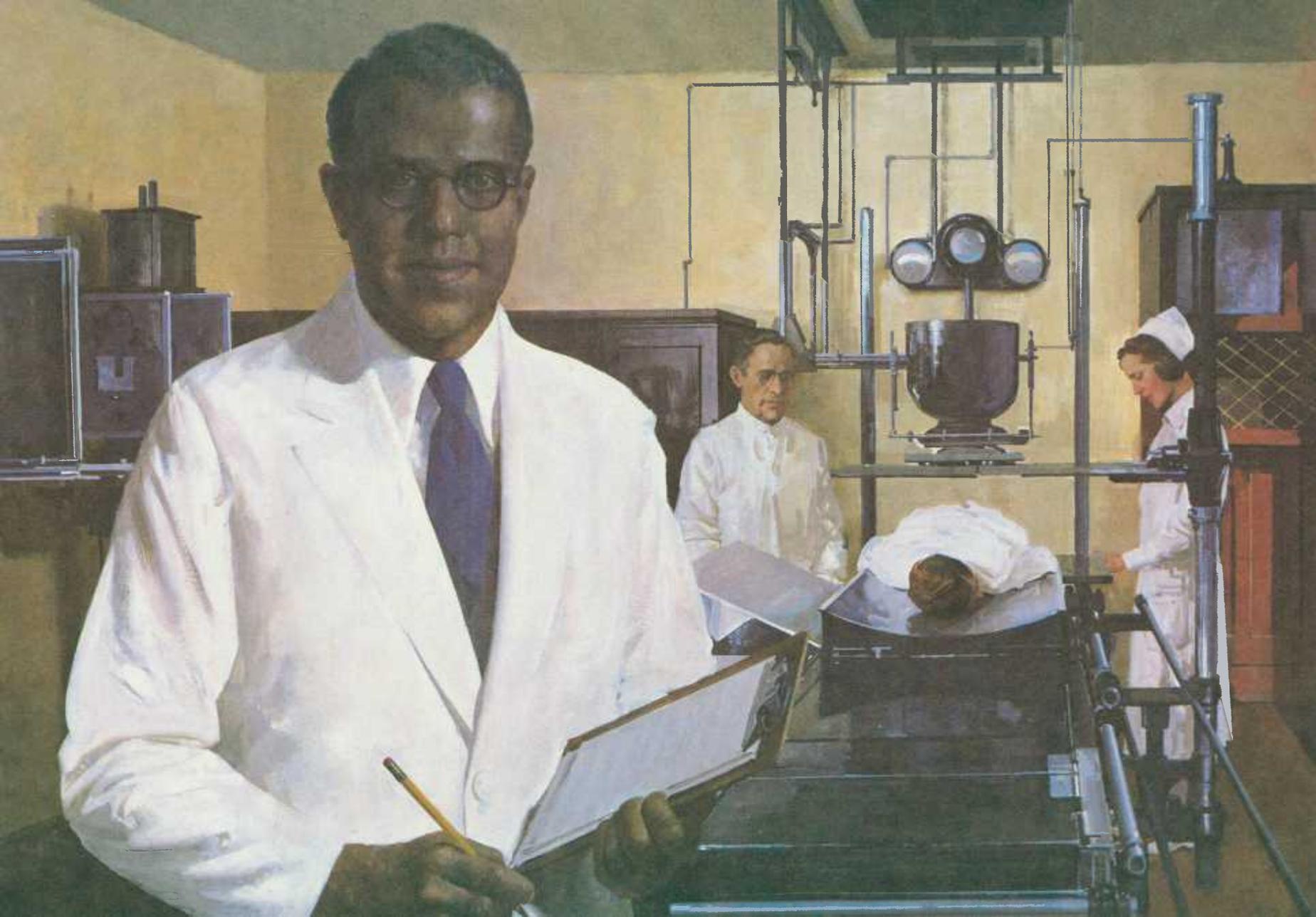
had for them.”

Elders G. A. Irwin and I. H. Evans, arriving in Yazoo City Thursday night, December 8, on the 6:03 train, were given a grand tour aboard the *Morning Star*, which now could be floated on the Yazoo River. The two leaders spoke to believers in Palo Alto, inspected the movable chapel in Lintonia, and participated in its dedication. Rogers explained his early success with the school, which, beginning with fifteen students, could claim fifty before scarlet fever had closed it down for three weeks. In the partially completed chapel at Calmer Irwin spoke again to the few who braved the cold weather to hear him. In Vicksburg the elders visited the flourishing school taught by Miss Agee and Miss Jensen. At noon, Thursday, December 15, they caught a train for Keene, Texas. “We look for good results from this visit in many directions,” Edson White told readers of the *Gospel Herald*.

But he would have been too ashamed to publish what he wrote to Irwin after the latter left Mississippi: “I think I have never felt such utter desolation, and almost hopelessness as I have felt for a few days after you left. Sick, and discouraged, and failing in health, money gone, two mortgages on the property, no financial interest of any particular note from the General Conference, opposition from publishing houses, and then the care of all this great work.”

By Sabbath, December 17, two days after Irwin and Evans had left, White was preaching in Vicksburg, unaware of even worse troubles that loomed immediately ahead. Olvin’s experience illustrated the second type of prejudice White faced in Mississippi. Not only were his relations with white people constantly strained because of his work for black people, but non-Adventist black people, fiercely proud of their own church affiliations, resented a white man (whose very name was White!) invading their territory and stealing their members.

As Christmas holidays approached, White felt the blast from both barrels of this gun of racial prejudice. While he was preaching one



Sabbath in Vicksburg, a messenger came forward, passing him a telegram from Yazoo City. The message read, "MAIL OF GREAT IMPORTANCE COMING." By evening a letter from Fred Rogers arrived: "Satan is loosed here. We are in trouble. Today [Tuesday, December 13] at 1:30 P.M. two men rode up to the chapel where we were holding school and called me out and asked my name and told me, 'This business must stop. We went to the river last night to sink the boat *Morning Star*, but could not find it. It will never land here again, so beware!'

"Another spoke up: 'Yah, and we hunted for you till late last night.'

"Well, Brother White, we are resting in the Lord and have left the case to Him. However, I applied to the mayor for advice as to leaving the organ and other things in the chapel, as burning was threatened. The mayor said all was safe and he would see me protected. Write us immediately and act as you are impressed about landing the steamer here."

After the raiders left, the children were dismissed immediately from school. But within half an hour they returned, accompanied by their parents. Young and old they came, sobbing, with whatever money they could find in their hands—five, ten, twenty-five cents, sometimes a dollar, until enough was raised for the Rogers family to leave town. Rogers had already planned the escape.

"Children, mothers, and grandmothers," wrote Rogers, "were crying and praying for our safety and for the school."

The same mail that brought the letter from Rogers brought a letter from a white physician in Yazoo City—J. A. Crisler. Although not an Adventist, Dr. Crisler had secretly befriended the Adventists, asking that his name not be revealed lest his usefulness be destroyed. His letter informed White that evidently a black minister, hostile to Adventists, had hinted that on Christmas Eve the black people were going to rise and slaughter the whites in Yazoo City. This unsettling—and totally false—bit of information was accompanied

WHT-7

Harry Ford in the X-ray laboratory at Hindsdale Sanitarium and Hospital. Later he became manager of Riverside Sanitarium and Hospital, in Nashville.

PAINTING BY HARRY ANDERSON

by another to the effect that white teachers and preachers were stirring up the would-be murderers.

Without bothering to investigate the report, certain local white people, already prejudiced and looking for an excuse to strike at the *Morning Star*, had formed a "committee" that set out to bomb the mission boat. Failing in their attempt, they gave Rogers their ultimatum.

In spite of difficulty, however, White could be thankful. The mob had come looking for the *Morning Star* on Monday night, December 12, just hours after White had left Yazoo City with Irwin and Evans aboard. Had the mob come on Sunday night, it might have killed those two prominent church leaders, as well as White, his wife, Emma, and their helpers. Years later White wrote concerning this incident in an undated manuscript he titled "Southern Missionary Society."

"We had taken Irwin and Evans to Vicksburg, and the very night after we had gone, they came down Monday night, to mob us, and we were gone. When we came back [to Yazoo City] my wife told me afterward she would lie there and listen; and she would hear a song, and chills would run all over her, thinking it was the mob. [I would get up to look but] it seemed there was nothing but moonlight; I dislike moonlight to this day. I would see every shadow on the bank as a man. We had a skiff always fastened to the outside, at the stern, so even if they came into the room where I was, I could jump into the skiff and get away. The mob incident was in December. When we came back to Yazoo City we would stay sometimes a week at a time. It was our headquarters till the next May. But there was not much pleasure after that."

By the following Monday, December 19, the situation had become less tense. Rogers, ready to open school again, wrote White with great confidence and calmness. But White was unconvinced. In her letters his mother had warned him to exercise great caution in situations such as this, so he ordered Rogers to close the school until

after the holidays and to have the organ hauled from the chapel to his home.

However, Rogers received his orders from White a bit late; satisfied with the assurances of city authorities that he would be protected, he opened the school on Monday. An outbreak of scarlet fever closed it again on Tuesday. White later learned that about this time a large stock of arms and ammunition was shipped from Vicksburg to Yazoo City.

To offset some of the unfavorable criticism and to inform the public that Adventists were much more widespread than the *Morning Star*, White decided to print an "extra" edition of the *Gospel Herald*. This would include many illustrations of Adventist institutions around the world and an explanation of why they were working for black people and what they were trying to accomplish.

"The general impression is that we have some kind of a hocus-pocus religion that we cannot get the white people to accept," he wrote, "and so have come down to try to get it off on the Negroes. They want to know why we do not take it to the white people and not make a business of working among Negroes. This extra will show that we are taking it to all classes and races, and the branch we are carrying is only part of a great worldwide work."

Providentially, the city authorities kept their word, posting guards around Rogers' house for two nights. They arrested the leader of the "committee," putting him under a \$500 bond. Meanwhile, White was racked with chills and fever that enervated him. And his wife, Emma, stricken with malaria on Christmas Day, still lay sick on New Year's Day, unable to help the fourteen people who had been dependent upon her to provide them daily meals on the *Morning Star*.

The Southern Missionary Society had managed to weather the holiday season, but the money situation remained desperate. "At Calmer and Vicksburg," Edson wrote to the General Conference, "I find that we shall now have to take hold and aid people who are in poverty and suffering. But how can we do it? People in this place are

almost naked in some houses. With cotton sacks for bed ticking, and a few old rags for quilts, they *suffer* during the cold weather we are now having. God has said we must help such. Why, in lots of cases the only way they can get along is to stay up all night to keep fires burning to prevent serious suffering. And while in Vicksburg I found some of our own uncomplaining church number that were suffering for simple bread to eat."

Emma did not improve. Five days into the new year the threat of death from pneumonia, malaria, and stomach disorders hovered over the brave woman. Edson, almost as sick, had lost twenty-five pounds in a few weeks. "My wife is but a little better, if any," he wrote the next day. "As soon as she is able I think I shall take her north and then arrange for a home there. I see no hope for the future. My heart is very heavy—and it is sore with the indifference and injustice of my brethren. I see no light ahead. All is dark. I feel the limit has been reached. I entertain grave fears as to her recovery, and I have nothing with which to meet my crisis."

In the same letter he had to meet three charges: an old criticism that his boat idea had never been approved by the General Conference, a new complaint about the "crowd" he was trying to keep on the boat, and an accusation that he had begun printing the *Gospel Herald* without advice or authorization from church leaders. Finally, while White was sitting one day in his living room aboard the boat, the bitter irony of the whole situation crushed down on him. He felt unable to hold up under it. Suddenly the thought came over him that his whole Mississippi effort had been a mistake, and that no help would result from Irwin's visit. He broke down and wept like a child.

Although Edson had reached what seemed to be his lowest point, something held him and kept him from giving up. Perhaps it was the obvious suffering and need of the people all around him. Perhaps it was the memory of their tears of gratitude, or the sight of an old woman's wrinkled face beaming with pride, because she, born a slave, had learned to read. Perhaps it was just simply the dogged

determination of a man who knew he was doing right, even when everything seemed against him. Then, too, his mother's letters doubtless provided a great source of strength. Certainly his conviction was that God, who felt every throb of pain, had sent His Comforter, who had carried him through this personal ordeal.

He refused to be defeated. Soon the outlook began to brighten. In a few days Emma began to improve. By mid-January she was well enough to travel to Battle Creek, where White put her under the care of two excellent Sanitarium nurses. A committee of the General Conference finally met to consider making restitution for the losses White had sustained, both with the *Gospel Primer* and in the matter of the misappropriated Sabbath school offering. "The ground was gone over," he wrote his mother, "and a pretty good understanding of it gained. There was a good feeling all around."

By early February, when Edson and Emma were able to return to Mississippi, they found more than a hundred pupils attending Rogers' school in Lintonia. Word had made the rounds that in the Adventist school, children learned more in a week than they did in a month in public school.

"I assure you," White wrote to Irwin when he added up his finances, "I was very much rejoiced on my return to find matters in such good shape as they are."

At Calmer the buildings were getting their final touches. Dan Stephenson, a native Mississippian, was eager to open classes. Because of the good work Brother Olvin and his fellow believers had done, the whole black community was more friendly.

Eager to defend the black farmers of the Delta, White used the pages of the *Gospel Herald* to do it: "The question is often asked," he wrote, "why is the Negro farmer in the South so poor? Why cannot he succeed as well as white farmers?"

Then he gave a detailed analysis of the agricultural economics of the area and summed up the chances of the sharecropper, company-store type of farmer: "He pays about one half the value of

the land each year for rent. He pays fully double price for whatever he buys through the season in the way of clothing, food, et cetera. He is obliged by his rent and store-bill contracts to raise cotton which at present prices will seldom pay the cost of raising, even if the producer makes no account of his time. Now, how much better can the energetic Yankee do under such circumstances?"

Here White was being careful not to attack the plantation owners for the conditions he saw. He simply observed that the system made it virtually impossible for the black farmer to be anything but poor. Such explanations helped Northern readers understand the situation better, but in Yazoo City the post office workers, who combed every column of White's paper, didn't find his ideas particularly flattering or even welcome.

Meanwhile students at Battle Creek College began to show a great interest in the Southern work. Two of their most prominent leaders, Edward A. Sutherland and Percy T. Magan, traveled South to see what contributions the college might make to White's work. Magan was called upon to lecture on diversified agriculture before a group at Calmer. Among the group were several local planters. One of them was so convinced by what he heard that he declared he was ready to raise potatoes, peanuts, beans, and perhaps broom corn. He also announced that he was going to let his sharecroppers pay their debts in cash, thereby giving them an opportunity to get out of debt.

Sutherland reported all this to Ellen White in a letter, admitting that at first he was somewhat prejudiced against Edson. But, he said, "I came to the conclusion that he was doing more to develop the work in the right way in the South, and has already accomplished more, than any other person who is there."

When the planters along the Yazoo River (who had evidently received regular reports concerning White's ideas on farming) learned that now one of their own number had declared himself ready to try them out, their attitude turned to rage and hate. The advice and assistance White had given to sharecroppers heightened

the planters' fears that blacks might prosper and rise. Also, White's religion had its inevitable effect. Remembering the incident, an old-timer said, "You couldn't get a black man to work around here on Saturday."

The planters decided it was time to act. One evening Dan Stephenson, sitting quietly at his desk, was interrupted by more than two dozen horses galloping down the road. The hoofbeats stopped in front of his door.

"Stephenson, come on out," one rider shouted. "You're going to Redwood."

Dan Stephenson knew better than to argue. The planters, with all politeness, took him to the railroad station in nearby Redwood, put him on a car, and paid his fare to a station up the line. Then they rode back to Calmer, looking for Brother Casey. But Casey had gotten word of what was happening and hid. The frustrated planters next rode to Brother Olvin's house and called him out. Olvin, a powerfully built man, made no attempts to answer the planters' questions with "proper" humility. As he argued with them they dismounted and gradually formed a circle around him in the yard. Suddenly all was quiet. The yelping dog trotted off behind the house.

Ron Graybill has recounted what happened: "One of the planters reached into his saddlebag and jerked out a long rawhide whip. Olvin made a dash at the side of the circle, but three strong men threw him back as the whip whistled through the air and coiled around his neck. Olvin's hand reached his neck and felt the warm sticky flow of blood. Then the whistling sound came again, like a sickle slicing through the air, and with a sickening pop the blow sliced across his back, cutting through one suspender of his denim overalls.

"As the whip descended again he lunged at a clear space among the surrounding legs, only to catch a heavy boot thudding against his jaw. Suddenly a shot rang out, and through his pain Olvin could hear his wife screaming: 'My leg! My leg! Oh, my leg!' But her cry was

choked off with a sob. When the woman, realizing she would be next, had tried to slip out a window to escape, the bullet stopped her.

"Then suddenly another voice, husky and forceful, boomed out: 'Stop that whipping!' The mob ignored the command until the stranger pulled out a revolver and repeated his order. The whipping stopped.

"Slowly Olvin rolled over and wiped the dirt from his eyes. The mob quickly mounted their horses and rode away. His benefactor turned, mounted, and was also gone."⁷

Students coming to school the next morning found in front of the school building a pile of ashes in the yard. A few scraps revealed that their books, maps, and papers had been destroyed. On the door they read a notice stating that the school was never to be opened again. Nor was the *Morning Star* to land between Vicksburg and Yazoo City.

The next day Edson met Brother Olvin on the street in Vicksburg carrying a Winchester rifle and a box of shells. It took some persuasion to convince Olvin that such an approach would only result in the closing of all White's work—and probably initiate a great deal more violence and bloodshed. White paid the three dollars Olvin lost when he returned the rifle. "It is the Ku Klux days all over again," White wrote his mother, "and we are in the midst of it." Before long, to avoid further persecution, Olvin moved away from Calmer, but his troubles had only begun.

A visitor to Vicksburg today can tour an elegant antebellum mansion known as Cedar Grove, centerpiece of the Ballground Plantation, just a few miles south of the site of the Calmer chapel and school. The great house boasts eight bedrooms and fifteen marble mantels. Over the outside library door is engraved the name John A. Klein, and the date, 1852, the time when slaves finished building the mansion. A cannonball, lobbed through the front door by one of Grant's gunboats, is still lodged in the wall of one of the sitting rooms.

According to Edson White, it was John A. Klein's grandson,

George M. Klein, Jr., who led the mob that whipped Olvin. Klein, Jr., lived in a sixteen-room house on the plantation at the time. State archives list him as a sergeant in the Mississippi Volunteer Infantry during 1899, when this incident occurred.

About two years later George Klein, Sr., sold the Ballground Plantation to the Simrall family, which still maintains it. In 1970 the patriarch of the family remembered hearing as a boy about how the Adventists started a school for the Negroes and how they were run out the night of the "whippin' spree"!

In light of situations such as this one at Calmer, Ellen White repeatedly cautioned against agitating the racial hostilities of the people in the South. It was not simply a matter of reaching white people with the gospel. The very lives of workers and believers alike were in danger.

Edson White saw that it would be impossible to do anything further in Calmer for the time being. And since trouble also impended in Yazoo City, he decided to make another journey north and wait for matters to cool off.

From Battle Creek White sent a letter to George M. Klein, Sr., to explain what Adventists were trying to accomplish in Calmer, reminding him that in his *Gospel Herald* article he had blamed the "system" for the unfortunate circumstances of sharecroppers and pointing out that papers all over the South daily made the same complaints.

In February, 1900, Edson White returned to Calmer for a visit. He found nearly twenty-five believers still keeping the Sabbath and living up to the faith—although for three months they had been without a preacher, a teacher, or the use of a building.

Work was progressing on the new Vicksburg church building when White received word that his mother was returning from Australia. When trouble erupted again in Yazoo City, this time agitated by local newspapers, he himself was ready to move to Nashville.

The Yazoo City *Herald*, June 1, 1900, carried an editorial that began: "The religiously inclined of our colored people—and most of them have a tendency toward religion—are becoming exercised at the influence certain Seventh-day Adventists are having over their race in Yazoo City."

The editorial went on to say that Adventists had made little headway until they threw in a large slice of "social equality" and introduced their seventh-day observance doctrine. Reporting a black mass meeting at St. Stephens church to discuss ways of combating the Adventists, the journalist noted that several white people were in attendance, "to assure the colored people of their sympathy." Then, attacking the Adventists as "outside agitators," the editor asserted, "These people are strangers to the Negro, and have no real sympathy with his material welfare."

Steadfastly maintaining that whites and blacks were living harmoniously together, this editor declared that it would be the utmost folly for blacks to listen to any man or woman whose teachings would in the least interfere with this condition.

At this point in time Fred R. Rogers was moving to Vicksburg to teach for the next school year. The editor, assuming his attack had driven out the Adventists, commented that with the departure of Rogers "the Seventh-day Adventist cesspool in Yazoo City has been cleared of much of its filth."

But the battle wasn't over. Seven days later another city paper, the Yazoo City *Sentinel*, unleashed an even more explosive attack. With allusions to "scalawags and thieves," and history written "in the blood of the best manhood of the State," the editor insisted that a new element of discord had been introduced into local affairs.

Claiming that Rogers had adopted two Negro girls about 16—that they were living as members of his family, eating at the same table, sleeping in the same house, sitting at the same fireside, and were, to all appearances, equal members of his family—the editor announced that he would hate to see the history of 1875 (the end of the

Reconstruction) repeated. "We greatly mistake the temper of the people of Yazoo County," he said, "if they sit calmly by and permit this interloper to teach and practice a doctrine which is so repugnant to the traditions of her people."

Edson White laboriously replied to all the charges, pointing out that the Rogers family had adopted no Negro children and had never taught "social equality." The editors scoffed at this defense and asked why Rogers, if he were not guilty, had left town.

The Rogers family had, in fact, taken in two homeless Negro girls, both of whom took their places in the Adventist Church. One of them, Cynthia Gertrude Johnson, later married and became the mother of Garland J. Millet, who became an associate director of the General Conference Department of Education.

The fearless Rogers stayed on many years in the South, and when Spalding went to Yazoo City accompanied by Rogers in 1911 the author found him, not surprisingly, "fond of the back streets." Rural Mississippi had become dangerous for whites who associated with blacks.

But in spite of their circumstances, these early pioneers had faith in their God who was able to break the iron jaws of Southern prejudice and stubborn tradition. Though Satan often tore down the foundation that Edson White and Fred Rogers faithfully built, their dogged tenacity resulted in precious seeds planted for God's harvest among Southern blacks. None but those led by the Eternal One could have survived such trials and discouragement.

NOTES

¹ Ellen G. White letter to James Edson White, Aug. 14, 1898.

² *Ibid.*

³ Ellen G. White, Manuscript 101, 1898.

⁴ Ellen G. White letter to James Edson White, Aug. 14, 1889.

⁵ Ellen G. White, in *General Conference Bulletin*, 1903, p. 202.

⁶ ———, in *Review and Herald*, Dec. 24, 1895.

⁷ Ron Graybill, *Mission to Black America* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1971), pp. 130, 131.

Infants of Spring

A Baptist minister, Harry Lowe, was perhaps the earliest convert of African descent in the South to become a Seventh-day Adventist Church member. He had read copies of *The Signs of the Times* and had heard Elbert B. Lane in 1871 at Edgefield Junction, Tennessee, a few miles north of Nashville. Lane had been sent by the General Conference to visit and baptize a small group of converts won through reading Adventist publications. His reports to the *Review and Herald* told of public meetings he held in a railroad station, with the black audience occupying one room and whites listening from the freight room and the platform.¹

Lane spoke to the group with a freedom born of distance from Northern and urban restraints, where the sophisticated looked upon Adventists with contempt because of their rampant enthusiasm. The fact that he did not present polite, ethical homilies or merely make tactful suggestions about conduct appealed to Lowe, accustomed as he was to forceful and straitlaced sermons. Now Lowe himself was confronted with the clear and unequivocal judgment-hour message, and he had to make a choice. In all his preaching he had never seen

himself so greatly in need of God's mercy and grace. He had proclaimed that the nature of man was evil, that his tendencies were vile, his motives base, but never had this fact pointed so directly to himself. If he would heed the message, Lane had said, give his life anew to the Lord, keeping all His commandments, including the Sabbath, he could be changed by the power of the Spirit. Moreover, he found new hope and optimism in the Biblical message that Jesus was soon to return to the world to take to heaven a race of newborn people, decent, godly, and up-and-doing.

Certainly for Lowe there was much to deliberate, much to ponder and study about this new faith. Up to this time he had embraced the old Puritan approach to salvation, insisting that sinners were in the hands of an angry God. Often the result had been a kind of horoscope, predicting man to be a victim of the forces of destiny. God had chosen from the foundation of the earth those who were to be saved, Lowe had declared, and once a man was in Christ he was never out.

Here, however, in the Advent message, Lowe saw God's mercy reaching out for the last time to gather a remnant; the Spirit and the Bride were giving the summons to "whosoever will," urging them to come to salvation. The thought that God's invitation was to reach the disinherited and the disadvantaged consoled his troubled mind, so often lost in the woods of the world. He perceived the destiny that shapes man's soul, felt a delight at knowing this special revelation of God, and knew the greater joy of belonging to Him who rules the universe.

Harry Lowe gladly joined the company of believers that first met in 1883 at Edgefield Junction. At first the congregation was biracial; on November 9, 1886, however, because of mounting tensions in the South, a separate group was organized into the first Seventh-day Adventist church composed entirely of black Americans. Among the ten charter members were Mr. and Mrs. John F. Allison, whose two sons, Thomas H. Allison and Jonathan W. Allison, later became

ordained ministers and served in several responsible capacities in the church.²

The matriarch of the clan, Jennie B. Allison, born in 1858 near Edgefield Junction, was, as far as can be ascertained, the first black woman to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She was graduated from high school at age 77 and was 95 when she died in 1953.

Ellen White was an occasional guest in her home. On one such visit Jennie Allison confided to her that two of her children had strayed from the church. Her daughter, Florence M. Brawley, a contralto singer, was married to Frank Tustin Brawley (a brother of the noted Benjamin Brawley) and was caught up in concerts outside the church. Her son Thomas, a baritone, who during his college years sang with the Fisk Jubilee Singers, seemed also to gravitate toward the glitter and the baubles of entertainment life.

Ellen White advised her to go to Chicago at once and bring Thomas and his wife back to Tennessee. Jennie Allison did so, and not long afterward Thomas entered the ministry and served the cause as a pastor in the South and later as union representative for the black membership, first in the Central Union area and then in the Great Lakes States.

Jennie Allison asked Ellen White whether her daughter Florence Brawley (about whom Marian Anderson was said to have remarked that she would buy her voice if she could) might some day return to the Adventist fold. Ellen White took her out of the room to confide sensitive information. Jennie Allison never revealed what she was told that day, but following this episode she ceased to chide her daughter about her failure to attend church, and she would not permit others to do so. Florence Brawley died without becoming an Adventist.

By contrast, Thomas Allison not only took his place in the Adventist ministry but subsequently gave remarkably dramatic account of the Holy Spirit's attendance upon his evangelistic labors.

He experienced a number of exceptional deliverances from enemies of the faith. In one instance when he held a tent meeting in Birmingham, Alabama, he baptized several members from old established churches in the city. The ministers of these congregations were furious and came together to plot how they might rid themselves of this disturbing influence in their midst. They decided to waylay the Adventist preacher on the footpath lined with large trees and underbrush that he took daily on his way home. They cast lots to determine who would do the gory job. The man upon whom the lot fell was a respected preacher; nonetheless, he was at his appointed place that evening, standing quietly behind a tree as Allison approached. In his hand he nervously clutched a woodman's axe. But as Allison passed, the clergyman froze to the spot, unable to move an arm or a leg.

The next day this intended killer, troubled over events of the night before, made his way to Allison's house. He confessed what he had planned to do to Allison. "Tell me, Reverend," he then said, "who was those men with you last night?"

"Sir, there was nobody with me as I came home last night," Allison replied.

"Oh, yes, there was!" the preacher insisted. "There certainly was some men with you, 'cause I seen 'em myself, and I heard 'em talkin'. You was right in the middle, and they was talkin' about your sermon."

"Ah, my friend," Allison replied, "you're badly mistaken. There was no one with me. Not a soul. I'm sure of that."

"I know what I'm talkin' about," the clergyman then declared. "I watched them men with you, and down the road a piece I didn't see them no more."

At this point Thomas Allison ceased to deny that he had an escort. He remembered the hosts of ministering angels God sends to the aid of those who surely shall be heirs of His salvation.

Allison recalled a similar experience in Mobile, Alabama, where

enemies sought to harm him; but in this instance those who plotted to take his life were sure they saw ferocious dogs accompanying the Adventist preacher.

These two miraculous escapes sealed his commitment to the ministry, which he followed to the end of his days. Around him gathered a band of "more noble" spirits whom he baptized into the Adventist Church. From one place to another he preached in "the land of cotton." He went from cabin to courthouse, from river bottom to stony hillside farm, fording streams, winding up narrow trails, and being entertained in lowly but hospitable dwellings as he went.

The Adventist cause grew under the preaching of Harry Lowe. Strange uniting factors were at work, not only drawing people together from wide distances but also encouraging them to step across barriers that bristled with objections from family and friends. His task was not an easy one, for many to whom he gave Bible studies took refuge in what they felt to be the rightness of fixed and long-standing custom.

The first camp meeting to bring together the Negro Seventh-day Adventist membership was held at Edgefield Junction in the fall of 1901. The very size of the crowds attracted larger crowds. Spectators came to see the mysterious prophetic charts, to hear the preaching, to join in the lively singing³ and to behold individuals, as by an elemental force, turned into something other than their former selves. As more evangelists reached a wider audience in the South, and membership increased, similar camp meetings were held the following year in Birmingham, Alabama, and Jackson, Mississippi.

The early camp sessions linked Harry Lowe and the believers at Edgefield Junction with the growing ranks of Sabbathkeepers everywhere. To a people only a few decades out of bondage, camp meetings were a great spiritual feast, a foretaste of a better life in a better land. Campers thought of themselves as pilgrims and wanderers here, certainly not unlike the fugitive Israelites who went out of Egyptian bondage to meet with God at Sinai. The meaning of

their coming together perhaps had not always been stated, but it filled an obvious need for fellowship, and it was a necessary religious devotion, a revival for church members and an evangelistic thrust to gain new members.

The second church of Afro-American believers was organized at Louisville, Kentucky, in 1890, as a result of preaching by A. Barry.⁴ Barry was a modest man, utterly without braggadocio, who had desperately sought an education; in his late years he gave a touching account of that struggle. Following him as the Louisville pastor was Charles M. Kinny, a man of approximately the same age as Barry, who had become a Seventh-day Adventist in Reno, Nevada, some years earlier.

The third church consisting of a black membership was organized at Bowling Green, Kentucky, in June, 1891, and another church came into being at Nashville in September, 1894.⁵

In 1892 the General Conference appointed a special agent, Harry S. Shaw, to superintend and foster evangelism among the black population of the South. Although Shaw was white he was dark enough to pass as one of the numerous fair-skinned Negroes in the South. In 1890, about four hundred of every thousand Negroes was a mulatto, and Shaw was therefore able to work with great effectiveness among both blacks and whites. His genial personality, his earnestness and obviously serious intent, contributed greatly to an upswing in the work among a growing black membership.⁶ His territory began at the Ohio River, and he worked south through various cities, preaching wherever he could gain a hearing.

In isolated corners of the South, where no living preacher of the faith had gone, here and there Adventist believers were also springing up. One young woman climbed aboard a dusty train at Ellisville, Mississippi, around 1893, clutching a ticket to Chattanooga. Her name was Anna Knight, a cousin of Godwin Knight, later a governor of California. She was on her way to Tennessee to be baptized. At home she had devoured Adventist papers sent by

members of a correspondence band and had exchanged numerous letters with them about the amazing articles she had read. Band members had found her address in a secular magazine to which she had written earlier, requesting that her name be listed to receive old papers, books, and other printed treasures. When she was convinced the Sabbath was Saturday rather than Sunday and that the Lord was to come soon to gather those who obeyed His commandments, she wanted to join the church.

Within a short time she was put in contact with L. Dyo Chambers and his wife, who lived in Chattanooga. On this day she journeyed there by train to meet them, and they in turn took her in a buggy to Graysville, Tennessee, where she was baptized. Upon her return to Mississippi she was immediately set upon by members of her family: "Everybody else works in the fields on Saturday," they would say. "Why should she be allowed to lay around the house and loaf? Around here, if you don't work, well, you just don't eat!"⁷

There were loud family quarrels concerning this and another sensitive point: her refusal to "eat like everybody else." When she could bear it no longer, Anna Knight gathered up a few belongings and took the train back to Chattanooga. The Chamberses would understand her plight, she reasoned, and they would help her get adjusted in a new environment.

Sensing her need of an education to face life, the Chamberses arranged to enroll her at Mount Vernon Academy, in Ohio. Anna Knight remained there a year and then entered the school of nursing at Battle Creek College. There she met Dr. John Harvey Kellogg and saw the bustling headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

After graduation Anna Knight returned to Jasper County, Mississippi, to work among her own people, the very ones who had rejected her beliefs about the Sabbath. She found much to do. There were children to be taught, and almost as many grown men and women who had never learned to read or write. Her first task was to build a school, so she organized the home folks for this ambitious

undertaking and shortly constructed a creditable edifice dedicated to book learning.

Sometime about 1900 Anna Knight was in Battle Creek and learned of a critical need for nurses that had arisen in India. Dr. Kellogg asked if she would go. She agreed, and in 1901 sailed for Calcutta, where she rendered a magnificent service in connection with the church's city mission.⁸ After she was there for a time, news came that her school had been burned down by village enemies who apparently felt that education was spoiling their children and keeping them too long from work in the fields. Anna Knight had planned to continue her work in India, but this situation changed things considerably. She could not respond immediately, but on her next furlough she spent two years rebuilding the school and getting the program running again.

Anna Knight was a woman who had the gift of rallying people to assist in her work, and the country school again flourished. It was a lovely place; the building was painted white, with roses planted at the front and sides and on the path to the road. In this favorable environment children and adults could learn the fundamentals of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Most students were deeply concerned about securing an education and were obviously delighted with what Anna Knight had undertaken to do for them.

She taught her students to visualize what they read, and thus for these rural scholars Biblical figures stood alive. When they met for their Sabbath afternoon services, in the singing of hymns and spirituals and the reciting of Bible texts they were without self-consciousness. Children and their elders also gathered in the school building for Sabbath school and worship services on Sabbath. It was thus not so much church in the formal sense, a place away from the world that a boy or girl visited occasionally in a busy life, but a part of home.

When she was called to responsibilities as a Bible instructor and as operator of treatment rooms in Atlanta, Georgia, Anna Knight left

her school under the supervision of a younger sister. Later she served as secretary of several departments of the old Southeastern Union, and afterward in the Southern Union Conference as supervisor of elementary schools supported largely by the black membership.

A convert who joined the church in Mississippi somewhat later was Eugenia Isabella Cartwright. She had lived in Natchez and had worked at Monmouth, one of the fabulous antebellum mansions on the outskirts of town. The Duncans, for whom she worked, were a people of strict upbringing and of great culture and refinement; they represented a substantial influence in Eugenia Cartwright's young life.⁹ Through the eyes of these affluent and generous people, who traveled the world, she was able to behold vicariously the Sea of Galilee and the mountains of Palestine. She went to Oakwood School in 1912, and to her task there she brought a sense of discipline and carefulness. For more than fifty years she influenced positively the lives of many Oakwood students.

While at Oakwood Miss Cartwright married Lewey Cunningham but was widowed soon after a son was born. Remaining at the school, she served in various capacities as a staff member and adviser to students. Her son, Charles C. Cunningham, became a teacher and a conference departmental secretary in the South Atlantic, Southwest, and Lake Region conferences. Cunningham Hall, a dormitory on Oakwood's campus, is named in her honor.

Franklin G. Warnick was another recognized leader who added his talents to the growing Adventist mission in the South. Born at Chadsford, Pennsylvania, in 1868, he was married in about 1887 to Lucy Jeannette Miller, daughter of Virginia plantation owner Major Moorman Miller and his slave Sarah Miller. The Warnicks had a total of nine children, three of whom died either in infancy or early childhood. Franklin Warnick studied at Wayland Baptist Seminary in Ohio and was a schoolmate of Lewis C. Sheafe, who, like Warnick, became a Baptist minister. When Warnick heard Sheafe had become an Adventist and was no longer affiliated with the Baptists, he sought

his friend to "straighten him out." However, Warnick himself was convinced of what he had formerly looked upon as "strange" teachings. Hence in 1897 at Springfield, Ohio, Warnick was baptized as a Seventh-day Adventist.

Warnick now bade farewell to his Baptist congregation in Springfield and left for Battle Creek, where he hoped to secure additional training in Adventist doctrine preparatory to preaching the new faith. The family made the long, tedious journey by horse and buggy over sometimes bleak and muddy roads to the town that was then headquarters for the Adventist church. Warnick enrolled in several classes and taught printing to help make ends meet; his wife, Lucy, took lessons in hydrotherapy, kept house, and looked after the children.

While at Battle Creek Warnick was introduced to Mrs. A. S. Steele, a teacher from Chelsea, Massachusetts, who had founded The Steele Home for Needy Children at Chattanooga in 1884. She exacted a promise from him that upon completion of his studies he would come to Tennessee and teach the orphans. Warnick did so and remained in Chattanooga approximately a year. Compensation from the orphanage must have been most disappointing, for during the year both Warnick and his wife taught a country school while their own children were cared for at the orphanage. Also, he again turned to his knowledge of printing as a means of caring for his growing family.

Toward the end of his sojourn in Chattanooga, Warnick received a call from the Southern Missionary Society to connect with their educational work in Vicksburg, Mississippi. Edson White had become convinced, after considerable trial and error, that a prepared black person was needed to carry the leadership of Adventist work among black people if it was to have any long-term success. Fred Rogers had been superintendent of instruction, and Warnick was to succeed him. To prepare him for the task, Rogers remained in Vicksburg to acquaint him with both the people and the unusual

methods he had adopted in teaching young and old in the same classroom.

But there was more to the job than teaching. Warnick was soon giving Bible studies, preparing converts for baptism, and assisting those who were without jobs because of their stand to keep the Sabbath. What he did not realize at first was that nearly every person who accepted the Sabbath was thereby incurring the wrath of a plantation owner who depended on the convert's Saturday labor to till the fields. This hatred was mounting toward all who worked with Edson White, for by now the missionaries from the North had gained a considerable following.

One night as Warnick walked along a railroad track on his way to a Bible study he was intercepted by a tall man who stepped out of the darkness to hand him a note. In the bright moonlight he was able to read its message: "Do not go to your study tonight. Your life is in danger." Immediately Warnick turned back and, reaching home as quickly as he could, showed the note to his wife. He placed the note in his Bible, but when he looked for it the next morning he was surprised to find it was not there—the note had mysteriously disappeared. Warnick always believed the message was written by other than earthly hands and that the messenger himself had been one of those ministering spirits mentioned in Scripture who were "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." The next day he learned that a large group of men had been waiting at the railroad trestle to hang him.

Soon afterward Warnick was invited to direct the work at Lintonia, a suburb of Yazoo City, Mississippi, where another *Morning Star* school had attracted a nucleus of believers. Mr. and Mrs. Rogers also were here. Again community sentiment intensified and mounted to the extent that both Warnick and Rogers had to flee for their lives, albeit separately.

Mrs. Rogers escaped on the same train as did Warnick. When she became aware that he was aboard, in another car, she sought to get

word to him that her husband had also escaped and was safe. She sent a note to that effect by a crewman on the train, but the conductor intercepted the note. Assuming the wrong intent, he became enraged at what he considered her bold attempt to communicate with a black man. He wired ahead to the next station, advising the agent of the "problem" he had aboard and suggesting that some roughnecks get together, and when the train pulled in they could "take care of" Warnick.

Unaware of his plight and not knowing Mrs. Rogers was in another coach, Warnick sat calmly reading his Bible. Another crewman, who knew of the conductor's plan, watched Warnick for some time. Finally he went to Warnick and said, "Mister, your life is in danger. I'll tell you what you ought to do: When you hear the brakes being applied for the next stop, go to the back of the car and stand on the platform on the side opposite the station. When the train slows enough, jump and run for your life!"

Warnick thanked him and quickly made his way to the back of the coach. Alighting from the train, he headed for some nearby trees. As he entered the woods he looked down the tracks and saw a large mob awaiting his arrival at the station.

On another occasion during an especially tense period in Yazoo City, Warnick was preaching to the local congregation. Seated on the rostrum was a church member named Dancer. Outside the church window appeared several suspicious-looking white men. One held a ladder, and another had wrapped loosely about his arm several coils of a thick rope. It seemed obvious that they had come to hang someone. Presently one of the men entered the vestibule of the church and beckoned for Dancer to come down from the rostrum. He came trembling to the door.

"Is there a black man here who's married to a white woman?" the intruder asked.

"No, sir," said Dancer. "There's nobody here like that. No, sir, nobody!"

Warnick was of a light complexion and his wife, Lucy, was of a brown hue; apparently those who started the rumor had distorted and confused the facts. The mob had come to make certain no interracial marriage was allowed to continue without somebody paying the ultimate price. After all, this was a flagrant violation of Mississippi's carefully guarded code of social ethics. Since there was no black man in the congregation married to a white woman, the men left, taking the rope and ladder with them.

Warnick was later transferred to Nashville, where he was pastor of the local congregation and of a company in Bowling Green, Kentucky. In Nashville he performed the marriage ceremony for Charles M. Kinny, who had been in the ministry for several years and had finally decided on matrimony. Warnick later held an evangelistic campaign in Bowling Green.

Lucy Warnick gave birth to twins in June, 1903. After childbirth she went out prematurely to hear an address by Booker T. Washington at the State capitol building in Nashville. A heavy downpour of rain caught her unaware, and as a consequence she succumbed to what was known as "galloping consumption," acute tuberculosis. She died in December of that year. The disconsolate Warnick then moved to Washington, D.C., but did not take a pastorate immediately. Instead he assisted with evangelistic efforts in Alexandria, Virginia, and later was a pastor in other towns in the State. He was in charge of a church in Danville when his daughter Naomi went to Oakwood as a student, in about 1910.

Naomi Warnick pursued the nursing course in Huntsville, where she met Glenn Simons from South Carolina. They were later married and began long years of missionary service to the church. All their children have connected with the organized work: Norman G. Simons was for years a treasurer in South Atlantic Conference and administrator for Riverside Sanitarium; Donald B. Simons went as a missionary to Sierre Leone and was later a president of Allegheny West Conference; John Simons, a professional builder of homes, was

afterward a treasurer in the South Central and Central States conferences; Richard Simons, also a contractor, was a missionary to West Africa and later an assistant treasurer of Southern California Conference and secretary of the Northern California Conference. At one time he was also auditor in the Southern California Conference. Lois Simons, a registered nurse, married Dr. George Benson, graduate of Loma Linda University Medical School; they were missionaries to Libya and Ethiopia during the Middle East conflicts. Estelle Simons finished the nurses course in Chicago and served the Riverside Sanitarium for a few years before going to psychiatric nursing; Andrew Raymond Simons, a professional photographer, worked in the early forties and fifties for *Message* magazine and provided the journal with perhaps its greatest visual appeal. A great-grandson of the Warnicks, Douglas Simons, entered the ministry in the 1960s after graduation from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. Thus the Warnick and Simons families provided a significant corps of workers to the Advent cause.

George E. Peters, a native of Antigua in the West Indies who began his pastoral ministry in Gadsden, Alabama, also attended Oakwood in its formative years. He was the son of a Moravian minister whose German-based church had attracted quite a following in the islands. There was no doubt of George's enthusiasm for the Adventist message. His education as the son of a devout preacher and his exposure to many good books served as a marvelous and fundamental theological background.

Although Peters attended Oakwood only briefly in the early days, he had acquired more discipline in speech, in decorum, in Bible doctrine, and in diplomacy at home than most preachers who have completed graduate degrees. Thus with his British accent, his impeccable appearance, and his obvious sincerity and solemn resolution, he was able to attract large crowds. In Tampa, Florida, Peters established something of a record for the 1920s when he baptized 245 converts from one evangelistic meeting. He was later

pastor of the Ephesus church in New York and the Ebenezer church in Philadelphia. During the Humphrey crisis (see chapter 15) he proved a great stabilizing force for the New York membership, reclaiming many who had been drawn away by the dissident movement. He was later elected a field secretary of the General Conference, with prime responsibility of overseeing work for the black population in North America, the first nonwhite to hold such a position with the church.

Another early convert in the South was Taswell B. Buckner, who joined the Adventists in 1889. He began as a Bible instructor and was later ordained as a minister. He commenced his work, as far as can be ascertained, by organizing a small congregation in Selma, Alabama. One W. G. Buckner, a prosperous white Seventh-day Adventist, had erected a large building on Early Street in Montgomery, which he called Charity Mission. Seeing Taswell B. Buckner's name in reports to the union paper and assuming he was a distant relative, W. G. Buckner invited him to Montgomery to assist with the founding of a church and church school.¹⁰ Within a few months the two Buckner families had organized a church school and in the spring of 1899 a congregation was voted into conference fellowship. It consisted principally of two families, the Fountains and the Fraziers.

Members of the Frazier family made contributions to the denomination in the fields of business, education, and nursing. Alyce Frazier Follette served the church for years as a church school teacher. Ruth Frazier Stafford became a registered nurse and later taught health education at Oakwood College. Thorington T. Frazier, an accountant and business major, held positions at Riverside Hospital and Oakwood College. Ellen Gould Frazier, a church school teacher, also contributed her talents as a dean of college women in one of the Oakwood dormitories. Hurley Frazier Phillips taught church school for a number of years in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Mary Frazier Carter, another registered nurse, worked for years at Riverside Adventist Hospital and at the St. Helena Adventist Medical

Center. From the Fountain family, Frances Fountain was a church school teacher; Thomas M. Fountain became a minister and evangelist and, later, president of Lake Region Conference.¹¹

In east Tennessee the work among the black population began with the lay efforts of Dr. J. E. Caldwell, apparently the only white Seventh-day Adventist in that area who devoted his full time to work in the black community. One church at Knoxville and another at Greeneville resulted—in part at least—from his pioneer efforts.

The Seventh-day Adventist church in Memphis, eventually known as the Mississippi Boulevard congregation (and later as Longview Heights), began in December of 1898 in the home of Mrs. Ella Gray. V. O. Cole, a literature worker, assisted by Ben Parker, conducted a branch Sabbath school. The meetings soon attracted a considerable audience. A Bible instructor was assigned to Memphis, followed by a minister, Henry Balsbaugh, and a church was organized in 1905. Two years later the first evangelistic meeting was held by a former Baptist minister who brought his entire congregation into the church; he was assisted by N. B. King, a former public school teacher. Mrs. Gray's grandson, Charles A. Gray, spent more than twenty-five years in elementary education, in addition to several years as dean of the college men's dormitory at Oakwood.

In 1909 the Southern Missionary Society was incorporated into the Southern Union and known as the Southern Union Mission, was designated to foster work among the black population in all the conferences. The mission arrangement in both the Southeastern and Southern unions was later replaced by Negro departments, with a senior minister as secretary.

In Pensacola, Florida, in 1909, Joseph H. Lawrence held meetings, assisted by George E. Peters. Among the converts was 14-year-old Frank L. Peterson, who later enrolled at Oakwood and then completed work for a degree at Pacific Union College. He was the first black student to graduate from the full four-year college program at that school.¹² He served as pastor, teacher, president of Oakwood

College, director of the General Conference Regional Department, and as an associate secretary and finally a general vice-president of the General Conference.

Another Pensacola convert, Otis B. Edwards, who also attended Oakwood, went on to earn a doctorate from the University of Nebraska. For more than fifty years he was both a teacher and academic dean of Oakwood. Edwards Hall, the men's residence on the college campus, is named in his honor.

George E. Peters held a tent meeting in Huntsville, Alabama, in 1913, with the result that first a company and then a church was organized, in 1916. Oakwood had opened its doors as a manual training school in 1896, seventeen years earlier, and had been the first means of acquainting the city with a Christian group that observed the seventh-day Sabbath. Harvey W. Kibble, born near Huntsville, joined the church as a result of the college influence. Later he entered the ministry and for ten years was president of Lake Region Conference.

Also in the Huntsville area lived the William Clevelands, who became Seventh-day Adventists after the family moved to Chattanooga. William Cleveland was drafted into the Army during World War I; there he was severely tested on the points of Sabbath observance and the bearing of arms. After the war he was elected a local elder of the Chattanooga congregation. His three sons, all graduates of Oakwood, became ministers in the Adventist church: William, Jr., was president of Southwest Region Conference; E. Earl, an evangelist, was for twenty-three years an associate director of the General Conference Ministerial Association; Harold, the youngest, an effective evangelist and pastor, served as president of Allegheny West Conference.

The Calvin E. Moseley family in Brandon, Mississippi, joined the church after hearing Frederick S. Keitts in a tent meeting. They sent their two sons, Calvin, Jr., and Ernest, to Oakwood. Calvin, Jr., went on to receive a baccalaureate degree from Emmanuel Missionary

College and a Master's degree from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. He entered the ministry in the Illinois Conference, served briefly as a pastor in St. Louis, and for another seventeen years was chairman of the department of religion at Oakwood. In 1952 he was elected associate secretary and later secretary of the General Conference Regional Department. In 1958 he was made a general field secretary.

In the turbulent period after Reconstruction, practically all political rights given the Negro following the conflict between South and North were retracted. A gradual leveling took place. Before the Civil War the question was how to free the Negroes in the South from the violence of the slaveholders. Following Reconstruction the question became how to free Negroes from the violence of all the whites, in the North as well as in the South. Some of the worst conditions facing blacks now prevailed over the entire nation. In fact, this was the darkest period in the history of the Negro in America.

The nation's growing industrial sector used blacks as strikebreakers. Thus they were brought into steady conflict with the white laboring force, as well as with the masses of hardworking new immigrants. In this bizarre and tense situation sometimes more than a hundred blacks were lynched in a year. Observing this gathering cloud on the American horizon, Ellen G. White wrote:

"I am burdened, heavily burdened, for the work among the colored people. The gospel is to be presented to the downtrodden Negro race. But great caution will have to be shown in the efforts put forth for the uplifting of this people. Among the white people in many places there exists a strong prejudice against the Negro race. We may desire to ignore this prejudice, but we cannot do it."¹³

Obviously Ellen White was not one to give up. Even in the face of opposition and threats against their lives she urged leaders of the Adventist work to do something positively and quickly for the Negroes while there was yet time. With the feeling that an insidious power was at work behind the scenes, she wrote this message to the

Nashville church in 1907:

“The attention of statesmen is being called to the condition of the colored people, and by some the national laws are being studied in the light of Bible requirements. Ere long we are to have a closer view of the conflict that is before us. The workers in our institutions, the members of our churches, should now be cleansing from their lives every wrong principle, that they may be prepared to meet the emergency when it comes.”¹⁴

Adventism appealed mightily to an expectant and hopeful people, a people seeking to rise above the limitations of their past. Its doctrine of Christ’s return, repeated endlessly in sermon and song, assured them of the reality of what was soon to be. Bible study groups and cottage meetings addressed themselves to questions of life and death and how to be a Christian in the present evil world.

And black converts were pleased to observe that Adventists were a singing people. Many of their hymns and tunes were new, but they had a singular appeal and a rousing and moving cadence. Adventists and blacks had much in common, making all the more incongruous the terrible importance some whites had attached to the single difference of color.

NOTES

¹ *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 1375.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 223. Early camp meetings laid a heavy emphasis on evangelism. From their beginning, programs have included not only doctrinal, devotional, and evangelistic sermons but also instruction on the laws of diet, health, and temperance.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1375.

⁵ Historical records of South Central Conference, Nashville, Tennessee (in custody of Charles E. Dudley).

⁶ *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 1375.

⁷ See Anna Knight, *Mississippi Girl* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 34.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-92.

⁹ Eugenia Isabella Cunningham, *Make Bright the Memories* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Pub. Assn., 1954).

¹⁰ *SDA Encyclopedia*, pp. 1376, 1377.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1377.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 1376, 1377.

¹³ E. G. White, *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 204.

¹⁴ Ellen G. White, letter 317, 1907.

CHAPTER 7

Shadow and Substance

At about the same time that James Edson White began his work in Mississippi, other earnest Caucasians from the North came south to labor among the black population. One of these, a Brother Maxey, held meetings in Palatka, Florida, about 1896. Eight people were baptized, five of them children, and a company was organized that met in the home of one of the members. Maxey had a farm on which he depended for personal income while he spent his major time preaching and giving Bible studies. Among those who accepted the message under Maxey was Mary Butler, a public school teacher of Palatka, originally from Georgia. Rachel Hughes, the first black Adventist in Florida, had been brought into the church through a similar effort.

In Palatka, Mary Butler was encouraged to study the Scriptures intensively because, it was felt, she would make a good Bible instructor and could help with various evangelistic meetings in Florida. She did this, and, in connection with regular Bible classes, sold copies of the magazine *Present Truth* and the book *Bible Footlights* to awaken interest and as a means of supplementing her sparse

missionary wage. Eventually Charles Maynor, another black convert, with a talent for organizing, was elected leader of the Palatka company. He made weekly visits to east Palatka to hold Bible studies and had as converts the Bruce, Walker, and Williams families. Athea Sweedenberg, a gifted musician from among this group, later became a church school teacher.

Companies were begun in Orlando and Punta Gorda, also, about 1896. M. L. Ivory led out in evangelism in Orlando, and three brothers, Lewis, Charlie, and John Manns, became Adventists as a result of his preaching. In Gainesville, Lewey Cunningham and his family, relatives of the Manns brothers, also joined the church around 1896. In Punta Gorda, Louvenia Mobley, mother of Ruth Mobley Strother (later a Bible instructor with John G. Thomas) was baptized and became a member of a small company there.

The new converts were met with taunts almost everywhere. Their strange beliefs were the constant subject of ridicule in the neighborhood. "You Saturday-for-Sunday keepers," some tactless person would say, "you shore got some funny religion!" Or their children were ridiculed with, "Your mamma keep Saturday for Sunday." Many found employment difficult to obtain because for operators of a business or industry Saturday was the most lucrative day of the week. The "boss man" usually felt he could not grant the day off. School officials often arranged activities on Saturdays and so brought Adventist children into direct conflict with their teachers.

The Jacksonville church was begun along lines similar to other Florida congregations. People from the North had come south to do missionary work in black neighborhoods in response to counsels given by Ellen G. White. O. N. Whetsel came from Ohio to take over the work in Jacksonville. He did not live very long after coming south, but through his influence the Manns brothers began to turn their thoughts toward entering the ministry. Charles Maynor went to Oakwood to prepare himself for larger responsibilities and completed the course of study in 1907. He was for many years a valuable

leader and counselor.

Among the very effective house-to-house workers were I. C. Bunch, who worked in Milton, and George Smith, who worked in Lawtey. According to information provided by Carrie Furman Smith, Thomas Furman, the first black Seventh-day Adventist in Tampa, had accepted the faith in Bartow and had been baptized in 1896. At that time, Florida Adventists had one black preacher, M. L. Ivory, who was ordained in 1899.¹ In that year he reported evangelism in Orlando, Sanford, Palatka, Windsor, Gainesville, Waldo, Jacksonville, and Punta Gorda.

The first camp meeting for the Florida constituency was held in 1903 at Plant City. The Mobleys, the Butlers, and the Lesters went to this meeting and found a small tent erected for blacks, with a cookstove in the yard. There were two more tents for dwellings. Leroy and Ruth Mobley, Anna Butler, and Pearl Walker (later Mrs. Emile Jarreau) were some of the children. Many of these camp meeting regulars from Florida made their way later to Oakwood to obtain additional training for gospel work.

One particularly talented evangelist to emerge from the Florida group was John G. Thomas, who joined the church in 1909 after listening to the preaching of John S. Greene in a Miami tent meeting. He was a chef in the White Palace Hotel at the time, but gave up that job to spend a few months canvassing. Thomas moved to Orlando and secured employment as a cook for the J. K. Hammil family, bankers from Newark, Ohio. John Thomas made contacts with other cooks, gardeners, and chaffeurs of the neighborhood and arranged a time and place for Bible studies.

Mrs. Hammil was so impressed with his earnestness and leadership potential that she told him he would certainly be a great help to his people. When Mrs. Hammil returned to Newark, she contracted influenza and died. Thomas then turned to canvassing. In 1915 he married Anna Butler, of Palatka, whose mother, Mrs. Mary Butler, was one of the first black Adventists in Florida. In 1919 they

went to Bushnell, Florida, where the large Harris family became Adventists; there Thomas took numerous orders for the book *Bible Footlights*.

The State of Florida at this time had suffered a serious migration of blacks to the North, and domestic laborers were beginning to be in short supply. The situation was so grave in Jacksonville that an ordinance was passed requiring migration agents to pay a fee of \$1,000 to operate in the city.² It should be recalled also that of the total U.S. Negro population of about 10 million, 85.2 percent were in the South. Only 6.5 percent were in the Northeast, 7.6 percent were in the North Central States, and barely 0.8 percent were in the West.³ Among the causes given for leaving the South were general dissatisfaction with conditions, the boll weevil invasion of cotton crops, floods, low wages, poor housing, unfairness in court proceedings, lynching, and poor schools. At the time there were altogether sixty-seven Negro public schools, with fewer than twenty thousand students.⁴

Although John Thomas was a good canvasser (three churches were eventually organized in the Bahamas from one copy of *Bible Readings* he sold), in Florida he could not make many deliveries of the books that his prospects ordered. Boll weevils had ruined the crops. So he went to St. Petersburg for the winter, seeking a job. After a week of searching he came upon a site where a white contractor was excavating and building.

"I'm looking for a job," Thomas said. "Can you use a good strong man in your construction work?"

"Sorry," the man said, "I've hired about all the help I can use. Just don't need no more."

"Thank you," Thomas said, and he turned to walk away. The contractor noticed his quick step, his energetic manner.

"Say, come back here a minute," the contractor shouted, as if his refusal had worried him. "Maybe you can help with the plumbing crew. That's what you can do. You can help with the plumbing."

This was an important victory at a critical time for the family, and Thomas decided he wouldn't bring up the problem of Sabbath observance until Friday. Even then, he thought to himself, he wouldn't tell any more about his beliefs than was absolutely essential. The contractor, a man named Hamlin, had bought acres of property, and much was at stake in getting his work finished on time.

"Mr. Hamlin, I won't be back on Saturday," Thomas said with all the boldness he could muster.

"You won't be back?" Hamlin asked. "Why?"

"I am a Seventh-day Adventist."

"Well, of all things," Hamlin said. "You—a Seventh-day Adventist? Well, shake hands. I'm an Adventist, too."

Then Hamlin asked where he was living. Thomas replied, "I'm living in a mighty poor place, but I hope to do better soon." He and his wife had just come to St. Petersburg and were looking forward to the day when they could arrange for more comfortable quarters.

"Tell you what I'll do," Hamlin said. "I've got some houses I'm renting out, and one of 'em has a vacant apartment. How'd you like to live in that and collect rent from the other apartments for me? You could have your place rent-free!"

This was more than Thomas could have hoped for. Not only would it be a place to live, but he could hold Bible studies and church services there. There were only three black Adventist members in St. Petersburg, and the work to be done was considerable. Thomas' home became both church and school.

In March the Florida Conference sent S. E. Williams, a minister from the West Indies, to organize a company. He ordained John Thomas as local elder of the group, and about this time John S. Greene invited him to help with an evangelistic meeting in Key West. Thomas accepted and remained with Greene all summer. Among those who became members in that meeting were the Thomas Reid family and the Perkins family. Following the summer crusade the group organized a church school.

Thomas had worked and grubbed long hours on a farm in his boyhood, and he never forgot this upbringing. He gave Bible studies wherever he could and developed the habit of homily, discoursing on the Bible as a full and sufficient guide for living. He preached everywhere he went, even in the laundry in which he was later employed. Soon conference officials invited him to a full-time evangelistic ministry. In his long years of preaching he would fast and pray for days prior to every effort; as a result, he baptized hundreds throughout the South.

Another soul winner to join the Adventist ranks was Benjamin W. Abney of Columbia, South Carolina, who in 1910 had finished high school and entered college at Allen University. One of his college teachers had told him it was foolishness to believe the world was made in six literal days, and Abney had begun to ask himself if he could still rely on the Bible as the true story he had always regarded it to be. Am I really mistaken in believing that the Bible is God's Word? Abney said to himself. That summer Sydney Scott held a tent meeting in Columbia, and in the course of his sermons answered the question in such a dramatic way that Abney had no more doubts. Following the meetings he went immediately to Oakwood and in the spring of 1911 was baptized. The next summer J. F. Crichlow held meetings in Orangeburg, South Carolina, and Abney joined him as tent master. Before many months Abney himself was holding meetings, and through many years he baptized hundreds.

As with most others who preached the Adventist message, Abney had his difficulties with local authorities who were pressured in various ways to force him to leave town. In 1917 the Carolina Conference sent him to Lumberton, North Carolina, to conduct a tent meeting. He secured permission from one of the trustees to hold this on the grounds of the local public school. The conference shipped the tent but did not send the electrician who usually came along to do the wiring. Faced with this dilemma and with opening service only a few days away, Abney took an emergency step. As he explained it, "The

Lord and I went out and wired that tent." Thus he was able to begin his meetings as scheduled.

All went well until he preached the subject of the Sabbath; after that, trouble broke loose. Many local leaders questioned his right to hold religious meetings on the school grounds and took immediate steps to have his evangelism discontinued.

"How did you get your tent on that lot in the first place?" one irate board member asked.

"A trustee gave me permission," Abney said. "I certainly didn't go into this without consulting somebody."

"Listen here," the school official said. "You come down to my office tomorrow morning. I want to talk to you. Hear me?"

"Yes, sir. I'll be there. I'll certainly be there."

Abney canceled his morning appointments and hurried downtown to see this man who talked as if he could make considerable trouble for believers in the small country town.

"What kinda doctrine is this you preachin' in Lumberton?" the man demanded of Abney.

"Well, all I can say is it's in the Bible," Abney replied. "I preach only what the Bible says."

"Who gave you permission to put up that tent on the school grounds, anyhow?"

"One of the trustees."

The official took the cigar out of his mouth and tamped it in the ash tray. "Let me tell you somethin'," he said finally. "Your kind of doctrine won't do in Lumberton. I'd advise you to take that tent down right away and get out of town. Hear me? Get out of town!"

Abney would not be intimidated. He knew that the Constitution gave him liberty to preach and that this man had no authority to stop him. But he knew also that a case could be made against his holding a religious meeting on public school grounds. Fortunately he was able to secure a lot that same day, only a few blocks away in the same section of town. He took the tent down and had it up again in time for

the Friday night meeting.

There was only one difficulty; the man who did the electrical wiring hooked up the box in such a way as to deliver 2,300 volts of current. When Abney turned on the lights that evening, there was a sharp crashing noise, the bulbs blew, and he received a powerful electric shock. Had the ground been only slightly damp he would have been instantly electrocuted. He put in new bulbs and new fuses and tried again, and the same thing happened. Certain the devil was trying to cancel the meeting, Abney went to the neighbors and borrowed lamps for use in the tent. The people came in the usual numbers, and the meeting went on as scheduled.

Abney labored next in St. Louis and from there went to Cape Town, South Africa, as a missionary. As an evangelist to the Cape Coloured people he was blessed mightily in the organization of several churches.

Joseph Hermanus Laurence, who came to the United States as a youth from Basseterre, St. Kitts, in the West Indies, and who attended Oakwood, became a fervent preacher, telling the gospel story wherever he went. Nearly everyone who knew him thought Laurence had gone mad when he began to discourse on the end of the world and on the Sabbath. The Laurence family were Moravian Methodists and Episcopalians; the idea of a small Sabbathkeeping group had no appeal for them. They made life exceedingly difficult for this lone Adventist in their midst.

If J. Hermanus Laurence had misgivings about his faith, he didn't tell his family or friends. On his own at 17, he came to New York and found shelter in a friend's home in Brooklyn. The first night a defective gaslight that leaked fumes almost cost him his life, but this narrow escape sharpened his commitment to the work of the Lord. The years of rejection and harassment by his family and now this near-tragedy had not been endured in vain. Instead, it provided him with a reservoir of persistence and prepared him for the day when he would go out to preach the message. When opportunity knocked he

was ready to speak for the Master, and everywhere he went he considered that the place and circumstance had provided him with a pulpit.

In Memphis, while waiting for a train, Laurence put up his charts in the waiting room and began telling the message. A small crowd gathered; among them was Milton M. Young, a station porter who was greatly interested in the charts and wanted to know more. Laurence discussed the Bible with Young until train time and kept in touch by mail until he was ready for baptism some weeks later. Laurence returned to baptize him, and eventually Young himself became an ordained minister.

Drawn into a barbershop discussion in Louisville, Kentucky, Laurence directed attention to the Bible and showed how its prophecies described the present day. Leslie J. Pryor, the barber, became interested and also followed through a series of Bible studies. Pryor later went to Oakwood and in time became an Adventist preacher. Frank L. Peterson and Fletcher J. Bryant were other leaders in the Adventist work brought to the faith through the labors of J. Hermanus Laurence.

Another gospel worker who came under his steadying influence was Louis H. Bland, a Creole from Donaldsonville, Louisiana, who had been baptized by Sydney Scott in Memphis. Bland was foreman of a roundhouse crew for Southern Railway, recently transferred from a similar job in Vicksburg. He had married Juanita Hill, daughter of an emancipated slave and a white landowner who operated a horse farm. As a child Juanita Hill had been sent to the *Morning Star* school because her father had considered that it offered the best education for blacks in the city. After her marriage to Bland and their move to Memphis, they were both attracted by Sydney Scott's tent. When they found it was conducted by Adventists, they looked upon it as a place where they could meet old friends again. The Blands attended every night, and both were baptized.

When Louis Bland displayed an interest in leadership work in the

church, Laurence urged him to speak in public, to make the most of his abilities and gifts. Eventually he was called to enter the ministry full time. His first place of labor was Brownsville, Tennessee. From there he went to larger pastorates and in time was elected the first president of Northeastern Conference.

The tent meetings that proliferated through Tennessee, Kentucky, and the Mississippi delta around the turn of the century cannot be dissociated from individuals such as J. H. Laurence, Sydney Scott, and men of like mind and power. These evangelists could recount many instances in which God had attended and used them. There had been seen in their meetings some remarkable conversions, bringing into the church people with great influence and talent. Often regarded as pilgrims and strangers, these preachers served admirably because they believed in the sacredness of their mission. They stood in their chosen lot in the face of failure and deprivation, sometimes living for months on corn bread and sweet potatoes.

Thus, out of a robust heritage of confidence in what the individual might become, Adventists in the South preached a message of Christ's soon return. It was the announcement of a new birth, a proclamation of strength to men who had faith to move mountains. The religion that resulted was personal—intensely so, accepting the hardship as inevitable. Daily living, godly living, exacted the full conscious act of the follower of Christ. To change circumstances was not his lot. Rather, what these men of faith needed most was the Holy Spirit's power to rise above circumstances.

NOTES

¹ *SDA Encyclopedia*, pp. 1371-1375.

² P. M. Bergman, *Chronological History of the Negro in America*, p. 378.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 396.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 379.

The Right Arm

To have predicted in 1900 the widespread multimillion-dollar development of Seventh-day Adventist health-care institutions would have called for either divine inspiration or a wild imagination. The entire church membership was only 75,767, and the program offered an unpopular drugless therapy, in direct opposition to accepted practices of the nation's staid medical fraternity. One point in the Adventists' favor was that they were beginning to change the eating habits of much of the world through their breakfast cereals.

Dr. Lottie Blake, first black physician in the Adventist Church, a graduate of the old American Medical Missionary College in Battle Creek, and a classmate of Dr. Harry Miller, was one of the select group who pioneered these unique health concepts and worked to establish their institution. Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, surgeon, inventor of surgical instruments, specialist in physiotherapy and nutrition, who reared several black children in his own home, took a great interest in her work and urged her to go into the South to establish a sanitarium for this people. Dr. Blake accepted the task with youthful fervor.

The renowned Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, who performed the first successful surgery on a human heart, was then chief surgeon at Freedmen's Hospital in the nation's capital. He had brought considerable prestige to the role of the Negro physician, and black young people throughout the United States noted with more than usual interest the story of his achievement. Dr. Blake in turn inspired many young people to go into medicine and nursing, including her own husband and four other members of her family.

She emerges as one of a generation of superb dreamers and activists in the church who at first underestimated the potential ferocity of Southern white overlords. There were reasons in early years of the century to expect an amicable understanding with former slaveholders, but in instances where whites or blacks came into the field to teach blacks and upgrade them in the labor market, the reaction was instantaneous and savage.

The story of Dr. Lottie Blake's work in the Nashville inner city and north of town at Hillcrest is an indispensable source for those anxious to acquaint themselves with some of the difficult times that went into the making of an Adventist hospital. She began a sanitarium and treatment room in Nashville around 1903, but a sophisticated black community, where Meharry Medical College, Fisk University, and Walden University were just getting a foothold, looked with disdain on what they termed "rag treatments" of hydrotherapy, and they seriously questioned any doctor's practice of medicine without drugs. But Lottie Blake was resolute and determined to get a sanitarium going. Although it is a question whether being a woman hindered her, the fact remains that patronage was never large and the sanitarium census did not seem to grow. A later move to the Hillcrest property on White's Creek Pike proved equally disappointing.

Louis A. Hansen was in Nashville at the time, doing his best to foster treatment rooms for the white population, but even his efforts did not meet with great success. Some would say that physiotherapy and diet therapy constituted a good idea whose time had not yet

come and that Lottie Blake's mission was doomed from the start. When an epidemic of illness broke out among the children of Oakwood's orphanage, Dr. Blake was asked to connect with the school as a resident physician. She remained for some months and went from Oakwood to Birmingham, where she worked for a while with Jim Pearson in his treatment rooms. It was at this time that she was married to David Blake, a Jamaican who was also a minister and a graduate of Atlantic Union College. Leaders in Nashville felt she should try again to develop the treatment rooms, so she and her husband moved to Nashville to a location on Foster Street. Together they made every sacrifice to get a health work going.

During their stay in Nashville, Blake pastored the church in the city and at the same time completed the medical course at Meharry. When he was graduated in 1912, he and his family left immediately for Columbus, Ohio, where he organized a few believers into what is now the Columbus Ephesus church.

From there he went to Panama, where the United States had nearly completed work on the Panama Canal. In this needy republic, the Drs. Blake opened several treatment rooms. The response was as great as he thought it would be. People crowded into the clinics from Panama City, Cristobal, and Colon, eager to have competent medical treatment for their widely diversified illnesses. The Blakes were in Panama from 1912 to 1916, when he was stricken by dreaded malaria fever and forced to abandon his practice.

When he was well enough to travel again, he returned to the States, making the long journey to Charleston, West Virginia, where he hoped to continue his profession. Dr. Lottie Blake and the children journeyed to Jamaica, where they remained for 18 months while Dr. David Blake was getting established in Charleston. They had made great plans for a joint practice and had talked of a wonderful future for the children. The lark was again on the wing. But one day Dr. David went out into the rain, developed a chill, and was once again in the grip of the old malaria. Within a week he was dead.

Dr. Lottie Blake later joined Dr. Stark O. Cherry in Pittsburgh to help ease the load of his demanding house calls and urgent hospital cases. When Dr. Cherry died in 1945, she continued practice in Pittsburgh for some ten years until her retirement in 1955. But the traumatic memory of her experience in the South pursued her throughout her long career. "If there is any logical explanation required to throw light in the direction my life has taken," she said sometime later, "maybe it was the desire to save black young people from similar scenes, similar traumatic experiences."

J. Jim Pearson, of Birmingham, Alabama, was also an early graduate from the nursing course of the American Medical Missionary College. He returned to Birmingham and was able to convince a white businessman to advance money for him to set up treatment rooms in the downtown area. Pearson, unlike the Blakes, decided to open his facility to a white clientele. The venture was an immediate success. Among his patients were U.S. Senators and Representatives and a Supreme Court Justice, as well as numerous local lawyers and judges. Many nationally known politicians signed in at his treatment rooms and acted as publicity agents to spread the word about his baths and physiotherapy throughout Alabama.

The pity of it was that under Birmingham's segregation laws he could not serve blacks except at night and then only with shades tightly drawn. But Pearson realized enough profits from the treatment rooms to begin a boarding school for blacks some distance from the city. Nellie H. Druillard heard about his work and made substantial gifts to the school. This project continued for many years and helped to add permanence and character to the Adventist work in Birmingham.

Meanwhile in the North other health-minded people were preparing to make their contribution to the growing physical-therapy and diet-reform ministry of the church. One of these was Harry E. Ford, of Vincennes, Indiana. Only here and there does one meet men like Ford—a person of few words but one who proved a burning

spiritual light to numerous troubled, aspiring youth. He was utterly self-forgetful, utterly devoted to a great ideal of righteousness, and seemed destined for a significant place in the Adventist work. When his family joined the church about 1905, he enrolled at Beechwood Academy and later pursued the nursing course at Wabash Valley Sanitarium. Here he was introduced to the intricate processes of the denomination's health-care program, already enjoying a worldwide reputation at Battle Creek. He also studied the new science of X-ray at Purdue University and learned to take these machines apart and put them together again.

Harry Ford had been drafted for Army duty near the close of World War I. Once his competence in X-ray became known, he had been placed in the Army hospital's newly developed X-ray section. There he learned considerably more about this technique that was to be a feature of his work for nearly twenty years.¹ Promoted to the rank of sergeant, Ford was a compassionate and understanding soldier who dealt charitably with young men confused and afraid of what desperate turn the war in Europe might take. One private under Ford's command who had to walk guard duty past the Army morgue on a dark rainy night could not endure the ghostly feeling he had about this silent place of the dead. Ford gave the soldier his own raincoat and walked with him several rounds until the frightened recruit could become accustomed to the darkness—and to the dead.²

When the armistice was signed in 1918, Ford was on his way home to Indiana. He stopped by Hinsdale Sanitarium to visit his younger brother Louis, who was employed at this facility located outside of Chicago. There he met for the first time Dr. David Paulson, founder of Hinsdale, who had been a teacher in the American Medical Missionary College. At the time of Harry Ford's visit, Dr. Paulson was opening an X-ray and laboratory section of the hospital and was looking for a man to head this department. Ford seemed to have just the experience and background the sanitarium needed, so Dr. Paulson invited him to join the staff in this capacity. Ford

accepted the position and moved to Hinsdale in 1919. During his years at the sanitarium he learned so much about medical diagnosis that his colleagues considered him to be on a par with the physicians. Behind the scenes with doctors, he would often venture the diagnosis of a doubtful illness. The several physicians would offer opinions, and sometimes Ford would differ with them sharply, but his colleagues declared that he was nearly always right.

Meanwhile, during the years Harry Ford was building up the laboratory and X-ray department at Hinsdale, Nellie H. Druillard, who had received money from Cecil Rhodes's mining operation in Africa,³ decided to do something to provide a health program for the black population of Nashville. Ellen G. White had earlier exacted a promise from her to build a sanitarium for this recently emancipated people, but her work at Emmanuel Missionary College (and later at Madison College) seemed to consume all her time and energy. The day came, however, when she remembered her promise. During a General Conference session in San Francisco she was struck by a car and sustained painful injuries. The pledge she had made more than a dozen years earlier once again came forcefully to mind. Nellie Druillard promised the Lord that if He would restore her to a degree of usefulness, she would proceed with a sanitarium for these people whose cause Ellen White had again and again championed in her lifetime.

On a plot of land facing Trinity Lane north of Nashville, Nellie Druillard decided to begin this health institution for black citizens. The difference between her program and Dr. Lottie Blake's was that Nellie Druillard had considerable resources and could move ahead without being hampered by budget considerations. She proceeded with plans for five frame buildings, similar to those erected on the Madison campus, where she had spent several years. In a little while foundations for all five were completed.

Unknown to her, word spread through the white community that this woman was coming into their midst to organize some kind of

colony for black folks. She was deluged with protests from people who really did not understand her mission. They only knew it was for "Nigras," and they were "agin" it.⁴ Edson White's Mississippi ordeal was being repeated in Tennessee. All her good deeds seemed about to be reduced to ashes.

But Nellie Druillard was not to be defeated. She would not give up the work the Lord had especially impressed her to do. She arranged promptly to purchase other property. It didn't take long to move the sanitarium location to Young's Lane on a high, rocky plateau at a bend of the Cumberland River. A seminary operated by the Baptists was close by on White's Creek Pike, and she felt there would be no complaints in that environment. The new site proved a fortunate choice, since it afforded a commanding view of the city and was a good distance from the road. Because the river wound past immediately below, it eliminated the possibility that a real estate developer might spoil its potential with poorly built homes in the immediate vicinity or that nearby taverns would blare out their raucous music. The institution was named, appropriately, Riverside Sanitarium.

Nellie Druillard took in several girls and trained them in hydrotherapy and nursing procedures. Among these was Grace McDonald, a young woman whose parents had abandoned her at birth and whose sisters had taken her to the Steele Home for Orphans in Chattanooga. Grace's mother and father, ostensibly white (whom she never knew), were evidently typical of the more than thirty thousand very fair blacks who pass over the color line every year. They could not come to grips with the fact that their daughter's complexion was darker than theirs and thus would give away their secret. They left her in the care of Mrs. Steele at the orphanage, who helped her get to the Adventist academy in Minnesota. Later Mrs. Steele introduced her to Nellie Druillard, who invited her to Riverside. Thus Grace McDonald was with Riverside from its beginning. Through high moments and difficult times she was

always a loyal surgical nurse and could ever be counted on to perform her work with compassion and faithfulness.

Nellie Druillard was now more than 80 years old; the routines of a sanitarium and training program were too arduous for one so advanced in years. She decided she could carry the load at Riverside no longer and sought to be relieved of the new health institution venture on which she had embarked. In 1935 when she learned that the General Conference was seeking location for a sanitarium to be established, she decided to give the institution for this purpose. She had spent a total of more than \$250,000 of her personal funds to build cottages, hospital units, and a chapel, and in the operation of Riverside from 1927 to 1935. She told the General Conference audience in San Francisco of her conversation with Ellen White, who urged her to start this sanitarium for the Negro population. She mentioned also her procrastination and how the auto accident brought about a resolution to get it accomplished without delay.

The General Conference asked Harry Ford to take over this work; he left Hinsdale almost immediately after the San Francisco meeting to begin tours of churches on behalf of Riverside. His brother Louis trained in nursing at Wabash Valley Sanitarium (and an excellent craftsman and maintenance expert), came to Riverside to help get the institution on solid footing. Dr. Theodore R. M. Howard, a recent graduate of the College of Medical Evangelists who had interned at Provident Hospital in St. Louis, came in 1937 as a resident physician. Geraldine Oldham was chosen director of nursing service. She was a perfectionist who apparently found it difficult to adapt to an institution just beginning its mission, so she remained about a year and then joined the staff of Meharry Hubbard Hospital in the city.

Ruth Frazier was the obvious choice for a successor, since she was trained at Hinsdale and had considerable experience with Chicago's Shiloh Clinic and related health care institutes and programs. When she accepted the post at Riverside she felt she must carry this task through to the finish; therefore, through all the vicissitudes of the

sanitarium's struggle to raise health standards for blacks she was a faithful ally. She had known Harry Ford at Hinsdale, had shared his interest, and when the invitation came to join this pioneer adventure she responded with youthful enthusiasm.

When nursing education was difficult to secure within the denomination, Ruth Frazier was a constant support for the girls who went into training at Meharry's school of professional nursing. From her leadership background in Montgomery and at Oakwood, she had learned to rally people around the church's mission enterprise, and in a little while the uniqueness of the sanitarium was discussed all over the nation.

In her contacts with patients Ruth Frazier was also a good listener. She had the special art of making people so thoroughly at ease and confident about themselves that they came from great distances to Riverside with the high expectation of seeing her and talking with her about their troubles. She remained at Riverside nearly twenty years. During that time she was married to Joseph T. Stafford, for many years a teacher at Oakwood.

Another pioneer was Chaney Johnson, who had joined the Shiloh congregation around 1929. At the 1936 General Conference in San Francisco she had heard Nellie Druillard tell her story; it impressed her with the sacredness of the medical calling. Shortly afterward (in 1937) she volunteered her services to Riverside, in spite of the fact that she had worked for many years for a wealthy physician and his wife at a salary of \$150 per month, plus room and board, an impressive wage for the times. At Riverside she was offered \$20 a month—all the budget could then afford. Even at that, Harry Ford had a problem making ends meet, so Chaney Johnson contributed her services for a time without pay. She told Harry Ford to take her name off the salary list and that she would work for only room and board as compensation. Ford put his arms around her and said, "The one and only Chaney Johnson!" For two and a half years she refused salary. To her surprise, she found that friends began to send her

needed things—shoes, toothpaste, dress material, and other items—at almost the exact time she needed them.

“That,” she said in later years, “was the happiest period of my life.”

Riverside attracted early attention from business and professional people in Nashville. Dr. William H. Hale, founder and first president of A and I State University, came out to benefit from physical therapy and to enjoy the unusual diet. The sanitarium served as a hideaway for him also from the pressures of a growing State college, which at the time failed to receive adequate money from Tennessee’s governor and legislature. He continued these periodic visits during Harry Ford’s tenure and persuaded many other faculty members to join him at Riverside in this retreat from academic headaches.

A fortunate development in 1939 was the addition to Riverside’s working force of Dr. Carl A. Dent, a recent Loma Linda graduate, who came as head of the medical staff. He was the first black physician to serve an internship at Los Angeles County Hospital in southern California. For him and his family, work at Riverside was like pioneering in an underdeveloped country. He set up a small clinic on the hill to serve outpatients and, with much less than was needed in personnel and equipment, cared for long lines of needy people. He also traveled widely to tell churches the story of the institution’s work and of his plans for its future.

Carl Dent was a person who liked people. Patients came great distances to avail themselves of his services. One woman who became ill while in Europe traveled all the way from Yugoslavia to have the benefit of his meticulous diagnosis and care. In medicine the ability to diagnose is, of course, a highly prized asset. Dent was thorough in his examinations and unusual in his ability to diagnose. Patients also appreciated his complete honesty in telling them what was wrong and what they had to do about their condition. His skill as a surgeon was consummate. Even fellow doctors were high in praise of his competence.

When his family increased and his mother needed his support, when personal funds dropped to a low ebb, there seemed no other choice but for Dr. Dent to go into private practice for a while. Therefore, in 1944 he left Riverside for Santa Monica, California, and established an office in a predominantly Spanish neighborhood. Since he had learned to speak Spanish from associations with boyhood playmates and had a facility and fluency with the language, his patient list grew rapidly.

He returned to Nashville in 1950 after a successful five-year practice and eventually built his own office across the road from Riverside Sanitarium. People in high places have been his patients, and through more than a quarter century his name has been synonymous with Riverside and the Adventist health enterprise. For years he served also on the teaching faculty of Meharry Medical College and has helped train many young physicians now practicing throughout the world.

Increasingly, with passing years, word about Riverside spread to several large cities in the East and Midwest. Congressman Oscar DePriest, elected to the House of Representatives from Chicago's South Side, came to the sanitarium several times, as did also his successor, Congressman Arthur Mitchell, accompanied by Mrs. Mitchell. They both found delight in Riverside's unique environment, amid pleasant and dedicated people. One day Mitchell, who was reared on a farm, asked Chaney Johnson if she knew how to prepare corn pone and black-eyed peas.

She replied, "Sure, I do, and I'll just fix that for your dinner tomorrow."

Mitchell remarked that he longed for food of this type but that his wife didn't know how to prepare it. The next day Chaney Johnson served this dish and he ate it with obvious delight.

"But, Mrs. Johnson," he said as he returned his tray, "are you certain there was no ham hock in this?"

"No," she said, "none whatsoever."

He was amazed that vegetarian dishes could be prepared with such epicurean flavor, with the subtle touch of gourmet dishes he had enjoyed in the most expensive restaurants.

Dr. Merle Eppse, history professor at A and I State University said, "If anybody had told me you could prepare beans without meat, I'd never have believed them. But here at Riverside you've got just that and it tastes better than the meat!" In a public meeting that Chaney Johnson attended he said, "You know, Seventh-day Adventists are clever people. One of them is sitting right here." He then paused and pointed to Chaney Johnson. "They can make the best soybean pork chops you've ever eaten."

Harry Ford thus saw that his work, though often discouraging, was not in vain. He was reaching some of the most influential people in the black community, and they, in turn, were telling others. Word was getting around that Riverside was a place of outstanding restorative healing, a balm for the fevered pace of life. Benjamin G. Olive, secretary of the Universal Life Insurance Company in Memphis, and his wife, the daughter of Judge William L. Moon in Jackson, Mississippi, spent from a month to six weeks out of every year at Riverside. They were later joined by Judge and Mrs. Moon. Mrs. Sampson, the Negro representative to the United Nations, was also a patient, as was Mary McLeod Bethune, advisor to President Roosevelt; Toki Schalk Johnson, personable columnist for the *Pittsburgh Courier*; and Dr. and Mrs. Charles S. Johnson from Fisk University. The list also included several leaders of Protestant churches and of the Sunday school publishing boards located in Nashville.

Judge Henry J. Richardson, Jr., from Indianapolis, Indiana, and his wife were regular patrons, and both had many good words for Riverside and the Adventists. When the application of Oakwood College came up for consideration by the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) board, Richardson, then a member of that board, listened to some objections to the acceptance of Oakwood. It seems a few vocal

people felt the Adventist participation would be disruptive to the program.

"They don't attend functions on Friday or Saturday night," one member said, "and this could complicate our meeting arrangements quite seriously."

Then Judge Richardson took the floor on behalf of the Adventists. "I know these people," he said. "I've gone annually to their Riverside Sanitarium for many years, and you won't find a more sincere and more dedicated people on the top side of the earth. It's true they observe the Sabbath, the original Sabbath, and I admire their integrity and their willingness to stand alone, if need be, for what they believe. Gentlemen, I would say that we need more people like the Adventists. As for the Oakwood faculty and students, they have a remarkable group on that campus. I've been in the city of Huntsville and have observed these youngsters. Their dress and their deportment is a credit to us all. We admit they're different, but they're different in the way we all should appreciate. They're striving to live up to an ideal, and I would offer as my considered opinion that, in the area of education, we need more people like that."

After Richardson sat down, no one made any more speeches on the question. The vote was taken, and Oakwood was admitted to the UNCF by a considerable majority.

All these supportive statements seemed to be valid indications that Riverside was moving upward and was poised to take its place as a unique health mecca for blacks. Then at the plateau of its most glowing promise Harry Ford began to feel some strange and suspicious symptoms. He made his own tests on himself and later consulted with doctor friends at Hinsdale. Their findings: The mysterious penetration of X-rays over a period of two decades had taken its toll. Cancerous cells were already discernible.

Surgeons removed two fingers on his right hand. Before the incision was thoroughly healed, Ford was back in the field again, urging support for his beloved Riverside. He was feeling good once

more and went to camp meetings that summer, taking advantage of every occasion to promote the cause of health. But the usual ruddiness in his face was gone. His appearance did not support his optimism about his health. That fall he entered Hinsdale Sanitarium again for further tests and treatment, since what was suspected was now obviously a fact—the cancer had spread beyond his hand. In a few weeks Harry Ford was dead.

Louis Ford was asked to take up the immense responsibility at Riverside left vacant by his brother's death. There was still only a meager budget and a skeletal staff. He made trips for recruitment of patients and, when possible, attended meetings representing hospital interests. But for most of the time he was at Riverside keeping books, making decisions, and praying for the day when a new hospital would be built. As business manager he had to do just about everything outside the medical line. He purchased groceries, transported patients to and from trains, took care of the garden, helped in physiotherapy, repaired boilers and tractors and other equipment. Fortunately for Riverside, he had a working knowledge of plumbing, welding, and electricity, and he could repair almost anything. In addition, his wife and his father worked as hard as anybody at the sanitarium, most of the time without pay.

Another fortunate addition to the staff during this period was Thelma E. Johnson, who had been trained in typing and business procedures under Dr. Laurence C. Jones at his Piney Woods School in Mississippi. She had been baptized in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1935 and came to Riverside in 1941 at a salary of \$39 per month. A marvelous team worker, she was again one who could do almost any kind of work. She took inventory, composed and wrote letters, admitted patients, made travel and other reservations, helped in the kitchen to be certain meals were served on time, and checked the diet trays. Blessed with a radiant personality, she could make people feel at ease and instantly a part of the ever-widening Riverside family. Mrs. Johnson later became a receptionist for Dr. Carl A. Dent in his

Santa Monica, California, practice and returned to Nashville to be identified with his work and the program at Riverside for nearly forty years.

Prior to Harry Ford's death, plans had been underway to construct a new hospital building, but if they moved at all, it was at a very slow pace. It was difficult to get such a project through church committees during World War II, but the growing need for better hospital care kept the idea alive. The first plan called for an amazingly limited hospital facility, not much larger than some suburban homes. Then the idea expanded under the urging of George E. Peters, who by then was the denomination's elected head of the Negro department in Washington. The much larger building finally agreed upon was completed and dedicated in 1948.

Riverside's private and semiprivate rooms, plus its utilization of physiotherapy, electrotherapy, and hydrotherapy, made the institution unique in a city that had several hospitals, most of which were not blessed with modern buildings. A constant stream of visitors journeyed from many distant cities to behold this new institution and to tour its halls. Teachers and students from nearby colleges and universities came to view what Fisk University president Charles S. Johnson called a "phenomenon in medicine."⁵ Frederick D. Patterson, president of Tuskegee Institute, came and brought with him the famous architect Paul R. Williams, from Los Angeles. The governor's representative and the county commissioner were on hand at the service of dedication to congratulate the Adventists for this unique structure and the devoted service they were rendering in Nashville.⁶

Dr. J. Mark Cox, president of the medical staff at the time of dedication, had done much to organize hospital personnel and institute procedures for the smooth functioning of the health facility. Because he had a deceptively youthful appearance, his ability to diagnose correctly even rare diseases constantly amazed local physicians.

Harry D. Dobbins, who had a building trades background, was called to be sanitarium manager in 1944. He had been at Hinsdale during Harry Ford's stay there and, though for years he had been a teacher and pastor, he had a good working knowledge of the sanitarium routine and what a successful hospital program should be.

Adell Warren was chosen business manager of Riverside in 1947. Warren had a good background in business, with a degree in business administration from Ohio State University. He had considerable experience in the departments of supply and finance with the Army Air Force during World War II. Warren had also worked for the Federal Government as a private citizen in the Columbus office of the insurance department. He was immediately recognized for his superior ability in the field, and Riverside profited greatly from his business background.

The sanitarium began operating a school of practical nursing in 1949, with the thought that this might be a logical preparation for a later school of professional nursing. Quarters for graduate nurses had been built earlier, and now a dormitory for students in the practical nurses course was also erected near the riverbank.

Lysle S. Follette, for some years treasurer of South Atlantic Conference, came to Riverside in 1952 and led in the construction of a chapel building to house the church and to accommodate other programs at the sanitarium. Follette made important friends for the hospital, and his ability to rally support from outside the church made possible the addition of many otherwise costly items of equipment.

Norman G. Simons, another former treasurer from South Atlantic, was named Riverside's administrator in 1959, in harmony with the denominational trend to have a businessman oversee the day-to-day operations of health care institutions. Simons, a versatile and talented preacher who had shown unusual business ability, saw many ways by which Riverside could be updated. For one thing, the

1947 building was more than 20 years old and, though it had been outstanding when first constructed, was now, in light of a great nationwide hospital building program, a bit antiquated.

In the Nashville area there was talk of combining facilities so that patients would go either to Vanderbilt Hospital or Meharry-Hubbard Hospital. A census had shown that Nashville had more hospital beds than were needed. Therefore, when Simons applied to the county commissioner of health for a new building, the answer was No, and the commissioner was adamant on the point. Simons then talked with the influential Dr. Dorothy Brown, on Riverside's staff; she in turn made an appeal to the governor. The outcome was that the governor gave orders to the State Commissioner of Health that the new Riverside building should be erected. The county commissioner, enraged at this action, refused to certify beds in the old building, which left the hospital with not enough income to break even.

Joseph Winston, who followed Simons at Riverside, made strong efforts to cut back and save every penny. He closed the laundry and cut down on hospital services, but all in vain. There seemed no way out but to close the hospital.

At this point the General Conference asked the Southern Adventist Health and Hospital Services (later, the Sunbelt Health Care Corporation), which operated thirteen health institutions in the Southern Union, to take over the management of Riverside. This provided for cooperative buying and other group action to minimize rising hospital costs. James E. Merideth was chosen administrator to see the hospital through this transition, and the future again seemed bright.

Another significant development in the Adventist health program came about in 1976. In that year four Adventist students—Zavon Kanion, Anthony Lewis, Mark Beale, and Daniel Garcia—enrolled at Meharry Medical College. Three were in the school of medicine; Zavon Kanion was in the dental school. As a result of their witness, two other medical students—Keith Jackson and David

Moore, both from Florida—became members of the church.

For the four men who had been longer in the faith, problems regarding Sabbath observance were not new. For the most part, they had been able to avoid confrontations with teachers at Meharry about classwork or laboratory routines required to be done on Sabbath.

Early that year it was announced that freshmen medical students would sit for the National Board of Medical Examiners and that one phase of this examination would be given on Saturday. Anthony Lewis contacted the chairman of the department of physiology and requested permission to take the examination on another day. The department head agreed and suggested to Lewis that there would be no problem, that he could take the examination on Sunday. His agreement was made, however, only with Lewis. There was no mention of other students who would require special consideration; Lewis assumed each would make an appeal on his own.

But as the other Sabbathkeepers came to make their requests, the professor began to have second thoughts. Would there be a problem that those who took this examination earlier might reveal its contents to the other students? Was he setting a bad precedent by permitting any exception to the rule? Perhaps, the professor thought, he would be better advised to abide by a more strict regulation.

When Keith Jackson came to add his request for postponement of the Sabbath examination (his was now the fourth request), the teacher told him there would be no accommodation; he would have to take the examination on Saturday like the rest of the students. Jackson then alerted the other young men, and as a group they approached the professor.

"I'm very sorry," the chairman said, "the decision has been made and there's nothing I can do."

"What about your previous agreement?" Lewis asked.

"I'm sorry, I can no longer honor that agreement. In other words, we in the medical school simply cannot make that kind of accommodation any longer. You'll have to take the examination on

Saturday. It's either that or you'll have to repeat the course. I'm sorry, but that's the way it has to be."

"We can't do that," Lewis declared. "No, sir, we can't do that." The Adventist students thanked him courteously and left his office.

They next approached the assistant dean, explaining to her their situation. She was entirely without sympathy for the boys.

"You do other things on Saturday," she said. "Why can't you do this? As a doctor what are you going to do when someone is sick on your Saturday?"

"We're talking about two different matters, ma'am," Lewis said. "There's a difference between taking an exam and helping the sick. One is an academic requirement, the other involves the actual relief of suffering. Performing an act of healing is in order because, as you recall, Christ healed on the Sabbath."

"I'm sorry," she said with a shrug. "You must be guided by what your chairman says. You'll have to take the exam when it's given or repeat the course."

Clearly the professors intended to support each other, and a student would have a difficult time if he went contrary to procedures they had agreed to follow.

The young men next told their story to the dean. He seemed a trifle annoyed at what appeared to him to be a totally unnecessary problem. He couldn't understand, he said, why Saturday would loom so large in their thinking.

"What is it about you guys that would cause you to make such a commitment? It's such an unnecessary thing, and besides, you're taking up valuable time with this trivial concern. Do all of you feel this way?"

All the young men responded, telling him specifically what the Sabbath meant to them and how their faith in Christ and the precepts of the Bible shaped their lives and determined their conduct.

Finally the dean said, "I know Dr. Coopwood [an Adventist physician and a Loma Linda graduate who was at the time acting

head of a department at Meharry]. I'm persuaded he's a Christian man, and incidentally, he's my neighbor. I notice that he never mows his lawn on Saturday. I mow mine on Saturday and Sunday. I'll take this matter up with him, and whatever he advises, that's what we'll do."

The young men were delighted with this suggestion, for they were certain Dr. William Coopwood would come to their defense in the matter of exemption from examinations on Sabbath. Members of the local Hillcrest church, upon hearing of their plight, joined in public prayer for them; for many of the church members, the steadfastness of the students through trial was a modern replay of Daniel and the three Hebrew captives.

The freshman class was taking the first part of the National Board exam in the basic science building when the dean entered to proclaim his decision. "I have an announcement to make concerning the examination scheduled for tomorrow," he said. "Because of the religious beliefs and convictions of four of your classmates, I find it necessary to change tomorrow's examination from Saturday to Monday. I will entertain suggestions of whether you wish to take it in the morning or afternoon."

There was a sudden uproar. Some students had already moved out of the dormitory into motels to avoid paying a full month's dormitory fees. This meant they would have to pay for two extra nights of lodging at the motel. One student was scheduled to march with his graduating class from Hampton Institute on the Sunday following Meharry's examinations. He would have to receive his degree in absentia. Plane reservations and car-rental arrangements had to be changed. Numerous long-distance calls had to be made to alert parents of a new arrival time back home.

But the dean was adamant. "I said I will entertain no further questions concerning the day of the exam. It will be Monday. The only question is whether it will be in the morning or afternoon."

By then the uproar was so great he didn't call for a vote. He simply

said, "The exam will be Monday at nine o'clock." With that he left the room.

Some classmates approached the Adventist boys and said, "We're really upset with you. You fellas have caused the entire class to suffer." Others, with more reflection, said, "We really admire you for your stand."

When undergraduate students convened in Nashville again in August to begin another academic year, the Adventist boys began meeting on Friday evenings to study the Sabbath school lesson in the medical school's amphitheater, used in the day for lectures. They invited other students to join them, and the number increased shortly to fifteen students.

They enlisted the help of Joseph F. Dent, Jr., educational superintendent of South Central Conference. Dent began a series of Bible studies with this interested group and invited them to meet in his home. He discovered that the young men were serious about Bible study, particularly the prophecies, and that they yearned for something sure and certain to lend stability to their lives. He studied with them until the end of the school term, hopeful that some would make decisions for the Lord.

The next year the young men decided to have their witnessing program in the amphitheater; they secured permission of college officials to use this facility from eight to nine o'clock on Friday evenings. They approached their fellow students, inviting them to the Bible study. Later they had this announced on the public address system, and attendance grew noticeably. They then decided to spread the word to other local college campuses, Tennessee State University, and Fisk University. At those schools the Adventist boys stood in front of the cafeterias on Fridays at noon and personally invited students to attend the studies. Eventually they produced fliers noting the subject, the speaker, and the place and time of meeting. At Tennessee State they offered transportation from the dormitories to Meharry Medical College and back.

The amphitheater had a seating capacity of 120, and the study group often nearly filled it. When a discussion of "What Happened in Heaven in 1844?" was announced, there was standing room only. For all the weeks of their meetings, attendance was never less than fifty.

Young people who had no previous notion of what they might do with their lives decided to give them to Jesus. Within three years sixty-one students, more than one third of them medical and dental students from Meharry, were baptized. Many of these have graduated and, in turn, have gone out to bear their witness and to announce the gospel's glad tidings in neighborhoods where interlocking problems of race and poverty have created a cycle of despair.

NOTES

¹ Louis B. Reynolds, "Boy of Few Words," story of Harry Ford in the ninth-grade reader, *Seventh-day Adventist Advanced Reading Program* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1972), Book II, p. 96.

² *Ibid.*

³ Ira Gish and Harry Christman, *Madison, God's Beautiful Farm, the E. A. Sutherland Story* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Pub. Assn., 1979).

⁴ Bill Holder, "Mother Dee's Monument," a story of Nellie H. Druillard, *The Nashville Tennessean Magazine*, 1947.

⁵ Speech of Charles S. Johnson at Riverside's twenty-fifth anniversary celebration, August 16, 1953.

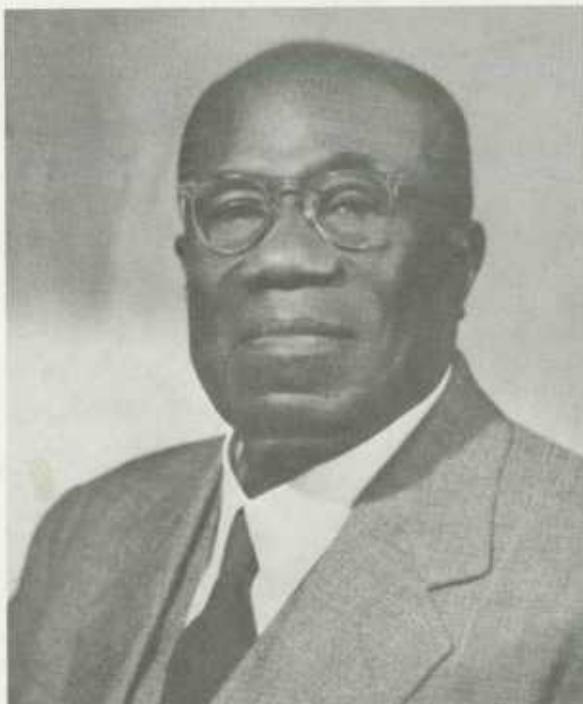
⁶ Riverside Sanitarium and Hospital, twenty-fifth anniversary program, Aug. 16, 1953.



(Above) Churches and institutions serving black Adventists in the South soon after the turn of the century. (Left) Rock City Sanitarium, forerunner of medical work among blacks in Nashville.



(Right) Charles M. Kinny, pioneer of black work in North America. (Below, left) James Edson White, who pioneered work among the blacks in Mississippi and western Tennessee. (Below, right) W. D. Forde, prominent worker in the Chicago area in the 1920s.





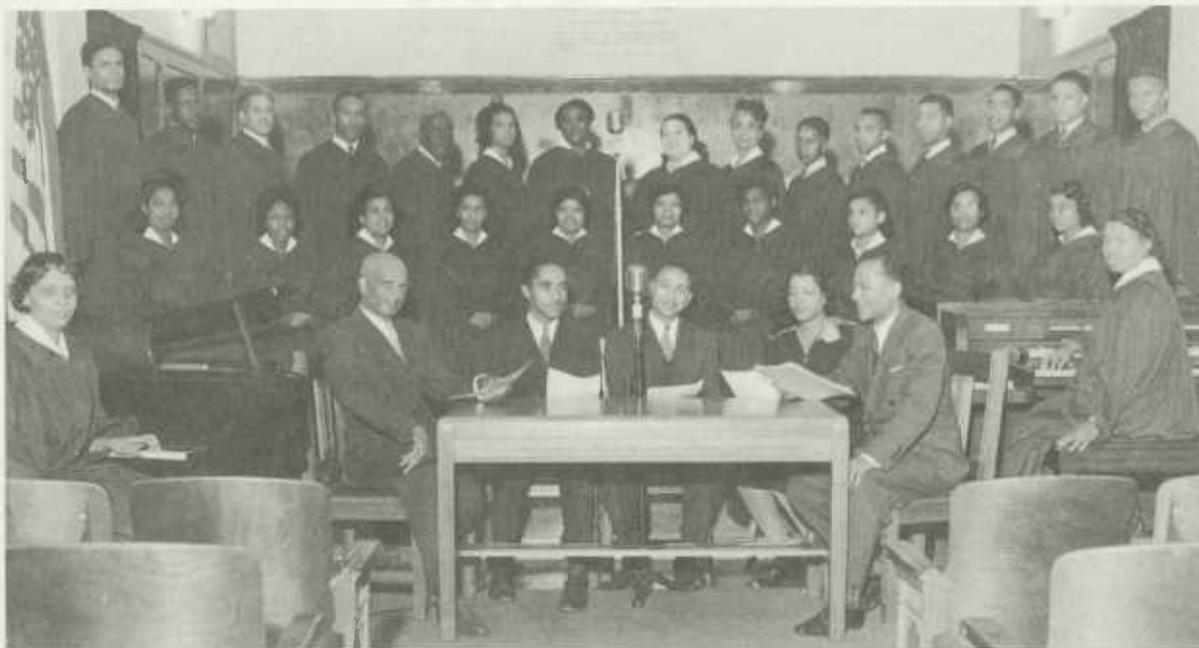
(Above) Workers in the Southeastern Union Conference in 1924. Seated, left to right: W. E. Strother, F. A. Osterman, B. W. Abney, W. H. Winston, P. M. Boyd, F. H. Stevens. Standing: J. A. Bookhart, N. B. Smith, T. M. Fountain, C. A. Lynes, J. L. Martin, (unknown), J. S. Green, R. L. Soaries, Charles Curtis, J. G. Thomas. (Left) A group of students at Oakwood Junior College in the 1930s. The front row includes Jethro Lester, W. S. Lee, and John Street.





(Left) Pastor and Mrs. Philip Giddings, one of the first black missionary families to go to Liberia, in the 1940s. (Below) Workers in the Chicago area in the mid-1930s: O. A. Troy, Harry Ford, R. F. Warneck.





(Above) *The Sweet Chariot Hour* radiobroadcast group in the Sunset Avenue Seventh-day Adventist church in Pasadena, California. Seated at the table, left to right, are Emanuel Wilkins, Harold Lindsey, Ray Stone, Von Naky Smith-Porter, Owen Troy. Mrs. Troy is at the piano, and Ruby Brown Wilkins is seated at the organ. (Right) *The West Coast Quartet*, Pacific Union College, 1947-1948, consisted of Earl Carson, Otto Stokes, Major White, and Owen Troy, Jr.





(Top) Delegates to the Autumn Council in 1949, left to right, front row: H. D. Singleton, F. L. Bland, F. L. Peterson, G. E. Peters, L. H. Bland, V. Lindsay, H. R. Murphy; second row: W. W. Fordham, T. M. Fountain, T. T. Frazier, O. A. Troy, L. E. Ford, W. H. Wagner. (Bottom) Pine Forge Academy (Pottstown, Pennsylvania) students and faculty, 1946-1947. The principal, J. L. Moran, is seated in the center of the second row.



(Top) David Hughes, right, receives a citation for services to the people of Liberia from President William Tubman. (Bottom) A fellowship banquet for teachers of the South Central and South Atlantic conferences. W. W. Fordham and H. D. Singleton, respectively, were conference presidents. (Photo by A. R. Simons.)



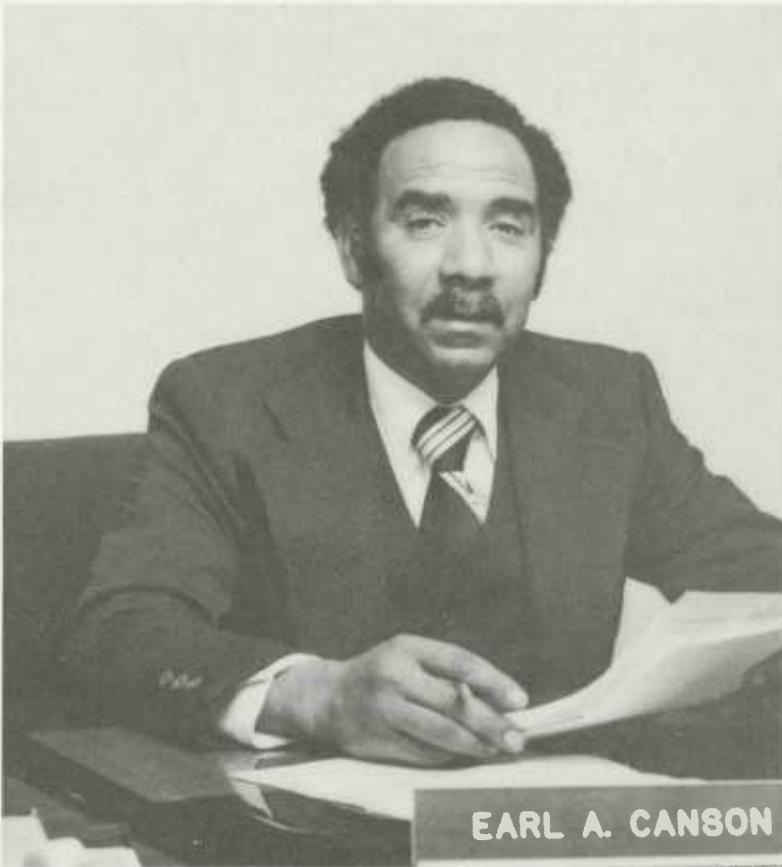
(Left) W. W. Fordham, pastor, evangelist, administrator. (Lower left) Dr. Natelkka Burrell, for many years chairman of the department of education at Oakwood College. (Lower right) Earl E. Cleveland, pastor, evangelist, associate secretary of the Ministerial Association, General Conference.





*(Above) E. C. Ward, evangelist and pastor. (Photo by R. W. Simons, Jr.)
(Left) Major C. White, secretary of the Pacific Union Conference.*



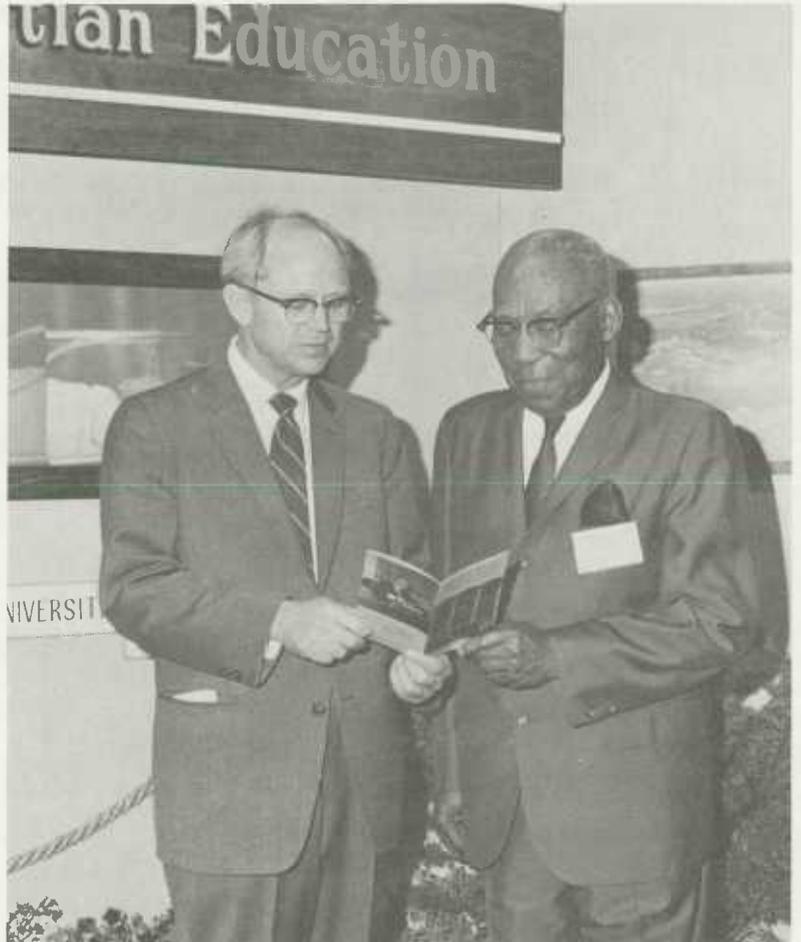


(Left) Earl A. Canson, director of the office of regional affairs, Pacific Union Conference. (Below) Eunice Winston, former treasurer of the city of San Diego, California. (Bottom) Richard W. Simons, secretary of the Northern California Conference, with Marilyn Wolfkill, office secretary.





(Above) President Jimmy Carter greets Charles E. Bradford, vice president of the General Conference for the North American Division, in the White House. (Right) Richard Hammill, president of Andrews University, shares a moment with veteran worker J. Hermanus Laurence at a session of the General Conference.





(Right) Calvin B. Rock, president of Oakwood College. (Below) Oakwood College as it appeared in the late 1960s.



New Trails in the Old West

The Underground Railroad was a humane enterprise operated by people who were opposed to slavery and who helped runaways reach free territory. Sometimes it involved feeding and housing the refugee between points in his journey. Sometimes it meant driving him in a wagon or buggy to a given destination. Again, it might mean listening for knocks at the door at night and going to the window to whisper a few directions to those who could give the password. The route was forever changing, to throw slave catchers off the trail.

The Underground had numerous branches in the North and a few in the South, but not much has been recorded of its activity in the West. Yet, as early as 1855 Seventh-day Adventists in the West were involved.

In Kearney, Nebraska, one Adventist, a vendor of fruits and vegetables and a member of the Underground, had a false bottom in his spring wagon with enough room for a man to hide underneath. With boxes of produce on top, filled with tomatoes, green peppers, oranges, artichokes, and the like, the presence of an escaped slave below was not suspected. Many such devices helped western

abolitionists conceal their activities. A tomato cut in a wedge and placed on the dining table announced to sympathetic visitors that a slave was harbored in the house and they were to be on the lookout for strangers or suspicious people in the community who might attempt to capture him. The Anti-Slavery Society often arranged to secret a fugitive across the Mason-Dixon line, out of the South, but this was only a half freedom. He could still be pursued and overtaken—even from the far West—and returned to Southern bondage. Only in Canada was he beyond the reach of the slave system, for while Canadians gave the slave refuge, they refused slave catchers permission to invade their land.

Hannah Ford was an escaped slave who had been helped by Adventists in the Underground system in the West. She was a sister of Barney Ford, who later became the first black millionaire in the old West. At one time he owned a chain of hotels—in Nicaragua, Wyoming, and Colorado. In Chicago on business, Barney Ford met Edward Goins, a runaway slave from southern Virginia who had fled the South after beating his white half brother, son of the slavemaster, unmercifully. Ford helped Goins get to Nebraska; there he met Adventists and became involved in a Bible study group, which met in different homes on set days of the week. Among the people who conducted the studies were those who, a few years earlier, had assisted Hannah Ford in her escape from bondage. Goins was later married to Hannah's daughter, whose name was also Hannah. Though Goins himself did not join the Adventists, his descendants became members. A granddaughter, Ruth Goins, was a graduate of Adventist schools and was married to Dr. John Bookhart, an Adventist physician who graduated from the University of Nebraska and practiced in Denver, Colorado. Her sister, Donna Goins, was married to Harvey Kibble, a minister. Stories of the secret Bible studies and descriptions of weird prophetic beasts painted on window shades have been passed down in the Goins family through five generations.

Most historians of the nineteenth century were too engrossed with elections, debates, and diplomatic schemes to heed what was happening on the western frontier. They realized, of course, that migrants, prospectors, and blue-coated soldiers were adding great blocks of territory to the nation. But in general it did not occur to them that the pioneers' recurrent wrestlings with the frontier might also create a distinctive way of life and that a denomination was gathering momentum that would spread across the entire nation and the world.

Around 1890, when the Census Bureau declared that a frontier line no longer existed, and Hamlin Garland was writing about the arduous aspects of Plains living, historian Frederick Jackson Turner announced his now-famous hypothesis: to understand America, one must understand the West. By the same token, if one is to understand the Seventh-day Adventist Church, he must understand something of the denomination's roots in the West.

Charles M. Kinny (or "Kinney," according to the S.D.A. Encyclopedia), born a slave in Richmond, Virginia, in 1855, had joined a party moving to the West when he was 10 or 11 years old. The Civil War had just ended, and many emancipated bondmen traveled in groups, seeking their future in a new territory of the nation. Kinny's party divided at points such as St. Louis and Kansas City; most of them found temporary jobs to tide them over until the next stop. Eventually he reached Reno, Nevada, a market of the cattle-raising area and a distribution point for mines of Nevada. Here Kinny found small jobs with attractive pay and sought a kind of permanence he had never known before. Lonely and far from home, he lay awake evenings listening for the whistle of the night train.

In 1878, Kinny attended meetings held under a tent in Reno conducted by John N. Loughborough, pioneer evangelist and administrator. Loughborough and Daniel T. Bourdeau helped to establish five churches in Sonoma County, California, one of them in Santa Rosa, where the first Seventh-day Adventist church building

west of the Rocky Mountains was erected in 1869. Loughborough baptized the first three Seventh-day Adventist members in Nevada in 1878, and Kinny, if not among the three, was certainly in the list of seven charter members of the Reno church.

While Loughborough's effort was still in progress Mrs. Ellen G. White visited Reno, and on Tuesday evening, July 30, she preached to a crowd of four hundred, using the words of John: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Kinny, a deadly serious young man who knew few pleasures in life, found courage and assurance in that sermon. His life as a slave had been uncertain, his family associations at best distant and unpredictable, but in God he had joined a new family, and through His leading Kinny discovered new friends and a new life. He kept his first Sabbath on the last Saturday of September, 1878, and treasured snippets of time spent in church as though they were gold from the Medes.

Reno members, sensing his earnestness, elected him their church clerk. Kinny's ability seems to have been readily perceived by conference officials, who offered him the position of secretary to the Nevada Tract and Missionary Society, established to foster the missionary spirit among local churches.

"Come now, and let us reason together," Kinny was fond of saying, after Isaiah. He could debate as well as keep voluminous records and statistics. The Tract Society was certainly a stimulating adventure for him, for he enjoyed reading. In the books he purchased he underlined choice passages and made profuse notes throughout the margins.

During the period of his work with the Tract Society, Kinny arranged for a complete collection of Adventist books and periodicals to be placed in the public library of Reno and in the Reno Temperance Reform Club. In his zeal he did not forget to share his newly found faith with Baptist friends he had known in Richmond; he placed their names on a list to receive copies of the *Signs of the Times* and other

literature. It is not unlikely that these contacts resulted in some of the earliest converts to Adventism from the black community of Richmond. It was also Kinny's duty to prepare quarterly reports for the *Review and Herald* and to formulate a progress summary for the Nevada Tract and Missionary Society.

As his work came increasingly to the attention of Adventist leaders the California Conference entered into an agreement to help Reno church members send him to Healdsburg College for further education. Kinny enrolled at Healdsburg in 1883, when the institution was only a year old and classes met in the two-story building of the recently acquired Healdsburg Institute. At the opening of this new Adventist college in 1882 it had only two teachers, Sidney Brownsberger (former president of Battle Creek College) and his wife, and twenty-six students. Most students had come for special short-term school programs so they could go immediately into denominational work. Kinny remained for two years.¹

Ellen G. White was living in Healdsburg at the time; the chances are that Kinny had several opportunities to hear her speak during his college years. In 1885, at the end of his Healdsburg studies, the California Conference called upon Kinny's services and sent him to Topeka, Kansas, to commence work among the growing black population of that city. Thus began the long career of the one who was to be the first ordained minister of African descent in the Adventist Church.²

In 1896 Jennie L. Ireland, sister of John Ireland, at one time with the General Conference Treasury Department, began a self-supporting ministry among black Americans of Los Angeles. A graduate nurse from Battle Creek Sanitarium, she did medical work, held Bible studies, and eventually helped to organize the Furlong Seventh-day Adventist church, the first congregation of black believers west of Kansas City, Missouri.

It all began in a prayer meeting held in the Los Angeles Central

church when Jennie Ireland presented her burden to see something done to reach the greatly neglected black population. Shortly after this, Sarah Cain, a Central church member, asked her postman if he would be willing to have someone come to his home to give Bible studies. His immediate response was, "Yes, my wife will be glad to have them." The postman was Theodore Troy, father of Owen A. Troy.

Jennie Ireland herself conducted Bible classes in the postman's home. With the discussions she combined home nursing demonstrations, classes in healthful cooking, and the like. In fact, she taught the Troys and their friends everything she knew about the Adventist message. The Troy family, Mrs. C. E. Hendricks, and the Temple family all joined as a result of these Bible studies, and all made worthwhile contributions to the church over a period of many decades and in many localities. Shortly after the Troys' baptism, a colporteur studied with the Bontemps family and they joined the church. Later many other members of their family also became Adventists.

Owen Troy attended Pacific Union College, and upon his graduation in 1922 entered the ministry in southern California. He followed in his evangelism the same procedures used by Jennie Ireland in presenting the gospel. Wherever he had a church, he set up a clinic, held home nursing classes, cooking classes, and demonstrations of first-aid procedures. During the depression he set up an employment office in the church to assist members who found it difficult to obtain jobs. He taught people how to organize and operate churches. Troy observed how Jennie Ireland drilled and reviewed Bible study subjects until her students could explain the topics themselves, and in his ministry Troy did the same. No one was baptized into his congregation until that person thoroughly understood the Adventist teachings. Troy always taught principles of healthful living as a doctrine. In some churches he established clinics and always emphasized the vegetarian diet, which Jennie Ireland

had also taught in that first Bible class. In 1924 Troy married Ruby Bontemps, a daughter of one of the original Furlong families, a young woman with a charming personality who had a great gift as a public speaker and an extraordinary competence in music.

Troy was a creative, constructive genius, a man of explicit detail who used his great talents to the honor and glory of God. He conducted several tent meetings, baptized many converts, and his church administration was a model of order and detail. He was a violinist of consummate skill and with great success conducted choirs and choral groups, including the Sweet Chariot Hour radio group. On one occasion he rendered violin numbers in connection with a program featuring the celebrated Roland Hayes. He also played for the wedding of Ralph Bunche. He had the reputation of being the best violinist west of the Mississippi. Troy was totally honest, hardworking, unyielding on points of principle, and had a personal reputation that was pure gold.

In 1923 P. G. Rodgers came to Los Angeles from Baltimore to take over the work begun by Jennie Ireland. A native of Philadelphia, he had been the only convert from a tent meeting held some years earlier by Fred H. Seeney in Wilmington, Delaware. Rodgers was a tall man, more than six feet, and since both he and his wife were of a very fair complexion, the congregation thought the conference had sent a white man to be their pastor. Mrs. Rodgers was a Moor; that is, one of a group of people of mixed Indian, white, and Negro ancestry, found in central Delaware. Like the Spanish Moors, they had a racial flow back and forth that defied classification. But whatever the Rodgerses' origins, their warm and friendly manner, and their aggressive church program soon won the hearts of the Furlong group.

Rodgers began one of the most progressive city ministries that had ever been undertaken in southern California. Each year he pitched a big tent on Central Avenue in the heart of the black community and usually ran a three-month summer crusade. He used the best talent available to make the tent services attractive to Central

Avenue crowds and other visitors brought by members from nearby Pasadena, Long Beach, and Santa Monica. Eventually membership outgrew the Furlong building and the congregation moved to the Thirty-sixth Street location. From there they moved to the Wadsworth Avenue church building. Out of the Central Avenue meetings came, in addition to Los Angeles converts, people who made up new congregations in Pasadena, Santa Monica, and West Los Angeles. The Watts church was organized around 1914.

Rodgers was a chiropractor as well as a minister of the gospel. He treated scores of people without cost; many felt that his competence in health matters greatly enhanced his ministry, that his pastorate was more successful with the practice than it would have been without it. Conference administrators, however, took a dim view of the chiropractic interest and advised him not to continue it as long as he was a pastor, since they felt either would require his full time. But a task that would have overwhelmed ordinary men seemed to be no problem for Rodgers. Contrary to official fears, the Wadsworth congregation continued to grow, and Rodgers was said to have done more to build up the work in the Los Angeles area than any man of his time.

Rodgers also had considerable musical ability. He developed choirs involving many young people, and on numerous occasions he arranged appearances for them in nearby communities. H. M. S. Richards invited them to sing for his big evangelistic meetings, and other Adventist pastors in the area invited them to present music for Sabbath services.

After studying the prophecies with Jennie Ireland, Paul B. Bontemps, who came to California from Louisiana, had aspirations to enter the ministry. Sensing this, Rodgers sent him out on Sabbath assignments to preach to congregations that had sprung up around Los Angeles. Eventually Bontemps was ordained and given a permanent charge. He had been a bricklayer in the South, and he brought this special skill to his ministry. In the difficult depression

years he built the Pasadena and Watts churches at a substantial saving in hard-to-get cash.

His son, Arna Bontemps, was graduated from Pacific Union College and entered upon a career of teaching in denominational schools. His first assignment was Harlem Academy, where he was eventually made principal. His second appointment was to Oakwood as English teacher. His last service to the denomination was as principal of Shiloh Academy, in Chicago. He devoted many years to writing, first in the Pacific Union College paper and then in *Signs of the Times*. Later he submitted manuscripts to major New York publishers and became famous in his lifetime as a prolific and sensitive interpreter of the black experience. For many years he was librarian and writer-in-residence at Fisk University. For about six years he was a visiting professor at the University of Chicago and at Yale.

Mrs. Estelle Hendricks, another Furlong charter member, volunteered her services to the church as a Bible instructor. She was a woman of great personal charm, exploding vitality, and she gave genuine substance to the spirit of Adventism. Her home was perpetually open to young people, and she helped several aspiring students receive a college education. Some of these eventually became leaders in the Adventist work.

Dr. Ruth J. Temple, another original Furlong member and daughter of a Baptist preacher, was an idealist who found in the Adventist Church the embodiment of all the good things she had sought or known, a beginning of the eternal journey toward the city of God. Born in Natchez, Mississippi, where her parents had gone as "missionaries" from Granville, Ohio, Dr. Temple has described the protective environment of their residence near Natchez:

"Our home was our world—our world of preparation for a larger service. Located on the outskirts of Natchez, we had a 13-acre homesite called 'Templedale.' It was covered with tall trees, green ferns, and flowering shrubs. We loved it. Though we did not go out into the community, our lives were full. We loved each other's

society, and we learned to know and appreciate other people. My father had a wonderful library and was an excellent Greek and Hebrew scholar. As he was delightfully interesting, students often consulted him on matters of educational interest. Our parents brought people with whom they worked into our home, and welcomed all who wanted to visit and enjoy our simple home life."

The family moved to Port Gibson, Mississippi; while her father served there as pastor, he became ill and died. Afterward her mother took the children to Los Angeles, where they came in touch with Jennie Ireland's Bible class and became Adventists. Ruth Temple attended the old San Fernando Academy and later enrolled in the medical course at the College of Medical Evangelists, now Loma Linda University.

She finished medical school in 1918 and began practice the same year. In 1923 she began work in the Los Angeles County Maternity Service, and for many subsequent years, while in private practice, maintained connections with the city health department as a maternity service staff member. She was also one of the chief attending physicians in the children's clinic at the College of Medical Evangelists. Throughout her long career she held several positions on the faculty of her alma mater. In 1941, after taking a degree in public health at Yale University, she was appointed assistant health officer and director of special health services for the city of Los Angeles. Many times she has related one incident, which seemed especially to probe her heart and channel her life into an ever-unfolding performance for God and humanity:

"I remember receiving a call quite early one morning while I was in private practice. The telephone rang, and when I answered sleepily, my senses became instantly aware of the distress evidenced by the caller. A voice fraught with terror cried in broken accents, 'My baby's breathing hurts him to breathe!' I threw on some clothes and hurried to the address given near San Pedro Street. I found in a miserable room greatly lacking in ventilation a distraught mother

clutching her baby. Willingly she allowed me to make a hurried examination, which confirmed by fears. I dashed out to call the hospital. When I returned and explained quickly to the mother that the baby had pneumonia in an advanced state and must be taken immediately to the hospital, her expression changed. Her eyes, now full of hate and fear, rejected me. 'No!' she cried. 'I love my baby; and when he is sick, you can't take him away and put him among strangers.'

"Desperately I explained that doctors and nurses were kind, and that the baby would have a chance to get well in the hospital. She only clutched the child closer and refused to allow me to take it. This was, of course, before the day of penicillin. . . . The mother feared hydrotherapy. Without a chance for help this baby died! But that little one's death was not in vain.

"I knew then that through ignorance many people perished. Health-education programs would have to be developed that would teach people how to accept medical aid and how to help themselves to health. I also knew that young people who had lost their way, who had illegitimate pregnancies and venereal diseases, must be taught a better way. . . . I wanted to teach hopeless people that their God-given talents were being wasted and that they could, with God's help, start anew and work for themselves toward wholeness in an atmosphere of new opportunity."

Dr. Temple began her initial health study club in a YMCA building, not far from the home where the baby had died of pneumonia. The program was instituted with the purpose of helping people help themselves, teaching them how to prevent disease and tragedy. Another important objective was to inform them of available medical services—either through a private physician or some public health service. She also taught them that many health-connected problems had some spiritual or mental origin, that guilt feelings were often registered not only in depression and anguish but in pain.

In 1944 Dr. Temple and her sister conceived the idea of a general

countywide community Health Week that would embrace the entire population. The idea was accepted and implemented by the Los Angeles County Health Department. Since 1945 the program (the only program of its kind, so far as is known, in the world) has been followed every year with astounding success. Health Week was proclaimed annually by the mayor of Los Angeles and the county board of supervisors. All metropolitan dailies carried articles and pictures about Health Week; streetcars and buses displayed posters; radio and television stations promoted the event; city and county schools, parent-teacher associations, women's clubs, men's organizations, chambers of commerce, labor groups, business leaders, churches, and other major community bodies put on extensive Health Week programs.

A luncheon at the Biltmore Hotel featured well-known speakers who urged citizens to take advantage of opportunities made available by medical science to improve their health and thus contribute to more abundant living. Dr. Temple continually emphasized spiritual needs and took advantage of every opportunity to introduce people to the Lord Jesus as the Source of healing and health. She succeeded in getting Health Week recognized throughout California, and in 1976 U.S. Representative Yvonne Braithwaite Burke, of California, introduced a bill in Congress recommending that her program be promoted and implemented throughout the nation.

Evangelism in California has flourished through the years since the ministry of Rodgers at Wadsworth. Frank L. Peterson, who left the General Conference to take over the Wadsworth pulpit when Rodgers retired, continued the soul-winning ministry, baptizing more converts who joined the already overcrowded sanctuary. It was necessary then to organize new congregations and expand old ones. R. Hope Robertson, who moved from the West Indies to California in the early forties, also began a campaign that resulted in scores of baptisms. His unusual, sometimes controversial, presentation of doctrine, which raised eyebrows even among Washington leaders,

nonetheless contributed to a stable and responsible membership.

One of California's native sons, Owen A. Troy, served as pastor of the Shiloh congregation in Chicago for several years. For a time he was business manager at Oakwood College. He returned to California in 1939 and began a radio program called *The Sweet Chariot Hour*, which he fostered in connection with his evangelism at Pasadena's Sunset Avenue church. In San Diego Jarrod E. Johnson, another fervent soul winner, carried on an effective laymen's movement that added a considerable membership. Meanwhile Harold A. Lindsey followed Troy in Pasadena and later moved on to be pastor of Compton Avenue church. Troy moved to the union as secretary in the Office of Regional Affairs. R. Wendell Nelson kept up a steady program at Market Street church in Oakland, and Jeter E. Cox built up the small group of believers in San Francisco. Many new churches were added, and young men, most of whom were graduates of Pacific Union College, were installed as pastors: Earl Canson, Major White, G. Nathaniel Banks, Garland J. Millet, and Eric C. Ward.

An evangelistic crusade in west Los Angeles by E. Earl Cleveland in 1964 resulted in the baptism of more than four hundred converts and served as a field school for numerous ministers of North America and even South America. R. Wendell Nelson, transferred to southern California, continued the soul-winning emphasis and baptized scores of new members who joined the Sunset Avenue church or, later, the Miramonte church in Los Angeles. Jonathan W. Allison, who joined the early Adventist congregation at Edgefield Junction, Tennessee, also was a pastor in southern California, as was his son, Jonathan, Jr.

Byron R. Spears came to California from Kansas in the early sixties to add his evangelistic talent to the growing work in the West. In time he was invited to join the Voice of Prophecy staff and thus widened his ministry to cover the entire nation, reaching out occasionally to hold meetings in Hawaii and Bermuda. Spears had the unusual

ability to memorize long Scripture passages; he quoted them faultlessly, without a mistake in a word or sentence. He was able to attract large crowds and baptized scores of converts from both white and black districts. An altar boy in the Catholic church during his boyhood, Spears could speak convincingly to people of Catholic, Episcopal, and Anglican backgrounds about his yearning for a more substantial and plausible faith.

Dennis T. Black, a minister with considerable experience in building and decorating, supervised the construction of a new church in San Diego while he was a pastor in the Southeastern California Conference. When he was assigned to the Berean church in Los Angeles he led the work of building a new church for that congregation, which greatly enhanced the Adventist cause in the city's westside community.

A new Los Angeles Academy was built in 1946, and Joseph F. Dent, who had been administrator of a junior academy in the city, was installed as principal. Christian education thus received a new vote of confidence, and teachers came from many parts of the nation to join the faculty. This consciousness of the place of church school swept across the Pacific Union, and black children took their places in the numerous other academies and grade schools provided by local conferences in the West. Pacific Union College, La Sierra College, and later Loma Linda University, all showed increased enrollments of black students after World War II. Moreover, the colleges added black scholars to their faculties, making these campuses even more attractive to students representing minority groups. Gaines Partridge, formerly on the faculty of Oakwood College, was made associate dean of admissions at Loma Linda, with a special responsibility to recruit black students for the several medical and paramedical programs.

John R. Ford, a physician who located in San Diego, was soon on the staff of nearby Paradise Valley Sanitarium and other hospitals. A specialist in thoracic surgery, Ford had both a wide clientele and

lucrative practice; hence, he soon became well-known in the State. In 1962 he was appointed to the California Board of Education, and in 1973 was made chairman of the board. He insisted that the story of Creation be included in elementary and high school texts, and the board voted to do this. The result was a massive revision of texts, not only for California but for other schools served by publishers of their textbooks. The decision was widely discussed on radio and television, and in newspapers and weekly newsmagazines.

Willie S. Lee, an Oakwood graduate, was elected regional department secretary after Troy's term in the union. He surveyed the vast field and sought ways to get more people involved in conference evangelism. Under his leadership black congregations grew considerably; offerings also registered a dramatic increase.

G. Nathaniel Banks, whose family came to California from Oklahoma in 1923 and who were among the charter members of Pasadena church, pastored briefly in California before he was called to West Africa to become the first black American president of an overseas mission. He went out in 1945, remained until 1954, and upon completion of four terms of overseas service located once again in California. In a few years he became secretary in the Office of Regional Affairs and remained in that position until his retirement in 1976.

Earl Canson, who followed Banks in the Office of Regional Affairs, had come up through the ranks as a pastor in California and had served briefly as associate secretary of the Southern California Conference. His election coincided with the move of Pacific Union Conference offices from Glendale to Thousand Oaks in 1976.

Other changes had taken place in California affecting the regional membership, which in the late seventies numbered more than thirteen thousand. Major C. White was elected an associate secretary of the union, and both Earl Canson and G. Nathaniel Banks were members of the union committee. Also serving in a lay capacity at different times on the union committee were Anita J. Mackey, social

worker with the Veterans Administration in Santa Barbara; and Gloria Mackson Hemphill, treasurer of the Rapid Radial Transport in Sunnyvale, who also had served as a missionary in Tanzania.

Another of California's sons who has had a distinguished career in evangelism is Eric C. Ward. While he was pastor in San Diego he instituted what he termed the "Go-Tell" program, an imaginative lay witnessing plan that caught on quickly in the Southeastern California Conference and around the nation. His special Bible study tracts have been distributed by the thousands and have been used in white and black congregations alike to win numerous converts to the church.

The Pacific Union Conference and the local conferences that it comprises have exhibited a certain awareness of social change in the sixties and seventies and put forth some effort to keep pace. In 1945 and beyond, when regional conferences became a reality in the East and Midwest, the approximately 1,500 blacks and the sixteen conference workers who made up the regional department's constituency of the Pacific Union Conference felt that the two major groups could work well together and that a certain posture of integration would take hold in the West.

When black pastors were called together in 1955 they voiced what they felt to be the sentiments of their constituents: that in the existing conference structure they believed that departmental and administrative positions would be opened to black leaders in the conferences. They felt that by this means some of the accomplishments of regional conferences would be duplicated in the Pacific Union territory if the membership could demonstrate patience and set up some type of forum where black and white leaders could meet and iron out problems. They could also plan ways to develop an integrated system of operation throughout the union and its related fields. In 1958 a race-relations committee was set up within the union, composed of conference presidents, union administration, some union departmental personnel, and representatives of the black constituency from the local conferences. This committee was later expanded to include

all minority groups and was still functioning in the late seventies. The result has been an increase in cordiality among the races and a better understanding of the needs and aspirations of the various ethnic groups.

Some developments were considered worthy of a place in the record. In 1971 Major White was elected associate secretary of Pacific Union Conference, the first to serve in that capacity. Ron Lindsey became an auditor for the union's trust department in 1976. John Collins was appointed associate director of the union's lay activities department in 1977. The Pacific Union has had a director of the office of regional affairs since 1942. Frank L. Peterson was the first; those succeeding him were Owen A. Troy, Willie S. Lee, G. Nathaniel Banks, and Earl A. Canson.

In the Southern California Conference Lorenzo Paytee is the executive secretary. William DeShay is coordinator of black affairs. Byron Dulan is an associate director of the youth department. Phyllis Paytee is supervisor of all the elementary teachers in the conference, and R. Z. Boyce is an assistant in the publishing department. The Southern California Conference has for some years endeavored to meet the needs of its largest minority by providing a sufficient number of pastors, Bible instructors, and evangelists to do the work. Those who served in Southern California in the seventies included Joe Hutchinson, an assistant in the publishing department; Glen Howell and James Kyle, both associate youth directors. Richard Simons and Ronald Lindsey had positions in the treasury department, and Eric C. Ward, R. Wendell Nelson, and Earl A. Canson served as executive officers for the conference.

The Northern California Conference elected Richard Simons in 1974 to the post of executive secretary. Ned Lindsay had directed the inner-city work in that conference. David Taylor was associate youth director and Kenneth Smith was conference evangelist and the coordinator of regional affairs. Irwin Dulan, who since has taken up mission work in Ethiopia, once was associate youth director of

Northern California Conference.

In the Southeastern California Conference Horace Barker is the director of the inner-city work and coordinator of regional affairs. Maurice Woods is presently serving as associate director of the youth department. Others who have been on the Southeastern California Conference staff in recent years have been Richard Hamilton, David Taylor, Henry T. Saulter, and Edward A. White.

The Central California Conference has as its director of communication and director of its community services department William C. Webb. Richard Hamilton is associate youth director. Others who have served in recent years on the staff are Ted T. Jones, David Taylor, and Major C. White.

All California conferences employ office secretaries from the black constituency, and most of the hospitals operated by the denomination in the Pacific Union have Afro-American members working in key positions. Two of the twenty-three senior academies in the Pacific Union have had principals who are black: Roland McKenzie, principal of Lynwood Academy; and William Wright, principal of Golden Gate Academy. Approximately fifty qualified black instructors teach in the Pacific Union school system from kindergarten to twelfth grade.

Pacific Union College and La Sierra Campus of Loma Linda University have made significant progress in employing minority group educators and administrative personnel. Pacific Union College has three black faculty members, and La Sierra Campus has six. Two black staff members serve as resident deans.

In the seventies five black ministers were assigned to nonblack churches, either as pastor or assistant pastor.

The development of the West and of Adventism was simultaneous. Their time had come at the time of the end. Yet the two were not identical. Converts who had become members in the East and Middle West moved beyond the Rockies like water released, eagerly or under social or financial compulsion. The preachers moved under a system.

Unique to Adventists, the system was called "the movement," and what they proclaimed endlessly was "the message." Preachers did not go on their own initiative or wander about like friars. They went when and where the conference committee directed.

To the fringe of civilization in the West, where "church bells were seldom heard and religious observances were so rare as to be holidays," the zeal of the Adventist Church brought fervency, regularity of devotions, and a certain hope. Books and tracts and magazines were distributed everywhere, and the witness of Adventist members carried the gospel throughout the vastness of the West. Others might have seemed as fiery in their faith as the Adventists, but they lacked the judgment-hour evangel, the authority of the Word, the gift of prophecy to spur them on to a finished work. The assurance that divine guidance was with them, and the experience of learning as they went, sharing what they had learned, made these servants of God invincible.

To join the young and growing churches in the West with believers in the East would require more than organization. There would have to be another level to give Adventists of African descent some feeling of common purpose. Thus increasingly a nationwide identification with Oakwood College came into being. Further, weekend sessions at Wawona Camp and the annual gathering of the black membership at Lynwood Academy, both in California, have always been attended by speakers from the East. Geographical, racial, and language affinities, and natural related interests had their meeting point in the Advent hope, the hope of the coming of the Lord.

NOTES

¹ Louis B. Reynolds, story about Charles M. Kinny, in third-grade reader, *Forward March*. (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1963), pp. 280-285.

² *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 741.

The Oakwood School

Oakwood Industrial School, as the denomination's predominantly black college in North America was first known, began its mission on a broad, irregular landscape near Huntsville, Alabama, in 1896. It was a next step in the educational process for students from *Morning Star* schools who, as they completed elementary grades, had need of more advanced training to prepare themselves for teaching, nursing, Bible work, the ministry, and related fields.

The manual arts, emphasized by Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee, had seemed an essential part of any program in education for Negroes, and this aspect was not left out of the reckoning. Edson White had advocated this also because so many had expressed the fear that schools for blacks would unfit them for practical everyday encounters; the feeling was that an educated black man would not work; hence the white man would have to take care of him.

Moreover, the idea that blacks should be taught chiefly to farm and work railroad beds and perform domestic chores was prevalent throughout the South, as one readily observes in institutional names such as Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical College, Tennessee

Agricultural and Industrial College, and Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College. Tuskegee Institute was the most famous leader in the work ethic, and since its graduates were assured of jobs wherever they went, Adventists followed the development of Tuskegee with growing interest.

In 1895 a three-man educational committee from the General Conference went to Alabama to select and purchase property (not to exceed \$8,000) for a similar industrial school for black youth. These were G. A. Irwin, director of the Southern District of the General Conference; O. A. Olsen, president of the General Conference; and Harman Lindsay, a former treasurer of the General Conference who had also assisted in the founding of Battle Creek College. On the way south they stopped in Chattanooga, Tennessee, at the home of L. Dyo Chambers, where they met Anna Knight, a young woman then seeking training for her future work in the church. The next morning they continued their journey to Alabama.

In Huntsville the committee was directed to the Beasily estate, a 360-acre farm approximately five miles northwest of town. When surveyed it seemed a suitable location for the proposed school. The committee made its report to the General Conference, describing the land, the buildings, the accessibility to students scattered over a wide geographical area, and its possibilities for earnings from industries. With the consensus of leaders in Washington favorable to the acquisition, Irwin and Olsen returned to Huntsville for formal negotiations and purchase of the property. This time Mahlon E. Olsen, son of O. A. Olsen, accompanied the group. The General Conference thus purchased the Beasily estate late in 1895. Because it had sixty-five towering oak trees, Irwin and Olsen recommended that it be called Oakwood. It was to be operated as an industrial, normal, and theological school for Negro youth.

A few years later when Ellen White saw the property she was also delighted with it and wrote concerning what had been revealed to her about its development: "In regard to this school here at Huntsville, I

wish to say that for the past two or three years I have been receiving instruction as to what it should be, and what those who come here as students are to become."¹

The Beasily estate, although originally a beautiful and fertile place and at one time a frequent refuge for Andrew Jackson, had been greatly neglected. The stately oak trees on campus were a mass of brush and low-hanging limbs. "The old mansion house," says Arthur Spalding, "was in bad disrepair, and the long row of slave cabins, built of squared cedar logs planted upright in the ground and clapboarded, were decaying and dropping to pieces. Even the well near the house, which rumor said had been the burial place of a Yankee cavalryman, was broken down and choked with debris, and the old barn was leaning to a threatening fall. The land, mostly a heavy clay, had been so long and continuously cropped with cotton, and so robbed of humus, that some of it was as barren as rock. It was a place in which to begin at the bottom."²

The first staff member to arrive on campus after the Oakwood purchase was J. J. Mitchell, of California. He came at night with O. A. Olsen; his initial glimpse of the place the next morning was so discouraging that he at once resigned as manager, though he remained on the place for about two years. Grant Adkins was sent from Atlanta to take temporary charge, and an effort was made to get another farm developer. Finally, Solon M. Jacobs, of Iowa, was persuaded to undertake the all-but-overwhelming task. Fortunately for him, two students had already arrived: George Graham, from Birmingham, and Grant Royston, from Vicksburg. It was reassuring for these young men to see the president of the General Conference and the district superintendent don overalls and work with other help in the first efforts toward campus improvement. Jacobs began to plow up what was left of the mixed-grass prairie and to cut through the dense undergrowth. He also conceived the idea of husbanding the soil by contour plowing. Parallel furrows across the slant of the land kept the rainfall and fertilizers in the dry and sloping earth and

helped prevent erosion.

Thomas Moore, a former slave on the Benjamin Tyson Moore plantation who joined the Adventist Church about 1923, recalled passing by the Beasily plantation in the early morning before daylight during his years as a slave. On these vast estates in the Huntsville area, as elsewhere in Alabama, the work schedule for slaves commenced before daybreak. The relative cool that preceded sunup found the laborers hurrying toward the big house, getting ready to begin work in the fields. Moore remembered the cruelty of the Beasilys, who whipped their slaves before sending them to their never-ending toil. He often heard the cracking of the whip and the sad moaning cadence of those whose flesh throbbed with pain. "Mercy, Lord; mercy, Lord," was the only cry Moore remembered from these tragic captives who wailed and groaned and wept aloud in their anguish. With the winter dawn a cold wind ran along the ground, dipped and spun toward the bottom of the ravine. Moore's heart bled for his comrades in suffering. For them there was no prospect for deliverance save in the Lord.

When the Adventists purchased the Beasily farm, things were, of course, different. Here at last on the same soil were men of great compassion and faith, willing to risk life itself to make a better life for these freed men, now no longer compelled by forced toil and servitude, but nonetheless puzzled about the future.

"One of the prime necessities," Spalding wrote, "was a good supply of water. At first they had hauled it in barrels from a spring on the hill; then they set a windmill up over a well in the field, but two hours' pumping ran it dry.

"Then they began on the old well by the house. They worked for two days clearing that well, digging through seventeen feet of mud mixed with knives, pitchforks, clevises, plow-points, rocks, and what-not. All that gave evidence of the Yankee cavalryman was a spur that appeared on the second day, an object that induced the telling of the story. . . .

"The grove was cleared of brush, and the trees were trimmed up, but attention had chiefly to be given to the farm, for on that dependence must be had for a living. Only fifty acres were in cultivation when Jacobs took charge, the rest being grown up in brush. All but fifteen of these fifty acres had been farmed out to renters, who of course had taken all they could out of the land, and yearly improverished it."³

Perhaps the most unpromising piece of Oakwood soil was a bare ten-acre plot that was obviously unprotected against the smoldering Alabama sun. Like most soil in the region, it was red as paint, washed and gullied, and in this case, there was scarcely a weed to shield it. Jacobs worked diligently to plow and harrow this section of land, but he didn't have enough fertilizer to go around after caring for the garden. Hence this problem soil yielded no returns the first year, though it was adequately sown with seed. "The next spring," Spalding records, "it was sowed to cowpeas, which struggled up about four inches, only to wither in the July sun. They were immediately turned under and another crop sowed, which, blessed with rains, made a good showing, and were also turned under for manure. The third year another sowing of cowpeas produced a third of a ton to the acre. Manure was hauled upon the stubble and turned under; then winter wheat was sowed. And the next summer, three years from the first treatment, the ten-acre plot gave a harvest of 270 bushels of wheat."⁴

Gradually these first efforts toward survival began to show dividends. Under Oakwood's limited assets and necessarily strict budget, the acreage could not be developed at once. The parts of the farm that yielded food naturally received the lion's share of the fertilizer. One economy was achieved by chopping cornstalks into fine particles and using them as cattle feed. And for future crops barn manure was scrupulously saved, mixed with hundreds of loads of forest leaves and weeds, and compounded with air-slaked lime. Going this step beyond contouring in an effort to produce good

topsoil, Jacobs hoped to safeguard the ground for future generations. Forest trees, thickly grown on the tangled slopes, stood sentinel over the garden plot; the latter was plowed in the fall, disked, harrowed, and heavily fertilized in the spring, ready for a summer-long harvest. That which began in a modest way grew steadily in soil efficiency and crop yield. Planting was rotated almost yearly as some twenty-five acres each were sown to cotton, cowpeas, and wheat. Seventy-five acres were devoted to corn.

To guard against possible Klan-type raids against their enterprise, such as Edson White had known in Mississippi, Jacobs made open attempts to cultivate friendship among whites in the community. The white population in Alabama at the time had an inordinate fear of a community taken over by black youth who might overturn Southern custom, influencing insurrection against the sharecropper's uneasy system. The fact that white teachers had come down from the North to conduct classes at Oakwood was not reassuring. So the Oakwood staff, finding on surrounding farms an icy barrier difficult to penetrate, entered into the other essential job of making friends.

Spalding has told of an old man, one of the nearest neighbors, who seemed especially bitter against the Adventist teachers. Jacobs, knowing this, "took the opportunity of a rainy day to carry a saw for filing to the old gentleman's son, who was a carpenter." Describing the growing tension, Spalding added that, while the two were in the shop talking, this old man came out. "He stepped into the doorway, filling it with his tall form, and gave this greeting: 'Another Yankee come south to teach us Southerners how to farm!'

"Mr. Jacobs walked up to him, put his hand on his shoulder, and said, 'Mr. B, I have just been wanting to get acquainted with you, and wishing that I could make the best friend of you that I could possibly get in this country. Now in the North I thought I knew how to farm, but when I come here, and see your soil, and see how differently you farm, and your different tools, I am persuaded I don't know how to do it, and I want some friend who will advise me, to go over that farm

and show me how to plant, how to thin, and what to put in. I have just hoped I could find that friend in you, for I'm not acquainted with any other white men, except two or three merchants.'

"That made a friend of him. In a few days he visited the school farm, and went over it with the manager, telling the peculiarities of every piece, and giving advice freely as to its cultivation. He always remained the best kind of friend, and so did his sons. One of them, John, was much of an experimenter with new seeds, and one season Mr. Jacobs requested him to save him seed from his harvest. One day in the fall, as the father was driving past, Mr. Jacobs asked him if John kept those seeds.

"'Kept 'em!' he exclaimed, 'he's got 'em in a band box. Anything you want he puts in a band box and stores it away in the house.'"⁵

The story of another hostile neighbor in those beginning days throws light on the strained atmosphere in which northern teachers worked. In this instance the school took occasion to offer all-out help in what seemed the neighbor's greatest personal emergency.

"Early the second summer his barn took fire and burned everything he had—mules, wagons, harnesses. He had fifteen acres of corn, and not a chance to cultivate it, and all his neighbors were busy with their teams and crops. One morning soon after, Mr. Jacobs took his boy Bertie and four or five students, put six cultivators on the wagon, harnessed six mules, and drove over to his neighbor's.

"He went to the door and told him he had brought the boys over to cultivate his corn. The man stood looking at him, dumbfounded. At last he said, 'Is that the kind of man you are?'

"'Yes, that's the kind of man I am. Why not?'

"'Well,' he said, 'if that's the kind of man you are, I've got something to do.' He stepped out of the door, and with a trembling voice he said, 'Mr. Jacobs, I've said some mighty hard things against you for starting that nigger school. Now I ask you to forgive me for all I've said.'

"'Why, I had forgiven you long ago,' returned Jacobs. 'If not, I

wouldn't have been over here.'

"Out into the field they went, and Jacobs said to his boys, 'Now, boys, if you have ever done an honest day's work, do one today.' And they did. Noon came, and Jacobs directed the boys to bring in the dinner from the wagon.

"'No sir,' said the man, 'my wife is getting dinner. We have something to eat, at any rate. And you shall eat dinner at my house.' The evening saw the job of cultivating completed, not only in the soil but in the heart of a neighbor."⁶

After this incident, Spalding says, Jacobs and the students went to the farm of Byrd Terry, a black neighbor, who needed similar help with his wheat, and spent a day cultivating. And he adds that "reports of these acts of Christian grace to white and black alike went arm in arm about the country."⁷

"Another neighbor that summer," he also recalled, "saw his wheat spoiling in the shock because of the frequent rains, while he had no help to break it out and dry it between showers. With astonishment and gratitude he accepted the help of the Negro students one sunny day, and they put his wheat in the barn before night. When he came to Jacobs with offer of payment, Mr. Jacobs said to him, 'You owe us nothing. I haven't time to do this for money; I have all I can do; I have done it only to help you out.' The man looked hard at him, but said never a word.

"This man owned a threshing machine, and a few weeks later came to thresh on the Oakwood farm. As he climbed up on his engine to leave, Jacobs called, 'Hold on; I want to pay you.'

"'Well,' he said, looking down from the footboard, 'you'll never pay me nothing. I didn't have time to thrash for you for money; I had all I could do; I did it just for accommodation.'"⁸

The Oakwood campus began to take distinctive shape with the construction of West Hall, a small two-story frame building, completed the first summer. It was to serve for many years as a recitation area and a young men's dormitory. The makeshift slave

cabins, pressed into service the first few years, were merely a way of getting started.hovels such as these were obvious relics of past humiliation and brutality, and students felt they would just as soon forget them. Jacobs quickly demolished them.

The old cookhouse, one exception, was converted into a laundry, and it stood for some fifty years. Its tall chimney was dismantled, and five thousand usable bricks were salvaged for other campus construction. Photographs of students in the original Oakwood laundry show an unbelievably primitive operation. Old smoothing irons were heated against a coal stove. They were used for pressing sheets, pillowcases, shirts, dresses, and towels. An iron caldron, set in the top of a brick furnace, served as the laundry boiler. For washtubs students used kerosene barrels sawed in two; these bridged the gap until more conventional equipment could be purchased.

Three years after the founding of Oakwood a study hall was erected. In the early days the library had few books, mostly donated, possibly without regard for their usefulness in the curriculum. There was a work and study program, but most of the studying was done at night around potbellied stoves in dormitories. The new study hall, three stories high, was constructed by student labor and provided more expanded quarters for those earnest scholars. Stone for the foundation came from Oakwood's mountain, studding and frame were fashioned from Oakwood trees, and shingles were split from the same abundant source. Boys used this as a dormitory while girls occupied West Hall and the addition to the old mansion.

The denomination numbered less than twenty thousand in its entire membership and was struggling to build churches, hospitals, and schools in many places. Oakwood was one of many institutions calling for a substantial outlay of funds; it is understandable that the General Conference could not supply all these pressing educational needs at once. Nearly every student at Oakwood had to depend on work offered by the school to see him through the financial midnight

then engulfing the nation. Work on the farm and in the shops seemed to be the only means of survival.

The fortunate part was that, in the process, an important essential to education was fulfilled—students learned to do necessary and profitable work. Young women became experts at home chores, home planning, cooking, laundry, garden and orchard cultivation. Young men were taught the best methods of agriculture, and not a few became proficient in carpentry and masonry. Their testimony through subsequent years has been that hard, practical labor for them had disciplinary value. Making the most of meager facilities, while working to provide better, was fully as great an education as that which came through the study of books. There was at Oakwood a resulting spirituality and depth of purpose in connection with these ordinary pursuits that followed the students wherever they went. Those who went into denominational service made exceptional ministers and teachers, and they organized numerous churches and schools throughout the nation.

The first graduation exercise for nurses at Oakwood took place in 1909. This description of a typical school day that year was published in the November 25 issue of the *Review and Herald*:

“Regular class work was begun on the morning of October 3. The enrollment was good for the time of year. The daily program has been so arranged that classes recite in both the morning and evening, leaving the larger portion of the day free for industrial work. The greater number of our students must meet their own expenses in school by their labor, and with our present plan, they will be able to work enough to meet their current expenses and carry from one to three literary branches.

“All seem anxious to succeed in getting a good practical education, and are quite diligent in their studies. Besides the regular work in the lower grades, we have organized classes in Bible doctrines, algebra, geometry, English literature, bookkeeping, and general history. A commendable interest is also manifested in the

industrial classes. Instruction is being given in plain sewing and dressmaking. In a short time classes will be opened in blacksmithing, carpentry, broom making, agriculture, and printing.

“Faithful work is also being done in the music department, including both vocal and instrumental. Two nurses’ classes are carrying on their regular course of instruction.”⁹

Oakwood gained early prominence as a school that offered a valuable and worthwhile education for sons and daughters of former slaves. At an annual conference of Negro schools held at Tuskegee in 1901, Thomas Jesse Jones, of the United States Bureau of Education, stated publicly that Oakwood was the nearest to the government’s ideal in the South. In his inspection tours he had visited every Adventist school in the nation and he also reported on them in the bulletins of his bureau.

Each change of administration re-posed the question of how far the school should go in its departure from racial customs of the South. The knowledge that not too much virtue and idealism might be expected from frail, flawed human beings kept the black leadership constantly at work prodding whites to follow through when change was obviously called for. Carl Sandburg’s six-volume biography of Lincoln, *The Prairie Years* and *The War Years*, depicted the great President’s effort to shift with the winds of change while always steering generally in what seemed to him to be the right direction. Adventists gained much from this kind of sincere grappling with the social problem in the southern states.

Through the administration of W. J. Blake, who became the sixth principal in 1906, and successive presidents, there was always the awareness that in the deep South strong fears of amalgamation did exist; that these must be recognized, and allayed if possible. Blake decided on the policy he would pursue as Oakwood’s principal in all matters dealing with race. He didn’t spell it out in so many words, but its outline was clear in all he said and did. He would not take a stand as bold as that of earlier abolitionists in the denomination, but he

would push as steadily as he could in the direction he instinctively felt Oakwood should go. Quietly and insistently he appealed to the better nature of the progressive southerner, to his sense of justice and fairness, to his tolerance, to his so-called special understanding of the black man born of the years the races had lived side by side. It would not be an evangelical crusade; it would be a dialogue, a calmly rational discussion with faculty and townspeople about black and white relations as they affected Oakwood and the Huntsville community. It took this kind of stubborn courage to speak with the voice of reason in a violent time.

Study Hall was leveled in flames shortly after classes began, October 11, 1906. This was a hammerlike blow for a struggling school with few financial resources. But faith in the school was strong; the small band of Adventists, North and South, rallied and provided money for the first cement-block structure built on campus—an administration building with chapel and classrooms, completed in 1907. Work on Oaklawn, a residence for the principal, was finished the year Study Hall was burned. Butler Hall replaced Chapel Hall in 1908, and the sanitarium building, since renamed East Hall, was set in operation in 1909.

In the process, industrial development was not forgotten. Carpet-weaving, raising of poultry, and making and repairing of shoes were all introduced in 1906. Later came a print shop, a second laundry building, a garage, a barn, a silo, a wagon house, and a cannery to make campus operations even more self-sustaining. C. J. Boyd succeeded Blake as principal in 1911; the next year he began an organized program for orphans and built on the hill a two-story dwelling for these homeless children. In 1914, the year World War I broke out, The Pines, a duplex apartment for faculty members, and Henderson Hall, a boys' dormitory, were built.

By 1916 young men from Oakwood were being drafted into the Army. For some the orderly routine of education was interrupted indefinitely. To Americans at home the war seemed far away, a war

over Europe's differences, though their sons were fighting in it. But when a few Oakwood students were drafted the rest could hear it, feel it, see it in fantasy almost every hour of the day.

That same year representatives from Alabama's Department of Education visited Oakwood for the second time. They were generally pleased with the type of school the denomination was fostering—actually its campus was then a bit more advanced than the Alabama A & M Institute, a State school some seven miles away. In its report the group recommended that the industrial program be organized so as to correlate with academy classes. Under a wartime economy a small school could not make outstanding advances, but this seemed reasonable and workable.

Boyd was succeeded by J. I. Beardsley, a man with a certain grace with words; he was named president. Under his leadership the school acquired twelve concrete cisterns and a pump, a potato house, and two teachers' cottages. These were not great achievements by later standards, but with the nation at war, the very fact that the school continued at all was in a way a triumph. Student enrollment grew noticeably under Beardsley, as often happens after devastating hostilities. A number of faculty members were added, more books were acquired for the library, and the value of Oakwood's property increased approximately one thousand percent. In 1926 a normal building, devoted to the theory and practice of elementary teaching, was erected.

Around 1920 an incident in which Beardsley attempted to discipline a student touched off a strike that caused a suspension of classes for a full week. Lawrence Longware, who had been accused of a serious infraction of Oakwood's rules, was told he had to go home. Longware did not wish to depart the campus, of course, and when he absolutely refused to do so Beardsley and several faculty members went to Butler Hall to expel him from the grounds and take him to the railroad station. Several students who witnessed the incident felt Longware was the victim of unnecessary brutality, and their report of

the altercation touched off a campus-wide strike. Students refused to attend classes until the president agreed to hear them on this and other grievances. The final resolution came when the matter was brought to a faculty meeting, and students who witnessed the incident were called to testify. Faculty members recognized the validity of their claims and made several concessions at these hearings. Students reported afterward that relations between faculty and themselves became greatly improved.

Joseph A. Tucker became president of Oakwood in 1923. Under his administration a students' cottage was built, the dairy was expanded and improved, a concrete sidewalk circling the campus was installed, and a reservoir was constructed toward the mountain slope. Also, by 1928 enrollment had increased to the point where a new women's dormitory was needed.

While the normal building was being erected the dining hall caught fire and burned to the ground. To meet this emergency the General Conference Committee voted an appropriation of \$15,000 toward a \$32,000 building that was to accommodate not only a dining hall and kitchen but a forty-room girls' dormitory, complete with dean's quarters, worship room, laundry room, and storage space for trunks. Henderson Hall, the residence for young men, had been erected a few years earlier.

President Tucker traveled with Oakwood's singing groups, raising money for the school and recruiting students from New York to California. He was entertained in the homes of black members and generally made himself one with the cause of the school and its students. He steered the school through some of its most difficult times, including the financial depression that began with the stock market crash and the closing of many banks in 1929.

Blacks, who now joined the faculty from other sections of the country, raised questions about carrying on the work of a college under what they considered to be primitive conditions. How much, after all, is a teacher expected to sacrifice and deny himself in order to

teach at Oakwood, they asked. And some young teachers thought the rules and restrictions antiquated and absurd. The system suddenly appeared to be too paternalistic; students were said to have been overprotected, and in another sense boxed in with little means of fulfilling their blossoming ambitions. One teacher insisted there was too much moralizing in the instruction. Many felt that opportunities should be given for even more Negro teachers to join the faculty. Reference was made to one or two white faculty members who, students felt, seemed to demonstrate as much prejudice as those who professed no religion.

A strike at Knoxville (Tennessee) College was in the news; this, with the Scottsboro trials, the defendants in which were jailed at Huntsville, caused an uneasy racial tension throughout Alabama. To add to the fury, the National Guard was mobilized in Huntsville. Worldwide attention was focused on the cruel inequities and backwardness of the whole South. It was almost inevitable that, given the circumstances of wholesale unrest among blacks throughout the nation, long-nurtured grievances would break into the open again at Oakwood.

After some deliberation, student leaders decided to enter into a mass protest, but it was thought best to express their grievances in a pietistic and orderly way. A boycott of classes was planned to coincide with the fall meeting of the board of trustees. On October 8, 1931, at the early-morning breakfast, A. Samuel Rashford, a student, rang the school bell to make an announcement. "From this time on the students will be on strike," he said. "We'll have perfect order throughout the strike. We'll place student monitors at the doors of each building. No one will do any work or attend any classes until we get a hearing from the board. We intend to present our cause direct. In the meantime we can pack our trunks and get ready to go back home if that's necessary." Students took their posts with something close to military discipline. Even when Tucker went to the campus store to purchase gasoline, Theodore Perry, the student in charge,

courteously refused.

Speeches by other student leaders followed at a meeting called in the worship room of the young women's dormitory. Young people insisted they would stick together through every conceivable circumstance.

One by one a dozen or so students appeared before a committee of the board, demanding a new president. They wanted several campus rules rescinded, and they wanted better food. The hearings lasted into the night, and board reaction was mixed. Some declared it a mistake to listen to student complaints and demands. After all, they asked, were students running the school? Others saw in this an omen of the future, a sign that the college was on the verge of an inevitable new order and a change for the better. Surely, they argued, the time had come to give greater responsibility in directing Oakwood to the black membership of the church.

The matter was debated not only in the board but in numerous private conversations throughout the nation. Some white leaders expressed the view that no Negro in all the denomination was capable of being president of Oakwood. But the board, after a long and prayerful deliberation, decided to install James L. Moran, former principal of Harlem Academy, as Oakwood's president. He began his duties in the summer of 1932.

Actually several black Americans had joined the faculty during the years since 1924: Frank L. Peterson, Otis and Roberta Edwards, Julia Baugh, Fletcher J. Bryant, Arna Bontemps, Harry and Jennie Dobbins, and Joseph and Alice Dent. Their efforts to build Oakwood had been made with conscientious ambition and carried out with great enthusiasm. They recognized discipline as a necessary way of life at Oakwood, as is true of all successful schools, and knew that getting an education on any campus is serious business. Through the efforts of these teachers the Oakwood graduate became marked as a man or woman of serious work and practical achievement.

Moran's first days at the college made a considerable impact on

students and faculty. Registration was about to begin, but classrooms were badly in need of repair and painting. Although there was little or no money in the treasury to devote to restorations, Moran determined that these improvements would be made. He donned overalls, improvised a scaffold, and did scraping, patching, and painting himself. The result was immediately apparent, and from that moment no one doubted the board's wisdom in the selection of Moran as Oakwood's new president.

To keep pace with other Adventist colleges across the nation and to make possible the continued education of Oakwood's graduates beyond the Bachelor's degree, in the 1940s school officials sought accreditation for the college. This quest involved long-term planning, curricular changes, and faculty development. An extensive building program was inaugurated that included the construction of a science building, a separate library facility, and an up-to-date demonstration school for practice teaching. The first science hall was named for Harry E. Ford, the first library for William H. Green, and the demonstration school for Anna Knight.

After World War II, campus enrollment swelled with combat veterans, mostly medics from various theaters of service. Many were married and took up quarters in Army-surplus mobile homes on campus. These were obviously serious students, with life goals already determined. One of them, C. B. Tivy, made the highest grade point average in the history of the college. Most were men preparing for the ministry.

Living quarters for an increasing number of young men and women called for the erection of Eugenia I. Cunningham Hall, originally a women's dormitory; Frank L. Peterson Hall, originally a men's dormitory. Later Bessie Carter Hall, a residence for upper-classwomen, was added, and the dormitory for college men, Otis B. Edwards Hall, named for a revered academic dean and teacher for more than forty years.

Oakwood's laundry, enlarged in the 1950s to fulfill a contract with

the Huntsville Arsenal and its space program, became the largest laundry and dry-cleaning plant in northern Alabama. It has been a continuing campus industry and source of finance. Income is used largely to provide tuition and living expenses for worthwhile students who were without resources of their own.

As more people were baptized into the church, invariably their thoughts turned to their children. Often without the advantage of an education themselves, they were anxious that their offspring should widen the gap between the leanness of the depression and the postwar boom. Many families sold every worldly possession and borrowed heavily in order to give their children the advantage of a Christian education. Enrollment at Oakwood in the fifties was more than four hundred, and the administration was hard put to furnish adequate housing.

At Oakwood no expense was spared to make education available to as many as possible. Students found there not only knowledge but an advanced step in faith, an unexplored remainder in their Christian life. Numerous accomplished people were invited to serve on the faculty. Among them was Eva B. Dykes, the first black woman in the history of the nation, perhaps of the world, to complete requirements for the Ph.D. degree. She had graduated with honors from Radcliffe College in 1921, was a brilliant Latin and Greek scholar, and for many years had taught English at Howard University, where she was once voted the outstanding teacher of humanities. More than this, she was a devout and uncompromising Christian, an Adventist who set a worthy example to students. A demanding teacher, she would penalize students if she felt they were doing less than their best. Although she was a well-known figure outside the church, a frequent women's day speaker, a celebrated figure in black history, she never hesitated to go onto the streets with students soliciting Ingathering contributions or selling magazines to help spread the faith.

Calvin E. Moseley, Jr., who came to the campus as a Bible teacher in 1934, perhaps did the most to inspire and prepare young men for

the ministry. An excellent preacher himself, it was only natural that students would imitate his style, lean heavily on his notes. Although Christian standards underwent frenzied upheaval during the 1930s, Moseley stood solidly as a block of granite for the plain virtues. He was the disciplined student of guarded emotions and restrained impulses, for whom work and thrift formed a holy creed. He insisted on simple, unadorned dress for preachers and Bible instructors. Beyond the social niceties, Moseley believed, lay the deeper issue of responsibility, of example, in carrying the Advent message. "After all, gentlemen," he used to say, "people tend to look more at you than at the Word you preach."

Through the years of its existence, Oakwood has been known for its singing groups that have acted as goodwill ambassadors. A quartet from the college sang for the General Conference session in 1926. Their appearances on radio, television, before Kiwanis, Rotary, and national rallies of various groups have publicized the college far and wide.

Oakwood is a member of the United Negro College Fund since 1964, and Oakwood Alumni chapters have supported this cooperative fund-raising effort for church-related colleges. Oakwood's Brenda Spraggins was chosen national queen of the UNCF for its 1967 meeting in New Orleans. The fund's climactic meeting was changed from Friday night to Saturday night in order to accommodate her observance of the Sabbath. Oakwood received its annual share of UNCF contributions; in the latter 1970s this check amounted to nearly \$200,000.

Garland J. Millet was elected president of Oakwood in 1954 when Frank L. Peterson went to Washington as a General Conference field secretary. Millet had taught in the English department of Oakwood upon his graduation from Pacific Union College in 1934, had been principal of Washington [D.C.] Union Academy, a teacher at Los Angeles Academy, and subsequently entered the ministry, pastoring in Los Angeles and Santa Monica, California. During his nine-year

administration at the college, thirteen buildings were constructed or enlarged to serve the needs of a constantly growing institution. In this period also, in December, 1958, Oakwood received the long-sought accreditation as a senior college with the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

Addison V. Pinkney, educational superintendent of Allegheny Conference, became president in 1963. A native of Baltimore and a member of an old Adventist family, Pinkney had been in educational work nearly all his adult life and brought to Oakwood a natural commitment to Christian education. It was under his administration that Oakwood College was made a member of the United Negro College Fund.

Pinkney guided the destinies of the institution at a time when widespread racial protests were at their height and when the Vietnam War was debated on nearly all college campuses.

When the General Conference met at Detroit in the summer of 1966, Pinkney was elected an associate director of the Temperance Department. The college board then chose Frank W. Hale, Jr., an Oakwood alumnus who had a doctoral degree from Ohio State University, to succeed him. Hale brought grand ideas and a superb imagination to the educational program at the college. He garnered considerable public recognition to the institution through his wide contacts with individuals sympathetic to the cause of Negro education. He secured, among other gifts, a \$10,000 contribution from Ethel Dupont, of Louisville, as a result of a contact through Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn. What he looked upon as a crowning achievement was the erection of a large student center on campus that housed a cafeteria, business offices, and rooms for several campus activities. The building was planned by the architectural firm of Alexander, Rothschild, and Joyce, who designed the Atlanta Braves' stadium. It was named in honor of W. J. Blake, principal of Oakwood Manual Training School from 1906 to 1911.

Calvin B. Rock, pastor and evangelist, was elected president of

Oakwood in 1971. Under his administration a new library and a new church were completed. Also, a new academy building, separate from college facilities, was erected on the hill west of the college campus. As the college completed its eightieth year, a new industry was taking shape. Harris Pine Mills, which had outlets on twenty-three college and academy campuses, agreed to set up operations at Oakwood.

Student enrollment in the seventies soared past 1,300, with young people coming to Oakwood from thirty-two States and more than a dozen foreign countries. The college population had doubled from 1954 to 1963, and it doubled again from 1963 to 1972. For the first quarter of the school year 1979-1980 it seemed well on the way toward doubling again! Students pursued majors in religion, education, biology, business, chemistry, English, history, home economics, mathematics, and music. Alumni were making their marks in many sections of the nation, holding responsible positions in the local, union and General Conference.

The Office of Regional Affairs reported that in 1917, 75 percent of all leaders of the department had received all or part of their training at Oakwood. In 1927 the figure had dropped to 60 percent, but in 1963 it rose to 71.3 percent. In 1976 it stood at 74.6 percent.

The alumni homecoming, an annual event since 1967, draws Oakwood's sons and daughters back to the campus from all over the nation. In 1976 the crowd was so overwhelming that alumni association officers were forced to rent the new Von Braun Auditorium in Huntsville for Sabbath services. Former Oakwood students had come to see the improved campus and the new facilities, but most of all to meet comrades of former years. They remembered preeminently the Friday evening vespers, the girls' middies and skirts, alternate Sabbath boys' and girls' walk day, the Friday night sack lunch, onions in the milk, the school picnic, farewells at graduation, and the old chapel bell with its sad, far-reaching note.

NOTES

¹ Ellen G. White, "The Huntsville School," 1909.

² A. W. Spalding, "Lights and Shades in the Black Belt," pp. 229, 230. This unpublished manuscript, written about 1924, sets forth a history of educational and religious work among blacks in the United States, the author's view of the racial problem, and what he considered to be the most pragmatic approach Adventists might take in their ministry to this group.

³ Spalding, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 238, 239.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 239, 240.

⁹ J. I. Beardsley, article on progress of Oakwood and its day-to-day operations, in *Review and Herald*, Nov 25, 1909.

A Bright, Believing Band

It is not surprising that early in their development Adventists chose Illinois as a place to bear witness to the Lord's early return. Lying between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River, it was, from the beginning of its settlement, the crossroads of America. Emigrants from Dixieland found homes in its southern part, New Englanders and Scandinavians flocked to its northern portion, and Chicago received all races.

The black presence in Chicago goes back to its earliest settler, Jean Baptiste Point du Sable. Arna Bontemps and Jack Conroy have described this rugged frontiersman, the city's first citizen, in their book *They Seek a City*:

"The Indians used to say, with straight-faced merriment, no doubt, that the first white man in Chicago was a Negro. Of course they were talking about du Sable, the trader who built his log house at the mouth of the Chicago River in 1779 and lived there for more than sixteen years; and their remarks suggest that they were keen enough to understand that culture, rather than color, makes the man. Du Sable's heritage was French, despite his dark, Negroid features, and

this makes his story of special interest. Here was a man who fitted not at all into the accepted pattern; he was neither a slave escaped from the bondage of the South nor, from what we know about him, a man who was brought to these shores against his wishes."¹

At the turn of the century Chicago had become the home of thousands of black citizens who had escaped the cruelties of a widespread sharecropper system in the South. Here in the midlands, after the Spanish-American War, the rich had become more incoherent and even less capable of making judgments and discriminations. They no longer included within their circle the educated, the polished, or the significant. Society had been replaced by a series of cliques, lacking both the power and the will to influence events. As a new black elite began to take shape on Chicago's South Side around 1905, a few Adventists laid plans to organize a neighborhood church. J. R. Buster, a literature evangelist, was appointed church elder. He initiated an aggressive program of tract and magazine distribution, with members rallied to knock on doors and talk with residents throughout a wide section of black neighborhoods.²

The Illinois Conference, naturally interested in this great potential, sought leadership for the enthusiastic group of believers.

In the early years of the century there were not enough seasoned black ministers in America to meet the demand, and so the call went out for evangelists from the West Indies capable of carrying on aggressive soul-winning campaigns in the large U.S. cities. In 1910 the Illinois Conference invited W. D. Forde, a successful evangelist from Bridgetown, Barbados, to become its pastor. Forde had been a teacher in the island before he became an Adventist in 1900. He was baptized after he attended meetings held by E. Van Duesen, of Michigan; for theological training he attended Emmanuel Missionary College.

In 1905 the president of Northern Illinois Conference invited Forde to begin a pastoral ministry in Chicago. Forde replied that he

had promised A. J. Haysmer, of East Caribbean Conference, to work in that union upon completing his work at EMC, so he went back to a district pastorate in St. Lucia, Grenada, and Barbados until a call was extended again, five years later, for him to take up a big-city ministry in Chicago.

F. G. Lane, an American missionary to the islands, was one who urged Forde to come to America and assist with a mammoth crusade to save souls in Chicago's predominantly black neighborhoods.

Forde arrived in the Windy City in February, 1910, and held his first evangelistic crusade at 35th Street and Giles Avenue. His preaching attracted large crowds; the two-pole canvas pavillion was filled nearly every night. Elizabeth Harvey, a lay Bible instructor, assisted with studies and visits to the homes of interested people. Forde held a tent meeting every year after that, and by 1918 the membership had grown from twenty to 250. J. Malcolm Phipps was his tentmaster; Mary Senator, a Bible instructor who worked with Lewis C. Sheafe in Washington, D.C., came to help Forde when Sheafe defected from the church to join the Seventh Day Baptists.

The first church school for the black membership in the Lake Union was begun by Forde in the new building he and the congregation erected in 1911 on the corner of 48th and Dearborn streets. He set aside a room in the basement for an initial enrollment of twenty, four of whom were his own children. Forde taught English, Bible doctrines, and denominational history to adults in the evening. Mary Senator conducted classes in nursing and health until her marriage, when she became Mrs. David Joseph Graham.

Prior to Forde's coming, the South Side congregation met in a storefront building on 43d and State streets. When its membership reached 150 the church moved to Dearborn Street. In November of 1918 the congregation again sought larger quarters; this time it moved to its third home, in the 4300 block of Prairie Avenue. The designation of Shiloh was officially adopted as the church name in 1925. After fifteen years in Chicago, Forde was called to the Indiana

Conference as pastor of the Indianapolis church, then he pastored congregations in South Bend, Richmond, Marion, and Gary. In 1937 he went to Michigan and pastored in Battle Creek, Flint, Saginaw, Inkster, and Detroit. Maitland G. Nunez, whose wife was a physician, succeeded Forde as leader of the Shiloh congregation, but he remained in Chicago for only a brief period.

George E. Peters, whose evangelism in Tampa, Florida, had resulted in nearly 250 baptisms, was invited to Chicago in 1922 to continue the massive program of evangelism begun by Forde. In a matter of months Peters had baptized scores of converts in the Windy City and was moving forward quickly with plans for a new church building at 46th and St. Lawrence. Chicago was not an easy place in which to pursue a gospel mission; it was alternately stormy and intensely hot, the winds were terrible and the cold incredible. Rain and snow were excessive, and sudden changes of temperature the rule, but Peters moved undaunted amid the handicaps of irregular weather.

Peters was a successful evangelist with deep, sure knowledge of his calling, but he was at his best in the intricacies and technicalities of church government. Perhaps this was in part a matter of temperament. It was also a matter of home and family training, for he had grown up under the strict discipline of the Moravian Church and had observed in the West Indies an adaptation of this German-based religion before he joined the Adventists. Under his leadership the Adventist faith in Chicago and around the Great Lakes enjoyed considerable favor as churches multiplied, and the mustard seed grew into a great tree.

Among the notable contributions of laymen during this period was the work of Charles E. Baynes, a deacon who was baptized by Peters at the Prairie Avenue church in 1922. Baynes conducted Bible studies and was so successful as a soul winner that he was invited to shepherd a group of believers at Morgan Park. Assisting him was C. C. Arbothnott, another effective lay preacher. Among the first

converts from Baynes' labors were Charles M. Willis and his wife, who were baptized in 1938. Willis served some years later with the Review and Herald and Southern publishing houses as periodical representative and later with the General Conference as associate publishing director.

Irrepressible, Willis began Bible studies on his own in the Altgeld Gardens area. Because he encountered scores of children in his contacts, he suggested that Baynes conduct a branch Sabbath school for them. Interest mounted to such an extent that a recreation hall was secured for their use, and eventually Harvey W. Kibble conducted an evangelistic meeting; the branch Sabbath school was organized into a church. After twenty-two years worshiping in the recreation hall, the Altgeld Gardens congregation moved into their new church in 1968. Baynes and his wife returned to Shiloh but continued their weekly branch Sabbath schools. In the years since Baynes began Bible studies he has been instrumental in winning more than one hundred converts to the Adventist Church.

By 1907 a group of fifteen believers was organized in Indianapolis, Indiana, largely as a result of preaching and Bible studies by L. W. Browne. Four years later, following ministerial labors of E. L. Campbell, Sydney Scott, W. D. Forde, and Emile A. Jarreau, the work had advanced, and the congregation purchased its first building. Twenty-four years later J. H. Laurence held large tent meetings there and in 1938 erected his twenty-seventh church building, on a busy corner of the city's heavily traveled Capitol Avenue. To this was later added a church school building for the growing population of children enrolling for elementary education. Raphael F. Warnick, Meade Van Putten, Joseph Winston, and Douglas C. Batson were pastors who made considerable membership additions and pursued the school remodeling and building programs.

Evangelism in Detroit, Michigan, began in the summer of 1910 with J. W. Owens, who systematically sold small books and

conducted Bible studies in several neighborhoods. By year's end he had organized a group of seventeen into the first black congregation of Adventists in the Motor City.³ William H. Green and Milton M. Young, later pastors, added considerably to the membership, so that when Taswell B. Buckner arrived, there was sufficient support to build the Hartford Avenue church. Workers reached out also toward smaller cities in northern Michigan such as Muskegon, Idlewild, and Grand Rapids. Jacob Justiss was assigned the task of visiting these believers preparatory to organizing them into churches or companies.⁴

As membership climbed, plans were formulated for large numbers of black children and youth who needed wholesome activities in addition to the church and church school programs. For children from heavily populated cities who were unaccustomed to rural life and who longed for recreation in the wide-open fields, the Michigan Conference acted quickly to rent a campsite near Ann Arbor for black youth of the Detroit area. Jarrod E. Johnson was appointed camp director. The first day children and their parents came in steady streams that continued far into the night. The next morning eager juniors, groggy from dreams, vied among themselves for the shower room. Lost socks were hunted, ears were scrubbed, hair was combed, soap was lost, and the air was rent with squeals of delight over this grand outlet for pent-up energies and emotions.

As a result of this camp, there was considerable talk about agendas for young people and provisions that should be made for them in this growing department of the church. Walter W. Fordham, then a pastor in Pittsburgh, had received national recognition for his support of the Center Avenue branch of the YMCA. He felt that the time had come for the Adventist Church to do something on the order of this association's blueprint for its youth.⁵ A meeting was held in the summer of 1941 in Detroit to discuss the possibility of a national youth organization and to formulate constructive plans for the denomination's teen-age black constituency. Monroe A. Burgess, of

Petersburg, Virginia, was principal speaker; in attendance were George E. Peters, of the General Conference Negro Department, and Alfred W. Peterson, of the Missionary Volunteer Department. Herman P. Clayton, of Chicago, was elected president, and Mildred Evelyn was chosen secretary of the new organization, which became known as the National Association for the Advancement of Adventist Youth.

Meanwhile, large numbers of young people were out on the streets every summer selling single copies of *Message* magazine in order to secure money for academy or college expenses. Mostly young women, they attracted considerable attention, and many nonmembers wanted to know how they might join this apparently profitable crusade. John H. Johnson, then working on a WPA project in Chicago, was perhaps the greatest beneficiary of the idea. Based on what he saw of the Adventist salesladies, he decided to start a magazine of his own—*The Negro Digest*, later *Ebony* magazine—which was to become part of a \$43-million-a-year publishing enterprise, the largest venture of a black publisher in the world.

In the late twenties Harry E. Ford came from Hinsdale to assist with the broad evangelistic and health ministry carried on by Owen A. Troy in Chicago. Hinsdale, where the streets were named for trees and heroes, had been the fortunate location for an Adventist sanitarium since its founding in 1905 by Dr. David Paulson. It was like a hundred American towns, smug and cozy, and the sanitarium had been a way of reaching people not ordinarily accessible to members of the church.

Following this idea, Ford and Troy organized the Shiloh Clinic, an outpatient medical center that served the church and the community. Several doctors and dentists who had an established clientele on the South Side were invited to join the staff. Frances Barger, Ruth Frazier, Leuticia Samuels, and Hattie Steele served as nurses. When training classes were inaugurated by clinic nurses in hydrotherapy and home nursing, the ladies of the church were eager to join, and

the clinic became a prime topic of conversation in the community. Mary Graham conducted subsequent classes and extended the offerings to Red Cross First Aid (beginners' and advanced classes), water safety, and civil disaster courses. Members who completed these classes, with advanced training, became teachers of other classes.

In 1965, Shiloh church, in its new location at 7000 South Michigan Avenue, conducted a successful Community Health Week. Cooperating in the venture were the Tuberculosis Institute of Chicago, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, the Chicago Board of Health, and the Chicago Dental Society. The activities opened on Sunday afternoon with a motorcade consisting of fire engines, fire department personnel, and various uniformed representatives of Shiloh church auxiliaries. Ballons heralding the opening of Community Health Week were distributed to children along the parade route.⁶ This was followed by health demonstrations at the parish hall, educational health films, lectures by medical specialists, and a dissemination of free literature from the various participating agencies. The highlight of the week was the launching of the Family Blood Assurance program in cooperation with the Mount Sinai Hospital Blood Center. A lending library of materials on the subject of health was also established during the week.

To the north in Minnesota, A. Gaynes Thompson, an Oakwood graduate, was called to begin his ministry in Minneapolis and St. Paul. He had been ordained as an African Methodist Episcopal minister. At the time he became an Adventist he was in the seminary at Wilberforce University. He promptly sought training at Oakwood for his role in the ministry of the Adventist Church.⁷ He entered the work in the Twin Cities following a series of evangelistic meetings held by Stevens Avenue laymen under the guidance of Varner J. Johns. The Minnesota Conference then asked Thomas H. Allison, secretary for Negro work in the Central Union, to hold another series of meetings. As a result, on September 30, 1933, Allison organized

the Glendale church, with a membership of 26. Fourteen of these came by letter transfer from the Stevens Avenue church. Isabel McQuerry and Pearl Martin had been right-hand helpers with Bible studies and visitation, and when Thompson arrived they gave valuable help with leadership.

In due time churches were established in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; St. Paul, Minnesota; Springfield, Illinois; Cassopolis, Michigan, and other smaller towns and villages in the Lake Union. By the end of 1944, the number of black members around the Great Lakes had grown to more than 2,500.⁸

The General Conference had designated the spring of 1944 as the time for a reassessment of the denomination's organizational structure for its work among the black population. So at the convening of the Spring Council in Chicago at the Stevens Hotel, April 8-19, Negro departmental leaders and pastors of large churches from New York to California came together to discuss the issue. Joseph T. Dodson and Addison V. Pinkney, representing the Committee for the Advancement of Worldwide Work Among Colored Seventh-day Adventists, came with an agenda that had been widely distributed prior to the meeting. It was an eight-page pamphlet entitled "Shall the Four Freedoms Function Among Seventh-day Adventists?" Although Frank L. Peterson had urged that "those two influential men ought to be allowed to stay in the meeting," they were not permitted to remain with delegates or to take part in the discussions. But their agenda was studied carefully by J. L. McElhaney and the ideas presented seemed to establish clearly the need for regional conferences to supervise work of the church for the black minority. The General Conference Committee was to make the final determination.

On April 10, 1944, following a persuasive speech by Jay J. Nethery, president of the Lake Union Conference, the Spring Council voted to recommend conferences for the black membership. This was to be put into effect "in unions where the colored

constituency is considered by the union conference committee to be sufficiently large, and where the financial income and territory warrant, colored conferences be organized." The Lake Union led the way in North America by voting, on July 17, 1944, to adopt the General Conference recommendation. The regional constituency was called together for a special meeting at Shiloh church in Chicago. This group elected J. Gershom Dasent to the post of president of the newly formed Lake Region Conference. Fred N. Crowe was elected secretary-treasurer; Walter J. Kisack, Missionary Volunteer and educational secretary; Virgil Gibbons, publishing secretary; and L. B. Baker, Book and Bible House manager. The prospects of growth and development looked good, even though there was only a limited membership. There was tumultuous excitement on the Great Lakes frontier as Dasent began to make plans for the fledgling organization. He envisioned a series of great tent meetings, a youth camp, possibly a boarding academy at Cassopolis. Both ministers and laity felt a peculiar evangelistic zeal that made them want to share the wealth of their experience. The establishment of a separate conference had been an accommodation, of course, but its expansion would reach all sorts and conditions of men.

Thomas M. Rowe, after two years of pastoring Shiloh, led them in purchasing a new home for the congregation, at 70th and Michigan avenues. It included a parsonage, a parish hall, a gymnasium, and a church. He added a considerable number of members to the church through his Bible school, a unique but effective method of evangelism. In 1954 Eric S. Dillett came to Shiloh and served the congregation for eight years. During this time E. E. Cleveland held an evangelistic meeting in the city, adding greatly to the membership.

In Detroit, as the Hartford Avenue church became overcrowded, need arose for a new and larger edifice to care for the congregation. The City Temple property was purchased on Grand Avenue, providing not only an adequate sanctuary but ample rooms for the church school and Sabbath school programs. Under the ministry of J.

Hermanus Laurence, Louis H. Bland, Raphael Warnick, Jonathan Allison, Thomas M. Rowe, Joseph T. Winston, Calvin B. Rock, and Jesse R. Wagner the Detroit city work prospered immensely. Other churches were raised up in nearby Ecorse and Inkster to swell the membership in this large industrial complex.

In the meantime, in the Great Lakes area some unusual events were taking place, other than the inception of the newly formed conference. Dunbar Henri and his family were called to be missionaries in Ghana; Donald B. Simons and his family went to Sierre Leone; and the Philip Giddings family went to Liberia.

Marvene C. Jones went to Riverside as a dietitian and made a considerable impact with cooking schools, her book, *Eating for Health*, and her monthly column of recipes in *Message* magazine. Herman P. Clayton served as a reporter for the Associated Negro Press, turning out articles that often took front-page positions in the *Chicago Defender* and the *Pittsburgh Courier*.

Alyne Dumas Lee, for years an organist at Shiloh and the possessor of a remarkable soprano voice, went on the concert stage as a means of spreading her faith. She received enthusiastic press notices as she met concert appointments in different parts of the nation. But perhaps her greatest contribution to the church was her work as artist-in-residence at Oakwood College. This afforded her opportunity to teach the fundamentals of voice culture to numerous young people who went on to use their music in a creditable way within the church.

Esther J. Lowe, a teacher for years in Detroit public schools (and who traveled considerably over the world) was appointed a member of the Oakwood College board and also a member of the General Conference Committee. Anita J. Mackey, who taught church school in Chicago briefly in the 1930s, pursued a distinguished career in social work with the Veterans Administration. She later was awarded an honorary doctorate degree from Andrews University.

A significant achievement by a black Adventist layman from the

Great Lakes region was the rise of Dr. Leonard W. Johnson to the rank of colonel in the United States Air Force. In 1968 he was the first black physician to become certified in the specialty of aerospace medicine. By 1977 he was commanding officer of USAF Hospital at Lake Air Force Base in Arizona. One of his most challenging assignments during his twenty years in the Air Force was that of Aeromedical Evacuation Coordinator for Project Homecoming—the prisoner of war return program that followed the Vietnam war. Johnson was located at that time at Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines, and was responsible for the medical treatment of all returning prisoners of war. He personally went to Hanoi to escort a group of American soldiers who had been detained there in military prisons. Through all his extraordinary success, Johnson, a member with keen spiritual perception, kept close to the church and used his expertise to counsel young people and assist in other ways with the program of the gospel.

An evangelistic meeting conducted in 1972 by Charles D. Brooks in Chicago set the stage for some unusual events. It was a meeting hedged about by opposition from the start. A city official declared the meeting could not be held on a certain vacant lot on the South Side. The tent had to be specially treated and certified in writing by the manufacturer, whose plant was hundreds of miles away. This order came just hours before the meetings were scheduled to begin. In addition to this problem, he had the usual lack of helpers in getting the pavilion, grounds, and chairs in readiness. It was amazing how all these handicaps were overcome.

Meetings were held from July to September, resulting in 243 baptisms. Staff members pondered whether they should assign these new converts to churches already established or keep them together in one group and organize a new congregation. They finally decided upon the latter course, 27-year-old Harry Strafford, who had been an enthusiastic participant in the campaign, was appointed pastor. Brooks preached a sermon concluding the series on a Sunday; the

following Wednesday Strafford, who had suffered for some time with aplastic anemia, died of this disease.

This obvious blow to the newly organized group led them to adopt the name Strafford Memorial for the church, in honor of the young pastor whose ministry had been so tragically terminated. Russell W. Bates, Sabbath school and lay activities director for Lake Region Conference at the time, took over as interim pastor. Renting a church presented a problem, because most pastors in the vicinity had lost members to the Adventists and therefore were apprehensive about even a short-term arrangement with them. But eventually they found a church in which they could meet, using a basement auditorium for Sabbath services.

As a means of thoroughly indoctrinating these new members, local leaders decided that each one should study the Profiles of Faith Sabbath school lessons. They ordered enough sets from the Review and Herald Publishing Association to supply each member and had them shipped by air freight to Chicago in time for them to begin their studies the following Sabbath. This course gave the converts an essential rooting and grounding in the Adventist message.

Douglas Simons, a young man about the same age as the late Harry Strafford, was called to succeed him as pastor. He quickly won his way into the hearts of these people. Capitalizing on the fervor and wholehearted commitment of the group, he led them into a new evangelistic campaign to win their relatives and neighbors. At first his only assistant was Clyde Lee. The latter was an older layman who had attended Oakwood but had been out of the church for many years; he had returned as a result of Brooks' tent meeting. However, they were able to train twenty-five people to give Bible studies and make house-to-house visits. Of this group fifteen gave full-time service, with only a small remuneration of \$7.50 a week to assist with transportation costs. The other ten gave part-time service, visiting and giving Bible studies in the evenings. A total of 102 people were baptized as a result of that meeting, and this group was organized

into another congregation. One of the woman Bible instructors was responsible for bringing to the Lord eleven people.

About this time the Strafford congregation found a church building for sale, purchased it, and moved out of their basement quarters. Then congregation number two negotiated to meet in the same basement auditorium. They, too, were quickly involved with Profiles of Faith lessons and began planning another evangelistic campaign with a view toward raising up church number three. In the meantime church number one had increased its membership within a twelve-month period to more than three hundred.

Devotion such as this looms large in the story of Adventists in black America. It has worked to produce a membership growth in percentage comparable to that of Southern Baptists. From the days of the nation's greatest social and economic depression black Adventists asserted and kept alive the confident idea that God would reward the faith of those who trusted in Him.

Alone among other predominantly white denominations, Adventists saw remarkable gains in their black membership.¹⁰ The very thought of a better world soon to be established touched the imagination, and the insistence that men must prepare for citizenship in the new world exalted the will. The idea was practical, and it had a built-in endurance. It was part of the human situation yet at the same time it was in the divine plan, firmly planted in the conscience and consciousness of the people called Adventists.

NOTES

¹ Arna Bontemps, *They Seek a City*, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran, and Company, Inc., 1945).

² *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 758.

³ *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 759.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ See Jacob Justiss, *Angels in Ebony*.

⁶ Historical notes in connection with dedication services for the new Shiloh church, March 26, 1977.

⁷ The author was a schoolmate of A. Gaynes Thompson, half brother of Charles E. Dudley, and worked in the same conference with him in the late thirties.

⁸ *SDA Encyclopedia*, *loc. cit.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ While many of the mainline denominations reported a loss of membership, the Adventists were in the gain column year after year. But within the Adventist Church, gains were always most outstanding among the black membership.

Treasure in Earthen Vessels

When Charles M. Kinny was asked by the California Conference to begin mission work in Kansas, he commenced with house-to-house canvassing in Topeka and Emporia, both college towns that offered educational opportunities and some form of employment to recent migrants from the South. About 1880 a movement known as “the Exodus” had attracted thousands of former slaves from the southern states to Kansas. Seeking jobs and education, they spread out over the state to wherever they could find homes. Nell Painter has described the phenomenon of this “Kansas fever,” which infected more than twenty thousand black migrants with an overpowering urge to flee the South:

“The Exodus had no anointed leader. Rather than being deluded by false leaders, the Exodusters rejected leadership altogether. ‘We have found no leader to trust but the God overhead of us,’ said a typical group of Exodusters. In New Orleans, a prospective migrant summed up their position: ‘Every black man is his own Moses now.’ Exodusters refused to hear out prominent blacks who contradicted their beliefs.”¹

These were largely the independent-minded people to whom Kinny presented Adventist teachings. Their skepticism, built up through months of impatience and anger, was directed against those who tried to interfere with them. In the May 25, 1886, *Review and Herald* Kinny reported that since the previous October he had made 648 visits, had distributed 16,525 tracts, and as a result five women in Emporia had indicated they would keep the Sabbath and two heads of families reported they were much interested.²

Although there were few visible results of his work Kinny continued with a determination that would not be defeated. Working eastward he began canvassing in Kansas City and Atchison on November 11, 1887, with the book *The Great Controversy*. From there he moved to Hannibal and St. Joseph in Missouri. A number of local preachers purchased his books and he addressed several of their congregations. His reports show that in 1889 he spent six months canvassing in St. Louis.³ No church organization resulted from his house-to-house calls, but we can assume from later membership developments that many of his converts attended services with local white congregations.

In 1901 the small membership in Kansas City, Kansas, arranged for their own meeting place and Sabbath school. Sydney Scott and S. S. Ryles held evangelistic meetings in 1902, which added seven converts. A new church, with a total of nineteen charter members, presented itself to the conference to be accepted into the fellowship of churches. For two years afterward the congregation met in rented quarters until the members were able, with help from the Kansas Conference, to construct a suitable place of worship. Work on the building was completed January 24, 1904.

By 1901 also, the earlier canvassing efforts by Kinny with copies of *The Great Controversy* had begun to reap a spiritual harvest. In St. Louis there were enough members to form a new company. Some 250 miles to the west, the Kansas City, Missouri, believers, who had organized approximately two years earlier, were gaining in numbers.

In February, 1903, Scott reported that two groups of new converts in Kansas City, Missouri, and nearby Kansas City, Kansas, had been formally organized as churches. The Missouri congregation also conducted a Sabbath school of thirty and a mission Sunday school of fifty. The Kansas congregation, an extremely conservative group but with generally better educational advantages than their Missouri counterparts, organized a church school. H. M. Hiatt, educational superintendent of the Kansas Conference, sent this report to member churches in the fall of 1909:

“The colored brethren of Kansas City, Kansas, have determined to be in line with the other churches of the conference; and accordingly have organized a school which is doing good work. . . . This is perhaps the only Adventist school exclusively for colored children north of the Mason-Dixon Line.”⁴

Among the several active colporteurs in those times was John T. North, who canvassed for many years through small towns and villages of Kansas, presenting *Bible Readings*, *Bible Footlights*, and *Daniel and the Revelation*. He had trudged from door to door in Atchison County without great success, but that was nothing new. The people of Kansas were known for their unemotional, almost stoical posture. They would listen patiently to explanations about his books, but were wary about making a commitment to buy. One cold afternoon in December as he was going down a country road North overtook an 11-year-old boy.

“What’s your name, son?” North asked.

“Theodore Torkelson, sir. I’m just coming home from school, and I live on the farm right over there.” He pointed to the neat frame house situated back from the road. “And what’s your name, sir?”

“My name is North—the same as the direction from which this cold wind is coming. I’m out here selling Adventist books.”

“Adventist books!” Torkelson exclaimed. “Why, my folks would really like to talk to you! Why don’t you come and spend the night with us?”

“I have to see several more people,” North replied, “but I think I can make it by your house toward evening.”

For weeks the Torkelsons had received a roll of papers from a friend in another part of Kansas who had recently become a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She had mailed copies of *Signs of the Times*, *Watchman*, and *Our Little Friend* to the family in an effort to acquaint them with the good news of Christ’s early return. The Torkelsons had read the papers and discussed their contents but had made no decision to become church members. They had questions about why the Sabbath had not been revealed until so late in the history of the world. As farmers, they wanted to know what they should do about retaining hogs or selling them on the market. If North was in the area canvassing Adventist books, and in this way representing the church, certainly he should be able to clear up most of their problems. Young Torkelson had described to them the man he had seen, adding the point that had first aroused his boyish curiosity—North had only one arm. His right arm had been amputated just below the elbow.

It was already dark when the bookman arrived at the Torkelson home. By that time the biting cold wind swept with fury across the Kansas plains, and he was pleased to have an invitation to spend the night with what appeared to be a genuinely hospitable family. North rapped on the door and waited. A woman holding a kerosene lamp opened the door.

“Good evening. You must be Mr. North,” she said. “We were hoping you’d find it possible to visit us tonight. Won’t you come in?”

“Yes, ma’am,” North replied. “I’m real proud to see you folks. I had a brief conversation with your wonderful son this afternoon, and he said you’d like to talk to me about the books I’m placing in the homes around here.”

North spent several days with this family, studying the Bible and answering their questions. In the time he conversed with the Torkelsons they decided to become members of the church, and at a

camp meeting held in Topeka, the mother, father, and all seven children were baptized. One of these, the boy who invited North to his home, was afterward a missionary to India and a book editor of the Pacific Press, the denomination's publishing house at Mountain View, California.

Byron R. Spears, another convert from Kansas, was bell captain at the Jayhawk Hotel in Topeka, his hometown. In his childhood he had been an altar boy in the St. Simons Episcopal church. The passing of years found him a young married man, searching for answers to many religious and philosophical questions. He had become disenchanted with the form and ritual of the Episcopal Church and was reaching out, feeling and inquiring into more substantive directions for his faith.

At Jayhawk Hotel, Spears regularly visited a reading rack that the management had placed at the disposal of religious groups who sought an outlet for their literature. It was variously stocked with *Unity*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Our Sunday Visitor*, and *Signs of the Times*. The subject matter of *Signs* appealed to him more than all the rest. Spears read the entire contents of this one magazine as regularly as issues were delivered to the hotel. He verified texts by using hotel copies of the Gideon Bible. Before many weeks had passed, he made contact with the Adventist Church, but he had already read himself into a full knowledge of its doctrines.

He and his wife were baptized as members of the College Avenue congregation in Topeka and immediately became active participants in this small, unpretentious church. Spears enjoyed especially the challenge of reciting Morning Watch Bible verses for youth meetings on Sabbath afternoons. To his amazement he discovered he had practically a photographic memory for Biblical passages, their placement on the page, and their relationship to other verses. He used them in discourses, and before long, in the absence of the district minister, who pastored several churches, he was asked to be an occasional Sabbath speaker. Although he had not gone to college,

Spears developed steadily and became an exceptional Bible student and preacher.

In the fall of 1936, Jayhawk Hotel was the official headquarters for a bankers' convention. Businessmen and their families came to Topeka from all over the nation. It was a busy, tumultuous season for Spears. In the course of caring for large numbers of guests he developed a severe headache, followed later by vomiting. When he went home and retired he felt violent spasms in his legs. Two days later, when he attempted to walk he fell to the floor. The doctor later declared him a victim of the dreaded poliomyelitis. His was the first case reported that year in the entire city.

Spears' family raised money to send him to California, where he spent three months exposed to direct sunshine, on the beach and in the water, hoping to lessen the crippling effects of the disease. While reclining on the beach he read and memorized long passages of Scripture. The image of the Biblical page seemed to register on his mind like a tattoo.

Spears returned to Topeka and, as soon as circumstances allowed, began to preach again. He quoted text after text and long Bible passages from memory. His hearers—old friends from the city, long-term members from the church—were amazed at his effectiveness. To sustain his family he invested in a recycling business, buying old bottles, newspapers, various metals, rags, and rubber to resell to wholesalers. At night he conducted Bible studies and at one point held public meetings in a tent. Conference officials, noting his method and the number of converts baptized through his efforts, invited him to join their Kansas ministerial staff. As a full-time pastor he was also an instant success. He could relate to people with problems, he could advise them from the Bible, reciting dozens of its inspired admonitions from memory.

In 1949 Spears went to Oakland, California, on vacation and was guest speaker for the Market Street church. S. P. Golden, an influential layman, was so greatly moved by his sermon that he said

to Spears, "I think you should be a full-time evangelist."

Spears merely smiled, for although he had great dreams of winning converts through public meetings, he had not dared to imagine he could do this full-time and on a large scale.

"Really, I'm serious," Golden added. He talked with his pastor, R. Wendell Nelson, a member of the conference committee, urging him to act immediately."

When Spears returned to Kansas, an invitation had come to him from the Northern California Conference president asking that he accept the post as conference evangelist. Spears was delighted with this opportunity to preach in a densely populated community. Moving to the West, he held one meeting after another in Stockton, Vallejo, Sacramento, Pittsburgh, Elmhurst, and East Oakland, winning hundreds of new converts and organizing new churches. He spent almost twenty years as Northern California's evangelist, but he held meetings on loan to other conferences also. In 1968, the Pacific Union committee requested his services as evangelist for the entire union. Two years later, in 1970, he connected with the Voice of Prophecy, thus reaching a more expanded audience in his unusual ministry. Everywhere he went he was known as the preacher who knew his Bible so well he could preach without ever opening it.

An earlier witness in the city of Atchison also deserves mention here. John Miller and his family came to Kansas from California and settled in this quaint railroad town about 1921. Here, where there was a lingering frontier insecurity, Miller felt he had an ideal environment to begin Bible studies. Among the first people he met was Thomas J. Lewis, who worked at the Santa Fe roundhouse by night and chopped weeds in his garden by day. Lewis had known of Adventists before he moved to Kansas from Oklahoma; consequently, when Miller suggested Bible readings for his family he readily agreed and urged his wife and children to hear Miller, also.

Lewis' wife, Fannie, was outwardly cordial, but her demeanor seemed at times strained, especially as Miller discussed texts

referring to the Sabbath. Fannie Lewis was particularly troubled by the suggestion that Sunday was not the Biblical rest day, and more so by the thought that to be fully in harmony with the Bible she must depart from this tradition of her fathers. Her first defense was to insist that if the Lewis clan were to worship on Saturday the children must also go to Sunday school on Sunday. Even when in a nominal way she accepted the Sabbath, she still argued that the children should go to Sunday school. But before long the children themselves rebelled, setting forth their claim that they all wanted to observe the Sabbath and had no more interest in Sunday school.

Approximately forty years later Thomas Lewis joined the church, but nearly all his family became members and were known in the community as the "Seven Days." However, in the local public schools they were also known for their high scholastic achievement. Two of the Lewis boys, Rayfield and James, went on to study at Loma Linda and were graduated as physicians. One daughter, Frances, married Delvert Davis, a new convert living in St. Louis, who later entered the ministry. She taught church school at first, but years later went on to complete a doctoral degree in education and taught both high school and college courses. Two other daughters, Gail and Julia, were also church school teachers.

Shortly after Frances Lewis married Delvert Davis, they moved to St. Joseph and there entered upon a vigorous program of literature evangelism and Bible studies. Before long the membership of the little church grew from 13 to 50. The Davises, both musical enthusiasts, organized a *Messiah* chorus composed of the so-called "forgotten people" who lived in north St. Joseph. He surprised the entire community with a display of their talent at a Christmas program given in the local high school auditorium.

One project undertaken by the singing group was a Sunday afternoon visit to the local city jail. These effervescent new members, mostly in their teens, faced the world with a virtuous sense of mission and had the bearing of serious adults. When they sang and Davis

spoke, the prisoners and guards were moved by the sincerity of their purpose. Small-town religion can be very parochial, as the young people had found; often they had seen it lead to something akin to a meaningless cult. But the Davises and their singing group made an impact of straightforward honesty in what they proclaimed, and the prisoners were stirred.

On one Sunday visit the singers noticed one who seemed to them an unusual convict, a respectable-looking man. Ira Wilkinson, the father of twelve children (now in their teens and twenties), had been charged with a serious statutory crime. The entire family had come that day to visit him and, when they heard the group sing, readily joined the Adventist young people in their hymns and anthems. Before long these sons and daughters of Wilkinson began attending church, and within months nearly all of them were baptized.

One of the married sons of Wilkinson had a sister-in-law, Reba Lytle, in nearby Troy, Kansas, who was especially curious when she heard of the Adventist young people and what they were doing for men behind bars in St. Joseph. She came to see for herself and in a very brief time decided to join the church. Robert White, a young pugilist whom she met in St. Joseph, was at the same time urging her to marry him.

"I'm sorry, I can't marry you," Reba Lytle said. "You're not a Seventh-day Adventist."

"A what?"

"A Seventh-day Adventist."

"What's that?"

"That's the church I've decided to join, and those folk don't believe their members should marry outside the church. They say it creates a lot of problems, and I'm inclined to agree with them."

"Well," White said, "I've got to look into that."

The result was that both Reba Lytle and Robert White studied with the Davises and after some weeks were baptized on a Sabbath and married in a simple ceremony the following day. They decided to

devote their lives to the church's literature ministry, and both achieved outstanding sales records in St. Louis, Kansas City, Denver, and many small towns between. Eventually Robert White was invited to become a field representative for Christian Record Braille Foundation, seeking private contributions for its numerous Braille publications and records programs. In this new responsibility he was eminently successful, gathering year after year by far the largest amount of contributions of any foundation solicitor. In addition, through his ministry with literature and other personal work, close to one thousand people were baptized.

Clara B. Franklin, who with her son, Chester A. Franklin, homesteaded in Colorado and later founded the *Kansas City Call* (a weekly newspaper circulated throughout the Midwest and Southwest), was an early convert to the Adventist church in Missouri. Largely because of her known church affiliation and her son's positive attitude toward the Adventists, news about evangelistic meetings, camp meetings, missionary work, special programs, and special speakers were always welcome manuscripts at the *Call* editorial offices. The *Call* also consented to carry a Bible-questions column prepared in Kansas City, and this feature attracted wide attention.⁵ The Bible correspondence course, offered in connection with the column, soon caught the attention of Fordyce W. Detamore, then pastor of the Kansas City Central church. When he joined the *Voice of Prophecy* in 1942 he introduced the idea on nationwide radio.⁶ It has since become a standard feature, not only for *Voice of Prophecy* operations, now in many languages, but part of nearly every radio and television contact made by the church. It has also been adopted by Lutheran and Catholic broadcasts.

The Kansas City, Missouri, congregation met at first in a rented hall. Then it purchased the lot and building vacated by the Kansas City branch of Pacific Press when that organization moved out of Kansas City in 1926. Elizabeth Hanks, of the Kansas City church, was the first full-time black Bible instructor in the Central Union territory.

She was later married to Henry J. Miller; their ministry included many years in the Central Union and in the South. Their daughter, Helen Miller Kanion, served the Adventist Church for years as a registered nurse. Helen's son Zavon Kanion was graduated from the Meharry School of Dentistry in Nashville.

When Adolphus E. Webb was assigned to the Kansas City Beacon Light congregation in 1943, he was dismayed by the thought of members' meeting for worship services in a book warehouse. Little of the storefront image had changed in the seventeen years the Beacon Light group had occupied the old Pacific Press quarters; the Depression years had been lean, and money for any renovation had been hard to come by. Only after the United States began supplying arms for Europe at the outset of World War II did the depression begin to lift. Webb took this as his cue to construct a new church on a vacant lot the congregation owned adjacent to the makeshift meetinghouse.

What he had not counted on was the scarcity of steel and other building materials in a wartime emergency. Undaunted, however, Webb decided he would launch a building program anyway to provide respectable quarters for his growing congregation. He secured the services of an architect to draw plans, and found a contractor who was willing to undertake the job on a pay-as-you-go basis. An abandoned brewery being demolished in another section of the city provided inexpensive steel and stone. That acquisition, with some adjustment in building plans, would make possible the completion of the building exterior.

The story attracted attention of the Kansas City *Star*, a daily newspaper distributed to rural and urban homes for a radius of one hundred miles around Kansas City. "Adventists Build Church From Stone of Old Brewery," the heading in the Sunday edition declared. The article commented that Adventists did not drink alcoholic beverages; they didn't even drink tea or coffee. One downtown manufacturer, impressed by the news item, sent a check for \$250

toward the project. Other smaller contributions followed; meantime, Webb donned overalls and helped daily with building chores from excavation to carpentry. At the close of World War II the story of this accomplishment was circulated over the Central Union territory and beyond, to encourage other congregations to update their places of worship. Thirty years later, in 1972, the Beacon Light congregation purchased a large Baptist church at Linwood Boulevard and Spruce Street and moved to this more favorable location where the witness of the church would come to the attention of considerably more people. With Thomas A. McNealy as pastor, the name of the Kansas City, Missouri, church was changed from Beacon Light to Linwood Boulevard.

Throughout the country Adventists found it difficult to secure jobs with Sabbaths free. Even church members in the professions did not escape without anxious moments, especially during the period when America was caught in the clutches of a great depression. Stanley Lee Henderson, an Adventist music teacher—who later earned a Ph.D. in music at the University of Iowa—was the subject of some harassment by a St. Louis principal who insisted that he take charge of a musical event each Friday night of the school year. Of course, Henderson, a serious church member, refused. But when the matter was reviewed by the superintendent's office in the board of education it was noted that if Henderson were dismissed it would be necessary to replace him with a person who could teach music theory, voice, and piano; direct a choir and a band; and play any of the instruments in the band! Henderson, an exceptionally proficient musician, could perform all these feats. The superintendent of schools knew he would have difficulty finding anyone to match his accomplishments. So Henderson remained in the St. Louis school system in spite of his principal's displeasure about his observance of the Sabbath. He taught both high school and college classes for forty years!

Charles Lightner and Thomas Branch pioneered as evangelists in

Colorado. At the Colorado camp meeting in 1901 a committee of three had presented a resolution to the delegates requesting that one or more workers be employed full time to evangelize the black population.⁷ The resolution stated that at the time there were about sixty black members in the conference. The Colorado delegation voted to grant this request and shortly afterward Branch was sent to Pueblo, where he began meetings in a hotel. William S. North, with members and conference leaders rallied behind him, led out in building a tabernacle in Pueblo, which was dedicated January 11, 1903. This was said to be the first church building constructed for a black Adventist congregation in the Central States area. Unfortunately, the structure—used also for a mission—was destroyed by fire within a year after it was opened.

Another veteran of Adventist work in Colorado was Thomas H. Coopwood. Prior to joining the church he lived in Colorado Springs and was an exhorter in the local colored Methodist Episcopal church. Born in Germantown, Tennessee, Coopwood had attended Philander Smith College, where he met Sallie Bell Wamble, daughter of a Methodist Episcopal minister. She later became his wife. After their marriage the Coopwoods moved several times, seeking a climate best suited to persons suffering from the hay-fever allergy that had plagued him for many years. The couple were living in Weleetka, Oklahoma, when someone suggested Colorado Springs as a favorable climate to lessen the effects of this vexing ailment. Consequently, the family moved to Colorado Springs, where Coopwood obtained employment in a local dry-goods store. He also served the local Methodist Episcopal congregation as preacher.

Sallie Coopwood, on her way to church one Sunday, observed a white neighbor doing her weekly washing in full view of passersby bound for morning services. Mrs. Coopwood was outraged.

"That's what I say about white folks," she murmured to herself. "They have no respect for Sunday—none whatsoever."

The next day the woman who had been busy at her laundry on

Sunday was at the Coopwood's door, distributing tracts. The publications had a familiar theme and format, to which Sallie Coopwood had become accustomed as soon as she had learned to read. Her minister father, a half-Indian circuit rider, had subscribed to the *Review and Herald*, *Our Little Friend*, and other Adventist publications. In her childhood she had read these with inordinate pleasure. Now she was confronted with these provocative papers again and could not conceal her delight.

Before long a Bible instructor from the local Adventist church visited the Coopwood residence to involve her in Bible studies. In a few months this wife of the exhorter was ready for baptism into the Adventist Church; word went out that she would eventually draw her husband out of the Methodist pulpit. Undaunted, she made her commitment to the Lord and was baptized in one of the beautiful lakes of Colorado Springs.

Her husband continued to take the children to church on Sunday, but this was a weariness and an embarrassment to him. He had also pondered the question of the Sabbath for himself, but because of his position he hesitated to make a public declaration.

"I don't like this business," he said one day. "I'm going to see what I can do about getting Saturdays off at the dry-goods store."

At lunchtime that day Sallie Coopwood and the children were walking toward the store when she suddenly noticed her husband approaching them at a faster-than-usual pace.

"What you reckon?" he asked excitedly.

"You got fired," she replied.

"No, I didn't. The boss gave me the Sabbath off, and now we can all keep the Sabbath together!"

The Colorado Conference was delighted to have this new member and his family, a man already with considerable experience in the ministry. Before many months had passed, S. E. Wight, conference president, formally requested him to take over the Adventist work for the Negro population of Denver. Coopwood was pleased, even

though there were only twelve members in the city, and these held their worship services in a private home.

One member of this early group, perhaps the first black convert to join the Adventists in Colorado, was Jane Andrews Carter, a member of the church pastored by H. M. J. Richards, father of H. M. S. Richards. Subscription copies of the *Review and Herald* mailed to her between 1896 and 1899 were presented by her great-grandson Reger Smith to the Berrien Springs White Estate collection in 1979. One grandson, Hugh C. Smith, was in the same kindergarten class with H. M. S. Richards, later to become an evangelist and founder of the Voice of Prophecy. Hugh Smith recalled seeing Ellen G. White while she was in vision when he was 7 years of age. Another grandson, Rothaker C. Smith, was for many years an ordained minister in the Adventist Church. All told, six generations of Jane Carter's family became Adventists. Reger Smith, the great-grandson who cared for her papers, received a Ph.D. in social work and served for years on the faculty of Andrews University. Rothaker C. Smith, Jr., another grandson, received a Ph.D. in biology and was a member of the faculty of Oakwood College and Pine Forge Academy. Thomas Coopwood obviously could not foresee the ways that his limited group would grow and its influence would spread.

Among his first words to the small congregation in Colorado—some of whom had been members of H. M. J. Richards' church—were these: "We're going to buy a church." The little flock was understandably shocked at what seemed to them a bit of grandiose and unrealistic dreaming.

"We can't afford a church," members countered.

However, they did not actively oppose their new pastor in his plan. Coopwood sought out real-estate dealers and in time inspected a Catholic church with several adjoining lots that were part of the church holdings. The priest expressed a willingness to sell the property, and Coopwood and his congregation, greatly lacking in resources as they were, began negotiations to purchase the building.

Once there was a will to acquire a church home they soon found a way to accomplish it. Thus began in earnest a work of many decades among the black neighborhoods in the mile-high city of Denver.

When Thomas Coopwood was a pastor in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1925, he established there a fellowship with churchmen of his former Methodist connection. One of these individuals, Fletcher J. Bryant, was a well-educated clergyman, pastor of a large Methodist congregation, who was conversant also in several languages (German, French, Spanish) along with a knowledge of Biblical Hebrew and Greek. Fletcher Bryant was a searcher for truth. Coopwood, in the course of his visits, introduced many doctrinal positions held by Seventh-day Adventists. After a year or so of study this Methodist clergyman accepted the Adventist message and was baptized into the church by Coopwood. Later Fletcher Bryant accepted an invitation to teach for a few years at Oakwood College before he began a long and fruitful career in the Adventist ministry.

Coopwood also baptized Birdie McCluster, daughter of a Methodist minister, in Little Rock, Arkansas, around 1929. Noting her forceful and persuasive manner, he encouraged her to enter the literature and Bible work ministry. Her first experience as a Bible instructor was with Coopwood in an evangelistic campaign, which resulted in a new congregation in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Later she joined him in a similar effort culminating in another newly established church in Alexandria, Louisiana. Birdie McCluster worked with a number of evangelists in the Southwest and was personally responsible for leading more than one thousand persons to Christ and to membership in the Adventist Church. In 1975 she was honored at the General Conference session in Vienna as one of the outstanding women of the denomination.

The long story of Midwest evangelism began with Charles M. Kinny, born a slave in Richmond, Virginia. This itinerant preacher lighted fires in many places. His presence at that early period in widely differentiated sections of the nation might be difficult to

explain, except for the assumption that administrators, hearing of his work in Kansas and reading his reports in the *Review*, probably concluded he could sow effectively for a harvest in places where others could not. At least reports of his ministry seemed to reflect a dogged, resolute effort to reach people by personal contact, by house-to-house calls, by preaching where possible in the established churches.⁸ Needless to say, something about this procedure, under God's special surveillance, gave a steady impetus to the work.

Kinny went to New Orleans in October of 1891. Finding a nucleus of six members, he began his familiar routine of house-to-house visits and Bible studies, which brought his message to the attention of many others. With its lavish Mardi Gras and voodoo superstitions, and its emphasis on the cabaret and jazz music, New Orleans was hardly the place to expect a thoughtful and pious audience, but by the summer of 1892 Kinny could claim enough members to form a new church.⁹ On June 4 of that year, therefore, he organized the fourth church of Negro members in the denomination. Preceding it had been congregations at Edgefield Junction, Tennessee, 1886; Louisville, Kentucky, 1890; and Bowling Green, Kentucky, 1891. On this carefully chiseled and meticulously laid foundation many more consecrated emissaries were to build.

A notable example was Frederick S. Keitts, who in 1923 held a six-week tent meeting on Magnolia Street in the uptown section of New Orleans. He was assisted by Eric S. Dillett, Emile Jarreau, Jacob Soughs, and Charles Salisbury—all students from Oakwood, selling books that summer to secure funds for their school expenses in the fall. Mildred Dixon was the Bible instructor.

Keitts was not overly sensational, but he was painstakingly thorough in his preaching, and when the meetings were over he baptized more than one hundred converts in a beautiful Mississippi River ceremony. Fifty years later all could be accounted for—either they were still in the church or had died in the faith!

Among those who joined was Myrtle Gates, who later graduated

from Oakwood and spent many years as a church school teacher and principal before she took up a second career in nursing. She was married to George Murphy, of Memphis, Tennessee, also a teacher. In addition to other church commitments, Myrtle Murphy served for years as a member of the Allegheny East Conference committee.

Two other converts were Wylene Saizon and her mother, Annie Cutson, both of whom lived directly across the street from the tent. They had moved to New Orleans from Columbus, Georgia, where Wylene Saizon had been born. Although Annie Cutson made her living as a domestic, she was able to help her daughter qualify for a teaching certificate from Straight Normal School, later merged with Dillard University. Wylene Cutson taught public school for several years. When she married Sam Saizon, of New Roads, Louisiana, she gave up teaching and together they founded the Standard Life Insurance Company. She was secretary-treasurer of the firm and an influential businesswoman in the city. She accumulated many properties, including a country home in Pearlinton, Mississippi. After her husband's death, Wylene Saizon married Henry Dorsey, who worked with the Pullman Company. As a member of the church, she donated generously to the cause. She served as treasurer, Missionary Volunteer leader of her local church, and a member of the Southwest Region Conference committee. She died in a tragic auto accident en route to a conference committee meeting in 1958.

Still another convert from Keitts's meetings was Fannie Edmonds. Her mother, also named Fannie Edmonds, had joined the church five years earlier under the imaginative and eloquent preaching of J. Hermanus Laurence, who pitched a tent in New Orleans just as World War I was drawing to a close. Maude Evans, Bessie Jennings, Viola Randolph, and Annie Drayton were staunch members who dated their baptism from those meetings, and their names were synonymous with Adventism wherever they went. The younger Fannie Edmonds, later married to Harry King, followed in

their train. Her entire career was spent as a teacher, but in the church she was a recognized leader and supporter of all its programs.

Following World War II Adventist work among the black population of Texas began to move with accelerated force. This was the time of greatest change in Texas since the revolution more than a century before. Texas had become synonymous with the word "millionaire" or, more often, the phrase "oil millionaire." Walter W. Fordham had come from Florida to be president of the newly organized Southwest Region Mission. With him he brought numerous ideas of how churches might grow, how the membership might be dramatically enlarged. He held evangelistic meetings in the big cities and urged other ministers to do the same. The Adventist work had developed slowly in the Southwest, and Fordham was impatient with its pace. The new organization, a conference administered solely by black workers, had been broadly hailed throughout the field. The opportunity to achieve records never before realized by other conferences gave the budding enterprise a surge of new vitality and strength.

Prior to this, in 1901, preaching by Sydney Scott resulted in a group of converts being baptized in Catcher, Arkansas. Scott also reported an entire congregation, the "Monarch" church, being converted to the Adventist teachings.¹⁰ In 1901, a group in Houston, Texas, was organized into a company as a result of the work of two literature evangelists who had won converts there in 1898. Then Maitland G. Nunez, union evangelist, held meetings in the same locality and organized a church of 63 members.¹¹ Taswell B. Buckner, Joseph H. Laurence, James G. Dasent, Caleb Martin, and John W. Green were also among the ministers of considerable experience who contributed their vast talents to building the work in the Southwest section of the nation.

Kinny lived to see much of this take place (he died in 1951). The first black ordained minister, he saw the development of the Afro-American constituency from a sparse fifty to nearly fifty

thousand in the United States at the time of his death. His house-to-house visits proclaiming the message of a Saviour soon to return to the world had indeed begun to catch on.

NOTES

¹ See N. Painter, *The Exodusters*. The story of black migration to Kansas, the first major migration to the North of ex-slaves after the Reconstruction.

² Kinny kept meticulous records and wrote constantly to the General Conference and the *Review* about his mission work. Thus it is possible to trace his activities throughout his ministry with some degree of accuracy.

³ The activity of Kinny in St. Louis aroused opposition from some Adventists who did not favor the idea of blacks and whites worshiping in the same church. Ellen White issued a special rebuke to these members.

⁴ *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 250. Church schools for blacks posed a problem for Adventists, since Kansas schools were integrated, and a school apparently separated by race was at that time difficult to explain.

⁵ The *Call* question-and-answer column was introduced by Louis B. Reynolds and was continued for about six years.

⁶ Fordyce Detamore told the story of the Bible correspondence school development at the Spring Council held in Chicago in April of 1944 (and on other occasions). He declared that it was a direct development from the Bible correspondence school feature of the *Kansas City Call* newspaper.

⁷ *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 25.

⁸ Ron Graybill, "Charles M. Kinny, Founder of Black Evangelism," *Review and Herald*, Jan. 13, 1977, pp. 6-8.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *SDA Encyclopedia*, pp. 1404, 1405.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

A Boarding School in the North

The need for an educational institution in the North, offering academic or college preparatory subjects, came to the attention of Adventist leaders as black membership grew rapidly in large cities north of the Mason-Dixon Line. Because Harlem in New York had an unusually large Adventist following, dating from the turn of the century, a Christian education for its young people became a matter of prime concern. Oakwood, which offered high school as well as junior college courses, was a thousand miles away, and parents hesitated to send their children, 13 and 14 years of age, this great distance from home.

As a step toward solving the problem, Harlem Academy was organized as a day school in 1920. It was operated by Greater New York Conference in conjunction with the First Harlem congregation.¹ Beginning its classes in the church, located then on 131st Street, the school included grades one to nine; a grade was added each year until it reached the status of a twelve-grade academy. James L. Moran, who had attended Atlantic Union College and who, as part of his World War I military duty overseas, had taught literacy classes for

U.S. soldiers, was elected principal. Assisting him was a faculty of five.

Four years later, in 1924, the church acquired the Carlton Hall property on 127th Street. That allowed Harlem Academy to have its own physical plant and separate identity, as well as freedom from conflict with church programs. Although it was a day school intended for residents of metropolitan New York, students seeking a Christian education came from as far away as Jamaica in the West Indies and from Georgia in the deep South; some who enrolled were from Italy. In order to attend Harlem Academy and care for tuition and other expenses, out-of-town students found temporary jobs and housing wherever they could in the city. Since New York was not the best environment for young people with so little knowledge of the evils of big cities, especially those far from home, Moran began to investigate properties in New York State and nearby New Jersey and Pennsylvania on which he hoped might be established a boarding academy for the denomination's black youth.

Moran finally decided to purchase a 130-acre tract of land near Linglestown, Pennsylvania, thirteen miles northeast of Harrisburg. The estate, which bordered the Blue Ridge Mountain chain, stretched halfway up the mountain and comprised about six glacial ridges. It included one house and one barn on the farm. Moran sold his own home and solicited other funds to make up the required down payment. He invited Glenn Simons, of Zanesville, Ohio, to take over as local manager of the agricultural program. Simons left a fairly prosperous truck farm about seven miles from Zanesville, known as Bronkers Farm, and set out with his family in a Model-T Ford to begin preparations for food crops at what was to be the new boarding academy.

The year was 1928, a time of high spirits in the nation, when people were so sure of themselves that many were on occasion throwing coins into the air to express support for politicians and wandering troubadours. One year later came the stock market crash

and the closing of banks, which ushered in the great depression. Moran had planned to sell lots to members to pay the \$75,000 mortgage on the Linglestown property. But now people were scarcely making large purchases of any kind.

Moran had managed to solicit gifts sufficient to send a small monthly check to Simons, but contributions to the school were now out of the question, so there was no pay for the farm manager and his family. Simons went out to find a job but discovered there were no jobs. As winter came on, his family's food supply gave out. He took the little money they had on hand and invested it in a large sack of buckwheat flour. There was no oil in the house, so his wife, Naomi, made with water a buckwheat cereal that—as one of her sons later recalled—“had the consistency of wallpaper paste.” This she alternated with buckwheat cakes at breakfast and dinner, and the family kept going on this limited diet through December and January.

When time came for spring planting, Simons was out trying to plow, even though he had had next to nothing to eat. When he stopped to rest he was thoroughly exhausted. His wife, watching from the window and overcome with seeing her otherwise strong and courageous husband hungry and broken in spirit, wept softly.

W. H. Sebastian, a devout preacher who had known the Simons family in the South, came to the farm about that time to offer encouragement and to pray for the family and for the school Moran was attempting to build. A few days later a letter came in the mail from J. E. Cox, then pastor of a congregation in Cleveland, Ohio. In it he enclosed a check representing a collection from his church, with the explanation that, as he went into the pulpit on the previous Sabbath, he was strongly impressed that the Simonses were in dire need and that he should call for an offering to help them. Simons took the check, laid it on the floor, and called the entire family together to pray and thank God for this signal deliverance.

Immediately after their prayer session he went to town, cashed the miracle check, and purchased several bags of day-old bakery

goods. Within a few weeks the surrounding fields were alive with dandelions, wild onions, lamb's quarters, and other edible weeds. With some judicious picking, the family ate heartily once again.

But the larger hopes of that time were not realized. Moran was pressed to pay the monthly note, and with no money available in the midst of a depression, had to agree to a foreclosure on the property. Consequently, all the contributions made by a large number of people, including him, were forfeited.

Had Moran and his helpers succeeded, the history of the work in that period would have looked, in retrospect, very different. Though the Linglestown area itself became a thriving suburban community following World War II, for those who struggled with the farm there remained the stark memory of deprivation and hunger associated with that first attempt at a boarding academy for black youth in the North.

Some sixteen years later, after the organization of Allegheny Conference in 1945, the boarding school idea surfaced again. This time John H. Wagner, newly elected conference president, led out in the effort to establish an academy. There was a simultaneous attempt by leaders in the Lake Region Conference to begin a rural boarding school at Cassopolis, Michigan, but this was not successful. Undaunted by the failure nearby, Wagner moved forward out of a sense of personal commitment to Christian education. In his youth he had attended Oakwood and had traveled with the school's quartet, promoting Christian education in churches and institutions all across America. It was only natural that his first thoughts as the new conference administrator were for the spiritual upbringing of children and young people in the States represented by the new Allegheny Conference.

Plans for the boarding academy began to take certain shape when a layman from Philadelphia came upon a large rural tract of land for sale near Pottstown. He mentioned it to his pastor, Frank L. Bland, and when Bland surveyed the acres he was so delighted with what he

saw that he urged the conference to investigate the purchase. The price for 575 acres of land and twenty buildings was a mere \$42,000.² Wagner responded immediately because his fledgling conference was housed in temporary quarters in Washington and he needed a suitable location both for the conference and the school that he hoped to establish. On Friday, December 14, 1945, officers of the conference met with realtor David Amey, of Philadelphia, and signed for the purchase. Plans were announced subsequently for an academic school year that would begin in September, 1946. The slogan that sounded throughout Allegheny Conference churches had an urgent ring: "Heed the call: A school by fall!"³ Ministers, Bible instructors, and church school teachers made personal pledges toward purchase of the property; these commitments ranged as high as \$1,000. With this excellent example the constituency rallied, raised the required down payment, and consummated the deal.

The property itself, Wagner found, had great historic significance. It had been established in 1715 as an iron forge to provide ammunition for sentries of the original American colonies. The original owner was Thomas Rutter, a Keithian Quaker and an observer of the Biblical Sabbath, who had obtained a homestead grant from William Penn. The earliest pamphlet issued against slavery was published by his group. The Pine Forge property was a station of the Underground Railroad and featured an escape route from the manor house to the Manatawny River. The farm remained in the hands of the Rutter family until early in the twentieth century; since then it changed hands several times before it was sold to the Adventists for their new boarding school and conference office.⁴

As news of the proposed rural academy became known in Pine Forge and in nearby Pottstown vigorous opposition came from residents of the surrounding area. Some gross misconceptions of what the academy would be like and rumors of how students might roam the neighborhoods and terrorize the population had made the

rounds of Manatawny Valley. Wagner, in his affable and persuasive manner, met with community groups to clarify this misunderstanding, to refute charges, and to allay fears. Influential friends of his cause in Pottstown, such as Shandy Hill, managing editor of the *Mercury*, and the manager of the Old Iron Bank of Pottstown threw the weight of their support behind Wagner and his staff. Hill ran editorials in the *Mercury* defending the rights of the newly arrived property owners to establish their school and to move forward with the business of their church in the Pine Forge community. Before long the opposition subsided.

The Allegheny Conference had originally invited J. L. Moran, of Oakwood, to be treasurer; C. H. Kelly of the Columbia Union carried on his work until the school year at Oakwood was over. Later the committee elected Moran to be principal of the new school, to which the name Pine Forge Institute was attached.

Wagner sent out a call to pastors and other workers in the conference to come to Pine Forge and prepare for the opening of school. They came in cars and by train and bus from all over the field. Their task was to transform farmhouses and barns into classrooms, homes, and dormitories. Moran saw the cattle barn as a chapel and the old grist mill as a classroom facility. Here and there on campus other office and study space was provided. Ministers and laymen rallied again to get cleaning and remodeling done prior to the school's opening date. Curious visitors came to see what was accomplished and could scarcely believe that such a vast transformation could be achieved in so brief a time. Representatives of business concerns in the Pottstown and Reading areas also came to establish commercial relations with the emerging institution.

On September 9, 1946, nine months from the time conference leaders first saw the site, the academy opened. Moran dashed off this report to readers of the *Columbia Union Visitor*: "School is now open and filled to capacity with students from California, Wyoming, Indiana, Michigan, Massachusetts, Maine, New York, and South

Carolina, as well as every part of the Allegheny Conference. . . . All the young people seem to be happy to be at Pine Forge.⁵

It was a stirring time for the black membership throughout the Northeast and Allegheny region. Some declared it to be almost like a new beginning for Christian education in the church. There was a pride in a new institution, a willingness to sacrifice to make its mission a reality. Of that high moment in the life of this people, Charles D. Brooks has written this reflection:

"We all remember with delight the peculiar pleasures of those early days. The pioneer, self-sacrificing spirit seemed shared by all and there was a fierce pride in rugged accomplishments which bound all together. . . . The pride was justifiable. The Columbia Union Conference had contributed \$10,000 for the founding of this school, the General Conference \$7,000. All the other financial strength was supplied by the faithful constituents of Allegheny Conference and their friends.⁶

The times were still tense for Pine Forge faculty and students. A riot in nearby Philadelphia on September 29, 1946, involved more than one hundred Negroes and whites. This had followed a race riot in Athens, Alabama, and another in Columbia, Tennessee, earlier that year. In that year also, six black Americans were lynched, and the news of these events was not reassuring to a school administration that had begun its work amid protests from the nearby white community.⁷

The lack of employment and the difference in income accorded blacks had their bearing on the economy and progress of Pine Forge. The median income of wage and salary workers nationwide was, for the white male, \$2,357, and for the nonwhite male, \$1,279. For the white female it was \$1,269; for the nonwhite female it was \$432. The people who had to pay prevailing tuition rates for their children at Pine Forge were therefore at a noticeable disadvantage. Family backing for school fees was augmented by the street sale of denominational magazines, a project many students and parents

wholeheartedly entered into.

When graduation time came at Pine Forge, more than five hundred parents and friends of the academy assembled for the first commencement exercise, to see six graduates receive their diplomas. By the conclusion of the 1946-1947 school year ten Pine Forge students had been baptized.

During the first year Moran had sustained a serious back injury as a result of a fall from ceiling rafters while assisting with renovation of the barn that was to serve as school cafeteria. He spent months in a veterans' hospital without dramatic improvement, and later resigned his work at Pine Forge to seek further means of recovery. Robert L. Reynolds, who had been in educational work before he joined the Adventists, was chosen as his successor. He brought added stability to the enterprise. Ercell I. Watson, a capable young minister from Dayton, Ohio, was elected to be principal about three years later. During his ten years at Pine Forge the administration building was erected, which, in addition to office space, provided adequate library facilities and greatly enlarged the space for classroom teaching.

In more recent years Charles L. Brooks, Luther R. Palmer, Jr., Cleveland B. Tivy, Adrian Westney, Auldwin Humphrey, Paul Jones, Rothaker Smith, and W. Augustus Cheatham have served terms as principal. Commenting on the effectiveness of teaching done in this rural boarding academy, Charles D. Brooks declares that it has justified its existence.

"Students have gone forth from these halls to serve with distinction in many professions; they are the Pine Forge epistle, known and read of all men. They validate the academy's right to exist, and certainly it is always known best by its fruits. Through the years this institution has been blessed with dedicated, unselfish teachers and other staff personnel."⁸

In addition, persons such as Dr. Grace D. Kimbrough, a physician and a member of the Ebenezer church in Philadelphia, rallied with thousands of dollars in financial support. Kimbrough Hall was built

largely from funds provided in her will. Robert L. Handy, first dean of the boys' dormitory and whose name the new dormitory bears, gave the boys an example in deep spirituality, good personal grooming, and sympathetic consideration for each other, especially for those who were away from home for the first time. A large part of the funds that made possible the new boys' dormitory came from the thirteenth Sabbath overflow offering in the second quarter of 1972.

Nathaniel E. Ashby, another teacher who brought an extraordinary talent to Pine Forge, one who believed in discipline and toughness as major requirements for teen-age faith, set a high scholastic goal for his students that many remember with gratitude. Margaret Booker Duncan, who organized the library and taught subjects in English, did such a remarkable job that she was invited to join the library staff of Columbia Union College. Adrian Westney, whose consecrated labors also came to the attention of church leaders at Takoma Park, became associate director of education for the entire Columbia Union area. James Brockenbrough did such an excellent job with the farm that he was invited to connect with the Adventist college in Japan as farm manager.

The graduating class of 1959 made, for that academic year, some of the highest scores in English, chemistry, biology, and mathematics for the entire Philadelphia-Pottstown area. Several outstanding students who contributed to this high rating went on to do further credit to their alma mater in their chosen fields. Gus Cheatham, class president, became deputy director of civil rights for the U. S. Government's Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in Washington. Ronald Anderson became an ophthalmologist, and Everett Cantrell, a physician; entering the teaching profession were Diana Lester and class valedictorian Ida Anderson.

Science teacher Samuel E. Darby received a citation in 1971 from the Chemical Industry of Eastern Pennsylvania, pointing out his signal contribution as a secondary school instructor. At a banquet given in the prestigious Marriott Hotel in Philadelphia he was named

one of the five most outstanding high school chemistry teachers in the entire Eastern Pennsylvania region.

Charles Cheatham, development director for Pine Forge in the seventies, approached many local business leaders and foundation representatives to seek gifts and grants for the academy's building program. From foundation officers he often heard the question "What is the reason for the existence of a school like yours, offering a high school curriculum, when all you offer might be secured in a public education program and at no cost to the student?" His reference to Bible courses offered at Pine Forge did not seem to satisfy their questions about uniqueness, and his references to small classes and individualized instruction seemed to them to be merely rationalization for a small enrollment and generally limited help from philanthropists. Other than his stated reasons, Cheatham had no clear and definitive answer for these hard-nosed executives.

Toward the end of U.S. intervention in Vietnam, Pine Forge Academy was in great financial distress. Other Adventist academies were by now more heavily endowed and were in better position to make capital improvements. At the same time, students with membership in regional conferences were welcomed to these institutions, and each high school enrollment outside the black conferences was one less potential candidate for the Pine Forge student population. To add to the fiscal nightmare, in the midst of the 1976-1977 school year the cafeteria burned to the ground.

To help turn things around, Auldwin Humphrey, a young minister from Philadelphia, was installed as principal. He in turn invited several talented and experienced educators to join him, adding to the competence of faculty and staff at Pine Forge. Among them was Ruth Mosby Greene, who had been dean of women at Oakwood; John Pitts, who had been a mission treasurer in Sierre Leone; and Rothaker Smith, Jr., who had considerable classroom expertise and practical know-how in the field of agriculture.

Raymond Moore, director of Hewitt Research Center, had

observed after a summer workshop at Pine Forge in 1977 that the academy was "too isolated" and too little known. "Let people know what you're doing up here," he said to Humphrey. "You need publicity."

Three months later the name of Pine Forge blazed in newspaper headlines, and pictures of faculty and students were shown on television news accounts all across the nation.

A class from Pine Forge, with their teacher, Charles Battles, had gone to Boston on a field trip to see firsthand the Boston Commons, the place where Crispus Attucks had died in America's first engagement against the British in the Revolutionary War. As they left the historic site and were boarding a city bus, they were attacked by hoodlums, who struck some of them with golf clubs and sticks. The fact that they did not fight back made this story a prime radio, television, and newspaper account for nationwide distribution. Both police officers and hospital emergency personnel had more to say about the character of the students and their teacher than about the incident. They remarked that the attitude of the students toward their assailants was truly Christian and of a nature they had never witnessed before, especially in the kind of racial incidents that for months had kept Boston in perpetual turmoil. The police expressed hope that the media would capture this spiritual, nonviolent stance of the Adventist young people.

What was the reason for a distinct and separate school at Pine Forge? The Boston incident clearly had provided the answer.

NOTES

¹ Annual bulletin for Harlem Academy (New York, N.Y.: 1929).

² Charles D. Brooks, "The History of Pine Forge Academy" (mimeographed paper prepared for an anniversary of the institution).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *A History of Pine Forge* (published by the Pottstown Historical Society).

⁵ Article about opening of Pine Forge Institute, *Columbia Union Visitor*, fall, 1946.

⁶ Brooks, *op. cit.*

⁷ P. M. Bergman, *The Chronological History of the Negro in America*; information is noted under events listed for 1946.

⁸ Brooks, *op. cit.*

The Branches Overhang the Fence

Charles E. Bradford was elected president of the North American Division of the General Conference, January 11, 1979, after Neal C. Wilson took office as president of the world body. Bradford had been associate secretary for nine years. He had been born in Washington in 1925, three years after the dedication of the famous Lincoln Memorial. His father, Robert L. Bradford, was pastor of Ephesus church, then located at Sixth and N streets, NW.—it is significant to note that both Charles Bradford's father and grandfather were ordained ministers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. His mother, the former Etta Littlejohn, a cousin of Taswell B. Buckner, was a convert of the *Morning Star* boat mission in Vicksburg, Mississippi. She finished high school at Oakwood and completed the nursing course at Melrose Sanitarium in Massachusetts.

Charles Bradford, considered to be one of the denomination's most articulate and profound preachers, gave the midday sermon on the first Sabbath of the 1980 quinquennial session of the General Conference at Dallas, Texas. Speaking to representatives and visitors from 190 countries around the world, he reminded them of their



"pathetic search for a more satisfying formula, a new theological construct," calculated, he said, "to 'finish the work.'"¹ Then, touching on the need to love God and to love one's neighbor as an essential posture in doing anything for the Lord, he said the church must be "vertically alive to God and horizontally in touch with men and all that troubles them."² He appealed for sympathy toward the needy and the unfortunate, for hearts that could feel the sorrows of others.

"The church must be in deed and in reality the Just Society," he said. "The principles of justice and neighbor love must be worked out in the laboratory of human experience, in the here-and-now. And we are the ones to demonstrate these grand principles."³

Later in the session Bradford presented the North American Division report, a motion picture showing him on a Washington street, with a backdrop of heavy traffic, urging the church to be up and about its pressing business. On the same evening program the Aeolians, a choral group from Oakwood College directed by Alma Blackmon, sang, "Sinner, Please Don't Let This Harvest Pass," a spiritual, and "Battle Hymn of the Republic." If anyone at that point had denied Bradford's ability to lead North America, this stimulating report provided ample and positive assurance that indeed he could.

Months earlier Bradford had held what he termed a "summit" meeting with union and local conference presidents high in the Colorado Rockies. His competence to assume leadership of this widely diverse group was also easily apparent. One church official expressed his view that in this council alone Bradford had "bought two years of time in his administration," a period normally considered necessary for a new division leader to acquire a good grasp of his work and the cooperation of those he depended upon to carry forward the task.

Bradford's experience in Baton Rouge and in the bayou country of Louisiana; in St. Louis, the midcontinental focal point of transport and manufacture; in New York, the nation's headquarters city; and in

Eva B. Dykes, first black woman to complete the requirements for a Ph.D. degree in North America, graduated from Radcliffe College.

PAINTING BY HARRY ANDERSON.

Chicago, America's heartland, had admirably prepared him to deal with many distinctive groups of people. More than this, his personal discipline in study and in preparing well his sermons and prayer meeting talks had assured him of an appreciative audience wherever he spoke.

Robert L. Woodfork, a field secretary of the General Conference, acts as liaison for Bradford in arrangements and contacts involving regional conferences, entities that in 1981 had a combined title income of more than 38 million dollars. Woodfork's responsibility incorporates some aspects of church governance reminiscent of the Department of Regional Affairs.

Before he came to Washington, when he was president of the South Atlantic Conference, that conference annually raised more than \$100,000 for evangelism. A large pavilion purchased by the conference for its campground helped make the facility one of the most attractive camp arrangements in the denomination. Members come by busloads from many parts of the country to attend the annual convocations. By a careful husbanding of funds, Woodfork also built a new conference office building in Atlanta. This was in addition to the many churches constructed in South Atlantic under his leadership.

An innovation of the North American Division under Bradford is the extension of designated posts of leadership. J. William Bothe, associate secretary for the world organization, is also secretary for North America, and Don Christman, another associate secretary for the world field, is associate secretary for North America. William C. Scales, Jr., is Ministerial secretary; Samuel D. Meyers is stewardship secretary; Owen A. Troy, Jr., is communication secretary; Leslie H. Pitton, Jr., is Adventist Youth secretary; and Thomas M. Ashlock is Sabbath school secretary—all of these are assignments in the North American Division.

G. Ralph Thompson, in Washington since 1975, is the first black to hold office as secretary of the General Conference. Before he became

secretary, Thompson was for five years a General Conference vice president. Singularly patient, realistic, and bold, Thompson had become president of the Carribean Union after serving for several years as president of the East Caribbean Conference.

Maurice Battle is an associate secretary with a broad background of overseas experience, having spent many years in Ghana and Liberia. As a result of his work and that of others in 1970, the Ghana Mission was lifted to the status of a conference.

A man with driving energy, Battle is perhaps one of the best-organized people in the officer group. Because he has lived and worked in Lebanon, Cyprus, and London, as well as in Ghana and Liberia, he has more than a nodding acquaintance with outstanding people from many parts of the world and has demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of trends of the times.

Warren S. Banfield heads the Office of Human Relations, which incorporates a concern for black Americans and other minorities. This office keeps a watch against segregation, discrimination, injustice, suppression, and special privilege wherever they may exist in the church. Banfield and his associate, Eloy Martinez, are constantly at work to assure members that their interests have high priority at the church's headquarters.

Owen A. Troy, Jr., heads programs for North America in the communication department. A veteran of mission service in Ghana and Trinidad, he is a third-generation Adventist preacher with considerable training and experience in journalism and inner-city ministry. Troy has organized programs to train press representatives and to increase newspaper exposure all over the United States and Canada.

Another leader whose 23-years connection with the General Conference made church history was E. Earl Cleveland. As associate director of the Ministerial Association, he had traveled the world and held successful evangelistic crusades in such places as Warsaw, Poland; Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Port-of-Spain, Trinidad; Johan-

nesburg, South Africa; and Sydney, Australia.

Born in Huntsville, Alabama, and reared in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Cleveland had opportunity to meet several prominent Adventist evangelists, and he had early set his heart toward a career in the ministry. In Chattanooga he was known as the boy preacher, even in local circles of Methodists and Baptists. At age 12 he helped increase the family income during summer months by selling ice-cream "snowballs"; during the winter he managed a coal bin, where he sold wood and coal. He finished public high school in Chattanooga, where he was valedictorian of his class. Since then he has received numerous awards, among them an honorary D.D. degree from Andrews University; an L.L.D. degree from Daniel Payne College; and a Doctor of Humanities degree from Union Baptist Seminary. Oakwood College named him *Alumnus of the Year* in 1969.⁴

Cleveland, who was baptized by A. B. B. Storey, a Southern Missionary Society preacher, has led more than nine thousand persons to Christ in thirty-six years of ministry. The 1966 campaign he conducted in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, brought more than one thousand converts into the church. At the time it was the largest number of baptisms from one meeting in the history of the Adventist denomination. Fifteen of his converts are in the Adventist ministry; more than nine hundred ministers have been involved in his field training seminars.⁵

In addition to his evangelistic crusades, Cleveland worked with committees for several years to establish the Inner City program and the church's Human Relations Committee. He initiated the seven-hour prayer meeting, a yearly dedication to evangelism, now observed by some 1,300 churches across North America. He also inaugurated the Floating Seminar, a part of the continuing-education program for the church's urban ministry.⁶

Charles D. Brooks, a general field secretary of the General Conference and speaker for the *Breath of Life* telecast, has baptized

close to five thousand people in his ministry. He is widely sought for college campus appointments and is a frequent commencement speaker.

Brooks came into the Adventist Church in quite a spectacular way as a result of a vision God gave to his mother. Explaining this early encounter, this fragile miracle, "with the infinite God bending low to speak to one of His children in a private conversation, he had this to say about the outcome:

"I was just an infant at the time. But I had a blessed mother whom all her friends remember as an extraordinary Christian. God spoke to her directly, audibly, as she lay on a sickbed. He called her name and told her to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. Mother was amazed to discover that she was ignorantly observing the wrong day, but she promised the Lord then and there that she would observe His true Sabbath, even if no one else besides herself and her children did.

"For seven years our mother and the children who were yet at home observed the Sabbath (from midnight Friday to midnight Saturday), and we thought we were the only folks in the whole world who were doing so. This brought us into severe conflict with neighbors, relatives, and our church. I come from a long line of Methodist preachers. There was hostility from everywhere. Father did not agree with the new idea (he was baptized later and died loving Jesus and this precious Adventist truth). Folks all around us showered us generously with opprobrium and vitriolic abuse.

"After several years of rancor, our church decided on a more charitable course. A committee was named to approach Mother with the view of 'reclaiming' for the church this valuable but confused member. Over the years we children had become defensive, bristling before the abuse. We had no counselor, no pastor to guide us, no books—only the patient, kindly example of Mother.

"But God was about to send us help. The committee arrived, headed by the senior deacon of the church. They pleaded and cajoled at length, then offered their arguments to refute the message that had

come to Mother. However, this 'quiet spirit,' our mother, had pored over the Word by the hours on Sabbaths (with no church to attend), and had become more than a match for the committee. She did not do it with fire, but with light. She didn't argue and dispute in the face of ridicule; she questioned. Her points scored hard and well. Her lines of argument were later found, to my amazement, in our many books. She was, in effect, quoting the thoughts of great preachers in the Adventist Church before she had ever heard of them. I use her arguments now as an evangelist in the cities of the earth.

"We saw the truth triumph that day. We saw the committee retreat in exasperation. When they stood to leave, the head deacon removed from under his arm a package wrapped in brown paper and tied with binder's twine. He said, 'Mrs. Brooks, since you believe this foolishness, here is something I've brought for you. I didn't think we could change you.'

"After they had left, we carefully opened the package. Inside was a large, elegantly bound volume called *The Great Controversy*, by some unheard-of woman named Ellen G. White. Curiously we began to open its powerful pages, and God spoke to us again. This time He carefully, accurately retraced history, documenting the events that led to the great apostasy in Christendom. Here was His explanation as to why He spoke to Mother in that hospital room and asked her to do this unheard-of, 'new' thing. The whole thing became clear. Reading this book was like God speaking in thunder tones to His own in a way that only His own could understand.

"'Because My Word is sure,' He was saying, 'and stands forever and is not subject to the whims and fancies of theologians and priests, fanatics and friars, scholars and sectarians, I am not moved by plebiscites and polls. I am God, and My Word is settled forever in heaven. So walk confidently in truth though the heavens may seem to fall. I am God, and My Word is as sure as I am!'" No volume ever spoke to us like that, and though I was not yet 10 years old I understood it. I got the message! Powerful, profound, yet simple."7

This, Brooks says, was the family's introduction to Ellen G. White, and through her, to God's special message to His special people. At that time they had never heard the name Seventh-day Adventists; they knew only that God was speaking to them. He had a Methodist deacon deliver an Adventist book to confirm the faith once delivered to the saints. If for ages past society had floundered in the wilderness, He knew that now had come an era when the pilgrim band dwelt on the borders of the Promised Land.

"Surely a well-organized church, unoffensive in nature, liberal in views, could arise and flourish and progress numerically and economically any time, anywhere. But God's remnant church, born in ridicule, preaches a straight testimony, rebukes all sin (while encouraging the sinner), upholds all of God's law (while rebuking legalism and righteousness by works), calls for obedience to God rather than keeping the commandments of men, takes on nearly the whole Christian world by exposing a man-made Sabbath, preaches the mark of the beast, the judgment, the unconscious state of the dead, and the other decidedly unpopular beliefs. How could such a church progress and flourish in spite of the opposing forces? It is because of God's devotion, His defense, His guidance."⁸

Eventually Napoleon B. Smith, who had been converted through efforts of John Manns, a *Morning Star* preacher (and who had attended Oakwood in its early days), came to visit the Brooks family and to invite them to church. He taught them points of doctrine they had not discovered in the Bible and *The Great Controversy*, and all the family living at home except the father were baptized.

Walter M. Starks, first stewardship director of the General Conference, who organized the department, made possible the flow of millions of dollars into the Adventist treasury as a result of his planning and promotion of this work. Starks also began his ministry as an evangelist, having come into the Adventist Church in Columbus, Georgia, through the preaching of John G. Thomas. Thomas, in turn, had been converted in Florida through the

preaching of John S. Green, who had worked with John Manns, representing the Southern Missionary Society.

When Starks finished his college course, Thomas invited him to take part in his tent evangelism. One momentous event that took place in La Grange, Georgia, has been described by Starks in his book *Ordeal by Fire*:

"I was not aware of the custom or restrictions of La Grange of that period. My life at the college had been a sheltered one. There it was as if we students lived in another world. Besides, human relations in Huntsville, Alabama, in the early 1940s, were far in advance of most of the South. But in small, rural, Southern towns, blacks seldom went to town except on Saturdays. And on the few days when an exception was made, they never appeared in "dress clothes." My frequent appearance in town, in what was, to the populace, 'Sunday meeting attire,' stood out like a sore thumb. I had been a marked man from the very beginning.

"As I entered the appliance store and made my selection, the clerk, a young man about my own age, inquired, 'Aren't you from the tent?' I replied that I was. 'Well,' he continued, 'if I were you, I would leave this town—tonight.' I could hardly believe my ears.

"'Leave town tonight!' I responded.

"'Yes,' he replied.

"'But why?' I inquired.

"'I am not at liberty to tell you,' he answered. 'I am only warning you because my aunt is a Seventh-day Adventist and I attended one of your schools. You may do as you wish. I was only trying to be a friend.'

"I shrugged off the one dark cloud upon my horizon of hope. Settling down for the night, I turned on my radio to the news. It was evident that a storm was about to break upon America. What I was unaware of was the immediate storm that would break upon my head that very night!

"As the last rays of the sun fled from view I heard footsteps

outside my flimsy abode. They seemed to pause. I looked out to see an elderly white couple who had missed several meetings and were unaware of the new schedule. I informed them of the change in our schedule and invited them back for the next night, resisting the urge to tell them that I would be speaking. It was almost ten o'clock, the time the President's message would be broadcast. I tuned in to listen to one of the most renowned and talented orators of the day.

"The entrance to the big tent faced westward. The rear, which contained the rostrum, the choir stand, the pulpit, and the large white screen, was to the east. My family tent was on the south side, facing the north, in order that I might always have an immediate view of the entire area. I could stand in the door of my tent and have a panoramic view of anything transpiring. On the north side a dirt road ran parallel to the tent, east and west.

"My tent contained an iron cot, which was placed across the back, the head to the east. At the head of the cot stood a wooden chair on which I kept a basin I used when washing my face and hands.

"Immediately after the President's broadcast I fell fast asleep. I must have slept for several hours. I seemed to be dreaming, hearing a voice faint but clear and distant, calling my name. 'Elder Starks! Elder Starks! Elder Starks!' I stirred but could not seem to fully awaken.

"The calling persisted. No, it was not a dream. Now the calling was louder and almost frantic. There was a loud, explosive crash. The chair at my head toppled to the floor. A buzzing, whizzing noise followed next. It sounded like air escaping from a punctured auto tire. The tent was filled with a vaporlike mist. My body seemed to become one great mass of nausea. I felt each moment would be my last. The anguished, frantic cry now became even more urgent, 'Elder Starks! Elder Starks! Elder Starks!' There was a great noise of a car engine being revved up. It sped away into the darkness of the night.

"Fighting for every breath of air and almost to the point of collapsing, I struggled in the darkness to find some clothing. At last I found some trousers. How it happened, I do not know, but my shoes

were on the opposite feet—fully tied! I staggered to the door, gasping for air, just in time to see the tent come crashing to the ground in a blaze of fire and leaping sparks. Every rope that anchored the tent had been cut. The heavy iron poles as they came crashing to the earth made matchwood of the wooden chairs that lay in their path. Clutching my stomach, I drank in great draughts of the early-morning air. My head began to clear. I began to realize what had just transpired.

“While I was quietly sleeping evil men were busy at work. Methodically they cut every rope around the tent. They would finish me off just before leaving. According to a report, one man in the vicinity of the tent had already been shot; he had been mistaken for me. Now the evil men hoped to correct their mistake. Ordinarily I am a light sleeper. Had I awakened to investigate the happenings of the night, which I normally would have done, I would have provided a perfect target for the gunman. And had the chair not been in the direct line of the bullet, I would not be alive to testify to God’s divine providence. Tear gas had been the final effort to flush me out into the open.

“But God mercifully covered me with heavy slumber. He awakened the neighbors in time to alarm the intruders, and His providence arranged the placement of the chair in the path the bullet would travel. Surely it is true that ‘the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.’”⁹

Frank L. Peterson, first black official to be elected a vice-president of the General Conference, joined the Advent Movement under J. Hermanus Laurence in Pensacola, Florida. Laurence was one of the preachers connected with the Southern Missionary Society. Frank L. Bland, the second black representative to be elected a vice-president of the General Conference, attended the *Morning Star* school in Vicksburg, Mississippi, begun by James Edson White. Harold D. Singleton, for years director of the Office of Regional Affairs, was introduced to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Jacksonville,

Florida, through its local pastor, Matthew C. Strachan, who came to the Singleton home and introduced himself to Annie Mae Singleton, the mother. Strachan had been a teacher in the Southern Missionary Society, along with Franklin Warnick and Fred Rogers, and the Singletons were impressed with his gracious manner. Garland Millet, who edited *Journal of Adventist Education* in the General Conference, was an associate director of the Department of Education. His mother attended the *Morning Star* school also. Walter W. Fordham, another director of the Office of Regional Affairs, came into the church as a result of a tent effort held in Charleston, South Carolina, by Charles Manns around 1910. Fordham's sister Frankie had died, and in sorrow the family turned to the religious meetings conducted by the Manns brothers that had created considerable interest in the town. These evangelists were part of the Southern Missionary Society.

There were other significant facts about preachers and converts in the Washington metropolitan area and elsewhere in the region. The First Seventh-day Adventist church in Washington, D.C., was organized February 24, 1889, with twenty-six charter members. But the beginning of this congregation dates back to 1876, when D. M. Canright, on his way to Baltimore, reported two families in the area who systematically distributed tracts, hoping to find people interested in Bible studies.¹⁰ In 1880, I. Sanborn, while spending a week in Washington, visited three people whom he recognized as members; after a series of Bible studies, he baptized two more. Four years later, Reuben Wright distributed magazines and tracts in residential neighborhoods and also conducted Bible studies. After several months of these meetings he reported two converts, but no concerted evangelism was launched until two years later.

In January of 1886, Willard H. Saxby, of Vermont, and his wife, a Bible instructor who had been one of the first converts in Kentucky, were assigned to Washington. Assisting Saxby were Charles Parmele and his sister Julia, of Illinois, and others, including apprentice Bible

instructors who gave occasional help. Saxby operated what was called a city mission at 1831 Vermont Avenue, NW.¹¹

The Federal City was apparently a more difficult undertaking than church leaders had imagined, for in the first three months, although they gave 297 Bible studies, they were able to report only one convert. In two years, however, there was a Sabbath school of forty-six, which, having outgrown the Vermont Avenue location, met in Claybaugh Hall, 1630 Fourteenth Street NW. Within three years there was a church of twenty-six charter members, which was formally organized in 1889 by John O. Corliss. In the same month the congregation moved to a southeast site near the Capitol. There, in March, a council of leaders from Battle Creek planned the formation of what was to be known as the Atlantic Conference (organized September, 1889), which included the District of Columbia.¹² Under the new arrangement it was decided to close the mission, and the Saxbys left in August. The church then had a membership of 41.

J. S. Washington and Charles L. Taylor conducted almost continuous evangelistic meetings in 1890, and in 1893 the congregation purchased a small church building on Eighth Street NE., between F and G streets. This interracial fellowship had among its members Mrs. Rosetta Douglass Sprague, daughter of Frederick Douglass, who was no doubt influenced in some way by her father's belief in the Bible and the Second Coming and his description of the falling of the stars, to which he was an eyewitness in 1833.¹³ Douglass referred later to the falling stars as a "harbinger of the coming of the Son of man."¹⁴ Another prominent member was Dr. J. H. Howard, a physician and uncle of Eva B. Dykes, who financed her education and also contributed liberally to the church and to special mission projects that he fostered in West Africa.

Lewis C. Sheafe, an outstanding preacher, who at one time had been a minister in the Baptist Church, was invited to hold meetings in Washington, and since the Negro members were by now in the majority, he was retained as pastor. During this period the General

Conference offices were moved from Battle Creek to Washington, and churches in the District of Columbia and Takoma Park were assigned to the administration of the General Conference.

A letter written to A. G. Daniells by Dr. Howard in 1903 expressed a concern for what he saw as a change of attitude toward black members and an attempt to make the interracial church in Washington an all-black group.

"It is difficult to see why it is necessary to make a race line in the Adventist denomination in face of the fact that the truth involves a positive protest against any such thing in the church. It is even more difficult to see why there should ever have been a disposition . . . to experiment with this church in the interest of a policy of race distinction, or to deal with it in harmony with such a policy. The method of making things go a certain way, or managing so that they will turn out a certain way, surely ought not to be considered a proper method of building up a spiritual work. It would seem better to follow the openings and opportunities made by Providence and the Holy Spirit. . . .

"We understand the awful meaning to us of the dealing of the General Conference. . . . It does seem . . . that there is a disposition among the General Conference Committee to make the church colored."¹⁵

In this seething period of lynchings and race riots, white members apparently feared for their own safety and for the well-being of the entire denominational membership. They therefore left First church to organize other congregations in the Washington area.

Because several letters had been addressed to Ellen G. White about the matter, she came to First church as a speaker. Her reaction to the situation was later written out with earnestness and candor. She warned against what seemed to be a growing prejudice in the church against the black minority and the tendency to endorse the most unjust treatment of these people:

"No matter what the gain or the loss, we must act nobly and

courageously in the sight of God and our Saviour. Let us as Christians who accept the principle that all men, white and black, are free and equal, adhere to this principle, and not be cowards in the face of the world, and in the face of the heavenly intelligences. We should treat the colored man just as respectfully as we would treat the white man. And we can now, by precept and example, win others to this course." ¹⁶

Meanwhile Lewis C. Sheafe was asked to pastor a second church in Washington, called the Peoples church. Correspondence from him addressed to Ellen White also revealed an early disenchantment with church policies in Washington. He received this appeal from her in connection with the emotionally charged issue:

"Elder Sheafe, Satan has been at work upon your mind, and for a long time you have been entertaining his suggestions. Through his temptations you have been led to take a course of action in your home that has been a great evil. It has injured you and the cause of God." ¹⁷

The matter of racial discrepancy continued to plague Sheafe. He and his Peoples church withdrew from denominational fellowship about 1907, but he brought them back into the fold in 1913. In 1914 he moved to California, where he continued as a pastor and evangelist. Frederick Seeney was appointed pastor of the Peoples church.

Soon a split took place in the Peoples church. While about 25 members remained loyal to the denomination and worshiped with Seeney in his home, the remainder invited Sheafe to return from California and be their pastor. He did so and led the larger group away from the denomination a second time in about 1916.

The loyal group formed the Ephesus church and U. S. Willis was appointed pastor. He served for nine months, followed by P. Gustavus Rodgers, who led the congregation for seven years—from 1916 to 1923. In that period membership grew from forty to three hundred, and under successive pastors it continued to climb until Ephesus became one of the largest churches in the Potomac Conference.

In 1916 J. Marion Campbell came to First church as pastor, and with his coming began a new surge of evangelism in the northeast and southwest sections. The membership grew, and the congregation as well as its minister became more deeply involved in tract distribution and in personal witness. A church school was begun, and many children whose parents were not affiliated with the church were enrolled. First church also instituted welfare programs that strengthened its tie with the immediate neighborhood and with the Washington public.

By 1955 the small church on Eighth Street NE., had become greatly overcrowded. The congregation, led by Wilmot M. Fordham, purchased a larger property, an abandoned Jewish synagogue at Eighth and Shepherd streets. Later pastors remodeled it to make a representative house of worship.

Developed subsequently was the new Ephesus church (more recently named Dupont Park church), which had reached a membership of more than one thousand; a large church school was also established. J. Gershom Dasent pastored this congregation in the depression years, at the same time carrying forward an extensive evangelism. Other efforts by laymen resulted in the organization of five more churches in Washington, with a greatly increased membership.

To build membership among black neighborhoods of Pittsburgh, the West Pennsylvania Conference invited Adam Nicholas Durrant, an evangelist in the Caribbean Union. Durrant and his family arrived in New York aboard the *R.M.S. Oratava*, May 12, 1912, and proceeded to Pittsburgh to commence his evangelistic career in America. There were scarcely a half dozen members in the Steel City when Durrant arrived, but he began a vigorous soul-winning campaign and in a short time built a church on Chauncey Street. Among his early converts was Dr. Stark O. Cherry, a prominent physician, with his wife and family. Durrant went on to establish churches in New Jersey at Newark, Jersey City, Englewood,

Montclair, Patterson, and Camden. From there he carried on an aggressive program in Ohio, working with churches in Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton, and Springfield.

Durrant was born an Episcopalian in Manchester, Jamaica, May 23, 1879. His mother was a mulatto and his father a businessman of French descent whose parents migrated to Jamaica at about the time of America's Civil War. Durrant became a Seventh-day Adventist in 1900 after attending meetings conducted by Judson B. Beckner. When he confronted the Episcopal bishop with the Sabbath doctrine, the bishop refused to discuss the issue but told Durrant he was wasting his time listening to Beckner. Durrant was courting Ethyl Amanda Gregory, also an Episcopalian; he took her to the meetings and they both were baptized and later married. Durrant entered the ministry in 1904 and was ordained in 1908 by I. H. Evans.

In the Columbia Union, Durrant conducted tent meetings every year and added considerably to the black membership. His aggressive efforts seemed particularly to irritate the pastor of a large Baptist church, who wrote a column for the *Pittsburgh Courier*. In his column he made a weekly attack on Durrant. Not to be outdone, Durrant appealed to the paper, and the editors permitted him to answer with another column called "Hard Nuts Cracked." It was then that the Baptist preacher challenged him to a debate, stating that it must take place in his large Baptist church on a Sunday morning. Durrant responded, and his entire Chauncey Street congregation came out to support him. With his Bible and no notes Durrant made an eloquent defense of the Sabbath and other doctrines held by Adventists, with the result that Durrant was declared the winner—before his opponent's large Baptist congregation.

Durrant lived to be 88, and to the end of his life he was an ardent soul winner. Two Catholic nurses who attended him and Mrs. Durrant at Paradise Valley Sanitarium were baptized a few days before his death. He had taken the occasion of their daily visits to acquaint them with the Adventist message.

Susie Willis Hodney went to Battle Creek from her home in Little Rock, Arkansas, around 1899 to take the nursing course. When she finished training she was not only ready to be certified as a registered nurse, she was also a baptized Seventh-day Adventist. Returning to home and family, Susie Hodney was something of a curiosity. Her younger brother, Ulysses S. Willis, found himself gazing in wonder at his beloved sister, now so different from the rest of the family. She cooked meals that were strange, used separate utensils (that had not been used for cooking pork), had her own private worship every day, used no makeup or jewelry, and went to church on Saturday. Her brother secretly admired such devout behavior, this sincerity that set her apart from the rest of the Willis clan. He listened intently to her talk about the end of the world, about living soberly and righteously, and about the need to get ready for heaven. But he put off the decision to do this himself.

Now in his late teens, Ulysses Willis eventually grew restless with home restrictions and discipline. He was tired, he said, of strict rules and parental abuse, and shortly he boarded a freight train to begin a new life on his own in St. Louis. Before he arrived at his destination a mob carrying heavy ropes and chains met the train at a water stop. Perhaps mistaking him for another black man riding the rails, they pulled him off, preparing to hang him. Willis was frightened beyond words and proceeded to pray for deliverance. He promised God that if he were spared from this bloodthirsty, lawless gang he would give his life to the Master and keep the Sabbath as his sister had kept it. Miraculously, the Lord answered his prayer; without giving an explanation for their action, the mob left the scene.

Greatly sobered by the events of the night, Willis continued his journey to St. Louis. But he could find no work there. Then he boarded another freight car, this time headed for Omaha, Nebraska. As he rode into the rail yards of this grain and meat-packing center he saw a big sign announcing a Seventh-day Adventist camp meeting in progress on the outskirts of town. Taking this as the Lord's way of

reminding him of his promise, he wasted no time in getting out to the campground. A conference Bible instructor, upon learning of his presence on the grounds, introduced herself and talked with him very earnestly. She observed his resolute manner, his desire to serve the Lord.

“Mr. Willis,” she said finally, “the Lord sent you here. You must give your heart to Him.”

Considering this the Lord’s invitation addressed to him in the midst of a great personal ordeal, Willis joined the camp-meeting group preparing for baptism. On the last Sabbath of the meeting he sealed his covenant with God by going down into the watery grave.

Years later, in the town of St. Louis (where he could not at first find employment) Willis was a pastor for several years. He was also a pastor in Brooklyn from 1926 to 1939, and during the time of the Humphrey apostasy in Manhattan he lent his great talent of diplomacy in bringing disgruntled members back into the church. In Ohio he pastored several congregations and was a factor in preparing the membership for the organization of a regional conference in the territory of the Columbia Union Conference. Willis visited with pastors in Delaware, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia—most of whom had only a vague notion of how a conference with different territorial configurations could work in conjunction with existing conferences and unions. He was able to persuade a majority of these ministers—all delegates to the constitutional meeting. As a result the Allegheny Conference was formally organized in January, 1945. Elected president was John H. Wagner; secretary-treasurer, James L. Moran; lay activities and Sabbath school director, William R. Robinson; and publishing director, Howard D. Warner.

The development of regional conferences was, as has been noted elsewhere, a social change. Because social change is related to social problems, the existence of such problems has been considered advantageous to a certain development even within the Seventh-day

Adventist Church. Sociologists have declared that since the end of the World War II the rate of social change has accelerated far beyond that known in any previous period of recorded history. In the black sector the reason is not hard to discover. Persons who felt in some way excluded or alienated from the group had to find a way to adjust, while at the same time maintaining a degree of self-respect. Out of this often has come stronger and more substantial personality.

“The response to systematic discrimination is often an increased sense of cohesion and pride, often of a defensive kind of aggressiveness among the members of the disadvantaged group.”

With a growing number of people in leadership, including some with a limited experience, came other problems. There were excesses in the use of authority, and often decisions were made without consultation with the people involved. A manager of a church-owned academy or hospital, for instance, could deny entrance to representatives of a given ethnic body merely on the basis of his personal prejudice. To offset this trend, laymen of Ohio under Frank W. Hale, Jr., organized the Laymen’s Leadership Conference. The resulting discussions—sometimes publicized on television, radio, and in newspapers—tended to reverse these acts of partiality on the part of persons with strong segregationist points of view. The Laymen’s Leadership Conference also found it necessary to speak out against black church leaders who took unwarranted and oppressive positions against black subordinates and others with whom they might differ.

The General Conference also had set up its own task force with the purpose of maintaining a democratic posture in its councils. Known as the Human Relations Committee, it consisted of well-informed leaders, black and white, who pointed out inequities in church race relations and actually sought to correct them. A liaison group, this committee functioned as an adviser on racial matters to the General Conference president and the vice-president for the North American Division committee on administration.

The Human Relations Committee still serves in this capacity. It is an integral part of the organized movement to end color distinctions in the church. The men and women who form this influential body are determined, as one of them has said, "to secure for black members *all* the rights, privileges, and benefits enjoyed by whites."

This group is largely opposed to anything that smacks of racial separatism. They are aggressively for integration. Alert to trends, the Human Relations Committee has managed to make definite strides in advancing the cause of the black minority (always with the aid of regional presidents), and they count carefully the gains in the church.

The Human Relations group has given its heaviest concentration to the employment of Negroes in union and General Conference posts. The number of Negroes in General Conference employ increased from two in George E. Peters' time to nearly fifty in 1977. Black leaders frankly say that a large factor in the Negro's integration within the church has been a result of the presence of many black leaders on the nominating committee at the quinquennial session of the General Conference, and a black departmental director on the personnel committee, which deals with hiring of nonelected office workers. Application blanks no longer call for photographs and designation of race, and the rule permitting a selection of one out of three eligible people—which once allowed discriminations—has been shelved.

As Adventists are fond of saying, behind all the laws and devices of men stands God, the divine Designer, working now in dark colors, and now in colors of glowing light, concealing His pattern, even though the threads are heavy with tears. What design He is working out from those early beginnings by James Edson White and others in Mississippi, only He who stands behind the veil can know. Even the blackest clouds are shattered with soft sunbeams, and in the end God's compassion and love will dissolve the grief and woe borne by His children.

There is no station so low, no occupation so humble, no

neighborhood so bad, no temptation so severe, but that he who serves God sincerely may ride victorious over its misfortune. An English author wrote of a flower show held in the tenement districts of London by the poor costermongers, or hawkers of fruits and vegetables. Not in the steam-heated conservatories of rich men, not under the gentle rain and cooling dews of the country, where gardeners tend velvety lawns on great estates, did these blossoms open. All the violets, roses, and geraniums grew in the confined boxes that hung on narrow windows in ancient rookeries, surrounded with the grime and soot and dirt of forlorn alleys.

Wrestling with such surroundings, these blossoms came into a brilliancy that won universal admiration. A princess opened the exhibit and a lord of England presented the prizes. This victory of the flowers from dark and grim surroundings was glorious. Certainly this says that purity and nobility of character are surely possible for men made in God's image—men who patiently wait, and persistently seek to do God's will in the place that He was appointed for His children.

NOTES

¹ Charles E. Bradford, "Formula for Change" (sermon at Dallas, Texas, April 19, 1980), *Adventist Review*, April 20, 1980, pp. 12, 13.

² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ N. Reginald Dower, "E. E. Cleveland—a Tribute," *Ministry*, August, 1977, p. 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁶ Dower, *op. cit.*

⁷ Charles D. Brooks, in a compilation, with Herbert E. Douglass, ed. *What Ellen White Has Meant to Me* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1973), pp. 35-37.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 37, 38.

⁹ Walter Starks, *Ordeal by Fire* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1976), pp. 87-89.

¹⁰ *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 1141.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 1142.

¹³ The author conversed with Fredricka Douglass Perry, granddaughter of Fredrick Douglass, in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1939. She revealed that her mother was a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

¹⁴ F. Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, p. 186.

¹⁵ Letter from Dr. James H. Howard to Arthur G. Daniells, July 10, 1903. Ellen G. White Estate, Washington, D.C.

¹⁶ E. White, *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 342.

¹⁷ Ellen G. White letters 44, 1907.



To the Cities of the East

New York, observes Seymour Freedgood, is “the headquarters of an enormous number of the nation’s leading industrial concerns.” It is besides, he says, “the unquestioned capital of the country’s communications industry—TV and radio networks, advertising, book, and magazine publishing, and every sort of related venture.” He also calls it “the nation’s Headquarters Town” for the “all-powerful realm of ideas;” he goes on to say: “In its offices work the men who more than any others shape the thinking, and therefore the action, of the rest of the country.”¹

Additionally, New York has been home to some of America’s most famous preachers—among them Henry Ward Beecher, W. O. Carrington, Norman Vincent Peale, Gardner C. Taylor, Ralph Sockman, Sandy Ray, John Sutherland Bonnell, and Shelby Rooks. George E. Peters, who came to Manhattan in 1929 as pastor of Ephesus, was a consummate exegete and one of the really persuasive defenders of the Adventist faith. Adolphus E. Webb, Willie S. Lee, Leon G. Cox, Charles E. Bradford, Thaddeus D. Wilson, Robert H. Carter, Edgar T. Mimms, Ulysses S. Willis, Matthew C. Strachan,

Earl E. Cleveland baptizes some of the hundreds of converts won during an evangelistic campaign in Trinidad.

PAINTING BY HARRY ANDERSON.

T. M. Rowe, C. B. Rock, and Edwin J. Humphrey—all gave their signal witness and judgment-hour proclamation to the vast New York community. Edgar T. Lockett and George R. Earle spent almost their entire preaching careers in the Eastern corridor, and Earle eventually became a conference president.

As the Gateway Town, New York attracted people of many professions from all over the nation and from many parts of the world. One of these was G. Ralph Thompson, the first black official to be elected an executive secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Thompson spent some months in Brooklyn while attending Atlantic Union College in South Lancaster, Massachusetts. Born in St. Lucy Parish in Barbados, Thompson became an American citizen in September, 1965. He was baptized into the Adventist Church at Caribbean College after reading *The Marked Bible* and *Conflict on the Campus*, books made available to him by Dr. Ned Graves, one of seven health specialists from the West Indies who were trained at Battle Creek Sanitarium.

In the States Thompson was an assistant to Thomas M. Rowe, and principal of the Cassopolis, Michigan, church school from 1958 to 1959. When he completed graduate work at Andrews University he began a ministry in the South Caribbean Conference. From there he was elected president of the East Caribbean Conference and eventually president of the Caribbean Union.

Thompson, who now speaks in accents of the Brooklyn lower east side resident, keeps watch on the movement of missionaries to the ends of the earth, most of whom depart from New York. A broad segment of the Northeastern Conference membership has roots in the West Indies. And the conference takes pride in the large strategically located Hanson Place church, which pays the highest per capita tithes in the entire conference.

From the Southern United States in the late fifties there came to New York a highly effective preacher, Herman R. Murphy, who for many years was president in the South Central and Southwest

Region conferences. Murphy was recognized at once as a deeply reflective speaker; he has earned a Bachelor's and a Master's degree from New York University, and he could make the Bible clear to any audience. He took a small congregation in the Bronx and in a few years built it up to a membership comparable to the largest in the conference. His work in Northeastern's Sabbath school department was so outstanding that he was elected Sabbath school secretary for the entire Atlantic Union.

The youth work among black young people in the East had its greatest soul-winning success under Leon H. Davis and later George Timpson. Davis, because of his additional competency in photojournalism, was eventually made public relations director for the Atlantic Union Conference, one of the first black leaders to be elected to a union conference position.

George Rainey, who was for nine and one-half years Ministerial Association secretary of Atlantic Union, began his work in the church under Herman R. Murphy in South Central Conference. Murphy easily recognized his talent and after his first year in the field assigned him to full-time evangelism. From there he went to the Allegheny Conference and raised up several churches and held major evangelistic crusades in Norfolk, Roanoke, and Cincinnati.

Rainey has held other large crusades in Buffalo, New York City, the Bronx, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. Beyond the U.S. shores he has held successful meetings in Bermuda, Trinidad, St. Lucia, Barbados, Belize, Japan, Indonesia, and Canada. His 1980 crusade in Kingston, Jamaica, was concluded with a baptism of more than 1,000 converts, exceeding the previous 1966 record of 840 baptisms from Cleveland's campaign in Port of Spain, Trinidad. Rainey followed Cleveland's meeting in Trinidad with a second crusade, baptizing an additional 450 converts.

But none of the contemporary evangelists was quite as dramatic as R. T. Hudson, who pastored the large Ephesus church in the fifties and was president of Northeastern Conference in the early sixties.

Hudson had baptized scores of people in Des Moines, Iowa; Kansas City, Missouri; Dallas, Texas; Washington, D.C.; and Cleveland, Ohio, before coming to the Gateway City.

In New York he launched an almost continuous evangelism in Ephesus church, which resulted in a steady membership addition. These converts in turn made possible the founding of other congregations in the tri-borough area and on Long Island. He also held tent meetings in Mount Vernon and Elmhurst to encourage church growth in these suburban communities. From the various diplomats representing their countries at the United Nations he invited speakers who gave short talks about their countries, their aspirations, and their needs. The result of inviting the diplomats was that Hudson had a packed church each Sunday night when other Harlem meeting houses had largely empty pews. Also, apparently as a result of his contacts with the diplomats, he was chosen as one of five ministers in the United States to represent his country as a speaker on the Queens Broadcasting Station in London, England.

Hudson led a movement in Harlem that resulted in a \$21-million addition to Harlem Hospital. Borough authorities had neglected this facility to the point that the roof leaked and the building was infested with rats and roaches. Hudson had his congregation walk to the site one Sabbath after church services, and from the steps he addressed the gross inequities of the situation. The sudden appearance of these two thousand people from the Adventist Church so frightened politicians that they began immediately to make plans for renovations and the new multimillion-dollar wing.

Originally from Jackson, Mississippi, Hudson was the son of a Baptist minister, Joe Hudson, who had purchased a copy of *Bible Footlights* around 1910 from a colporteur. Joe Hudson read the book and kept the Sabbath for two years before he knew about Seventh-day Adventists. When he joined the church he was an energetic Bible student and a preacher of the message wherever he went.

In 1916 the family moved to Millington, Tennessee, a suburb of Memphis. Among others to whom Joe Hudson gave Bible studies was one David Washington. Washington joined the church in Memphis but later moved to Toledo, Ohio. Because he could find no church in Toledo, he began immediately contacting prospects and giving Bible studies. Before long several people were ready for baptism, and these formed the nucleus of the present Toledo congregation.

The next move for the Hudsons was to Chicago in 1918. There R. T. Hudson enrolled in Shiloh Academy. It was there also that he became acquainted with George E. Peters, who had come to Chicago as pastor. Thereafter he was Hudson's role model in the ministry. Hudson imitated Peters' preaching, his gestures, and his immaculate dress; Hudson also was able to convince large crowds on points of doctrine in the same way he had seen Peters do it.

J. R. Britt, who devoted his life to the literature ministry, worked for years in metropolitan New York. He handled mostly subscription books but encouraged the sale of *Message* magazines. It was said that he had a special charm, a disarming manner, when he knocked on doors in New York apartments. Residents, looking through peep holes or opening their doors to the length of the chain locks, had no fear of him when he introduced himself as Brother Britt. This immaculately dressed colporteur (who lived to be more than 90) sold thousands of books and was instrumental in winning many souls to the Lord through his tactful manner.

There is no record of a transition for black Adventists from the Millerite movement to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We can assume that many followers of this 1833 awakening became members of predominantly white congregations in Massachusetts, New York, and New Jersey. The fact that not a few Adventist churches in the East have a long history of interracial fellowship seems strongly to suggest this. Early believers were conspicuously antislavery, and some of them had been active in abolitionist societies.

The first report of Adventist work among blacks in the East dates back to 1902 when J. H. Carroll, a recent convert from Catholicism, began meetings in a home. He made contacts among Methodist and Baptist churches, seeking interested people, and several were baptized from among those who responded. One of the first converts was James K. Humphrey, an ordained Baptist minister who heard the message initially from J. N. Loughborough in New York while he waited to take a boat to Africa. Humphrey was both a musician and a scholar, with a special talent for organizing large numbers of people to move toward the accomplishment of church goals. When Carroll's group was formally accepted into fellowship as the First Harlem Seventh-day Adventist church, Humphrey was selected to be the pastor. Under his direction the work grew rapidly, both in Brooklyn and in Manhattan. By 1920 its membership was about 600; Humphrey had also established three other congregations.

Although he baptized an average of about fifty people each year, Humphrey became increasingly unhappy with his work in New York. At both the 1918 and 1922 General Conference sessions he asked to be transferred. In each instance he was denied a move because church leaders looked upon his ministry as an unending cycle of success. While he had solidly affirmed undying loyalty to the church, his frustrations over the position of blacks in the conference came to be more and more apparent. After having been pastor of one church for more than 25 years, he left the denomination, taking most of his membership with him.

Meanwhile a second company, under the leadership of J. C. Hennessey as local elder, was growing. Due to Hennessey's illness it did not develop as rapidly as the first church. The second group formally organized as a company of 12 members in 1904, and J. H. Carroll acted as pastor. This congregation met in Harlem on 134th Street, but eventually purchased property at 123d Street and Lenox Avenue, taking the name of Ephesus.

There followed ardent and imaginative work by laymen, which also

had a profound effect on membership growth in New York. Of the fifty-seven churches in Northeastern Conference in the late seventies, twenty-three were begun by persons not in conference employ. Percy Brownie, for example, went from Manhattan to labor with James J. North at New Rochelle, where a small nucleus of Adventists lived. They distributed "Autumn Leaves" tracts for fifteen weeks, then fasted and prayed for an opening to begin Bible studies. The answer came almost immediately, and they began to hold meetings, with the result that seven converts were baptized. The same two laymen then conducted a tent meeting, after which additional persons were baptized. Among them was Thaddeus D. Wilson, who later became an ordained minister. Then the Brownie-North team held two more evangelistic campaigns. After this, Thaddeus Wilson joined James North; together they conducted four more crusades. From one of these originated the Mount Vernon congregation, which in 1980 had a membership of 410.

Elsewhere in New York, the Berea church in Nyack came into being as a result of the work of Mrs. Emma E. Faulden. The Ellenville congregation was begun by John Maddox. Samuel Barber was active in the early formation of the Brooklyn Red Hook church. Sydney Armstrong and his wife pioneered two churches, the Linden Boulevard group in St. Albans, and the Brooklyn Temple, formerly the Brownsville church. The Westbury Mission was founded by the Foster family, and the Brooklyn Mount of Olives church by Theodore Perry. Ada Montell and James North brought together the Bethesda congregation in Babylon (since merged with the Amityville congregation). The Corona church was begun by Charles M. Willis, and the Newburgh congregation by a Mrs. Johnson. The Staten Island church was developed under the leadership of a Brother Golson. The Bronx church stands as a memorial to the work of Arthur King, Ruth B. North, and Edwin M. Thompson.

Perhaps the most significant work of a layman in the New York area was that of Dr. Vivian McKinley Wiles. His professional

reputation was known in various parts of the world. He came to Harlem around 1939, following his graduation from Loma Linda University and an internship in St. Louis, and took a preceptorship in urology at Harlem Hospital and a residency at Beth Israel Hospital in New York City. His missionary enterprises, his Bible studies, his distribution of tracts, were as widely known as his medical practice.

Dr. Wiles opened offices successively in several localities, including the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Illinois, and California, before beginning his practice in Manhattan. He was a member of the staffs of Sydenham, Bates Memorial, Beth Israel, Harlem, Jewish Memorial, and Knickerbocker hospitals, and the Hospital for Joint Diseases.

Dr. Wiles and his wife, Mary, a professional nurse, made a number of missionary visits to Africa, going at their own expense to treat patients and to teach missionaries and other physicians urological techniques. Five tours, from 1957 through 1963, took them to Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Kenya, the Republic of Congo, Zambia, Rhodesia, Botswana, Malawi, Uganda, Ethiopia, and the Gabon Republic.

Following his first visit to West Africa, it was said by church leaders there that "his godly influence as an Adventist among the professional people of West Africa will have far-reaching beneficial results." The U.S. State Department was impressed by his good-will tours and asked the doctor to broadcast greetings over radio, which were beamed to many parts of Africa.

During a lifetime of devoted medical ministry, Dr. Wiles received many honors. He was the first black specialist to be invited by Dr. Albert Schweitzer to perform surgery in the Schweitzer hospital at Lambaréné, Gabon. Following that experience he was accepted into membership of the Albert Schweitzer Foundation Committee. In 1963 he was presented the Distinguished Service Award of the Abyssinian Baptist church of New York City; in 1964 he was named the Layman of the Year by the Atlantic Union Conference, and, in

1966, was named Honored Alumnus of the Alumni Association, Loma Linda School of Medicine.

He presented hundreds of Bibles to patients and colleagues and kept copies in his waiting room for use by patients. He taped religious music that was played during office hours, and before examining patients and before surgery he always offered prayer. Because so many expressed their appreciation for his prayers and spiritual encouragement, he opened a chapel in an apartment above his office; it was kept open for meditation, study, and prayer. The Constance Wiles chapel, as he called it, was named in memory of his mother; it became a haven for many seeking consolation and hope.

In Connecticut the Bridgeport congregation resulted from efforts of three laymen: Mack Hawkins, Alfred Edwards, and Cola Arline. The Hartford church was begun by Matthew Bell.

Farther north, in Boston, a group of fifteen Adventist believers was organized in 1912. They assembled in a storefront on Shawmut Avenue, working with W. R. Utchman as their leader. Later they met for a few months in the home of a Mrs. Chivers. For several years students from South Lancaster Academy, 40 miles away, came regularly to preach and to assist with other leadership duties. After the church moved to Cabot Street, the congregation showed a marked growth and members eventually purchased a building near the place of their initial organization at 87 Shawmut Avenue.

Later developments in western New York included a home operated by Mrs. Bella Dorsey in Rochester for foster children sent to her by the courts. In 1922 the former Fernwood Academy property, at Tunesassa, was leased to her to be used as an industrial school for displaced minority children. This institution continued for several years. Evangelism in Rochester and Buffalo received primary attention at about this time, and as interest grew, still other churches were organized. The Eastside congregation was begun in Buffalo, and in 1936 a half dozen black members were transferred from the predominantly white Rochester church to form a nucleus for the

Ebenezer congregation in that city. In 1944 the Buffalo Eastside and the Rochester Ebenezer churches united with the newly formed Northeastern Conference. Since then soul winning proceeded with rapid strides, as is shown by the Rochester membership, which in 1980 numbered more than six hundred. In addition, there were thriving congregations in Albany, Syracuse, and Buffalo.

The membership in the northeast corridor grew so rapidly that the necessity for making a singular appeal to the black minority became everywhere apparent. The number of people won to the church in communities such as Harlem and the Bedford-Stuyvesant area in Brooklyn was not commensurate with the vast opportunities that seemed available in a city such as New York. The General Conference recognized the existence of such potentialities here and organized the Northeastern Regional Conference. On October 3, 1944, therefore, the constituency representing black Adventists in the Atlantic Union came together in New York to organize for a more concerted evangelism in their vast territory.

Louis H. Bland, who had been a pastor in several large cities, was elected president. Lionel O. Irons, a business major, was elected secretary-treasurer, Jonathan E. Roache was chosen to direct the educational and missionary volunteer departments, and James J. North was called to be secretary of the home missionary and Sabbath School departments.

Northeastern Conference, with a membership in 1980 exceeding twenty thousand, represented one of the most remarkable success stories in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A relative newcomer among the conferences, Northeastern in thirty years had reached the largest membership of any conference in the Atlantic Union. Its tithe, which exceeded \$5 million in 1979, was also the greatest amount by far of any tithe report within the union; with its sixty congregations, Northeastern had begun to resemble a miniature United Nations.

Members added by baptism in this conference were more than the

combined accessions of all other conferences in the Atlantic Union. Its camp meetings at Victory Lake attracted crowds from all over the nation. Its nursing facility, also at Victory Lake, was so successful that New York State officials urged Northeastern officers to build and operate others.

The burgeoning population of New York's Long Island community was a largely neglected territory for Seventh-day Adventists until Northeastern Conference began to hold major tent meetings in its townships and villages. Its record of soul winning and that of the Spanish-speaking membership shows clearly that many people in the big and indifferent city can be won for the Lord.

What a message is that which these eastern gospel workers have left through their sermons, their songs, their Bible studies, their general helpfulness to those in need. What a revelation of their passionate hunger for righteousness, their hatred for ignorance and selfishness and sin, their love for their fellowmen and their God.

NOTE

¹ Seymour Freedgood and the editors of Time-Life Books, *The Gateway States: New Jersey, New York* (New York: Time-Life Library of America series, Time Incorporated, 1967), p. 77.

Separate Conferences— A Road to Fellowship

For America in the early 1940s, the news seemed all bad. At Pearl Harbor the Pacific fleet had been severely crippled, and Wake Island and Guam had fallen to the Japanese. Then came the agonizing defeat of U.S. forces in the Philippines.

On the domestic front, black districts in the large cities were seething with discontent six months before the Pearl Harbor attack. This was reflected by outspoken statements of ordinarily conservative black leaders, by editorials in the Negro press, and by inflammatory letters to the editors. Political observers were manifestly worried, fearing the resentment would burst into a social holocaust, perhaps to rival any ghetto riot the nation had known.

Typical of the anguished editorials was this statement in Harlem's *Amsterdam-Star News*:

"Where there was once tolerance and acceptance of a position believed to be gradually changing for the better, now the Negro is showing a 'democratic upsurge of rebellion,' bordering on open hostility."

This unrest had been brought to a head by, among other things,

the frustration blacks experienced when they were routinely denied jobs in defense industries. One million and more Negroes were unemployed—but no longer did the black man have the cold comfort of the Depression, when white men too were unemployed. His had become a black fate. According to the 1940 census, there were 5,389,000 blacks in the labor force, 3,582,000 of whom were men. A government survey found that of 29,215 employees in ten war plants in the New York area, only 142 were blacks.¹ In fifty-six war-contract factories in St. Louis, each employed an average of three blacks. Outside the National Youth Administration and Works Progress Administration programs, there were practically no provisions for blacks in the program of defense-employment training, despite the need for manpower and the increasing number of blacks on the WPA rolls. The United States Employment Service sent out an inquiry to a selected number of defense industries seeking information about the number of job openings and whether they would employ blacks. More than 50 percent stated flatly that they would not. In Texas, of 17,435 defense jobs, 9,117 were barred to blacks—and in Michigan the figure was 22,042 out of 26,904. Moreover, contrary to the assumption that blacks were barred only when they sought skilled work, no less than thirty-five thousand out of eighty-three thousand unskilled jobs were declared closed to black applicants.

Against this national backdrop of discrimination—with blacks being shuttled between employer and union, each claiming that the other discriminated—an unfortunate racial incident occurred at an Adventist hospital in Takoma Park, Maryland. Lucy Byard, a gravely ill black woman and a longtime Adventist from Brooklyn, New York, was brought to the Washington Sanitarium and Hospital (now Washington Adventist Hospital) for treatment. Fair-skinned, at first she was admitted, but later when admittance forms were scrutinized and her racial identity discovered, she was told a mistake had been made. Without examination or treatment she was wheeled out into the corridor and transferred across the State line to Freedmen's

Hospital, where she later died of pneumonia. This incident, along with another similar case where no death was involved, stirred the black constituency in Washington to demand that the General Conference act to ensure that such discriminatory and inhumane treatment of blacks would not occur again. Not only were black members concerned about admittance to hospitals, but the whole question of quotas in schools, lack of employment in church institutions, and a general absence of solicitude for them in the church were subjects of their protest. Press and pulpit played decisive roles, whipping up sentiment in their favor.

As an outcome, a group of laymen from Ephesus church (now Du Pont church, in Washington, D.C.) met Saturday night, October 16, 1943, in the back room of Joseph Dodson's bookstore and hastily organized the National Association for the Advancement of Worldwide Work Among Colored Seventh-day Adventists. Joseph Dodson was elected as chairman and Alma J. Scott as vice-chairman. To arouse black members throughout the country, they made telephone calls and, after a quick printing of stationery, dispatched scores of letters. John H. Wagner, secretary of the colored department in the Columbia Union, acted as adviser. The group asked the General Conference president, J. Lamar McElhany, to act immediately in addressing the issue of separate conferences for blacks. In the hope of preserving unity in the church, McElhany introduced the issue at the General Conference Committee's Spring Council held April 8-19, 1944, in Chicago.

At the hour appointed for the crucial session, McElhany was in his hotel room, sick in bed. When he did not appear as scheduled, George E. Peters, spokesman for the black membership, arranged to delay the meeting while he talked with the president in his room. In spite of McElhany's illness, Peters urged him to get out of bed and make his appearance before the committee. Peters warned that it would be disastrous to fail the black constituency at such a crucial moment. He also convinced McElhany that the black conference idea

would be more acceptable to all—black and white—if it came from him. On the other hand, Peters said, if no solution to the problem emerged from this Spring Council, he didn't see how McElhany "could ever face the colored constituency again," and he was sure that he, George E. Peters, never would.²

Of all speeches made by white leaders in attendance that year, McElhany's statement represented perhaps the most forthright on the issue of separate conferences for blacks: "To me it is wonderful to see that the colored have large churches efficiently led and directed by colored men. We have some colored churches with more members than we have in some conferences. I think our colored men do a very good job. This gives me confidence in their being leaders. To say that a man could be a pastor of a thousand membership [church] but couldn't direct a thousand membership if they were divided into conferences seems to me to be inconsistent in reasoning."³

Understandably, there were many fears associated with the introduction of a second church administration within the same geographic territory. Only the chief officer could allay those fears. McElhany's speech was followed by a strong supporting speech by Jay J. Nethery, Lake Union president, and the historic resolution passed. It authorized union committees "when the colored constituency is considered . . . to be sufficiently large, and where the financial income and territory warrant" the organization of separate conferences for the black membership. These conferences were to be administered by black officers and committees.⁴

The plans were referred to the respective fields whose delegates composed the general meeting, and in a majority of cases the constituencies agreed to accept the decision recommended by Spring Council leaders. Plans were modified in the Pacific Union because local black leaders felt regional conferences would not be acceptable to the membership in the Far West. The Pacific Union was thus the only union with large black congregations that did not organize a separate administration for its minority membership.

Although it took the church nearly thirty years to accumulate three thousand black members, it took less than four years after reorganization to show an increase of more than 3,500 additional members. From 1944 to 1982 approximately 120,000 black American converts entered the Adventist Church by baptism or profession of faith.⁵

The *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, referring to the Regional Conference success story, commented that this separate administration, "though church leaders admit it is not ideal, has been responsible for an evangelistic penetration into the Negro community that had not been possible under the organization that formerly administered the work among the nation's Negro membership. The Regional conferences also have created more opportunities for leadership and other participation by gifted and trained Negro young people of the church, whose selection in the same or similar capacities had not worked out in the years prior to the formation of the Regional conferences. Another practical result has been that colored members of the SDA Church have been more readily and more naturally represented in elected offices and on boards and committees outside the Regional conferences than appears to have been true formerly."⁶

The idea of a separate church jurisdiction composed exclusively of black converts within the territory of a predominantly white membership, was not new. Charles M. Kinny, the first black minister to be ordained in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, when confronted by efforts to segregate him and his members at camp meeting on the day of his ordination, suggested the black conference as a solution to this embarrassing encounter. The year was 1889, and Robert M. Kilgore, leader of the Southern district, had officiated in the ordination ceremony, which he said set aside Kinny "to the work of the ministry among his own people."⁷

In a report to the *Review and Herald* Kilgore noted that the camp meeting had not been as well attended as he had expected. He gave

several reasons for the poor turnout, but the main cause centered upon objections to the presence of black worshipers: "Another reason offered was the race question (the mingling of the colored brethren and sisters with those on the ground), the prejudices of the people keeping many away."⁸

Kilgore suggested at a workers' meeting at the camp that blacks be separated from the rest of the audience. Kinny responded that such an arrangement "in the general meetings would have a tendency to destroy the unity of the third angel's message." He further declared the proposal to be one "of great embarrassment and humiliation."⁹

Anxious that his members and future converts "not be driven from the truth" by an unofficial position of the church on this question, Kinny discussed the matter at length with Kilgore and those gathered for the workers' meeting. Declaring his faith that the Advent message could remove all prejudice, Kinny, perhaps foreseeing the inevitable, made this recommendation, among others:

"Until there is enough to form a conference of colored people, let the colored churches, companies, or individuals pay their tithes and other contributions to the regular state officers, . . . that when colored conferences are formed, they bear the same relation to the General Conference that white conferences do."¹⁰

Stirred by the provocative discussions and uneasy because Adventists had no definitive position on race relations, Kilgore brought the issue before the General Conference Committee in 1890 and led out in a resolution to establish a policy of segregated churches.

Ellen White chose what she considered to be the best platform to comment on this questionable arrangement. In 1891 she issued her appeal entitled "Our Duty to the Colored People," referred to in chapter 3. In this appeal she made reference to the 1889 meeting and the matter that she said had been presented to her a year before "as if written with a pen of fire."¹¹ She gave these reasons for opposing the plan of action voted by church leaders:

“At the General Conference of 1889, resolutions were presented in regard to the color line. Such action is not called for. Let not men take the place of God, but stand aside in awe, and let God work upon human hearts, both white and black, in His own way. . . . We need not prescribe a definite plan of working. Leave an opportunity for God to do something. We should be careful not to strengthen prejudices that ought to have died just as soon as Christ redeemed the soul from the bondage of sin. . . .

“We need not expect that all will be accomplished in the South that God would do until in our missionary efforts we place this question on the ground of principle, and let those who accept the truth be educated to be Bible Christians. . . . You have no license from God to exclude the colored people from your places of worship. . . . They should hold membership in the church with the white brethren.

. . .

“Is it not time for us to live so fully in the light of God’s countenance that we who receive so many favors and blessings from Him may know how to treat those less favored, not working from the world’s standpoint, but from the Bible standpoint? . . . Is it not here that our influence should be brought to bear against the customs and practices of the world?”¹²

“Men have thought it necessary to plan in such a way as to meet the prejudice of the white people; and a wall of separation in religious worship has been built up between the colored people and the white people.”¹³

About this time there was beginning in the South a resurgence of racial antagonism that quickly spread across the nation. C. Vann Woodward, commenting on this phenomenon, wrote: “At the dawn of the new century the wave of Southern racism came in as a swell upon a mounting tide of national sentiment and was very much a part of that sentiment.”¹⁴

The black citizen was being systematically disenfranchised throughout the country, but by 1908 the hatred and violence had

swollen to fever pitch. Booker T. Washington reported that year that within a sixty-day period twenty-five blacks had been lynched in the United States. Ellen White wrote words of caution calculated to save white Adventists from the raids of night riders and black members from Klan lynchings. Compared to her earlier statements it seemed an about-face position:

“In regard to white and colored people worshiping in the same building, this cannot be followed as a general custom with profit to either party—especially in the South. The best thing will be to provide the colored people who accept the truth, with places of worship of their own, in which they can carry on their services by themselves. That is particularly necessary in the South in order that the work for the white people may be carried on without serious hindrance.”¹⁵

This drastic turnaround was partly a result of her awareness of the tense racial climate that existed and that threatened to get worse for the newly emancipated Negro. In 1898 Edson White had organized the Southern Missionary Society, with headquarters first in Yazoo City and then in Nashville. By 1902 it was necessary to replace white teachers with black teachers in the schools he had established. That Mrs. White and other Adventist leaders were sensitive to this situation is clear from a publication by the church’s Pacific Press entitled *An Agitation and an Opportunity*, in which the author describes how God was “staying the progress of the ‘reactionary movement’” in the South that the Adventist message might be presented to the vast population of blacks. The writer fully expected this “reactionary movement” to take “complete control” of the Negro’s destiny, thrusting him back into bondage. He refers to a threatened “semislavery,” and it was no doubt out of such a pervading attitude of urgency and expediency that Mrs. White gave her counsel of separate work “until the Lord shows us a better way.”¹⁶

In his book *Ellen G. White and Church Race Relations*, Ron Graybill

makes a case for the wisdom of Mrs. White's counsel offered in the midst of an unprecedented upsurge in racial hostility. He shows a correlation between the rise of racist violence and the necessity for prudence in approaching the work in the South. Graybill also points out that the year 1895, the very year James Edson White arrived in Vicksburg, Mississippi, was the year of Booker T. Washington's Atlanta Exposition speech. Washington and Mrs. White both died in 1915, ending what Graybill has called an era of compromise against a backdrop of overwhelming bigotry and violence.¹⁷

In 1895 Booker T. Washington was winning the heart of white America, and as far as this majority group was concerned, he spoke for black America when he said: "The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremists' folly and that progress and the enjoyment of all the privileges that will come to us must be the result of severe constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing."¹⁸

Commenting on this speech, Dr. Rayford W. Logan wrote some years afterward: "The national fame that Washington achieved overnight by his Atlanta speech constitutes an excellent yardstick for measuring the victory of the 'new South' since he accepted a subordinate place for Negroes in American life."¹⁹

While Washington was giving his Atlanta speech Ellen White was putting together material for volume 9 of *Testimonies for the Church*. Her words suggest a plaintive cry for God's special guidance through that trying period: "Let the colored believers be provided with neat, tasteful houses of worship. Let them be shown that this is done not to exclude them from worshiping 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*."²⁰

Another event that brought the black conference idea to the forefront was the Utopian Park affair, involving James K. Humphrey, pastor of First Harlem church, in New York City. In seeking relief for

those of his members who were old and infirm and had no place to go, he began to formulate a benevolent association to provide health, educational, and recreational facilities. In order to finance "Utopia Park," Humphrey proposed to sell lots to any black person "of good moral standing." The Greater New York Conference president, Louis K. Dickson, apparently unaware of the pressures to which Humphrey was subjected, had called him to task for making a purchase of property for this purpose without conference approval.

The matter reached a serious impasse when Humphrey applied at the city public welfare office for special Ingathering solicitation permits. When municipal authorities questioned Dickson about the project Humphrey was promoting, he had to confess ignorance. Later, when Dickson approached Humphrey about the matter, the latter thanked the president for his "kindly interest" and "desire to cooperate in this good work," but he said Utopia Park was "not a denominational effort" and was "absolutely a problem for the colored people." That was as much information as he chose to give.

Dickson interpreted this as an act of insubordination and summoned Humphrey to appear before the local conference committee, and eventually before the union committee, to defend his actions. When Humphrey failed to appear before them, the union committee counseled Greater New York Conference "to revoke his credentials until such time as he shall straighten out this situation in a way that will remove the reproach that his course has brought upon the cause." Within four days Humphrey was told he could no longer serve as pastor of First Harlem church and that his membership on local and union conference committees had been revoked.

The Harlem congregation, however, stood almost solidly behind Humphrey. Dickson then sought the help of General Conference president W. A. Spicer. The two attended a business meeting at Harlem First church to explain the pastor's dismissal. One witness who was present at the stormy five-hour session said the presence of white leaders, appearing in what many took to be an adversary role,

nearly precipitated a riot.

Prior to this confrontation, a member of Humphrey's church had inquired at the Greater New York Conference office about securing a title to the church property. Dickson is said to have told him that by policy the local church did not own property. When this was reported at Harlem First church, a local elder stated they would fight for their deed through the courts, and if they failed there, they would burn the building down! At some point Humphrey proposed the organization of separate conferences in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but the idea was turned down.

Eventually the Greater New York Conference committee voted to drop the First Harlem congregation from its fellowship of churches. Humphrey proceeded to organize his congregation into what he called the United Sabbath Day Adventist Church. Although Humphrey died out of the church, there are reports that he came back to apologize for his earlier actions. However, when he talked of rejoining the Seventh-day Adventists, leaders in his offshoot movement threatened to withdraw monthly retirement benefits, which would, presumably, have left him without financial support.

Since the Adventist Church was made up largely of white people from mainline denominations where blacks traditionally had been denied membership, and since most white communicants appeared to be comfortable with a segregated worship, its congregations were not likely to be greatly different from other religious groups in regard to the color line. H. Richard Niebuhr, on the religion faculty at Harvard University, at one time addressed the question of segregated churches in America. He concluded that his own research had pointed to a certain pattern: "Complete fellowship without any racial discriminations has been very rare in the history of American Christianity. It has existed only where the number of Negroes belonging to the church was exceptionally small in proportion to the total membership, where the cultural status of the racial groups in the church was essentially similar, or where, as among some Quakers,

racial consciousness was consciously overcome.”²¹

Niebuhr also discussed a church situation that in many respects paralleled the difficulty faced earlier by black members in the Adventist Church. One primary factor in any integration, he said, was “equal privileges of participation in the government of the particular unit of church organization.”²² Since in 1944 Adventist leaders were not disposed either to “consciously overcome” racial consciousness—in light of what seemed to be a hopelessly segregated society—or to provide “equal privileges of participation in the government,” it was clearly necessary for black communicants to take the route of separate conferences. Therefore, at its 1944 Spring Meeting, held in Chicago’s Stevens Hotel, the General Conference Committee formally voted approval of this new and distinct governing entity.

LAKE REGION CONFERENCE

Lake Region, formally organized September 26, 1944, was the first regional conference to be set up. Today it comprises Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. In 1982 its membership stood at 16,784, with sixty-six churches, fifty-one ministers, seven Bible instructors, and eighteen literature evangelists. All conferences in the Lake Union, except Lake Region, date their beginnings back more than a hundred years, with the oldest having been established in 1861, the year the Civil War began. Yet Lake Region, after only thirty-seven years of existence, is the second-largest conference in the union and shows the fastest rate of growth in the area. Its first president was J. Gershom Dasent, for years a successful pastor and State evangelist in the Southwest. Fred N. Crowe was installed as the first treasurer; Walter J. Kisack, educational and youth director; J. E. Johnson, home missionary and Sabbath school; and Virgil Gibbons, publishing director. L. B. Baker took over Book and Bible House responsibilities.

Their campground at Cassopolis, Michigan, intended first as the

site of a boarding academy, has been a gathering point almost year-round for conference events, including a large annual camp meeting. Lake Region fosters one housing project in East Chicago Heights and another in Detroit, and a hospital in Southside Chicago.

Charles Joseph, elected to the presidency in 1977, is a native of Birmingham, Alabama, and an Oakwood graduate. He holds a Master of Divinity degree from Andrews University and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Vanderbilt University. The secretary is Richard E. Brown, a native of Kansas City, Missouri, and also an Oakwood graduate. The treasurer is Dennis Keith, formerly a missionary to Africa and Korea and more recently an auditor with the General Conference Treasury Department.

Sabbath school director and personal ministries director is James Wray. The educational director is R. D. Barnes; youth, Conrad L. Gill; stewardship, Samuel Flagg; and communication and trust services, Harold L. Lindsey.

Thomas M. Fountain, an intense and provocative revivalist, served as president for two years. He was followed by Harvey W. Kibble, who carried the banner forward for ten years, evangelizing and building churches.

Charles E. Bradford, at the helm for nine years, came from New York to lead the conference in 1961. He demonstrated wise church management, focusing on select goals and objectives. Membership grew, the campground was upgraded to receive larger annual crowds, and education and publishing efforts were given a new emphasis.

Jesse R. Wagner, elected in 1970, brought to the office a remarkable sense of organization and detail. His conference reports demonstrated executive planning and good taste, and he received excellent cooperation from the churches and their pastors. His ministry was cut short by sudden death in the summer of 1977. The camp, which he greatly improved, is named in his honor.

In a two-month period during 1982, Lake Region's literature

evangelists sold more than \$250,000 worth of small books and magazines. Under the leadership of T. S. Barber, conference publishing director, and Mrs. Barber, a new church of seventy-two members was established in Champaign, Illinois, as a result of the small-literature program. In his publishing rallies involving church school children, Barber reported one 6-year-old who delivered more than \$2,000 worth of literature over a ten-week period.

In 1979 the Shiloh Academy administration, told by Chicago's board of accreditation that its physical facility would have to be totally renovated or a new building erected, was on the horns of a serious dilemma. Renovation costs alone would exceed \$2 million, and the school property would still fall short of required playground and parking space.

Three years later an almost miraculous development provided Shiloh Academy with a practically new building having a market value of \$5.2 million and a replacement value of \$10 million. Kitchen equipment already installed was estimated at \$250,000. Some twenty-four acres of housing development, sponsored by Lake Region, had made possible the amortization of a building that could easily be altered to meet the needs of Shiloh Academy.

The tithe reported by Lake Region Conference for 1981 stood at \$3,939,469, and baptisms for that year totaled 1,056.

NORTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

After thirty-seven years of intensive evangelism, Northeastern is the largest conference in the Atlantic Union and one of the five largest conferences in the North American Division. Its membership of about twenty-five thousand exceeds the combined total of all other conferences in the northeastern corridor, historic cradle of nineteenth-century Adventism. Three of the other conferences have been organized for more than a hundred years, and the remaining two have functioned for more than eighty years.

Comprising the States of New York, Connecticut, Maine, New

Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Vermont, Northeastern owns a modern office building on a main thoroughfare of St. Albans, New York. The new structure has been the subject of wide acclaim from neighborhood clubs, and the conference received an award of excellence from the local chamber of commerce. Organized in 1945 with 2,400 members, it had a 1982 tally of 24,042 in seventy-nine congregations. There were eighty-four ministers, 123 teachers, and twelve literature evangelists in the field. The conference has four churches of Spanish-speaking communicants and five congregations composed of French-speaking members. Northeastern Academy, a continuation of the old Harlem Academy, has an enrollment of 230, with sixteen teachers besides custodial staff and other personnel. The academy is housed in a fully equipped building on 179th Street.

On October 3, 1944, the black constituency meeting in New York City elected Louis H. Bland as its first president; Lionel H. Irons, secretary-treasurer; Jonathan E. Roache, director for the educational and youth departments; and James J. North, director of home missionary and Sabbath school departments.

Commencing its operations January 1, 1945, the conference occupied temporary quarters on 127th Street until it could purchase a building at 560 West 150th Street. This former church and parish office thereafter housed the conference staff, book center, church school, and a newly organized congregation known as City Tabernacle.

When L. H. Bland died in 1953 he was succeeded by H. D. Singleton. The latter served as president until 1962, when he was called to the General Conference as director of the North American Regional Department. During this period V. L. Roberts and F. L. Jones served as secretary-treasurer. Evangelism was strongly promoted.

Membership at the close of 1945 was 2,468, with a working force of twenty-one, plus twenty-seven literature evangelists. At the close of 1961 it was 7,179, with a working force of approximately forty-five. In

1952 there were 163 baptisms; in 1973 there were 1,437. From 1963 to 1973 membership doubled, from 8,097 to 16,328, and statistics seemed to build dramatically every year.

George R. Earle, an Oakwood graduate, president since 1966, has spent nearly all his ministerial career in New York and New England. He understands the people, and his evangelistic preaching to large audiences has met with outstanding success. Earle succeeded R. T. Hudson, a pastor-evangelist who for many years served congregations in Washington, D.C.; Cleveland, Ohio; and New York City. His ministry in Ephesus church reached many important people, including foreign diplomats who frequented his Sunday night meetings. The secretary, H. W. Baptiste, has also spent many years in the New York area. Stennett Brooks, treasurer since 1962, is a graduate of Oakwood College, with most of his undergraduate education at West Indies College in Jamaica. Present departmental leaders are Lee A. Paschal, communication; Sandra Herndon, education; Samuel W. Stovall, health; Clarence Richardson, publishing; R. L. Lister, personal ministries; James P. Willis, Sabbath school and religious liberty; and Leonard G. Newton, stewardship and development. Northeastern reported a tithe for 1981 of \$7,662,809 and 1,585 baptisms.

ALLEGHENY EAST CONFERENCE

Allegheny Conference, begun in the rear of a bookstore near Howard University, was reorganized in 1966 (effective January 1, 1967) to form Allegheny East and Allegheny West. In 1982 the two conferences represented one third the total membership of Columbia Union. In less than fifteen years Allegheny East Conference has added enough members to bring its total to the 1967 predivision figure.

The conference includes part of Pennsylvania, all of New Jersey, all of Delaware, most of Maryland, the District of Columbia, and eastern Virginia. With offices at Pine Forge, Pennsylvania, the

organization continues its operation in most major cities of the original Allegheny Conference. Its 1982 membership was 15,276; there were sixty-nine congregations with forty-four ministers and eleven Bible instructors. Tithe reported for 1981 was \$4,976,152, and there were 966 baptisms.

Pine Forge, the conference academy, begun two years after office quarters were established, has an enrollment of 135, with seventeen faculty and staff members. Facilities of the institution are used for annual Pathfinder and youth camps, as well as for summer camp meetings.

Meade C. Van Putten, conference president, is the son of an Adventist minister whose career was spent largely in Barbados and the Virgin Islands. Van Putten is a graduate of Andrews University, having acquired his early education in Caribbean Island schools. He served as treasurer of Lake Region Conference and Allegheny East Conference before his election to the presidency. The conference secretary is Paul Cantrell, Jr., and the treasurer is Bennie W. Mann. Departmental leaders include Ulysses L. Willis, Sabbath school; Alfred R. Jones, personal ministries; Daniel L. Davis, youth; Robert Booker, education; Noah Beasley, publishing; Harold Lee, stewardship; and Roland Newman, trust services.

The administration at Pine Forge began with John H. Wagner as president and James L. Moran as secretary-treasurer. Associated with him was a staff of departmental leaders, all new to their jobs but all eager to establish records in their respective fields. The publishing department, under Howard D. Warner, took to the streets with such zest that shortly its sales amounted to more than all the other conferences in the union combined.

Other departmental leaders were William R. Robinson, director of lay activities and Sabbath school; Jacob Justiss, educational and youth; and Gertrude Jones, Book and Bible House. William L. Cheatham followed as president of Allegheny; he was the one who recommended the division of the conference. W. Albert Thompson

was the first president of the new Allegheny East, succeeded by Edward Dorsey, Luther R. Palmer, Jr., and Meade C. Van Putten.

ALLEGHENY WEST CONFERENCE

Claiming a membership well over ten thousand, Allegheny West, even with a late start, is the fourth-largest conference in Columbia Union. This conference covers Ohio, western Pennsylvania, part of Maryland, part of Virginia, and the entire State of West Virginia. It was organized in 1967 at Columbus, Ohio, with Walter M. Starks as president and Aaron N. Brogden as secretary-treasurer. A. T. Westney directed education and youth; Donald B. Simons, Sabbath school and lay activities; and Henry S. Freeman, publishing.

Within a short time Starks was elected director of the new stewardship department in the General Conference, and Donald B. Simons was chosen to succeed him as conference president. Thus a major share of organizational details in setting up the new conference fell to Simons. Membership in 1982 was 8,703 in forty-four congregations, served by twenty-four ministers, two Bible instructors, thirteen teachers, and forty-seven literature evangelists. Tithes reported for 1981 was \$2,438,905, and for that year there were 540 baptisms. In an arrangement with the Ohio Conference, Allegheny West uses its camp facilities and the Mount Vernon Academy cafeteria and dormitory accommodations for summer camp meetings.

Harold L. Cleveland, conference president from 1972 to 1983, is a native of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and a graduate of Oakwood College. As a pastor and evangelist, he held large campaigns in Atlanta and Savannah, Georgia, and in Cleveland, Ohio, before assuming his duties with Allegheny West. The current president, Henry Wright, was an associate professor of religion at Oakwood College. K. S. Smallwood is the secretary, and W. G. McDonald is treasurer.

Departmental leaders include Walter Wright, Sabbath school;

James O. Best, personal ministries; Carl R. Rogers, youth; Beverly McDonald, education; Robert C. Lewis, publishing; and Willie Lewis, stewardship and trust services.

Despite strikes and unemployment affecting every large city of Allegheny West, Harold Cleveland managed to keep alive a constant evangelism program involving both laymen and ministers. Members, aware of the Lord's special blessing in their abundant soil and their plentiful supply of fresh water, do not take such riches for granted, but accept a responsibility to use them in trust. Harold Cleveland's calls for financial backing for his broad plans, therefore, did not go unheeded. Members living in farm communities were especially generous. Hopelessness is alien to the people of Allegheny West. They are a rugged lot, and they work and persevere and then they work some more.

SOUTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE

South Atlantic Conference, organized in 1946 with Harold D. Singleton as president and Lysle S. Follette as secretary-treasurer, covers South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, and most of Florida. Since its founding, offices of the conference have been located in Atlanta. At the time of its organization South Atlantic Conference consisted of sixty-two churches, with a membership of 3,614. Departmental leaders were Norman G. Simons, lay activities and Sabbath school; Fitzgerald H. Jenkins, education and youth; and Richard P. Robinson, publishing.

As first president, Singleton moved cautiously with finances but boldly with soul winning, and his efforts paid off handsomely. Everywhere there was enthusiasm for the new conference and its goals. Membership rose steadily. John H. Wagner, who followed, had had experience as president of Allegheny Conference, and he too was strong on evangelism. Under his administration a new office was erected in an upper-class suburb. Upon his death, Warren S. Banfield came into office, engendering the same loyalties, following the same

hectic pace. He was followed by Robert L. Woodfork, who pushed for annual offerings to be devoted to conference evangelism. Woodfork also led out in the construction of a larger and more contemporary office building.

Ralph B. Hairston, the present conference president, was formerly conference secretary. He had been a pastor and evangelist in the South Atlantic territory. A veteran of World War II, he completed college studies at Oakwood and entered the ministry in Macon, Georgia. The secretary-treasurer is John A. Simons, also a veteran of World War II. After graduation from Oakwood he spent a few years as contractor for housing projects in Atlanta. He was later elected treasurer in South Central and Central States conferences. C. Dunbar Henri is the administrative assistant. Departmental leaders in South Atlantic include Joseph T. Hinson, personal ministries; G. Herfin Taylor, Sabbath school and trust services; V. J. Mendinghall, education and youth; Samuel Gooden, communication and religious liberty; Fred W. Parker, stewardship; Robert T. Smith, publishing; Earl W. Moore, director of the Bible school; and Olice Brown, manager of the Adventist Book Center.

South Atlantic's campsite at Hawthorne, Florida, where camp meetings and junior, senior, and friendship camps are held annually, was acquired in 1949 at a total purchase and development cost approaching \$250,000. Its present value would easily exceed a million dollars.

In 1981 membership had grown to 21,541. In that year the conference was divided to form the Southeastern Conference. The new organization had a membership of 8,210, which left 13,331 members for South Atlantic. The yearly tithe before separation had climbed to \$4.5 million, and an evangelism and development offering had reached an annual total of more than \$100,000. The conference had also built a spacious office complex on Hightower Road. The contractor was Jonathan Walker, whose membership is in the Atlanta Berean church.

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

Southeastern Conference includes most of Florida and a part of Georgia. Temporary office quarters are at Altamonte Springs, near Orlando, heart of the fruit belt. Membership at the beginning of 1982 was 9,112, and tithes for 1981 was \$2,549,010. There were 918 baptisms for its first year of operation and more than 1,100 for its second. Projected baptisms for 1983 were 2,300.

James Edgecombe, president, was born in Miami and spent several years as a missionary in Port of Spain, Trinidad. He is a graduate of Oakwood College and has completed a Master's degree at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. Donald A. Walker, formerly an Army captain in the Korean War, with treasury experience in the Columbia Union and South Central conferences, is secretary-treasurer. Departmental leaders include Ira L. Harrell, Sabbath school and personal ministries; Keith Dennis, education and youth; Roy Brown, communication and stewardship; and Robert T. Smith, serving both South Atlantic and Southeastern as publishing director.

A big event for the young conference was the opening of a headquarters church in Orlando, pastored by Oster Paul.

SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE

South Central Conference, including the States of Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and that portion of Florida lying west of the Apalachicola River, was organized in 1946 with 2,235 members. At the close of 1981 membership stood at 14,626. Its offices, first set up in a private dwelling, were shortly moved to Charlotte Avenue, in Nashville, and later to the present building, constructed for the purpose on Young's Lane, opposite Riverside Adventist Hospital.

The first president of South Central was Herman R. Murphy, an Oakwood graduate who later earned a Bachelor's degree and a

Master's degree from New York University. The secretary-treasurer was Vongoethe Lindsay, formerly a high school instructor in Birmingham, who became a minister in the early forties. Departmental leaders included Walter M. Starks, Sabbath school and lay activities; Frederick B. Slater, education and youth; M. G. Cato, publishing; and Paul C. Winley, Adventist Book Center.

South Central has sponsored three low-rent housing projects with a total of 352 apartments: Haynes Gardens in Nashville, with 208; Abel Courts in Bowling Green, Kentucky, with forty-six; and Dudley Apartments in Paducah, Kentucky, with ninety-six. More recently it has sponsored two apartment buildings for senior citizens, both bearing the name "South Central Village." One is in Cleveland, Mississippi, with sixty units; and the other in Clarksville, Tennessee, with 134 units.

Charles E. Dudley, president for twenty-one years, is a native of South Bend, Indiana, and a ministerial graduate of Oakwood College. His half brother, A. Gaynes Thompson, who died in 1938, was also a minister; he pioneered Adventist congregations in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. Dudley has worked to ensure representative church buildings throughout South Central and has continually emphasized membership growth. In a program to recruit physicians, aided by Dr. Carl A. Dent, he has attracted six new doctors to the field. The "dark county" evangelism fostered by these professional men has resulted in seven new churches. Tithe reported for 1981 was \$3,073,672; there were 1,261 baptisms for the same period. At least twenty-five ministerial graduates without official assignments are working in South Central to raise up churches in places where none have been established.

Fred N. Crowe, conference secretary-treasurer, is a native of California, with years of experience as treasurer in the early development of Lake Region Conference. Departmental leaders include Murray E. Joiner, Sabbath school and personal ministries; Nathaniel Higgs, education; Joseph W. McCoy, youth and temper-

ance; Stephen Ruff, publishing; George I. Pearson, manager, Adventist Book Center; and Isaac J. Johnson, field representative.

Other presidents of South Central have been Herman R. Murphy, Walter W. Fordham, and Frank L. Bland.

A demographic study of Southern Union members, completed in 1982 by the staff of *Southern Tidings*, shows the three predominantly black conferences with a total membership of 40,288 and the five predominantly white conferences with 63,307 members. The ratio of black members to black population was 1 to 195, while the ratio of white members to white population was 1 to 467. The white conferences had been organized from eighty to a hundred years previous to the study, while the black conferences had been in existence only thirty-six years. In that relatively brief time they had accounted for more than one third of the union membership.

SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE

Southwest Region Conference, which includes congregations in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas, is one of five conferences that make up the Southwestern Union. In 1982 the conference had seventy churches and a membership of 8,796, with thirty-one ministers, eight church schools, and forty teachers. Tithe for 1981 was \$2,237,956, and baptisms totaled 627. Begun as a mission January 1, 1947, its first officers were Walter W. Fordham, president; Vincent L. Roberts, secretary-treasurer and lay activities director; Helen Wiggans Beckett, Sabbath school director; and J. H. Jones, publishing director. At the end of two years as a mission, the membership was organized into a conference with 1,939 members.

Herman R. Murphy served as president in Southwest Region shortly after its organization as a conference. He was followed in office by Vincent L. Roberts, who served thirteen years. Under his administration the conference office was moved from Oakland Avenue to 1900 South Boulevard, in Dallas, and many churches were added to the Southwest Region fellowship. William J. Cleveland,

who served many years in the Northwest as well as in the Southwest, became president in 1969. A gifted pulpit orator himself, he inspired good preaching in the entire working force.

William C. Jones, the president in 1982, grew up in Detroit, Michigan, attended church school there, and was later graduated from Oakwood College. He has pastored large churches, including Bethel in Brooklyn and the City Temple congregation in Dallas. The secretary and director of stewardship is Milton M. Young, son of an Adventist minister, who also served congregations in the Southwest. Helen Turner, Southwest's treasurer, is the first woman to hold this key position in a regional conference. She holds a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in business administration and has begun work on a doctoral program. Departmental leaders include James Ford, Sabbath school and education; Rawdon Brown, personal ministries; James Marshall, publishing; and Billy E. Wright, youth director.

CENTRAL STATES CONFERENCE

Central States Conference comprises the black constituency of Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Wyoming, San Juan County of New Mexico, Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. In 1982 there were thirty-two churches, 6,304 members, two church schools, twenty ministers, two Bible instructors, and five church school teachers. The conference is included in the newly formed Mid-America Union, which combines the old Central and Northern unions.

Central States was organized as a mission in a meeting at Jefferson Hotel, in St. Louis, Missouri, January 1, 1947. Thomas M. Rowe, a veteran preacher who had pastored New York's Ephesus congregation and Chicago's Shiloh congregation, was elected president. James H. Jones was elected secretary-treasurer. The membership, including small and widely scattered congregations, numbered a modest 798. A converted house at 2528 Benton Boulevard provided office quarters for the new organization.

Within five years membership increased 76 percent—from 798 in 1947 to 1408 in 1952, with baptisms averaging more than a hundred a year. In 1948 the State of Iowa, of the former Northern Union Conference, was added to the territory of the mission, thereby including the Des Moines church in the membership total.

Frank L. Bland was elected president in 1952 when the Central States became a conference. Henry T. Saulter was elected secretary-treasurer. Membership increased from 1408 in 1952 to 2,326 at the end of 1961. The proportional gain by baptism and profession of faith was the second-largest in North America.

Walter W. Fordham, who became president in 1959, brought a fresh emphasis to evangelism. This was reflected in the erection of a new church building and a new elementary school in St. Louis, also new churches in Wichita, Kansas, and Pueblo, Colorado.

In St. Louis a 1963 soul-winning program called "Contacts for Christ" involved laymen in Bible correspondence course enrollments preparatory to a Voice of Prophecy evangelistic campaign. Enlistments averaged a thousand a month, and members were delighted at campaign's end when a hundred converts were baptized. The next year, 1964, E. Earl Cleveland, of the General Conference Ministerial Association, joined with Andrews University Seminary faculty and students to conduct a field school of evangelism in St. Louis. The campaign, blessed with 150 converts, resulted in the organization of the Shreve Avenue church.

Willie S. Lee became the fourth president of Central States in 1966. For several years he had been director of the office of Regional Affairs in Pacific Union Conference; he also had wide experience as pastor of some of the largest churches in the denomination. Lee continued the aggressive evangelism in Central States and led out in the construction of a new office complex.

Donald L. Crowder, who followed as fifth president, saw a dramatic rise in membership, to 4,246 at the end of 1974. During that year the Central States tithe income amounted to more than \$500,000,

with \$100,000 of this amount coming from the Denver Park Hill church.

Samuel D. Meyers came from California to be the sixth president; he found much he could do. The Shady Hill campground needed refurbishing—the shuttering of cabin windows, the erection of a chain-link fence, the reroofing of the pavilion. Having cared for these, Meyers led out in the construction of a two-story book center, snack bar, and registration complex. He and his staff also built a new camp dormitory with bathroom facilities for each room.

Sherman H. Cox, who became the seventh president, emphasized more large-scale evangelism in big cities of Mid-America, where large populations of black citizens needed the gospel of hope. Cox is a native of Baltimore and a graduate of Oakwood College. He served Central States as a departmental director prior to taking up duties as conference president.

LeRoy B. Hampton, who served for many years in the finance department of Oakwood College, is secretary-treasurer. Leaders of the departments are Eugene F. Carter, stewardship, Sabbath school, and personal ministries; Nathaniel Miller, education and youth.

Because of these separate church administrations, black administrators have been quickly added to union and institutional boards, thus increasing minority participation in high-level decisions of the church. Prior to 1951 there was only one elected black leader on the General Conference staff—George E. Peters, secretary of the Colored Department. The name of Calvin E. Moseley, Jr., was later added as an associate secretary of the department, and eventually both Peters and Moseley were elected to the office of general field secretary.

To aid further the integration of black leaders into the church structure, the 1961 Autumn Council established a biracial committee on human relations to frame appropriate resolutions. With the specific aim of eliminating discrimination against blacks in churches, the 1965 Spring Council of the General Conference Committee voted that "membership and office in all churches and on all levels must be

available to anyone who qualifies, without regard to race.”²³ This included hospitals, schools, and every facility operated by the church.

When this proved insufficient, and black Adventists found themselves still unwelcome in some Seventh-day Adventist churches and schools, regional conference administrators suggested that perhaps the organization of two union conferences with a predominantly black membership might add weight and substance to what, up to now, were only resolutions. There would be union presidents, advocates said, who could talk from the advantage of a constituency, and they could more easily make themselves heard in the higher echelons of church government. This, they said, would also give Adventists a better image in communities where they lived and worked. A recommendation was made that the annual Autumn Council study the feasibility of forming black unions.

Meanwhile, North American Division president Neal C. Wilson urged union officers to place black men in responsible positions on their staffs. Eventually nearly every union placed black representatives in office. Aaron Brogden is the secretary in Atlantic Union, Earl Parchment is Sabbath school director, and Leon H. Davis is editor of the *Gleaner*. In Columbia Union, Luther R. Palmer, Jr., is secretary, Adrian T. Westney is associate in education, and Samuel Thomas is Sabbath school director. The president in Lake Union is Robert H. Carter, and Charles Woods is assistant treasurer. The Mid-America Union elected George Timpson associate secretary. During the final illness of R. H. Nightingale, Willie S. Lee was acting president of Central Union Conference. North Pacific Union elected Edward A. White to its office, and Pacific Union named Major C. White secretary. John E. Collins serves in Pacific as associate personal ministries secretary, Joseph W. Hutchinson as associate in publishing, and Earl Canson, director of regional affairs. In Southwestern Union Vincent L. Roberts was the first black leader in North America to be elected union treasurer. In 1982, Elbert W. Shepperd was

elected director of youth programs in the same union. In Southern Union, Ward Sumpter was associate secretary, and Ralph P. Peay was youth director. For many years M. G. Cato and Odell Mackey were associate directors of the union publishing department. The list changes almost every year.

The black union proposal was debated for ten years and presented formally before two sessions of the General Conference Autumn Council. However, it failed to attract sufficient votes to be inaugurated into the system of Adventist church government. Perhaps an approaching recession, reminiscent of the prolonged depression in the 1930s, had its influence. But black observers declare that the very discussion of separate unions undoubtedly improved opportunities for black members to hold meaningful offices in union conferences of North America and in many other parts of the world.

Membership gain was always a lever in discussions of black unions because with increased membership came increased tithes and other offerings. Public evangelism was usually considered the primary key to church growth, but it is known that door-to-door efforts of literature evangelists has had a steady influence in bringing new converts into the church. Many Adventists today declare that they read themselves into church fellowship, that they found periodicals and books decisive in their choice to be Seventh-day Adventists. At one point in the late forties, Allegheny Conference amassed sales greater than the combined totals of all other conferences in the union. Persons who have made outstanding records have been Howard D. Warner, J. R. Britt, Matthew Dennis, Mary Morrison Dennis, Paul C. Winley, T. S. Barber, Mabel Barber, Odell W. Mackey, Richard P. Robinson, Joe Hutchinson, T. R. Smith, Robert Smith, George Anderson, and M. G. Cato.

Message magazine, introduced as a trial number in 1934, was an immediate success, with students seeking money to meet academy or college expenses acting as a sales force. Regularly scheduled publication, first as a quarterly, was inaugurated in 1935; in 1943 it

became a monthly. Circulation has exceeded 260,000 for one issue; in the fifties a large New York advertising agency listed *Message* as one of the leading religious publications in America. It has featured as writers many outstanding leaders in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and other denominations.

J. Paul Monk, Jr., editor since early 1981, and his assistant editor, Kyna Hinson, produce a thirty-two-page magazine on coated paper with a four-color treatment possible throughout. Louis B. Reynolds, first black editor of this major denominational publication, was also for thirteen years editor of senior Sabbath school publications in the General Conference. Other editors of *Message* have been Robert Bruce Thurber, James E. Shultz, Frank A. Coffin (acting), Robert L. Odom, James E. Dykes, Garland J. Millet, William R. Robinson, and Ted T. Jones, an associate.

Garland J. Millet and Victor Griffiths have been editors for the *Journal of Adventist Education*, and Natelkka E. Burrell coedited a series of sixty-one basic readers and guidebooks for the Adventist Basic Reading Series.

Bible instructors have also laid a broad base of support for large city evangelism. In the vanguard of career people in this field have been E. Van Nockay Porter, Rosa Lee Jones, Zilda Forde, Celia Cleveland, Rawline Troxler, Vivian Boyce, Jessie Gulley, Maude Masters, Edith Young Rice, Alice Terrell Valentine, Elizabeth Coleman, Margaret Daniels Humphrey, Ola Mae Harris, Lillie Todd Evans, Alice Bowden, Elizabeth Carter Cleveland, Billie Rowe, Bonnie Dobbins Stewart, Josephine Flowers, Sadie Richardson, Ella Lee Wiley, Ruth Strother, Dorothy Smith, Bertha Bailey Leatores, Charles Miller, Ella Miller, Eva Jeltz, Beatrice Hampton, Nina Addison, Beulah Cross, Birdie McCluster, Jessie Bentley, and Rosa Pugh.

Elementary school teachers who have earned General Conference life certificates have included Jessie Wagner, Trula Wade, Vernon H. Jenkins, Myrtle Gates Murphy, Eda Lett Williamson, Hattie Thomp-

son, Emith Giddings Gaines, Bernice Johnson Reynolds, Alice Blake Brantley, Maxine Hamilton Brantley, Devolia Fowler Cantrell, Inez Jackson Shelton, Charles Gray, Wilhelmina Galley, L. Henrietta Emmanuel, and Christine Thompson.

Amid winds of doctrinal dispute and what has been termed the “Omega” of apostasy, black Adventists seem largely unshaken. They are not inclined to cast away anchors and moorings, or to drift idly about on the sea of doctrine, moving in no particular direction, arriving at no port. Bemused by a past both tragic and disastrous, this pious people accept the existing situation and move with confidence into the future. As they believe in love—which is to say, as they have love—they do not have fear.

If all Seventh-day Adventists could rise to the level of loving passionately not only their academies, colleges, medical institutions, and their missions installations, as they do, but also the rich and varied configuration of people—brown, black, and white—who dwell therein, with the untold possibilities for achievement that lie in such association, they not only would solve their greatest problem but also would be prepared with gallantry and courage to face the difficult circumstances of the future. When “the heirs of God . . . come from garrets, from hovels, from dungeons, from scaffolds, from mountains, from deserts, from the caves of the earth, from the caverns of the sea,”²⁴ there will be no caste or color distinctions. The people of the covenant will love much because they have been forgiven much. “The rebuke of his people shall he take away” (Isa. 25:8). “They shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord” (chap. 62:12). For the disadvantaged, the disinherited God has appointed “to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness” (chap. 61:3).

NOTES

¹ Census Bureau figures for 1940. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office).

² See Jacob Justiss, *Angels in Ebony*.

- ³ Minutes of Spring Council meeting of General Conference Committee, held at Stevens Hotel, Chicago, April 8-19, 1944.
- ⁴ Minutes of the first meeting of black delegates at a special meeting of Lake Union Conference held in Shiloh church, Chicago, Illinois, September 26, 1944.
- ⁵ Statistical report of North American Conferences General Conference (Washington, D.C.: 1981).
- ⁶ *SDA Encyclopedia* (1966), pp. 1059, 1060.
- ⁷ Robert M. Kilgore, in *Review and Herald*, Oct. 29, 1889, p. 683.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁹ Minutes of district workers' meeting, Nashville, Tennessee, Seventh-day Adventist campground, Oct. 2, 1889.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ E. G. White, *The Southern Work*, p. 11.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 16.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.
- ¹⁴ C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, second revised edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 72.
- ¹⁵ E. G. White, *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 206.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 207.
- ¹⁷ Ronald D. Graybill, *E. G. White and Church Race Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1970), p. 37.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 45.
- ¹⁹ Rayford W. Logan, *Betrayal of the Negro* (New York: Collier Books, 1967), p. 280.
- ²⁰ White, *Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 206, 207. (Italics supplied.)
- ²¹ H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: World Pub. Co., Meridian Books, 1957), p. 254.
- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 253.
- ²³ *Review and Herald*, April 29, 1965, p. 8.
- ²⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 650.

Ambassadors to the World

Dr. E. Stanley Jones once made the remark that the foundation of Methodist missionary work was laid by “a Negro preacher to the American Indians.”¹ This unusual disclosure, together with another historian’s statement that American Baptist missions in West Africa originated with “the colored Baptists of Richmond, Virginia,”² substantiates the recent finding of Reid Trulson, pastor of the First Baptist church in Antigo, Wisconsin, that “the earliest American missionary was a black man.”³

The first black woman missionary to be sent to India by a mission board of any denomination was Anna Knight, of Laurel, Mississippi (see chapter 6), who sailed under Adventist auspices.

Records show, however, that Anna Knight was not the first black person to go out from America as a missionary for the Adventist Church. She went to India in 1901, but James E. Patterson, of California, went to Jamaica in 1892. There is no formal biography of Patterson available, only yearbook listings and an article announcing his appointment, which was printed in the *Review and Herald*. But somehow through the corridors of denominational mission experi-

ence, Patterson comes to life and reengages us in his cause.

James K. Humphrey, a leading Baptist preacher in Jamaica, had heard from his son in New York that the seventh day of the week was the Bible Sabbath. Moreover, the younger Humphrey told his father he was changing his faith, forsaking the Baptists and joining the Adventists. To support the Bible claim for Sabbath worship he had heard from John N. Loughborough's preaching, young Humphrey sent literature to Jamaica to back it up. The father was quickly convinced and wrote to the Adventist tract society in Battle Creek, asking if there were any Seventh-day Adventists in Jamaica. The response indicated that two families in Jamaica were keeping the Sabbath and listed their names and addresses. Humphrey went down the next Sabbath to visit these members and found them discouraged and dismayed because they didn't seem to have had any success locally in spreading the message. He then preached to them from the text "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." After doing what he could to stabilize these believers, he returned home.

Weeks later Humphrey made an appeal to the General Conference in Battle Creek, asking leaders to send someone to Jamaica to preach to the masses. As soon as it could be arranged, they sent Patterson. Prior to Patterson's coming, Humphrey went in search of an old friend, Martin Robertson. He explained to Robertson the good news of the Sabbath and then appealed to his comrade saying, "We have fought for Queen Victoria. I've now got a message from the King of kings. Let's now go and fight for the heavenly King."

Robertson accepted the Adventist faith and then appealed to Humphrey to go with him to the country in search of his relatives so he might preach to them. A brother-in-law offered his cabinet shop for meetings, and Humphrey preached to these several families. Nearly all accepted the message and were baptized. One of Robertson's nieces, Anna Lumley, was sent to Battle Creek and later was graduated from the old College of Medical Evangelists.

Robertson was granduncle of Lucille Walters, wife of H. S. Walters, for many years president of West Indies Union Conference.

Anna Knight, an early convert to the Adventist Church, was the next missionary of African background to be sent abroad by the Adventists. Actually Anna Knight was an octoroon, from a community in which practically all members were of mixed parentage. Hence it was not a surprise around the turn of the century that this very fair woman with blue eyes and brunette hair should be chosen by Dr. John Harvey Kellogg to do medical missionary service in India rather than in Africa.

In 1889 and 1890 Stephen N. Haskell and Percy T. Magan, on their mission survey around the world, traveled through India from Calcutta to Bombay. A few years later the work was opened, and workers from America, Britain, and Australia came to Calcutta to pioneer as literature evangelists. Before any Seventh-day Adventist work was opened, however, Dr. Kellogg was supporting a Bengali Christian, B. N. Mitter, who was connected with the American Baptist Mission. The kindness of Dr. Kellogg to minorities and blacks had particularly endeared him to people such as Anna Knight, for whom he opened doors of opportunity when most doors were closed.

Dr. Kellogg was also in charge of the denomination's fast-developing medical ministry; he invited Anna Knight to attend the 1901 General Conference held in Battle Creek as a delegate. She made the journey to Michigan to represent medical-missionary and self-supporting work, which, as a Battle Creek graduate, she pursued in Mississippi. At the General Conference Anna Knight heard that J. L. Shaw and his wife, who had worked in Africa, were now to go to India, and they needed two nurses to assist with the medical ministry. It had been her wish years before to engage in just such a mission, so she offered her services. She said, "If they will send a man and his wife to look after my work in Mississippi, I'll go to India and stay until the Lord comes."⁴

When the reality of this seemingly rash promise dawned upon her a few days later, Anna Knight had some second thoughts. Could she bear leaving relatives she would perhaps never see again? Would anyone give the same devotion as she to the school and missionary work she had undertaken in Mississippi? Would her relatives think she had fully deserted them for people she did not know, people far across the sea? A Battle Creek classmate, Donna Humphrey, had been asked to go as the second nurse, but neither of them was sure this was what she should do. On the same evening both young women went before the Lord in prayer. Anna Knight later described her agonizing on that momentous night:

“In my usual direct manner I went straight to the point. ‘Lord, You know all things, and all needs. The work is all Thine; the people are Thine in Mississippi, India, and in all the world. Lord, if You need me in India more than in Mississippi, then take away this sorrow out of my heart and stop me from crying all the time about it. If the sorrow and crying is taken away, then I’ll know *You* are calling me to go to India.’”⁵

Before she had finished the prayer, she said, the crying was over, and she did not shed another tear about this appointment to India, not even when she bade goodbye to her dearest friends. The Parker Atwoods were asked to take over the Mississippi school.

Six missionaries embarked for Southern Asia on the same boat—John L. and Bessie Shaw; G. K. Owen, father of Mrs. Shaw; L. J. Burgess; Donna Humphrey; and Anna Knight, all happy at the prospect of what lay beyond on the vast subcontinent of India. Their ship, on the high seas sixteen days, reached Bombay at night; the party took a train from there to Calcutta. The mission workers in Calcutta were faced with vexing problems and were obviously delighted to see such impressive recruits who had come to assist with a task that seemed to defy all the devotion, work, honor, and high ideals they could put into it.

Anna Knight’s first assignment was with the newly established,

modestly equipped sanitarium, but she was not there long. A mission family at Karmatar had to return to America because of illness, and Anna Knight was asked to take over the Karmatar operations. Sometimes she extracted teeth, lanced boils and abscesses, or did bookkeeping for the mission. More often than not she was called upon to teach Bible and English in the training school. Added to this was supervisory work in the vegetable garden, and, when sanitarium patronage was low, she and Donna Humphrey went out to canvass with English editions of books and magazines.

When she tried to educate Indian coolies about ways to prepare soil for successful gardens, they balked and wagged their heads, saying it could not be done that way in India.

"I then took our schoolboys and did the impossible," Anna Knight said. "We were to plant sweet potato slips. The ground was hard; they had to dig it up with a pick. I knew sweet potatoes could not grow in such hard soil; therefore, we took gunny sacks and the bullock cart and went to the river and brought sand and mixed it with the earth. Then we took some barnyard manure and added that. Next we took a mattock and mixed it all together digging a trench for it. I remembered I had seen an American turnplow at the barn, and I told the coolie to fetch it. He began to protest again, saying it had never been used and would not work in India. 'Might be all right in America, no good in India,' he complained. I had it brought to me, hitched the bullocks to it, and took the handles of the plow myself. It took two boys to whip the bullocks to make them pull the plow. By the hardest kind of work I managed to lift up the soil into good rows. Then I took the slips and planted them on top of the rows. Our mission boys helped as best they could. I was wet with perspiration, and before I finished, it began to rain and I got wet again. I worked on in the rain until the job was completed; for I had been told that if one wanted to retain his leadership with the natives, he must not fail in what he undertook; therefore I persevered to the end."⁶

Anna Knight went into the bungalow and fainted as a result of the

overwork, but she regained consciousness after about thirty-six hours. She was soon back at the gardening again. "Soon there was a harvest of vegetables," she reported, "such as had never been seen at Karmatar before. Then all the village coolies and village folk spread the news that the missionary really did make the American plow work wonders."⁷

In the course of her missionary service in India Anna Knight was many times in mortal danger without knowing it. She went canvassing with her friend Freida Haegert to the villages of Rawalpindi and Peshawar on the border of Afghanistan, where strange things happened to foreigners. "We had not had much change in diet for several weeks; no fresh vegetables, only dahl and rice, and rice and dahl; once in a while we had curry. When we got to Peshawar, I understood there was an Indian bazaar where fresh vegetables could be bought. I made up my mind to find it and get something fresh to eat. Since I had a bicycle, it was my job to do all the shopping and Miss Haegert did the cooking.

"I had finally found the bazaar. It was a large place walled in with big gates through which to enter. I rode in and began to buy fresh cabbage, cauliflower, peas, carrots, and white potatoes. I filled my shopping basket, fastened it on the handlebar of my bicycle, and rode away.

"While I was shopping I had noticed some tall native men following me around holding big knives in their hands and dressed in an odd way. As they were not too close to me I scarcely noticed them. Rather quickly I rode away feeling happy and lighthearted, thinking of the good meals we would have while these supplies lasted.

"I was soon home, and when I delivered my groceries our landlady was shocked. She told me Europeans were not allowed in that market, and that it was a wonder I got out alive. I was told that those strange men I saw had a custom to kill as many Christians and foreigners as they could in order to be in favor of their gods. How grateful I was that my God took care of me!"⁸

Before many months had passed a letter came from Mississippi stating that Parker Atwood and his wife had been compelled to leave their work because of threats from a certain unfriendly group in the community. After they departed, the letter stated, the school building and their unfinished residence were burned to the ground. It was with a gnawing pain and disbelief that Anna Knight read this letter again and again. And here she was so far from home she could do absolutely nothing about it. All her efforts to establish a school had gone down in ashes within a few brief minutes!

When the time came, after several years, for a furlough, Anna Knight journeyed back across the ocean and to Mississippi to rebuild her school and get her educational program going in full force once more. She had received a pathetic letter from home written in a childish scrawl begging her to return and take charge again as teacher.

"Why don't you come back and teach us yourself? You understand us, and you are not afraid. Why would you stay over there, trying to convert the heathen while your own people here at home are growing up into heathen?"⁹

There was no doubt about it: A deserted Mississippi school needed her as teacher. A new building had been partially finished in anticipation of her coming, and her kinfolk turned out in large numbers to welcome their missionary back home. She talked to them of far-off places where she had worked and of how God had delivered her from the schemes of thieves and evildoers. Through her eyes they saw the fabled palaces, the Taj Mahal, the beautiful people of India, and all the glories of a once-majestic civilization. As she responded to invitations to visit churches and camp meetings to tell her story many criticized her for going to India when, as they said, there was so much to be done in Mississippi. "If I had my way," one pastor said, "I would not let you go back to India; we need you here. Let the white folk go to India, and you stay here and work with us."¹⁰

Not long afterward Anna Knight received a letter from the

Southeastern Union Conference proposing that she come to Atlanta to become medical matron of a new sanitarium to be established as an extension of a grand effort to reach the local black population. She tried it for some months, but the idea didn't catch on. Atlanta was too sophisticated to resort to water sprays and hot cloths for the cure of what they considered to be a real sickness. Then Anna Knight organized a local branch of the YWCA and used the sanitarium facilities to teach home nursing, healthful cooking, and first aid, and to conduct Bible studies. By this means she was able to double the membership of the church. In the community she was recognized widely as the nation's first Negro woman missionary to India, and as a result was frequently called upon to give lectures on its peoples and customs.

She later worked in other capacities within the union—as associate secretary of the home missionary, Missionary Volunteer, and education departments. In 1932, when the Southeastern and Southern unions were combined, she was elected associate secretary of these departments for the entire territory.

In 1945 there were thirty-four church schools, employing fifty-four teachers. Anna Knight visited all these at least twice each school term. The elementary school that serves as the laboratory school for Oakwood's student teachers is named in her honor.

The third missionary to go out representing the black membership was Thomas H. Branch, a minister from Pueblo, Colorado, and a native of Jefferson County, Missouri. Branch pioneered Malamulo Mission, the largest Adventist mission station in the world. He sailed to Africa in 1902, about a year after Anna Knight left for India, under an arrangement whereby the General Conference paid his transportation and the Colorado Conference furnished his salary.¹¹

Malamulo Mission, located in the Shire Highlands, about forty miles south of Blantyre, the commercial capital of Malawi (formerly Nyasaland), was at one time a coffee estate owned by a German businessman. On its compound Adventists have developed what is

perhaps the oldest leprosarium in Africa. In addition, there is an elementary school, a high school, a college, and extensive farm and dairy holdings.

The original owner concluded that the plantation was a financial liability and sold it to the Seventh Day Baptists, who were at that time seeking a place to begin mission work in Nyasaland.¹² Chosen to carry the major responsibility for developing the new outpost, which the church called Plainfield Mission, were Joseph Booth and Jacob Bakker, the first missionaries to survey possibilities for this tract of land. The two leaders disagreed on many policies and found themselves almost continually at odds, to the embarrassment of Seventh Day Baptist leaders at their headquarters in Plainfield, New Jersey. The mission work naturally suffered. Moreover, Booth, a Scotchman, for years had been under suspicion by the government because of his political involvements. In time conditions at the mission became so discouraging that Seventh Day Baptists sent out instructions to Booth to sell the property and return the proceeds to Plainfield.¹³ This was a step Booth was obviously hesitant to take; he could not visualize Plainfield Mission closing its doors and discontinuing its work.

Soon afterward Booth came to the States and made contact with the Seventh-day Adventists. He might have conversed with George James, an Adventist who went to Africa as a self-supporting missionary. But we know that he came to the General Conference in 1901 and offered to sell the denomination the two thousand acres comprising Plainfield Mission. General Conference officers agreed to purchase the mission with the stipulation that the money be paid to the Seventh Day Baptists.¹⁴ Joseph Booth then made known his wish to become a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, no doubt fully expecting to return and direct the mission with no interference from Bakker. The Mission Board did not offer the position to Booth but instead decided to send an American Negro minister, Thomas H. Branch, and his family. Booth returned with the Branch family to

Plainfield Mission and on this property Thomas Branch presided over the first Seventh-day Adventist mission to be established in Nyasaland.¹⁵

Branch, fired with a never-wearying zeal for the Lord's work, was full of optimism as he approached his new task. According to one who recalled his labors at Malamulo, he was "never afraid of anybody, he was as brave as a lion and was a great Bible student." He entered into the mission program with enormous enthusiasm. As might be anticipated, Booth found it difficult to follow the leadership of Branch, since he felt his experience better fitted him for the job of director. Relations between the two men became increasingly strained, and because Booth's political views had also become by this time extremely obnoxious to the government, he was banished from the country. Thereafter Thomas Branch was left to develop the work as he saw best.

Branch first inquired about methods of older missionaries as they undertook work in Africa. The Africans in 1902 were seemingly indifferent to religion, but they were keenly interested in education. As an introduction to gospel work, therefore, Branch established primary and secondary schools that attracted many African boys and men. At length these students, influenced by the precept and example of their teachers, accepted the gospel and became Christians. At first, in order to learn the vernacular, Branch hired teachers and translators who had been trained in other societies. In this way he learned to speak the language of the people and was able to get his program organized. The number of students at first was small, not more than twenty or thirty for the first few years, and classes were held under the trees. His daughter Mabel was the teacher.¹⁶ In 1905 seven boys had accepted the Adventist faith and were baptized on September 30 of that year. Two of these were Simon and James Ngaiyaye, devoted men who were ordained to the ministry. From this meager beginning developed strong workers of later years.¹⁷

In 1903 the General Conference sent J. H. Watson and his family

to be associated with Branch in this vast territory. Within a few months Watson contracted malaria and died, and Mrs. Watson returned to America, leaving Branch and his family once again as the only overseas personnel on the compound. Before his death, Watson had purchased four cows for Malamulo, to supply dairy products for students and mission staff. This was the beginning of a dairy herd that through many years proved a valuable addition to the mission. The name of the mission was changed in 1907 from Plainfield (then the New Jersey location of Seventh Day Baptist headquarters) to Malamulo, which is the Cinyanja word for "commandments"—thus it designated the people who observe the Ten Commandments.¹⁸

For four more years Branch and his family carried the leadership at Malamulo without change or rest. Then came J. C. Rogers and his wife in May, 1907, to assume direction of the work. Branch spent some time helping him to become familiar with operations of the immense, diversified plantation and the school.

When Branch left Malamulo, it had an enrollment of about sixty. Most of the students were middle-aged married women, greatly hampered by family cares as they undertook to learn. Rogers began at once to pray and work for more young men. And God answered his prayer, for at the beginning of the new school year in August of 1907, more than two hundred young people, a large number of them young men, applied to take classes at the mission.¹⁹ Many of these were baptized and went out themselves as teachers, starting new schools and extending the faith into sections of Africa where no teacher had ever gone. Whole villages were changed by the godly influence of these young teachers.

Thomas Branch left Malamulo for South Africa, where he labored for a few months before returning to America in 1908. He pastored several years in Philadelphia—his wife died there in 1913²⁰—and then retired in California. He died in that state in 1924 at the age of 68.²¹

L. W. Browne organized the first Seventh-day Adventist church in Sierra Leone. He was born in Barbados but had migrated to

Chicago in the early days of the century. A man of almost endless capabilities, with the discipline of a rugged rural life, he was recognized early as one who could give substantial help to the denomination's overseas program. He was therefore sent as a missionary to Freetown, Sierra Leone, to open mission work there. His correspondence published in the *Review and Herald* in October, 1907, reports the organization of a church in Sierra Leone on July 20.²²

"It was a bright, sunny morning (although this is the rainy season)," he wrote, "and quite a favorable day for those who lived at some distance from the place of worship. There was a good attendance, including those who had given their names for organization, as well as other interested persons."²³

Twenty individuals that day joined "the bond of Christian fellowship and concord," according to Browne, and seven of these were accepted subject to baptism.²⁴

A letter from W. A. Spicer, General Conference secretary, expressed delight over Browne's work at Waterloo, another town seventeen miles southeast of Freetown.

"The evidence that the truth is at last rooting into the soil of West Africa cheers our hearts. We have longed to see this, and trust that God may give to Brother Babcock and to yourself wisdom to drill the new recruits thoroughly into the truth, so that the work may grow up on the solid foundation of the message. It is the steady plodding, building work that counts after all."

Spicer was concerned with the formidable wall of Mohammedanism, the "religion of externals," as he called it, around which they must find a way. He was anxious to see some from among that people represented in the ranks of Adventists. Recognizing this as hard soil in which to work, the General Conference was content to keep men continually trying for a breakthrough, since, as leaders said, the Adventist Church had to begin somewhere. Noting that Browne was already suffering from the dreaded malaria fever, Spicer urged him to watch his health carefully. As if by way of further

encouragement to Browne, Spicer revealed that the Mission Board had already appropriated funds to erect a training school building in Sierra Leone, and they were on the lookout for a good teacher. Then he repeated the great burden of his heart:

“The third angel’s message is the thing that wins, and the Lord made no mistake when He called a people out in 1844, and He has been the Leader ever since. Let us build up the new recruits in this message and help them to catch the inspiration of pushing forward into West Africa as one little wing of the great army marching in solid columns across the whole earth. The steady, even, harmonious stroke is the thing that counts when a number of men are pulling at the oars. Let us teach the stroke to the new recruits, and set men into the work who will pull an oar in the good ship until the harbor is reached.”

Prior to the coming of Browne to Sierra Leone, J. M. Hyatt, a black American, and his wife had arrived from the Gold Coast to do self-supporting missionary work. The Hyatts had been in the Gold Coast (now Ghana) since 1903 and began their ministry in Sierra Leone by holding prayer meetings in their own home and by distributing papers.

More than twenty years passed before the next black missionary was sent from the United States to a foreign assignment. It may have been indicative of the times, a reflection of the change in American society, that signaled a cutback in Negro missionaries going abroad. But in the summer of 1928 Henry T. Saulter, an Oakwood graduate who had taught church school in Jackson, Mississippi, and Louisville, Kentucky, was asked to go to Nassau, Bahamas, as a teacher. He was contacted by Frank L. Peterson, then assistant educational department secretary of the Southern Union. When he accepted, he was told to go to Oakwood for further arrangements. There Joseph A. Tucker, Oakwood’s president, gave him train and boat fare to Nassau, and he was on his way. Saulter taught the Shirley Street church school in Nassau for the 1928-1929 term and then

returned to the States. The Bahamas Mission was at that time a part of the Antillian Union, with Alfred R. Ogden as president. The Shirley Street congregation was the only church in Nassau, but there were other companies on surrounding islands. Henry Saulter, an immensely versatile person, served later as treasurer of the Allegheny Conference, as director of student finances at Oakwood, and as auditor of Southeastern California Conference.

Two years after Saulter returned, Benjamin W. Abney, a pastor in St. Louis, was asked to go to Cape Town, South Africa, as an evangelist to what were then known as the Cape Coloured people. This was a way of designating individuals of a mixed Dutch and African ancestry, somewhat comparable to the mulatto population in the United States. Abney and his family sailed from New York on July 16, 1931, and arrived in Cape Town August 10. Since he had no great problem learning a language, he began immediately to plan for a crusade in Kensington, a suburb of Cape Town. He baptized some fifty members in that first campaign and organized a new congregation.

These meetings were followed by similar crusades in Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, Retreat, Winburg, and Johannesburg. Abney organized five churches and added several hundred members. When he went to Cape Town, William H. Branson was president of the South African Division; later John F. Wright came to take leadership of that field. The term of mission service for South Africa was seven years, and in 1938 Abney was back in America on furlough. Because his son and daughter were of college age, he decided to remain in the States in order to give them opportunities for a more substantial education than they would receive under the apartheid system. Abney pastored several churches in the South before his retirement in 1957.

In 1945 three black American missionaries, G. Nathaniel Banks, Philip E. Giddings, and C. Dunbar Henri, left the United States for Liberia. They were the first to be sent abroad since Abney went out

fourteen years earlier. Those days of mission service were characterized by potential danger, personal sacrifice, but great spiritual rewards. From 1945 and onward practically all black missionaries were sent to Africa. These pioneers laid a foundation for modern missions in the countries of Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and the Ivory Coast. Their history includes a roster of many humble people who have performed a distinguished service for the Adventist Church.

Donald B. Simons and his family labored in Freetown, Sierra Leone, beginning in 1947. William R. Robinson and family were appointed to the Uganda Mission in East Africa in 1957; he served there as president for two years.

However, the vast majority of these early black missionaries went to Liberia. G. Nathaniel Banks, C. Dunbar Henri, Lucius Daniels, Maurice T. Battle, and Leland Mitchell—each was, at one time or another, president of the Liberian Mission. The David Hughes family were missionaries to Grand Bassa County, where he served as district leader. Later he was appointed director of the Voice of Prophecy in Ibadan, Nigeria, and was for a brief period president of the North Nigerian Mission. Because of his extraordinary contribution to the peoples of Liberia, Hughes was invested by his Excellency, the Honorable W. V. S. Tubman, president of Liberia, as Knight Official of the Liberian Order of Human Redemption.

Theodore Cantrell and his family also served in the Liberian Mission. He was principal of Konola Academy and acting treasurer of the Liberian Mission; his wife was the school nurse. Cantrell's next foreign mission assignment was as secretary-treasurer in East Nigeria. Leland Mitchell and Hermon Vanderberg began their overseas service as pastors of the Bassa District in Lower Buchanan, Liberia. Hermon Vanderberg, while still a district leader in Bassa, was involved in a tragic accident that claimed the life of his wife and badly injured his children and himself. The family returned to the United States.

During his second mission term, Mitchell was elected president of the Liberian mission. After two years he became ill and returned to the United States where he died at the age of 34.

Adventist missionaries usually began their work either in evangelism or education. Both methods were used effectively in Africa. The educational work grew at a tremendous rate under the leadership of Philip E. Giddings, who acted as principal of Konola Academy. He built its girls' dormitory, completely renovated the campus, and gradually added grades so that there was not only an elementary school but also a full-fledged academy. Theodore Cantrell began the building of a boys' dormitory on the Konola campus; it was completed by Richard Simons. Johnny Johnson, who also served as principal at Konola, built the administration complex and made numerous improvements on the campus. The elementary school in Grand Bassa County was built by C. Dunbar Henri. In the capital city of Monrovia, G. Nathaniel Banks initiated the work of Seventh-day Adventist education, assisted by national workers A. Y. Turay and M. I. Harding.

Lois Raymond spent a long and illustrious career teaching in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Her period of service in West Africa spans more than twenty years. The Douglass Tates were teachers at Konola, but illness in the family forced their premature return. The Johnny Johnsons began their service as teachers, and then he was made principal at Konola. After some years of service they were transferred to the Seventh-day Adventist Secondary School, in Bekwai, Ghana. From that responsibility Johnson changed his work and became chaplain of the Ile-Ife Adventist Hospital, in West Nigeria. Mrs. Johnson taught elementary grades in several West African schools. Johnson came back to the States to complete a Doctor of Ministry degree at Andrews University in 1978 and returned to West Africa as district evangelist in Nigeria.

C. Dunbar Henri spent eighteen years in West Africa, where he filled several posts, including president of the Liberian Mission. He

served for four years in East Africa, where he was president of the East African Union. J. C. Pitts has spent several years as business manager of Masanga Leprosy Hospital, in Sierra Leone. Ruth Fay Smith was home economics teacher and dean of girls at the Bekwai Secondary School in Ghana. She also served as English teacher for the Adventist training college at Ihie in East Nigeria; she was there at the same time Samuel E. Gooding taught science and music at the institution. The Goodings spent two terms at the college before returning to the States. Eula Gunther was installed as a teacher at the Koforidua Seventh-day Adventist School in 1964. Ted T. Jones served as a teacher in Bugema Adventist College, Uganda, after serving as ministerial secretary of the Indonesia Union.

The medical work of Afro-American missionaries was for many years distinguished by the arduous ministry of Dr. and Mrs. Samuel DeShay. As director of Ahoada County Hospital, in east Nigeria (now Rivers State), the DeShays came to be loved by the people of Nigeria for both their spiritual and their medical service. They remained at their post until the Nigerian civil war forced them to flee and leave behind a great number of personal effects. However, instead of returning to the United States, the DeShays remained in Africa and served the Ile-Ife Adventist Hospital, in Nigeria, for several years. Then they worked for two years at the Masanga Leprosy Hospital, devoting a total of thirteen years to foreign mission service. Greta Graham went out as a nurse at the Ankole Hospital, in Uganda, East Africa. Caddie Jackson, Ruby Graves, and Claudia Ann Gordon also were at one time nurses at the Ile-Ife Adventist Hospital.

Gloria Mackson and Naomi Bullard were on the staff as nurses at the Mugonero Hospital, in Rwanda. Miss Bullard served also as a teacher-tutor and director of nurses at the institution. Gloria Mackson was also a teacher in the interior of Tanganyika (now Tanzania). Dr. George Benson was a physician at the Benghazi Adventist Hospital, in Libya, in the Middle East Division until a government action nationalized the hospital. The Bensons ended

their term of overseas service at the Gimbie Hospital, in Ethiopia. Doctors Warren Harrison, J. Mark Cox, John R. Ford, and Carl A. Dent all gave special short-term medical relief at the Ile-Ife Adventist Hospital in west Nigeria.

Robert Carter served a colorful year and a half as president of the Uganda Field, but political unrest and upheaval in that country forced his family to return to the United States. He was afterward appointed president of the Bermuda Mission, and in 1980 he was elected president of Lake Union. James Hammond came to West Africa as science teacher at the Bekwai secondary school, but his evangelistic fervor and success in soul winning convinced mission committee members that they should ordain him to the gospel ministry. He was then invited to be president of the Sierra Leone Mission and later, president of North Ghana Mission. Hammond built five churches in Ghana with the help of church members; during his tour of service in Bekwai the membership doubled and the tithes tripled.

Owen A. Troy, Jr., a third-generation Adventist preacher, was secretary-treasurer of Africa's only full-fledged conference in Ghana. The Troys spent three years in Africa and then accepted mission service in Port of Spain, Trinidad. Troy carried the responsibility of treasurer, director of communications, and pastor-evangelist. He was later director of communications also for Caribbean Union College in Port of Spain, Trinidad. Lindsay Thomas, who in addition to speaking English has a fluent command of French, Spanish, and German, was a teacher at the Adventist College in Bouaké, Ivory Coast, while Philip Giddings was principal. Mrs. Thomas, a physician, worked at a small hospital in Ivory Coast and also gave voluntary mission service in Nigeria.

The Dennis Keith family spent six years in Sierra Leone. Keith was treasurer of the mission until his transfer to Korea, in the Far Eastern Division, where he was also appointed treasurer. The W. S. Whaleys are other missionaries who spent a few years in Ghana,

West Africa, where he carried the responsibility of president for the North Ghana Mission. Clarence Thomas III, and family have labored in the South American Division, where he has been both evangelist and a treasurer in Brazil. The Craig Newborns began service in the 1970s on the faculty of Kamagambo Teachers' College, in Kenya, East Africa; he has carried the additional responsibility of pastor for the college church. Dr. Earl Richards inaugurated a flourishing dental practice in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. Mrs. Richards, a registered nurse, has given valuable assistance with the clinic and with the church program. In 1980 the Loma Linda University Alumni Federation honored Dr. Richards as its alumnus of the year.

Maurice T. Battle was the first American of African descent to serve as a division officer. His appointment as secretary of the Afro-Mideast Division in 1975 was a significant forward step in integrating overseas division personnel. Battle was department secretary of the Northern Europe-West Africa Division in London at one time. He and his family had spent many years in West Africa, where he was assigned, among other duties, the post of lay activities director for the union. The Russell W. Nelsons carried on evangelism for one year in the Northern Europe-West Africa Division, holding campaigns in Denmark, Scotland, and Wales. Helene Harris, a native of Jamaica, served as home economics teacher at the Rusangu Secondary School in Monze, Zambia.

Several student missionaries representing the regional department membership have left their homeland to give at least a year to fostering Adventist work overseas. Then there is that group that has given special foreign service in evangelism. E. Earl Cleveland conducted campaigns in Kampala, Uganda; Monrovia, Liberia; Accra, Ghana; Sidney, Australia; Port of Spain, Trinidad; Warsaw, Poland; and many other places. Walter W. Fordham held evangelistic campaigns in Uganda, East Africa; Kigali, Rwanda, Central Africa; Port-au-Prince, Haiti; and in Barbados, West Indies. Charles D. Brooks conducted evangelistic meetings in Montego Bay, Jamaica,

and on the island of St. Kitts. He baptized more than 460 people in the two crusades. He also conducted a three-week campaign in Port of Spain, Trinidad, in connection with the Breath of Life telecast, baptizing another three hundred. Other foreign preaching missions have included Japan, Bermuda, and South Africa.

Associated with these evangelists in overseas service at different times were Marshall Kelly, James Edgecombe, William C. Scales, Jr., and Elbert W. Shepherd. Samuel Jackson served as music teacher and his wife as college nurse for West Indies College in Jamaica until illness forced their return to the United States. The Jacksons left their homeland again after two years for a term of service with Middle East College in Beirut. Donald Crowder went as a stewardship secretary to the West Indies Union in 1974. George Rainey conducted a follow-up evangelistic campaign in Port of Spain, Trinidad, after Earl Cleveland's effort in 1966. Rainey's effort in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1980 resulted in more than one thousand baptisms. Alfonzo and Estelle Greene, of Detroit, Michigan, were on the faculty of the West Indies College, in Mandeville, Jamaica. Dolly Alexander is a missionary teacher in Ethiopia, having also served in Rwanda. The Irwin Dulans have served as teachers in the same school. After C. Dunbar Henri had served twenty-three years overseas, the Adventist Church elected him to serve as a General Conference vice-president.

The millions of dollars needed annually to keep the mission program going is provided by members in churches all over the world. Notable among money-raising achievements by laymen are records of two members in the South Atlantic Conference who have had outstanding success in the annual Ingathering drive for missions. Daisy Jackson, of Charlotte, North Carolina, raised \$40,356.40 in ten years, or an average of more than \$4,000 a year. Rosa Holmes of Savannah, Georgia, raised \$55,309.87 in five years, or an average of more than \$11,000 a year.²⁵

In 1938 Anna Knight visited her old friend, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, surgeon and pioneer in physical therapy and nutrition, at

his Miami health center, which he called Battle Creek South. As we have noted, Dr. Kellogg had befriended Anna Knight in the early days and made it possible for her to go out as a missionary to India in 1901. He had done much to help black children and young people in his lifetime. He and his wife had no children of their own, but they provided funds for the education of many who came under their influence, virtually rearing forty boys and girls and adopting many of them.

Kellogg, described by Richard Schwarz in his book *John Harvey Kellogg, M.D.*, as one having an "enlightened attitude on racial questions," would "allow no color line at the Battle Creek Sanitarium or in any of the schools associated with it." Dr. Schwarz goes on to point out that some employees in this far northern climate had attempted to introduce segregation of blacks at the institution but that Dr. Kellogg was unalterably opposed to the idea.

"When some of the sanitarium workers once petitioned the institution's directors to establish segregated seating in the employee dining room, Kellogg emphatically declared that if it were done he would resign as medical director."²⁶

The illustrious doctor had been prominent in his support of James Edson White, whose educational, evangelistic, and medical program with the *Morning Star* boat had gripped the hearts of Adventists everywhere. No doubt his encouragement made possible the establishment through the Southern Missionary Society of such a large number of church schools throughout the South. He is said to have contributed to the orphanage for black children maintained by Mrs. A. S. Steele, of Chattanooga. When the Haskell Home was established, Kellogg arranged for more than thirty children from Mrs. Steele's institution to be transferred to the Haskell orphanage in Battle Creek.²⁷ It had been reported that Mrs. Steele was quite lacking in kindness toward the children under her care. Prior to this, Kellogg had taken seven of the older girls from Mrs. Steele's orphanage into his own home with the idea of teaching them certain medical

knowledge, elements of nutrition, simple water treatments, and the like, that they might go back and teach wherever they could find a hearing in the black community.²⁸

Anna Knight's visit to the aging Kellogg was on a Sabbath afternoon. She had been concerned about his spiritual welfare, he who by now was more than 90 and had been outside the church for many years. His greeting was cordial.

"Anna, do you know what I've been doing today?" he said to her.

"No, Dr. Kellogg, I don't."

"I've been reading this book, *The Desire of Ages*." And he held up the richly bound copy for her to see. Although the noted doctor had parted company with the Adventists, he had kept on reading their books.

Then he took Anna Knight into a back room, showed her his vast library, and spoke with feeling about the value of the books to him. Among the volumes were dozens of Ellen G. White titles. The great philanthropist who had sent Anna Knight as the first black missionary to India, who had championed the cause of minorities in the denomination, had obviously turned his steps back toward the church he once loved and served.

NOTES

- ¹ Reid Trulson, "The Black Missionaries," *His*, June, 1977.
- ² *Ibid.*
- ³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴ Anna Knight, *Mississippi Girl*, p. 89.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 90.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 95, 96.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 97.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 134-136.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 159.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 168.
- ¹¹ Obituary notice in *Review and Herald*, Washington, D.C., Dec. 4, 1924.
- ¹² *SDA Encyclopedia*, pp. 178, 836.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶ *SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 836.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ Obituary, Thomas H. Branch, *Review and Herald*, May 22, 1913.

²¹ Obituary, Thomas M. Branch, *op. cit.*, Dec. 4, 1924.

²² *Review and Herald*, Oct. 3, 1907.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *The Regional Voice*, September, 1980.

²⁶ Richard W. Schwarz, *John Harvey Kellogg, M.D.* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Pub. Assn., 1970), p. 172.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

Never to Become Disheartened

The eyes of black Adventists are lifted to the hills. They ride the crest of lofty optimism about the future. They are represented in the highest decision-making councils within the church. Their children have prepared themselves in denominational schools, and many have gone out as missionaries to the ends of the earth. Because of civil rights victories of the 1960s they have a new personal dignity, and their talents are now recognized beyond inner-city districts. This emerging group of educated young people may well be the most important factor in establishing new beachheads for the Lord and in cementing amicable relations between American Christians and the disadvantaged peoples in remote territories of the world.

The signs of the times have made the black man hopeful, more than at any period in history. This is not to say he isn't distressed by periods of high unemployment and recession. But, a depressed economy notwithstanding, Urban League surveys show that banks, insurance companies, utilities, and big corporations are today appointing Negroes to their executive boards and are hiring many others for occupations hitherto occupied exclusively by whites. Retail

merchandising outfits have added black young people to their sales forces, and small establishments are using them as receptionists, typists, bookkeepers, accountants, secretaries, switchboard operators, and clerks. This integration in the marketplace has been accompanied by equal pay and dramatic upgrading.

A whole generation of black children has grown up in improved economic circumstances. The familiar rags and hand-me-downs; the scuffed, unlaced shoes; the improvised hats—these and many other stereotypes are no longer associated only with poor blacks. The flagrant gaps between the races in dress, health, social attitudes, and economic opportunities are beginning to narrow, especially now as the blue-jeans look reaches all the way to the top of the social ladder.

Those who are familiar with Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* will recall the picture he draws in his opening chapters, of the world as it was in the second century of the Christian era. He describes its peace, its order, its prosperity, its happiness, its contentment, and he asserts that never before and never since has the human race reached a similar height of satisfaction and happiness. Gibbon's judgment may perhaps be challenged, but the picture that he draws of that period speaks for itself. It is precisely the picture many would like to see drawn of this time by a historian of the future. The people of our time would like to be described in the personal, political, social, and economic relationships and opportunities and satisfactions as Gibbon described that period so long gone by. But turning from the contemplation and interpretation of history, the black man opens his eyes to that which is going on round about him, and he sees a world of appalling perplexity, of infinite problems, compassed about with doubt and difficulty of every sort and kind.

Two lines of Matthew Arnold seem to describe with succinct and compact language precisely the situation in which this generation finds itself:

"Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born."¹

One world is dead, the world that has been building since the days of Charlemagne and that historians declare went to its death on the battlefields of World War II. Ten million human beings were slain, including 6 million Jews—annihilated in gas chambers or by other systematic killing methods; 20 million more human beings were wounded, captured, or lost. The world savings for two hundred years were consumed and destroyed in that great combat, and the world's productive capacity for another hundred years was burdened with war indebtedness incurred in an endeavor to meet the costs of the tragic struggle.

That world of limited technology is gone forever; it can never be brought back. It is our lot to be living in the atomic age, which is much more far-reaching, much wider in scope, and more powerful in tendency than the revolution that first shook France, and then Europe, from 1789 to 1794. Said to be comparable only to the fall of the Roman Empire itself, that revolution, here forceful, military, and tragic, there more orderly and quiet and argumentative, represents the birth pangs of the new world that is as yet "powerless to be born."

Although civil rights legislation in America has had a positive effect on the conduct of the nation's affairs, we are not yet in God's new world, certainly we cannot hope to improve men and women and give them good hearts merely by passing new legislation. The country never had as many laws as it has today. The President of the United States writes executive orders, and the various government agencies issue regulations that have the force of laws. Congress continuously makes enactments, but no one seriously maintains that people in the land are better because of this stream of statutes.

Nor will education permanently improve a people. The striving for degrees and status has been especially marked among middle-class blacks who seek to escape a frustrated existence, but the goal itself, without some moral emphasis and responsibility, raises serious questions. A warden at a U.S. penitentiary, for example, reports that his convicts are of high mentality. Behind bars are

enough teachers to man a full faculty for a large college—from university presidents to professors and doctors of philosophy.

In only one way can the world be set aright: by the return of Christ to redeem those who put their trust in Him. Then will commence the new world of genuine hope and promise. Then, with Jesus Lord of all, will life's intricate and knotty problems be completely solved.

The first time God intervened in the affairs of this world He sent a deluge of waters. The second time He sent His Son as a ransom for the sins of man. And now as He is about to begin the ultimate rescue operation, He purposes to send His Son again.

Certainly, as William Still of the Underground Railroad movement declared, Christ *must* come. The world needs Him. In no other is there help. Mankind has tried and failed time after time. One who is greater than any man must save the world from the distress and chaos and sorrow toward which it is inevitably moving.

The one supreme goal of the Adventist movement is to carry the gospel of Jesus to every nation under heaven. If the church must persistently guard against one danger above another, it is the tendency to be sidetracked from that purpose. There is also the possibility that other issues will confuse aims and consume time and attention that should be devoted to the church's primary task. Among black members will always be the need to decide how much time they can conscientiously take from their allotted days to devote to bitter encounters over racial injustice or strife about who should occupy the highest church offices.

Dr. Harry V. Richardson, president emeritus of Atlanta's Interdenominational Theological Center, in his book *Dark Salvation* has traced the impact of Methodism on the black man's life and religion through slavery and Reconstruction and into the 1970s. He has written substantially about the struggles of white as well as black leaders to establish a religious undergirding, a stability of faith in the homes and environments of slaves and their descendants. He has dealt with the establishment of black churches and conferences.

Since the Seventh-day Adventist organization was originally patterned after the Methodist system, and since today its conferences retain certain similarities, it would be enlightening to examine the strengths and weaknesses of Methodism, especially in its relationship to a black constituency.

It is observed, first off, that Methodists, as the name would suggest, follow a unique system and order in their worship services and in their handling of church business. This discipline is adhered to in the large United Methodist Church; but, as Dr. Richardson points out, in the case of some black Methodist bodies the compliance and policy and ethics and church laws seem to be greatly diminished.

"In the development of the black Methodist bodies," he says, "one of the most unique features is the nature of the episcopacy or bishopric. While the black bodies are patterned very closely after the whites, this office in the black churches has acquired an authority, an autonomy, and a dominance far in excess of that office in white churches."²

He gives several reasons for this, among them being a lack of education and experience in organizational management. This unfortunately was the case when the churches first began to function. Among their constituents, moreover, education was indeed rare in the North and forbidden by law in the South. Added to this was another grave stumbling block. Declares Richardson: "In general, before emancipation any kind of organized activity among blacks was suspected, socially disapproved, and legally forbidden."³ This meant that a disproportionate amount of time "had to be devoted to interpretation, correction, and instruction which would not have been the case had the people been able to read."⁴

As a denominational entity, Methodism is comparatively simple, but the organization of the church is complex and detailed. And herein, according to Richardson, was a major problem. "The necessary dependence upon the leadership for guidance and interpretation in this complicated system gave the leader an

importance and authority which he otherwise might not have had. At the same time, the complexity of the Methodist system and the ignorance and inexperience of the people was an opportunity for irregularities of many kinds."⁵

Most objectionable, Richardson reported, was the behavior of some successful candidates after they had attained the high office. Bishops elected for life "proceeded to rule with autocratic methods and to institute programs for their personal benefit as well as for the church's."

Unfortunately, familiarity with the most solemn message in any communion often takes away its edge and blunts its impressions. John Wesley once declared that it wasn't the second generation of Methodism that he feared so much as it was the third generation. Conceivably, there may be among the present worldwide Adventist following those whose vision of God's perfect world has already grown dim. And, whereas some in more favored circumstances (such as in the United States) have lost faith and given up their allegiance to Christ, hundreds of others from beyond these shores have joyfully and enthusiastically taken their places. Many of these eleventh-hour converts have been depressed by what they saw in the conduct of apathetic members within the waiting church. They have gasped at pretended adherents here and there who dressed like the world and who seemed to have little interest in spiritual achievements. They have been shocked by those borderline Adventists who render music in the local church that closely resembles a nightclub performance—Christian words set to the rhythm and beat of tavern syncopation they supposedly left behind.

This is not to say that the gospel is cramped; certainly it overflows to people who have prayed for it—and yearned for it. The uniqueness of the doctrine is appreciated all the more. The kingdom of Christ, as a kingdom of constraint and reserve, set up in the hearts of His followers, controls the opinions. Those who are part of the kingdom are obliged to believe and obey all the truths of the Bible. It controls

the will, for God makes it criminal to choose the evil and refuse the good. It controls the beliefs, for the subjects of this kingdom are called upon to trust in the Lord and in Him only for salvation. It controls the affections, for the Bible declares, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God will all thy heart" (Matt. 22:37).

But true members of God's fold must yield to the control of the Holy Spirit, and there is infinite mercy in such control. Without it their opinions will be tossed consistently to and fro by every wind of doctrine. There is mercy in God's rule being exercised over the will, for those who profess to serve Him will otherwise be helpless amid sordid and wicked pressures. Because the carnal man has forsaken God, the whole world stands in need of the gospel; the gospel is the only remedy for men and women who one day discover that they are hopelessly lost.

As the last days of Jerusalem were calamitous days, times of great tribulation, violence, and war, so will it be at the end of the world. As Jerusalem's day of judgment came through a seemingly natural development, so it will be in the coming great day of the Lord. It will have much less of the supernatural than most people imagine. As the last days of the old Jerusalem economy abounded in falsehood and deception and ecclesiastical strife, the same will occur again. The zealots in the days of that city's troubles would by no means believe what was before them or what wickedness they were enacting in the name of truth. They relied on what they considered their covenant privileges. So it will be at the end.

As the gospel has survived the revolutions of nearly six thousand years, so it will survive whatever may come in the future. "My words shall not pass away," said Jesus. The great task before the Adventist Church, of bringing the light of the glory of God to every heart, must be accomplished, and the efforts of its members must not be relaxed until this is attained. Whatever changes may occur in the church or in the world, the teaching of the gospel will stand fast.

If the man who observes this church from outside sees no

Christian graces in those who are inside, if congregations are quarrelsome and self-complacent, then no amount of preaching can counteract the harm that is done. The presupposition of effective evangelism, and the first step toward achieving it, is a truly harmonious and dedicated church.

In an approach to the black minority in America, Adventists must consider the frame of mind of the people to whom they speak. The task of the evangelist in one sense is always the same; it is to preach the gospel, which does not change. But in another sense this assignment is different in every generation and to every people, because in order to preach with power to the changing minds of men, the servants of God must find afresh the points of most effective contact.

Until World War II not many blacks found it possible to pursue a college degree, and the system of education was disproportionately literary. As a consequence, there was urgent need to adjust to the new prominence of scientific studies. As usually happens, the reaction has gone too far. The result is a generation that has its standards of belief provided by laboratory tests. It now finds itself at sea among the imponderable factors that make up the greater part of human relationships and of spiritual faith. Many say they cannot believe what cannot be proved. Obviously this is not true. They do in fact believe a great deal that they cannot prove—concerning the trustworthiness of their friends, for example. They enter upon the consideration of any novel problem with minds well trained in the handling of all that can be weighed or measured, but undisciplined and often insensitive with respect to all that is not susceptible to that treatment. This frame of mind undermines the sense of responsibility and leads to a view of all moral subjects as diseases to be cured—if at all—by the application of external remedies such as the change of material conditions. Usually there is no reference to adjustments that may require a personal about-face in one's life.

In the bitter, brutal days of forced segregation within the country,

human affairs were wrong-side up. Adventists spoke of a time when right would be restored and when truth and justice would triumph. They were obviously undermining the outwardly magnificent but inwardly vile twentieth-century idols. These ambassadors of the cross, in their emphasis on Sabbath observance, were helping to make labor a blessing instead of a curse; in their insistence on purity of life, were giving to marriage a sacred relation instead of a licensed lust; in pointing to a pure religion they were guaranteeing a promise of pardon and peace instead of fear and terror. Even today this is the dominant chord of Adventist preaching, the central theme of their witness to the world.

The problems of race and caste that have plagued the church since Reconstruction have been faced realistically in the sixties and seventies, and leaders, along with members, have pondered again the counsels left by Ellen G. White:

“When the Holy Spirit is poured out, there will be a triumph of humanity over prejudice in seeking the salvation of the souls of human beings. God will control minds. Human hearts will love as Christ loved. And the color line will be regarded by many very differently from the way in which it is now regarded.”⁷

“The black man’s name is written in the book of life beside the white man’s. All are one in Christ. Birth, station, nationality, or color cannot elevate or degrade men.”⁸

“They are journeying to the same heaven, and will be seated at the same table to eat bread in the kingdom of God.”⁹

“God cares no less for the souls of the African race that may be won to serve Him than He cared for Israel.”¹⁰

The most hopeful statement Ellen White makes about race relations in the church is this counsel written around 1895 and addressed to the church:

“Walls of separation have been built up between the whites and the blacks. These walls of prejudice will tumble down of themselves, as did the walls of Jericho, when Christians obey the Word of God,

which enjoins on them supreme love to their Maker and impartial love to their neighbors."¹¹

The immense struggle over class and race, over the dominion of the world, will soon be over. Then the church militant will become the church triumphant. The everlasting gospel, reaching into Mississippi with James Edson White, into Florida with George E. Peters, into Georgia with John G. Thomas, into Texas with Walter W. Fordham, and into California with Peter G. Rodgers, will then have completed its mission of saving man and returning him to his long-lost home. The insurrection of Satan will have completely collapsed; he and his revolting hordes will be no more. God's eternal purpose will have been carried out. The Bible, which begins with Christ as the Creator of all things, ends with Him as the Finisher and Consummation. He is the Alpha and Omega, "the beginning and the ending," of the Scriptures.

No other planet in the vast universe of God has witnessed such terrifying ordeals as has this little world of tragedy and destiny. Here in this "lesson book of the universe" will be fought out and decided what principles shall forever rule in the government of all the worlds. Only the "nations of the saved" can pass through the pearly gates and walk the golden streets of the New Jerusalem. For them the command will be given to the angelic gatekeepers, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in" (Isa. 26:2).

For all who are deprived, dispossessed, frustrated because of vain expectations, the coming of the Lord is the world's best hope. For "the man farthest down," as Booker T. Washington called him, God will present the greatest opportunity mankind has ever heard about. "There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body."¹²

For those who have lived in crowded tenements with no earthly prospects for something better, God's world of tomorrow will bring back all that was lost and will make up for every disappointed hope and every shattered dream. Every good and beautiful thing that was lost through sin will be brought back through Christ. "There are ever-flowing streams, clear as crystal, and beside them waving trees cast their shadows upon the paths prepared for the ransomed of the Lord. There the widespreading plains swell into hills of beauty, and the mountains of God rear their lofty summits. On those peaceful plains, beside those living streams, God's people, so long pilgrims and wanderers, shall find a home."¹³

We are troubled on every side, yet
not distressed; we are perplexed,
but not in despair;

Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast
down, but not destroyed; . . .

For our light affliction, which is
but for a moment, worketh for us a far
more exceeding and eternal weight of
glory;

While we look not at the things
which are seen, but at the things
which are not seen: for the things
which are seen are temporal; but the
things which are not seen are eternal.

—2 Corinthians 4:8-18.

NOTES

¹ Matthew Arnold, "Stanzas From the Grand Chartreuse," in Walter E. Houghton and G. Robert Stange, *Victorian Poetry and Poetics* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968), p. 477.

² See Harry V. Richardson, *Dark Salvation* (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1976).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ E. G. White, *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 209.

⁸ ———, *Instruction for Effective Christian Service* (Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1946), p. 218.

⁹ ———, *The Southern Work*, p. 14.

¹⁰ ———, *Instruction for Effective Christian Service*, *loc. cit.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

¹² ———, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1950), p. 677.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 675.

APPENDIX A

The Plain of Paradise

William E. Foy
First Vision Communicated
to the Advent Believers

On the 18th of January, 1842, I met with the people of God in Southark Street, Boston, where the Christians were engaged in solemn prayer, and my soul was made happy in the love of God. I was immediately seized as in the agonies of death, and my breath left me; and it appeared to me that I was a spirit separate from this body. I then beheld one arrayed in white raiment, whose countenance shone beyond the brightness of the stars, and a crown was upon his head which shone above the brightness of the sun.

This shining one took me by my right hand, and led me up the bank of a river; in the midst was a mount of pure water. Upon the bank, I beheld a multitude, both great and small; they were the living inhabitants of the earth. Soon all moved towards the west, walking on the water, until we reached the mount. This became the separating line between the righteous and the wicked. The righteous crossed it, passed through three changes: first, their bodies were made glorious. Second, they received pure and shining garments. Third, bright crowns were given them.

But when the wicked reached the spot where the righteous were

changed, they cried for mercy, and sank beneath the mount. The saints then passed on to a boundless plain, having the appearance like pure silver. Our guide then spake and said, "*This is the plain of Paradise.*" This heavenly host was then divided into flocks, some exceeding large in number, others but small. In the middle of each was an angel. These angels' garments were pure and white, and unto each . . . was given a crown, shining with great brightness.

Their countenances were most lovely to behold; their wings like unto flaming fire, beneath which were the saints, both small and great. . . . I then beheld as it were a great gate before me. The gate was so tall, the height thereof I was unable to see. Before the gate stood a tall and mighty angel clothed in raiment pure and white; his eyes were like flaming fire, and he wore a crown upon his head, which lighted up this boundless plain. The angel raised his right hand, and laid hold upon the gate, and opened it; and as it rolled upon its glittering hinges, he cried with a loud voice, to the heavenly host, "You'r[e] all welcome!" Then the guardian angels, in the midst of the saints, struck a song of triumph, and the saints, both small and great, sang with loud voices, and passed within the gate; and the guardian angels arose upon their glittering wings, and vanished from my sight. The inside of the gate appeared like glittering diamonds. Beneath our feet was as the appearance of pure glass. I then beheld countless millions of shining ones, coming with cards in their hands. These shining ones became our guides. The cards they bore shone above the brightness of the sun, and they placed them in our hands; but the names of them, I could not read. These guides took us by the right hand, and led us to a boundless place. Then I lifted mine eyes and looked above, no clouds, or skies, appeared; but there, countless millions of bright angels, whose wings were like unto pure gold; and they sang with loud voices, while their wings cried, "Holy! Holy!" I then beheld an innumerable multitude, arrayed in white raiment, with cards upon their breasts; and unto each was given a crown of brightness. The guide spake, saying, "These are they which have

passed through death."

There was arrayed before me in the spirit an innumerable multitude, which had not passed through death; their crowns were like the brightness of the stars; and in their right hands they held cards. I then saw an individual which had passed through death. Her brightness was beyond the expression of mortals, and at her right side stood a guardian angel; the angel's raiment was like pure gold, and his wings like flaming fire, and as she passed me, she cried with a lovely voice, "I am going to the gate to meet my friends." An angel then appeared flying through the midst of this boundless place, and came to the spirit of one of those which had not passed through death, and cried with a loud voice, saying, "This is my Mother." He then became her guide. I then beheld in the midst of this boundless place a high mountain like unto pure silver. It appeared perfectly round, and although I was unable to see through it, yet my vision extended around it. Around this mountain was a space in which stood no being. But after this vacant circle, [there] stood, as it appeared to be, a choir of angels, and as far as my sight could extend, throughout this boundless place, stood the countless millions of the righteous. And O! the singing no mortal can describe! It appeared to me, the angels next to the circle around about the mountain, with loud voices struck a lovely song, and then ceased. The saints next to them caught the strain, and with voices yet more loud repeated it; and thus it echoed, and reechoed, until it had been sung by all the saints, and then it ceased, and then again the angels sang.

At the right side of the mountain appeared a mighty angel, with raiment like unto burnished gold, his legs were like pillars of flaming fire, his countenance was like the lightning, and his crown gave light to this boundless place, and those that had not passed through death could not look upon his countenance. I then beheld, upon the side of this mount, letters like pure gold which said, "THE FATHER, AND THE SON." Directly under these letters stood the mighty angel, whose crown lighted up the place, and all the heavenly host

worshiped at his feet, round about the mountain. This mighty angel then raised his right hand, which appeared like a flaming sword, and all the multitude of those who had not passed through death were caught up to the top of the mountain; and there was a large book opened, and their names came up out of the book in the form of cards, which were stamped upon their foreheads.

We then stood again upon this pure sea of glass, before the mountain; and our bodies had become like transparent glass; but the being that was within the mountain, I was unable to behold. While I was gazing upon the glories before me, a great voice spake in the mountain, and the place was mightily shaken, and the countless multitudes of saints and angels bowed at the feet of the mighty angel, and worshiped him, crying with a loud voice, "*Hallelujah!*" and then every voice was hushed, and the heavenly host remained bowed before the angel in solemn silence; and naught was heard save the trembling of the place caused by the voice of him who spake in the mount.

I then beheld this lower world, wrapt as it were in rolling mountains of flame, and in this fire, I saw a countless multitude crying for *mercy*. They appeared to be the aged and those who had come to the years of understanding. Their cries came up before the mountain, while all the heavenly host were bowed in solemn stillness. The voice from the mountain spake again, and all the saints and angels arose, and with loud voices cried, "AMEN."

I then began to converse with my guide, and inquired *why there was no mercy for those whom I had seen in distress*. He answered, "*The gospel has been preached unto them, and the servants have warned them, but they would not believe; and when the great day of God's wrath comes, there will be no mercy for them.*"

I then beheld in the middle of this boundless place a tree, the body of which was like unto transparent glass, and the limbs were like transparent gold, extending all over this boundless place. On every branch of the tree were small angels standing. There was an

innumerable multitude of them, and they sang with loud voices, and such singing has not been heard this side of heaven. This tree was also clothed in light proceeding from the mighty angel. Beneath this tree standing on the sea of glass were the countless millions of the righteous, arrayed in white raiment, with crowns on their heads, and cards upon their breasts; and in the multitude I saw some that I knew while they were living upon the earth, and they were all singing with loud voices and lifting up their glittering hands [and] plucking fruit from the tree; the fruit looked like clusters of grapes in pictures of pure gold. With a lovely voice, the guide than spoke to me and said, "*Those that eat of the fruit of this tree return to earth no more.*" I raised my hand to partake of the heavenly fruit, that I might no more return to earth; but alas! I immediately found myself again in this lonely vale o' tears.—*The Christian Experience of William E. Foy*, pp. 9-15.

APPENDIX B

*Actions From the Regional
Advisory Committee in
Miami
April 7-9, 1969*

1) ORGANIZATION OF A
UNION OR UNIONS

WHEREAS, The present structure of Regional conference organizations has been blessed of God in soul-winning endeavor, and

WHEREAS, It now seems in order to suggest that the organizational idea move up one step,

VOTED, That we recommend to the General Conference that a representative committee be appointed to study the advisability of the organization of a Regional union or Regional unions in the United States.

2) FINANCIAL NEEDS OF
REGIONAL CONFERENCES

VOTED, That we request the General Conference to continue its study of the financial needs of the Regional conferences taking into consideration the possible adjustment of percentages where tithes per capita are low.

3) CHURCH MANUAL
RECOMMENDATIONS

WHEREAS, The statement in our *Church Manual*, page 26, under the heading "No Wall of Partition," represents largely quotations from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy and not a specific and current statement of the current beliefs of the church, and

WHEREAS, We need a more specific statement that will leave no doubt as to our

open door policy in all Seventh-day Adventist churches regardless of race or color, and

WHEREAS, Membership in our churches is to be, according to page 49 of the *Church Manual* on a purely spiritual basis, and

WHEREAS, The church has a right to know concerning the faith and attitude of every individual applying for church membership, and

WHEREAS, It is possible that persons might desire to join the church without knowing its stand on brotherhood and without knowing that it accepts persons regardless of their color or previous condition,

VOTED, To recommend in the section of the *Church Manual* dealing with baptismal vows that there be a statement incorporated to indicate the candidate's belief in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and that this be a part of his vow taken at the time of baptism.

We further recommend, that such a statement appear also in the *Manual for Ministers* under the chapter titled "Receiving Members Into the Church," page 54, and under the chapter titled "The Baptismal Service," page 84.

VOTED, To recommend that the statement passed at the 1968 Autumn Council on ministers counseling on the inadvisability of marriage under certain circumstances not only be placed in the *Manual for Ministers*, but also included in the *Church Manual*.

4) INNER CITY

We recommend, That in every union where there are at least 500,000 Negro Americans that the union conference and each local conference unite with the Regional conference or conferences or Regional churches in the operation of a meaningful inner-city ministry in each major city.

We recommend, That serious consideration be given by these union conferences or local conferences of North America to the appointment of a Negro minister whose full-time responsibility would be to coordinate and direct the union- or conference-wide ministry to the inner cities of the union or conference.

The director of the ministry to the inner city will work under the direction of the union or local conference committee in close cooperation with the Health and Welfare Departments.

We recommend, That the union and local conferences appoint a standing committee perhaps to be known as the Committee for Inner-City Ministry. The purpose of this committee is to give direction and to serve as a coordinator of this North American Inner-City Program.

We recommend, That the General and Union conferences consider setting aside a special amount in each year's budget for this urgent program of inner-city ministry.

We recommend, That the guidelines prepared by the department be used in the operation of the inner-city program, and that consideration be given to the setting aside of a thirteenth Sabbath offering for inner-city work.

5) CONCERNING SOCIALIZING ACROSS RACIAL LINES IN OUR COLLEGES

WHEREAS, It appears that there are certain written or unwritten codes of

conduct on our campuses which limit the association of Negro and white students, and

WHEREAS, This in effect places a stigma upon the racial minority,

We recommend, That such barriers to fellowship and association on the basis of race or color be removed and that students be permitted to choose their friends and associates.

6) WORKSHOPS ON RACE
RELATIONS

WHEREAS, It has been deemed valuable for ministers and their congregations within given communities to establish communications across cultural and racial lines, and

WHEREAS, Great appreciations and understandings can be achieved when persons get to know each other,

We recommend, That a series of workshops be conducted in 1970 which will involve ministers and workers throughout North America and we ask that the General Conference consider the experimental plan that was followed at Andrews University where several ministers lived together for several days. Also we suggest that the General Conference look at the Andrews University guidelines for conducting this meaningful program.

We further recommend, That in 1971 all of our churches be asked to participate in workshops exploring the terms and possibilities of exchange and fellowship at the grass roots.

7) ADVERTISEMENT OF
ADVENTIST BOOKS

WHEREAS, Certain well-known personalities have become pictured in the public mind as reactionary in matters of race relations, and

WHEREAS, The use of such persons in connection with our publications may give an undesirable image of the church to the public,

We recommend, That great care and caution be used in the selection of popular personalities to be featured in connection with our publications both in the pictures and articles used and in the promotional aspects.

8) CONFIRMATION OF REGIONAL
CONFERENCES

WHEREAS, Questions are being raised as to the propriety of the continuation of Regional organizations, and

WHEREAS, It is the opinion of this council that the Regional conferences and the Regional Department are not only relevant for the times, but were used of God especially for these days, and

WHEREAS, The years have proven the wisdom of Regional organizations as attested to by the phenomenal growth of the constituency and the unprecedented financial support which has come to the church through the channels of Regional organizations, and

WHEREAS, These Regional organizations have served effectively as a bridge

leading to racial understanding and brotherhood,

We recommend, That a positive statement be prepared reaffirming our support and belief in our present form of organization, and that this statement appear in the *Review and Herald*, the union papers and in the INFORMANT, thus making crystal clear to the church that the responsible leadership of the approximately 70,000 Regional constituents meeting at the Quadrennial Advisory Council of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Miami, Florida, is not divided, but is united in reaffirming the loyal support of our present constituted form of organization, namely the Regional Department and Regional conferences.

9) THE URGENT NEED OF BOOKS,
TRACTS, ETC., BY NEGRO AUTHORS

WHEREAS, There is a strong market among the Negroes of North America for literature by Negro writers presenting the message in a way that will appeal to Negro people,

We recommend, That we set before our publishing houses in North America the urgent need of more trade and subscription books by Negro writers, and

We recommend, That a series of tracts be prepared for the masses living in the inner cities.

We further recommend, That unprecedented support be given to the circulation of *Message* magazine, and that we strive to reach the middle-class Negro America as well as the masses with this excellent journal.

10) NEGRO EMPLOYMENT IN
UNION CONFERENCES

VOTED, To recommend that where there are Regional conferences or departments having 3,000 members or more, study be given to the appointment of a person from the minority constituency to one of the major departments in the union office.

11) NEGRO HISTORY WEEK IN
OUR ACADEMIES AND
CHURCH SCHOOLS

WHEREAS, Our current provision for the observance of Negro History Week includes only the Adventist colleges, and

WHEREAS, there is need for an awareness among children and young people of church families that God is no respecter of persons.

We recommend, That beginning in 1971, Negro History Week be observed also in our academies and church schools.

12) RECRUITMENT OF MORE MISSIONARIES
FROM REGIONAL DEPARTMENT

WHEREAS, The church has with profit utilized its Negro missionaries on a limited basis in Africa and other areas, and

WHEREAS, Persons thus employed have distinguished themselves and their church in their service,

We recommend, That our General Conference Committee, through its Appointees Committee, put forth renewed effort to recruit more Negro talent in its mission programs for all areas of the earth, and that persons recruiting missionaries visit Oakwood with the same regularity that they visit other campuses.

13) A HISTORY OF THE NEGRO
IN THE SDA CHURCH

WHEREAS, Much of the contribution of Negro ministers and laity within the Adventist Church is lost for the lack of a consistent record of his contributions, and

WHEREAS, Our membership generally needs to know about its past and the way it has come,

We recommend, That the General Conference give study to the establishment of a grant for the development and publication of a book dealing with the history of the work among the Negro minority.

We further recommend, That L. B. Reynolds be asked to research and write such a book.

14) GREATER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
IN OUR THREE MAJOR
PUBLISHING HOUSES

WHEREAS, The present ratio of employees in our publishing houses is considerably out of balance racially, and

WHEREAS, Young people from our institutions and churches need outlets of employment within the framework of the church,

We recommend, That present plans to recruit persons from our inner-city fellowship to work in our publishing houses be further explored and implemented.

15) REPRINTS FROM *THESE TIMES*

WHEREAS, Two articles recently published in *These Times* magazine represent a magnificent statement of the problem of the black minority in the United States, and

WHEREAS, These articles would do much to bring understanding to members of our churches,

We recommend, That the full complement of five articles from which the two *These Times* articles were selected be studied with a view toward publication in the *Review* and publication in tract form for nationwide distribution.

16) EVANGELISM

WHEREAS, We are behind schedule in our efforts to baptize 20,000 converts by the 1970 General Conference Sessions, and

WHEREAS, we are told, "When divine power is combined with human effort, and work will spread like fire" (E. G. White, in *Review and Herald*, Dec 15, 1885),

We recommend:

a. That as pastors and church elders we invite the laity to unite with us in seeking earnestly by prayer and fasting for this divine power.

b. That 1969 and 1970 be designated as a time of unprecedented personal soul-winning effort.

c. That the month of March, 1970, be designated in every church as "Every Member Involvement Month." That objectives be limited to five.

- i) Give Bible studies
- ii) Enroll friends and neighbors in correspondence Bible courses
- iii) Distribute literature
- iv) Sell our books and magazines
- v) Bring people to church

17) **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

WHEREAS, The program of Christian education is an essential part of the program of the church,

We recommend, That Christian education be included in the indoctrination of the convert and the continued teaching of the seasoned church member by the pastor and/or the evangelist.

We further recommend, That all workers will reaffirm their commitment to Christian education and that educational secretaries be elected in each church and that at regular intervals during each month time be made available to activities relating to education.

18) **BRINGING TEACHERS IN
LINE FINANCIALLY WITH THE
GENERAL CONFERENCE
WORKING POLICY**

WHEREAS, Teachers are an integral part of the organized program of this denomination, and

WHEREAS, the continued success of the work is dependent upon the spirit, morale, and security of the workers,

We recommend, That continuous effort be made to bring all qualified teachers and educational workers of the conferences in line financially with the General Conference Working Policy.

19) **INCREASED FUNDS FOR
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

WHEREAS, The cause of Christian education has reached the state that a crisis exists, and

WHEREAS, increasing demands by state and local governments leave us with no other choice but to upgrade our schools in a hurry or close them, and

WHEREAS, Christian education is a first line of evangelism in the inner cities,

We recommend, That an urgent request be made that study be given by the General Conference and union conferences to providing funds for elementary education on the same basis as other emergency relief funds are provided.

20) **RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION**

WHEREAS, There has been rapid growth of the North American Regional Department since the organization of Regional conferences, and

WHEREAS, This growth is due largely to the leadership given by the

administrators of these conferences under God and their staffs in advancing the work of soul winning in their several areas, and

WHEREAS, The spirit of unity and teamwork and Christian fellowship that these administrators have developed in their respective fields and throughout the North American Division by the General Conference leadership of this department,

We recommend, That we extend to these leaders a note of confidence and appreciation for their self-sacrificing and dynamic leadership, and pledge ourselves to their continued support and to the advancement of our message among the black people of North America.

21) GOAL TO ADD
20,000 MEMBERSHIP BY 1970

WHEREAS, The signs of Christ's coming are fulfilling with frightening rapidity, and

WHEREAS, The unique and primary responsibility of the church is the betterment of man through the preaching of the gospel,

We recommend, That this council reaffirm its faith in the gospel and its resolution to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth through every means available and that as a department we utilize every tool of every department of the church for the achievement of our net goal of 20,000 members or more added to the Regional Department by the 1970 General Conference.

22) PROMOTION OF OAKWOOD
COLLEGE

WHEREAS, We witness today at Oakwood College a strengthened and competent faculty, rapidly improving physical facilities, a continued stress on character building and spiritual and cultural excellence, and in short a new day of renaissance and quality educational opportunity, and

WHEREAS, There is witnessed a regrettable trend for Oakwood students to migrate to other colleges,

We recommend:

a. That conferences and workers put forth an earnest and continued effort to keep the unusual advantages and benefits of Oakwood College before the youth of our churches, particularly those not now in our own schools.

b. That Oakwood College together with the conferences and churches take appropriate steps to encourage students to remain at Oakwood until graduation.

23) SUPPORT OF OAKWOOD COLLEGE

WHEREAS, Oakwood College is the institution responsible for the training of the majority of ministers, Bible instructors, and teachers serving in our Regional Department,

We recommend, That as leaders of the Regional churches we acknowledge our failure to support our only black liberal arts college in a manner that bespeaks our loyalty and interest, and

We pledge our support in a meaningful way by giving positive leadership by precept and example to the Oakwood offering in 1969, and that we strive for a

minimum of one dollar per member to be included in the regular church budget.

24) ADDITION OF STEWARDSHIP
SECRETARIES

WHEREAS, The comment from the servant of the Lord with respect to stewardship is that

"All heaven is interested in the salvation of man and waiting for men to become interested in their own salvation and in that of their fellowmen. All things are ready, but the church is apparently upon the enchanted ground. When they shall arouse and lay their prayers, their wealth, and all their energies and resources at the feet of Jesus, the cause will triumph."

We recommend, That the Regional Department and the conferences give strong support and immediate consideration to the placement of stewardship secretaries to carry on the ministry of stewardship in harmony with the Department of Stewardship of the General Conference.

25) PROMOTION OF *LISTEN* MAGAZINE
AND OTHER TEMPERANCE PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, The servant of the Lord has pointed out that pledge-signing membership and the sponsoring of subscriptions to our publications is the duty and privilege of every member of the Adventist Church,

We recommend, That the instructions from the Lord be followed literally in all of our churches on the observance of "Temperance Day" and "Better Living Day."

We further recommend, That our films, posters, literature, mannikins, and specimens available in the General Conference Temperance Department be widely used in all of our churches and in evangelistic efforts, and funds to do so be derived from membership fees.

It is further recommended, That articles and feature stories of this ethnic group be submitted to the editor of *Listen*.

We also recommend, That because of unprecedented success in the Five-Day Plan to Stop Smoking, the Regional conference workers become more involved in conducting these plans.

APPENDIX C

Officers of Regional Conferences

ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE

Presidents		Secretary-Treasurers	
J. H. Wagner	1945-1953	J. L. Moran	1945-1946
W. L. Cheatham	1954-1966	F. L. Bland	1946-1948
		M. S. Banfield	1949-1960
		W. A. Thompson	1960-1966

ALLEGHENY EAST CONFERENCE

Presidents		Secretary-Treasurers	
W. A. Thompson	1967-1970	Edward Dorsey	1967-1970
Edward Dorsey	1970-1975	Carty Laurence	1970-1971
L. R. Palmer, Jr.	1975-1981		
M. C. Van Putten	1981-		
Secretaries		Treasurers	
L. R. Palmer, Jr.	1971-1975	M. C. Van Putten	1971-1978
Paul Cantrell, Jr.	1975-1978	Bennie W. Mann	1978-
M. C. Van Putten	1978-1981		
Paul Cantrell, Jr.	1981-		

ALLEGHENY WEST CONFERENCE

Presidents		Secretary-Treasurers	
W. M. Starks	1967-1968	Aaron Brogden	1967-1971
D. Simons	1968-1972	James Washington	1972-1977
H. L. Cleveland	1972-1983		
H. M. Wright	1983-		
Secretaries		Treasurers	
K. S. Smallwood	1978-1982	William McDonald	1978-1982
W. J. Lewis	1982-	J. J. Mack	1982-

CENTRAL STATES CONFERENCE

Presidents		Secretary-Treasurers	
T. M. Rowe	1947-1948	J. H. Jones	1947-1951
F. L. Bland	1948-1959	H. T. Saulters	1951-1962
W. W. Fordham	1959-1966	J. E. Meredith	1962-1973
W. S. Lee	1966-1971	J. A. Simons	1973-1980
D. L. Crowder	1971-1974	L. B. Hampton	1980-
S. D. Meyers	1974-1979		
S. Haywood Cox	1979-		

LAKE REGION CONFERENCE

Presidents		Secretary-Treasurers	
J. G. Dasent	1945-1949	F. N. Crowe	1945-1961
T. M. Fountain	1949-1951	J. H. Jones	1961-1964
H. W. Kibble	1951-1961	M. C. Van Putten	1964-1971
C. E. Bradford	1961-1970	R. C. Brown	1971 (8 mos.)
J. R. Wagner	1970-1977		
C. D. Joseph	1977-		
Secretary		Treasurers	
R. C. Brown	1971-	Mark Wright	1971-1973
		I. R. Palmer	1973-1981
		D. C. Keith	1981-

NORTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

Presidents		Secretary-Treasurers	
L. H. Bland	1945-1954	L. O. Irons	1945-1950
H. D. Singleton	1954-1962	V. L. Roberts	1950-1956
R. T. Hudson	1962-1966	F. L. Jones	1956-1964
G. R. Earle	1966-	S. H. Brooks	1964-1968
Secretaries		Treasurer	
R. H. Carter	1968-1972	S. H. Brooks	1968-
S. W. Stovall	1972-1979		
H. W. Baptiste	1979-		

SOUTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE

Presidents		Secretary-Treasurers	
H. D. Singleton	1946-1954	L. S. Follette	1946-1952, 1959-1965
J. H. Wagner	1954-1962	N. G. Simons	1952-1959
W. S. Banfield	1962-1971	F. L. Jones	1965-1971
R. L. Woodfork	1971-1980	T. W. Cantrell	1971-1972
R. B. Hairston	1980-	J. A. Simons	1980-
Secretary		Treasurers	
R. B. Hairston	1973-1980	T. W. Cantrell	1973-1976
		Robert Patterson	1976-1980

SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE

Presidents		Secretary-Treasurer	
H. R. Murphy	1946-1954	V. Lindsay	1946-1953
W. W. Fordham	1954-1958	L. E. Ford	1953-1966
F. L. Bland	1958-1962	J. A. Simons	1966-1972
C. E. Dudley	1962-	D. A. Walker	1972-1981
		F. N. Crowe	1981-

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

President		Secretary-Treasurer	
J. A. Edgecombe	1981-	Donald Walker	1981-

SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE

Presidents		Secretary-Treasurers	
W. W. Fordham	1947-1954	V. L. Roberts	1947-1950, 1962-1964
H. R. Murphy	1954-1956	A. R. Carethers	1950-1958
V. L. Roberts	1956-1969	J. E. Meredith	1958-1962
W. J. Cleveland	1969-1976	L. D. Henderson	1964-1973
W. C. Jones	1976-	M. L. Baez	1977-1982
Secretaries		Treasurers	
C. M. Bailey	1973-1976	L. D. Henderson	1973-1977
M. M. Young	1982-	Helen Turner	1982-

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