

**REGIONAL**

# voice

COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE

SUMMER 2005

## The Pioneers Remember:

C. E. Bradford  
Alice Brantley  
Frank Hale &  
Mylas Martin  
H. D. Singleton

## The Future Predicts:

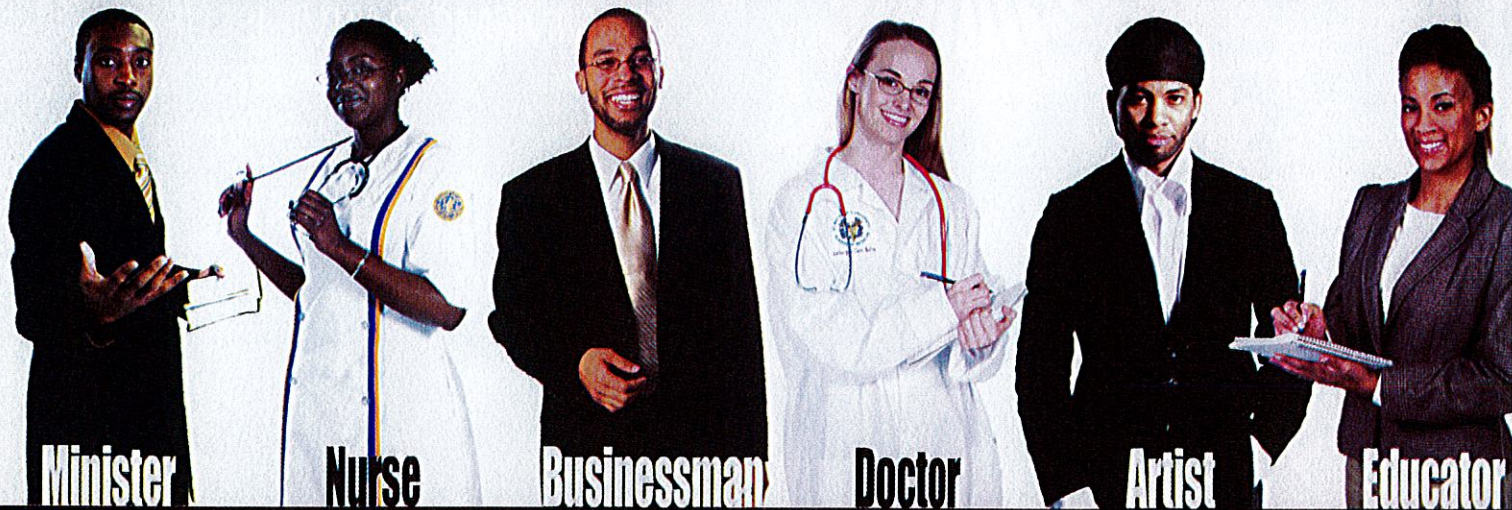
Ryan Lang  
Saschane  
Stephenson  
Young  
Professionals'  
Panel

60TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF REGIONAL CONFERENCES  
IN NORTH AMERICA

"CELEBRATING ADVENTISM IN THE  
BLACK COMMUNITY . . . UNTIL HE COMES"



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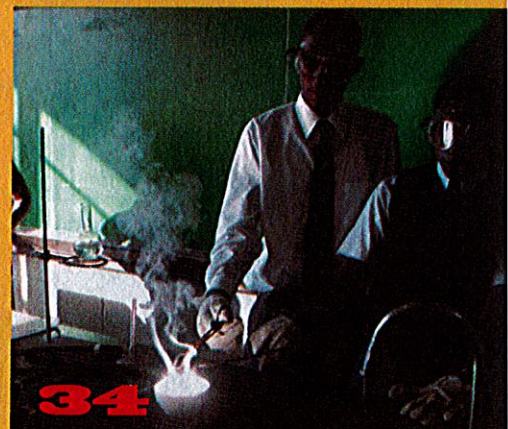
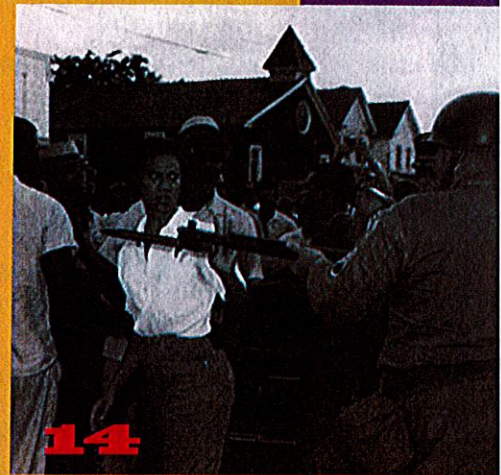


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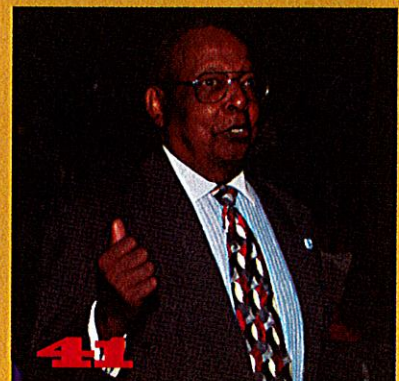
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60th Anniversary of the Regional Conferences "Celebrating  
Adventism in the Black Community . . .  
Until He Comes"

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# DEAR READERS



W

elcome from the Regional conferences of the North American Division.

This special issue of the Regional Voice commemorates the sixtieth anniversary of God's goodness to His people in the Black Regional constituency of the Seventh-day Adventist

Church in North America. Our theme is: *"Celebrating Adventism in the Black Community . . . Until He Comes."*

Beginning with the Lake Region Conference (which began operating January 1, 1945), Regional conferences have demonstrated in these three generations our unique commitment to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. For these 60 years, our conferences have been privileged to carry the Sabbath truth and the third angel's message of Revelation 14 to Black America. As a result, millions have heard it—and, under the power of the Holy Spirit, hundreds of thousands have accepted it as their faith and practice.

Each generation's challenges (and their approaches to them) are different; but one thing is constant: our community of believers remains committed to the doctrines and practices of our church.

This special issue invites you to consider the testimonies of both pioneers and future opinion leaders from each of our three generations. Different ages. Different voices. Yet the same interwoven message: This is God's church and we are His people, living and preaching it from every neighborhood and pulpit in which we have a presence.

So join us in this celebration of both our humble beginnings and our stellar achievements. Rejoice in the milestones we have reached:

- The baptism of hundreds of thousands of new converts through unique soul-winning strategies.
- The division of the South Atlantic and Allegheny conferences into the Allegheny East, Allegheny West, Southeastern, and South Atlantic conferences—this to accommodate the explosive growth of Black Seventh-day Adventism in North America.
- The birthing and developing—with General Conference support—of our own television outreach ministry, aptly named *"Breath of Life."*
- The growth and maturation of our own institution of higher learning, Oakwood College—with General Conference support—and of Pine Forge Academy, our only boarding academy.
- The establishing of *Message* magazine, our periodical witness to Black America.
- The launch of the pacesetting Regional Conference Retirement Plan on January 1, 2000.

These are just a few examples of how the Lord has blessed us these first 60 years!

While we celebrate what God has done for us in an environment that, on its face, appears segregated to some, we unequivocally pronounce our thankful pride in a Regional conference culture and fellowship that is open to everyone whom the Lord sends to us. After all, while Regional conferences occupy territory east of the Rocky Mountains and are composed of congregations that are predominantly Black, non-Black people are not excluded from our ranks on any level—neither in our headquarters offices nor in our congregations. In fact, our congregations and our conferences are becoming more diverse *naturally* with each passing year.

When you take a closer look at the way our church operates (if unfettered by erroneous presuppositions), you will *discover* that the Seventh-day Adventist Church, organizationally and structurally, is as integrated as any religious group on the planet. Each Regional conference is a local conference and belongs to the union conference in its geographical area, *without regard to race*. Each union conference belongs to the division of the General Conference in their part of the world. And we all are part of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We are one church, under God, indivisible, with policies and practices that proclaim liberty and justice as the only reasonable Christian expectation and privilege for all members in our fellowship.

Finally, we celebrate these 60 years affirming that "our help cometh from the Lord." Therefore, we are ever mindful of Philippians 2:13: "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

So sing and rejoice with us for the next few minutes. Then, let us all arise and do the will of the Father, who sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to save us. ▼

Joseph W. McCoy  
Editor



# PRESERVE THE CULTURE: TELL THE STORY

BY CHARLES E. BRADFORD



Charles Bradford as elder statesman in 2004, and as Oakwood student in 1946 (inset)

"I'll let you in on the sweet old truths, stories we heard from our fathers, counsel we learned at our mother's knee. We're not keeping this to ourselves, we're passing it along to the next generation" (Ps. 78:2-4, *Message Bible*).

We are an intergenerational community, and this must be preserved at any cost. We have a distinctive culture, and it must be nourished. And this must be intentional, not haphazard. It is serious business. A sick culture means a weak fellowship, plagued by all kinds of ills, including amne-

***The times developed quality leadership in quantity. These people had great capacity for hard work under tough circumstances.***

sia or identity crisis, even destructive behaviors. Culture, therefore, comes to mean what and who we are at the core, our innermost being, our real self.

How, then, can we best preserve the culture? By telling the story. One of the psalmists says: "I'll let you in on the sweet old truths, stories we heard from our fathers, counsel we learned at our mother's knee. We're not keeping this to ourselves, we're passing it along to the next generation" (Ps. 78:2-4, *Message Bible*). The culture is preserved and transmitted through stories of what God has done in our past.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, to find African-Americans in the Millerite movement. This has been well documented. Frederick Douglass, the great anti-slavery orator, was tremendously impressed by the great meteoric shower of 1833. That phenomenon, coupled with the powerful prophetic preaching of Miller and his associates, made Douglass a believer, although he never formally joined any religious body. His daughter, Rosetta Douglass Sprague, became a member of the First Seventh-day Adventist Church of Washington, D.C.

The names of several prominent African-American ministers (or "messengers," as they called them) appear in various Millerite publications: Father Bowles, John Lewis, and William



Foy. These brethren were highly esteemed for their labors. William Still, who obtained his own freedom and was later active in the "Underground Railroad," was a committed Adventist.

In 1840, William Miller wrote to his friend Joshua Himes: "I had set my heart on this, to see and to hear brothers Jones, Litch, Ward, Cole, Himes, Plumer, Millard, Arpes, Smith and others... Those colored brethren, too, at Belknap Street, with Christian hearts; Heaven I hope, has stamped them as its favorites" (Joshua V Himes, *Memoirs of William Miller*, pp. 241, 243, Moses A. Dow, Boston, 1841). African-Americans were present and accounted for in the early days of the Seventh-day Adventist Church:

- O. O. Farnsworth reports that Black people were among the charter members of the Washington, New Hampshire, church, which was organized in 1844. This is considered to be the first organized Seventh-day Adventist congregation.

- D. M. Canright baptized three African-Americans in Kentucky in 1876.

- In 1878, C. O. Taylor baptized an African-American preacher share-cropper in Houston County, just south of Macon, Georgia.

- J. N. Loughborough baptized C. M. Kinney in Reno, Nevada, in 1878. Kinney was the first African-American to be ordained to the gospel ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

- About the same time, Henry Lowe, a former Baptist minister, was baptized by Elbert Lane in Tennessee. Lowe became a pioneer Seventh-day Adventist worker among African-Americans in Tennessee.

- T. B. Buckner, a native Mississippian, became a Seventh-day Adventist in 1889 while working as an accountant in St. Louis, Missouri. Buckner returned to Mississippi as a literature evangelist and later became a pastor in Montgomery, Alabama; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Detroit, Michigan.

- In 1883, J. O. Corlis reported that there were 267 White believers and 20 African-American members in the Southern field.

- It is well-documented that Uriah Smith baptized the colorful Sojourner Truth in 1887.

This was the time of the *Morning Star* boat, built by Ellen White's adventurous son Edson, that was used of God to bring the Adventist message to the Black people of the Southern U.S.A. Two young girls, Etta Littlejohn (the author's great grandmother) and Cynthia Johnson Millet (Dr. Garland Millet's mother), were among the number who heard and followed.

The work was slowly growing. Tithes returned by Black Adventists in 1892 was \$40. By 1906, it had grown to \$5,000. In 1909, the General Conference established the Colored Department to foster the work among African-Americans. The first secretary of this new department was A. J. Haysmer, a Caucasian. W. H. Green, a Washington D.C.-lawyer-turned-Adventist-clergyman, was the first African-American appointed to the leadership of the department, in 1919. For the next ten years Green worked out of his Detroit residence. By the time F. L. Peterson was appointed, the GC officers provided office space for him at the headquarters.

As Blacks were given greater responsibilities (the union con-

ferences were encouraged to organize "Colored" departments where the membership warranted it), a large cadre of talented leaders came to the fore. They were effective advocates for their people. African-American Adventists were held together and encouraged to faithfulness by the likes of W. H. Green, F. L. Peterson, and G. E. Peters, all secretaries of the GC Colored Department, and also the union and state evangelists: J. W. Allison, J. G. Thomas, F. S. Keits, T. M. Coopwood, J. G. Dasent, M. M. Young, O. A. Troy, J. H. Wagner, W. W. Fordham, and others. These men visited the churches with indefatigable zeal and encouraged the believers to faithfulness. One must not leave out the evangelists, founders of churches, such as Sidney Scott, J. H. Laurence, and Thomas Branch, missionary to Africa.



he times developed quality leadership in quantity. These people had great capacity for hard work under tough circumstances. W. H. Green was called "Cross-Country Green" because of his extensive travels back and forth across the North American continent. These men acquired administrative skills. Above all, they were powerful expositors of the Word, who could present the doctrinal positions of Adventism with clarity and conviction and persuasion.

Some became almost household names in Black Adventism, including: B. W. Abney, R. L. Bradford, J. Campbell, A. N. Durant, W. D. Forde, T. M. Fountain, H. W. Kibble, J. H. Laurence, M. G. Nunez, F. C. Phipps, P. G. Rodgers, T. M. Rowe, and U. S. Willis.

And there was Anna Knight, the woman who preached and taught and supervised SDA education of Black youth in the Southern Union. The list is by no means complete. At the same time Oakwood College was rapidly developing into the premier educational center for African-American ministers.

The presence of African-Americans in the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been positive. The very people who "don't stick" have had extraordinary growth in membership and finance year after year. They now comprise almost 30 percent of North American Adventist membership. Contemporary African-American evangelists such as E. E. Cleveland, E. C. Ward, C. D. Brooks, and G. H. Rainey kept public evangelism alive for many years. The Black church taught us how to make "bricks without straw." African-American Adventists have developed a "survival kit." The whole church may profit by this story.

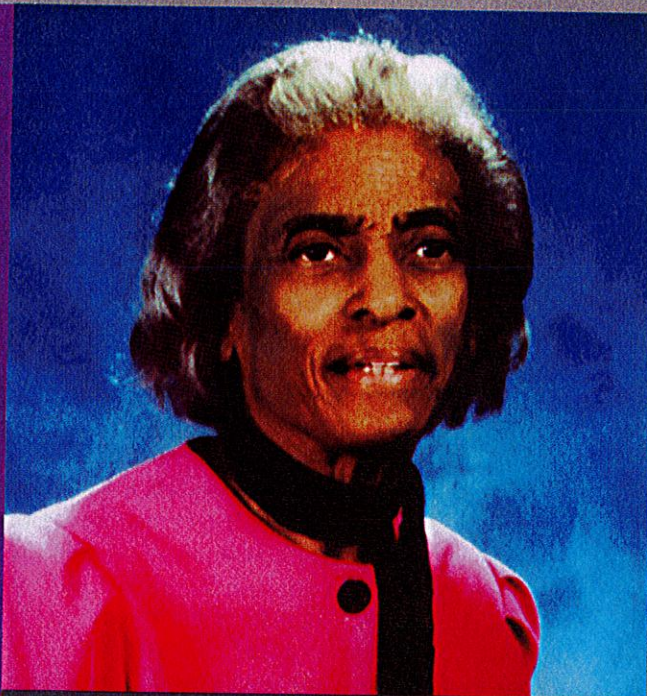
African-American Adventists make their greatest contribution to their church and the larger society when they are assured of their self-worth—affirmed by the belief system they have espoused (the message)—and come to see themselves as laborers together with God. Identification with the plans and purposes of Yahweh gives ordinary people a sense of security and maximizes their ability to serve their fellow human beings with dignity.

So tell them to our children and all who will hear! Without this story, the narrative is not complete. It must be told, because "they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:40). ▼

**Charles E. Bradford**, until his retirement, served as President of the North American Division.



# AN EYE-WITNESS REMEMBERS . . . AND LOOKS AHEAD



**BY ALICE BRANTLEY**

*Editors note: Alice Brantley, a former schoolteacher now in her ninety-first year, was present at one of the pivotal meetings in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. During the Spring Council of the church, which began April 8, 1944, in Chicago, Illinois, the White delegates present followed the recommendation of General Conference president J. L. McElhany and voted the establishment of Regional (Black) conferences.*

**I** was 31 years old in 1944 at the time of the organization of the first of the Regional conferences. I was living in Inkster, Michigan, rearing my family. I had taken the teacher's training course at Oakwood Junior College, and had completed that course several years earlier.

You might wonder how I happened to have been at the

occasion of the announcement of Regional conferences, which took place in Chicago, Illinois, at the Stevenson Hotel. At the time, my husband was doing colporteur work. The conference had said that anyone who sold \$1,000 worth of books that month would get a trip to this particular meeting. And by virtue of the fact that I was his wife, he took me along; so I was able to be in on the proceedings.

## **Who's on First?**

I would say neither Black clergy nor laypersons actually pushed the start of Regional conferences. To be exact, the meeting at the Stevenson Hotel was called by the White leaders. Most of the Black ministers and workers in North America were asked to attend. For the most part, they didn't even know why they were being invited or what this meeting was all about. So I cannot say that either laypersons or clergy were pushing the start of Regional conferences. They did not know that the Regional conferences were going to be organized when they went to that meeting in Chicago. Regional conferences were introduced by the General Conference, not the Black brethren at the time.

## **The Early Challenges**

As far as the problems of the conferences were concerned, I would think that perhaps the main problem would have been money. Because in starting the Regional conferences, locations had to be decided upon. Property purchases . . . that was perhaps the biggest thing at the beginning, after the leadership was chosen. And of course, money figured largely into that.

Before the start of the conferences, as I understand it, there was separation between (at least in some conferences) the funds which the Black churches contributed and that which the White churches contributed. So I suppose in most conferences the money was already in place, separate from the money which the White members contributed.

Some conferences, I think, did appropriate a little more than what was in the Black fund, because actually there was not a lot, I don't think, in any of these funds for the start of the conferences. Some, I think, took pity and gave a little extra money. Some may have had enough to have gotten a little start, but there was not a whole lot of money in any case. So that was one of the problems.

Another thing that had to do with challenges and difficulties faced by the Regional conferences was distance and expense. Whereas the former conferences to which they



belonged were for the most part set up as far as the states were concerned, in the case of the Regional conferences, in order to have a large enough group of people to start a conference, several states had to be involved. That meant that where ordinarily an administrator would travel only within a state, in the case of Regional conferences, the distances that had to be covered made it very difficult. The additional travel was strenuous and expensive, and so this was and always has been a problem.

Speaking of challenges, it was not really believed, I don't think, on the part of the White brethren, that these Regional conferences were going to last very long. In the first place, we had never had a Black man as president or treasurer of a conference, and they were not sure that this was going to work out. And so having to compete with the conferences that were already established, people who already had years and years of experience, was a challenge to say the least.

#### **The Regional Conference Advantage**

Well, the significant advantages were that, for one thing, it gave opportunity for our Black men to develop leadership skills or whatever else was needed, and they were able to play

## **TO MY MIND, THE ONLY REASON FOR CONFERENCES OR ORGANIZATIONS, EVEN CHURCHES OF ANY KIND, IS TO WIN SOULS TO CHRIST.**

a much greater role in the carrying-on of the work in general. Also, there were more opportunities for our young people. And so I would say, for the most part, there were challenges, even more challenges than advantages. And it was good for us to know as Black people that we could have equal opportunity with those who were not of our race.

To my mind, the only reason for conferences or organizations, even churches of any kind, is to win souls to Christ. And I think the most significant thing about the Regional conferences is what has been done. The work among Blacks has grown. I don't have the statistics that I'd like to have, but it has grown miraculously. The Lord has blessed, and whereas other conferences have had to combine in some

instances, we have no Regional conferences that have combined. On the contrary, we have Regional conferences that have had to divide because so many persons have joined the church.

#### **Regional Conferences: Then Versus Now**

Well, I think, for one thing, we're more sophisticated. Back in the days when Regional conferences were organized, many Adventists were wearing run-over shoes and dressing very modestly. Not everybody, but by all means, not as sophisticated as we are now. I don't want to say that I think we're more worldly, but I do feel that we're not as spiritual as we were.

And certainly we're better off financially. We have many well-to-do Blacks in our conferences, and this is one significant difference. Also, I feel that we have an air of independence now. We are kind of "feeling our Cheerios!" We know now that we can stand on the same turf that our White brothers can stand on, and in some instances, we can even show gains that he hasn't yet shown.

#### **Final Revelations**

Prejudice, it seems, has ever been a problem among God's people. It was the case in ancient Israel when Moses' wife Zipporah was discriminated against by his own sister, Miriam. The Jews and Greeks had problems in the early church. I sometimes sit and wonder, "Why would a people coming out of slavery and of a different race not be wholeheartedly accepted by a denomination declaring itself to be the remnant church of Christ?"

Do we still need Regional conferences today, 60 years later? Well, had the (world) church been in a position mentally to accept Blacks in the same way that the Whites are accepted, there would have been no such thing as Regional conferences. When people are truly converted color is not an issue. ▼



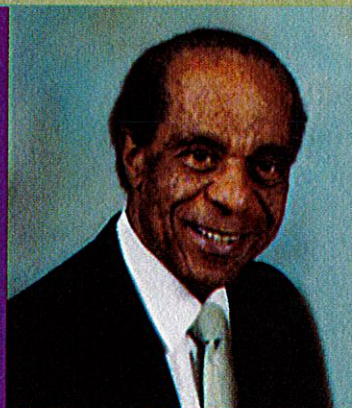
Alice and E. D. Brantley



# FREDRICK N. CROWE REGIONAL PIONEER

INTERVIEW BY STEPHEN P. RUFF

had the opportunity to visit Elder Fredrick N. Crowe, pioneer of the Regional work in the North American Division and the first treasurer of the Lake Region Conference, the first Regional



Fredrick N. Crowe

conference to be organized. His ministry spans more than 50 years and includes service as a literature evangelist, pastor/evangelist, treasurer, and internal auditor. As Elder Crowe recounts his experience, he shows his confidence that God, working miracle after miracle, has been leading all of the way.

Elder Crowe started his ministry in 1939, six years before Regional conferences came into existence.

He reminisced about the hardships of getting into ministry: "There were so few opportunities for Blacks who had trained for ministry to minister and serve. I was determined to be used by God to spread the gospel and to serve within the Seventh-day Adventist Church."

In 1939, after two years of canvassing, he received a call from the Indiana Conference. Because of a recommendation from Elder J. H. Laurence, he was called to serve as pastor/evangelist in the Marion, Richmond, Muncie, Indiana, district. Excited, and yet sometimes disheartened by the disparity of treatment of the workers of color, Elder Crowe preached his heart out, pitching a tent at every opportunity to share the good news with all who would be saved.

Elder Crowe offers his recollection of the creation of Black conferences: "Regional conferences began when Black leaders requested total integration in the church. At that time the church didn't hire any Blacks anywhere in the conference office, except in janitorial positions and the like. When the Black workers called for the church to 'do the right thing!' and integrate, Elder J. J. Nethery, president of the Lake Union Conference, suggested that we give the Blacks their own conferences. The church leadership did not want to have integration." Black conferences were only suggested with the conviction that Blacks would not be able to run them successfully and "would come crawling back."

Elder Crowe continues: "We were more determined than ever to make Regional conferences work." This newfound concept for

Black conferences would offer greater prospects for the employment of Blacks who went to school and prepared to serve the church and build up the kingdom of God. "Regional conferences, I think, are the most important thing that this denomination has ever done. I have seen much in my time that assures me that the value of Regional conferences can never be estimated in time, only in eternity."

In 1945 there was segregation at the General Conference headquarters. No Blacks were in the General Conference office except for Elder G. E. Peters, secretary of the Negro Department, and those who were employed as janitors or other such menial jobs. "Today," Elder Crowe points out, "when you go to the General Conference headquarters, it looks like the United Nations. This would not be so without Regional conferences. All of the integration within this church started with the inception of Regional conferences."

Elder Crowe was the first treasurer of the Lake Region Conference. Tithe that first month was \$11,000. The first year's tithe was \$144,000. The president's salary was \$35 per week, and the treasurer's weekly pay was \$27.50. Crowe states, "We never complained about how much money we made. It was a privilege to serve, and we were just so glad to be in the work of God."

Having served as treasurer of two conferences, Elder Crowe spearheaded the intergenerational movement, training two of the treasurers who presently serve the Regional conferences in that capacity: Phillip Palmer, in the South Central Conference, and Seth Bardu, in the Northeastern Conference. Elder Crowe values having young people in the work of the church and often invited students to come to the conference for internships in the summertime.

Thanking God for the opportunity to serve Him over the years, Elder Crowe declares: "It is only because of the wisdom and power from above that I was able to manage the finances and funds that belonged to the Lord." He is proud to be a part of the work of God within the Seventh-day Adventist Church and to be associated in the formation of the Regional conferences, which God has used in a mighty way to bless the church within the North American Division and around the world.

Elder Crowe is confident in the future: "I know that the God who has brought us this far will lead us safely home!" ▼

**Stephen P. Ruff** is *stewardship, trust services and religious liberty director for the South Central Conference.*





# PRELUDE TO A “VEGGIE” REVOLUTION: WHAT ALL TRIGGERED THE 1962 GC SESSION BLACK PROTEST?

## AFTER 43 YEARS, TWO TROUBLE-MAKERS CONFESS

**D**uring “the long, hot summer” of 1962, well-dressed but angry Black Americans hold a press conference to decry racial bias, job discrimination, and institutional segregation. The location is not the streets of Birmingham or Montgomery, Alabama, but a hotel ballroom in San Francisco, California, one of America’s most liberal cities. And the organization accused of discrimination is not the local or state government, but the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, meeting for its 1962 world-wide session.

The “troublemakers” are two Ohio laypersons: 35-year-old educator Frank Hale and 31-year-old journalist Mylas Martin. Along with partner and fellow Ohioan Burrell Scott (now deceased), they set in motion a Black “veggie revolution” that threatens to effect change in SDA leadership. Now, 43 years later, these two onetime “rabble-rousers,” co-founders of the Laymen’s Leadership Conference (LLC), look back.

**REGIONAL VOICE:** Mylas Martin, as an LLC co-founder, what was some of the history that led to this milestone event in San Francisco?

**MARTIN:** In 1943, Lucy Byard, a Black Adventist woman, died after a Washington, D.C., Adventist hospital refused to admit her as a patient. And 19 years later, in 1962, we still had discriminatory hiring of Black American professionals in Adventist health care.

Yes, think Loma Linda University. . . . Think every Adventist hospital school of nursing. Think every campus. All of them had restrictive racial quotas.

### What about Adventist education?

**HALE:** In 1940, 65 years ago, for example, Adventist boarding academies, elementary schools and colleges in the U.S. routinely practiced racial segregation. Many refused to accept any Black Americans. Yes. Columbia Union College and Southern Adventist and Southwestern Adventist universities were three higher institutions that refused to accept Blacks. But all of the others used rigid quota systems. They yearly limited the number of Black Americans enrolled.

Well, for one thing, our Adventist Black American students, even when admitted, were routinely segregated. They ate in college cafeterias at separate tables. Gaines Partridge and I and others were at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, in the 1940s. We ate at segregated tables.

### What about our men and women in the clergy?

**MARTIN:** Elder William R. Robinson was an all-city “triple threat” athlete in three sports. At age 16, he graduated from Columbus Ohio’s finest high school along with more than 500 others in his senior class. He held a 4.0 average. He was known all over Ohio for being an Adventist who would not play sports on Sabbath. A

**I was iconoclast. They reined me in. They gave me a credo. They taught me our protest first must be loyal, in order truly to be Christian. It secondly must be dignified, in order to be Seventh-day Adventist. Lastly, it must be ceaselessly insurgent, if it is to be effective.**



national academic fraternity awarded him a full, all-expenses academic scholarship. It was good at any "Big Ten" university of his choice.

Then his first taste of racism occurred. An Adventist college heard of him, spoke with him by telephone, assumed he was White. They sent a faculty member hundreds of miles to recruit him for their campus. Lo, when the recruiter "lifted up his eyes, and beheld him," he nearly fainted away, tongue-tied in stammering embarrassment. "I'm sorry! We can't take you!" said he, his face crimson.

W. R. Robinson turned down the Big Ten scholarship. He entered college elsewhere, studied for the ministry. He went on to a 50-year career as pastor, conference department leader, editor, and mission field president. At 89, he still preaches, his fervor for Christ unabated. . . .

#### **Didn't Seventh-day Adventist practices reflect that day's U.S. society?**

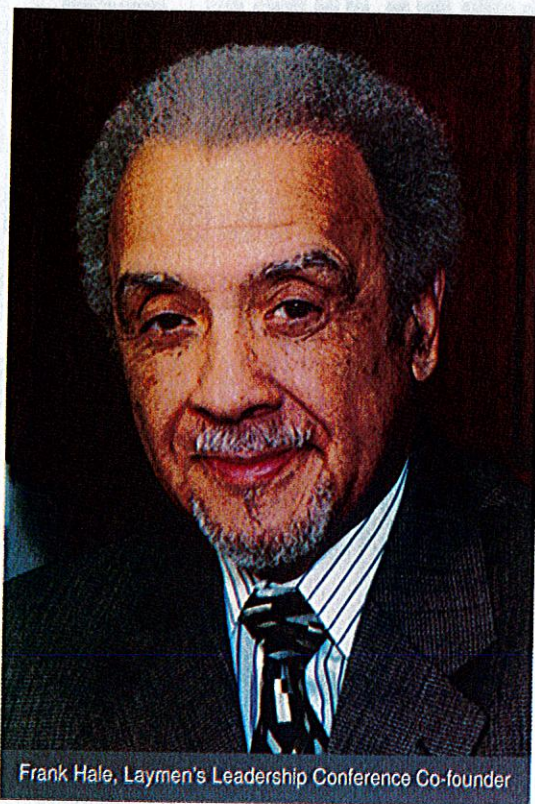
MARTIN: No. We were more racist still. Our policies, as Shakespeare's Hamlet fumed, in practice "out-herod Herod." In Washington, D.C., Black Americans could eat in public cafeterias. Not so at the cafeteria of the Review and Herald Publishing Association.

HALE: Any White could eat in there, including non-Adventists; but the church's own Black Adventists were refused as patrons.

MARTIN: Elder George E. Peters, for example, was an elected General Conference official. His wife packed his lunch every morning in a crisp, fresh, brown paper bag. He ate from it. He was not allowed to eat in the Review and Herald's cafeteria.

#### **Wow! That's some backdrop. Now, tell us about 1962, about the General Conference session in San Francisco, and the Laymen's Leadership Conference.**

HALE: All of this suddenly took on unstoppable urgency. On January 26, 1961, I sent out a letter. In it I invited other laymen to join me in forming an organization. We met at Wilberforce, Ohio, on February 26. We named our group the Laymen's Leadership Conference (LLC). LLC members pledged themselves to five major projects: (1) ending segregation and the "quota system" in Seventh-day Adventist schools; (2) ending employment bias in the Seventh-day Adventist Church organization; (3) ending the Seventh-day Adventist



Frank Hale, Laymen's Leadership Conference Co-founder

denomination's "silence" on its race problems; (4) ending segregation in every Seventh-day Adventist congregation; (5) republishing, by the church's leadership, of Ellen G. White's earliest writings on race, collected under the book title *The Southern Work*.

#### **Was there a catalyst, a specific event that brought the 1962 protest at San Francisco into existence?**

HALE: Very definitely. In fact, two things happened. First, my older daughter and the older daughter of Burrell and Bonnie Scott, in 1961, were refused admittance to Mount Vernon Academy. Both girls were aged 13.

#### **They were refused on racial grounds?**

HALE: Yes.

MARTIN: I personally went to the Mount Vernon Academy campus. I spoke with the school's principal. He assured me that his academy had no intention of admitting any "Colored students."

#### **And the next?**

HALE: It happened while I was still on the faculty at Oakwood College in the late 1950s. One day I walked past the old campus library. I casually noticed old books set out for trash collection. Something piqued my interest. I fished out a small book, clothbound. The title on its cover was *The Southern Work*.

MARTIN: Frank's discovery was providential. I've always believed that. It changed our lives. Most certainly it changed my life.

#### **What Is The Southern Work?**

HALE: *The Southern Work* is a collection of articles Ellen White wrote in the 1890s concerning Black Americans in the Deep South. The first one, which she wrote in 1891, is entitled "Our Duty to the Colored People." Ellen G. White completely repudiates racial segregation in *The Southern Work*.

MARTIN: *The Southern Work* went out of print immediately after Mrs. White died in 1915. Thereafter, only those who owned it or had seen a copy of it even knew of its existence. It was our "Charter of Freedom," no less.

HALE: LLC voted to demand that the church itself officially republish *The Southern Work*. We ourselves printed 3,000 copies. We took them with us to the 1962 GC session in San Francisco. They sold like hot cakes.



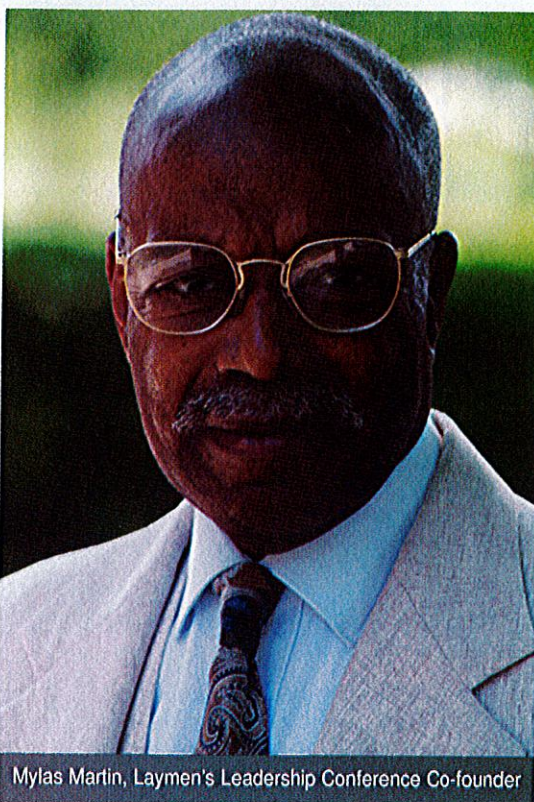
### What happened next?

HALE: We'd asked that GC president Reuben R. Figuhr meet with LLC officers in San Francisco. After seeming much inclined to do so, Elder Figuhr inexplicably instructed Elder Neal Wilson, his emissary to us, to tell me that the church's leadership would not speak with LLC. That left no option.

**O**ur contingency plan was to go public. We would go to the media, ending our church's de-cades of enveloping silence on racial issues.

HALE: On July 2, 1962, LLC's board voted to: (1) set up headquarters in San Francisco's Jack Tar Hotel; (2) conduct a protest rally on Sunday, July 29; (3) sell GC attendees our 3,000 copies of *The Southern Work*; and (4) present the media with evidence of our church's extensive race bias and discrimination, demanding that the Seventh-day Adventist Church give Negro Adventists "full citizenship."

On July 27, 1962, at San Francisco, LLC held a press conference. Attending were nearly a dozen news organizations,



Mylas Martin, Laymen's Leadership Conference Co-founder

including *The New York Times*, *Time* magazine, *Associated Press*, *United Press International*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Francisco Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, San Francisco television and radio stations, and other media outlets. The story broke the next morning and went nationwide. Wire services even took it to several countries in Europe. Nothing like this ever before had happened in our church communion. It brought the start of stunning change.

### And the result was historic!

HALE: On Sunday morning, July 29, the General Conference in session elected Elder Frank L. Peterson as a vice president, the first Black American to be elected to that post. In August through December, 1962, a number of Black Americans were appointed to positions within union conferences, at the Review and Herald

Publishing Association, and at educational and medical institutions. In 1966 the church republished the long-out-of-print *The Southern Work*.



Elder George E. Peters: Early General Conference official was denied daily access to Review & Herald cafeteria.

**I**n retrospect, do you think these widely publicized protests against long-held church positions were fully justified?

MARTIN: Of course. I was iconoclast. They reined me in. They gave me a credo. They taught me our protest first must be loyal, in order truly to be Christian. It secondly must be dignified, in order to be Seventh-day Adventist. Lastly, it must be ceaselessly insurgent, if it is to be effective. It's a tricky meld, but not an impossible one

Over the subsequent decades since 1962, we have seen the walls of discrimination and disenfranchisement crumbling. Now all SDA public spaces—academies, colleges, universities, health-care institutions, and publishing houses, for example—are integrated. Additionally, Blacks have assumed positions of union and division leadership, institutional board chairmanships, and academy principalships. Thanks to Mylas Martin and Dr. Frank Hale and their supporters, the church has been redirected into a position of ethical treatment of Black Seventh-day Adventists. Thank you, Gentlemen. ▼



# THE TURNING POINT... FOR TAMPA AND FOR ME

BY WARREN S. BANFIELD

*I have seen something under the sun: "The race is not to the swift, or the battle to the strong, nor does good come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant, or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all" (Eccl. 9:11, NIV).*

**T**his text of Scripture took on a whole new meaning when I returned home from an out-of-town meeting and found out that the Tampa Florida Black Ministerial Alliance (of which I was the associate secretary) had recommended and voted my name to become the new leader

of the local chapter of the NAACP (of which I was also a member).

This unexpected and unanticipated event changed the direction of my local ministry, as well as my destiny as a leader in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I learned from this that we never know as we begin our calling or profession what God has in store for us, when we follow His leading.

That I was full of fear is an understatement. However, my inner voice kept telling me that this was no time to be afraid to stand up for a just cause in which I wholeheartedly believed. So despite my fears and apprehensions—and without telling my conference president, Elder John H. Wagner, or my wife, Gerri—I accepted the offer. Before the news broke, however, I did tell my wife and my conference



Banfield led civil rights marches in Tampa, Florida in the mid-1950's, like those in Alabama (above) . . .



president what I had done. They both assured me of their full support. That was all I needed.

Mark Twain once said, "One never ceases to make a hero of one's self when the opportunity presents itself." This I will try to avoid. However, these were very heroic times.

In 1954, 25-year-old Martin Luther King, Jr., became pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. One year later, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery city bus to a White person, igniting the year-long and successful Montgomery Bus Boycott. On Tuesday, November 13, 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the decision of



... and Cambridge, Maryland (above)

a three-judge district court in declaring Alabama's state and local laws requiring segregation on buses unconstitutional.

It was in the spring of 1957, when Arkansas Governor Orval E. Faubus was attempting to block nine Black high school students—led by a young courageous Black Seventh-day Adventist student by the name of Terrence Roberts—from integrating the all-White Little Rock Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, that I became the president of the NAACP in the city of Tampa, Florida. The aftermath was a shock wave throughout the North American Division, including my own union, the Southern Union; my own conference, the South Atlantic Conference; and my own church, the Mt. Calvary Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In Tampa, Florida, in 1957, all parks, libraries, schools, beaches, theaters, eating places, and railroad and bus terminals were completely segregated. Separate Colored and White drinking fountains and restrooms were the norm, and clothing stores had a no try-on policy for Black customers. It was in this context that the Montgomery, Alabama, boycott became a catalyst for change in the city of Tampa.

By the end of 1958, after a year of sit-ins, wade-ins, boycotts, and a lawsuit against the city of Tampa to open up a park that was off limits to Blacks (which the city lost)—despite threats and without loss of life or damage to

any property—segregation of public facilities in Tampa became null and void.

During this period of time, many of the older members at Mt. Calvary were fearful, and some opposed what I was doing. The young adults were split—some were apprehensive and some applauded. Many of the youth were eager to join the action.

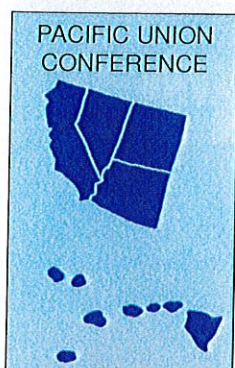
**I**n the end, both locally and across the North American Division, most seemed pleased with the outcome of our effort and were glad it was over. To this day, some feel that it was the wrong thing for me to do, but most of those who advised me not to accept the presidency of the NAACP later complimented me for my courage.

My supportive church, Mt. Calvary, asked that wonderful question: "What hath God wrought?" Then as now, I can only say, "To God be the Glory!" ▼



**Warren S. Banfield**, before his retirement, served as the Human Relations Secretary for the North American Division.





# A HISTORY OF THE REGIONAL WORK IN THE PACIFIC UNION

**T**he Seventh-day Adventist Church had a humble but significant start. A small group of pioneer believers assembled here and there in several Northeastern cities. America was ready to hear and respond to the three angels message—the infant church had to organize and develop the infrastructure and ministerial force to spread the “good news” to an expanding frontier.

Contrary to popular belief, Black Adventist believers have been a part of this work from the very start and have shared with enthusiasm the message that God destined to reach the world. Pioneer O. O. Farnsworth wrote to state that people of African descent were members of the very first church organized, in Washington, New Hampshire. The young church was, however, slow to fellowship and utilize the talents of Black believers.

## The First Black Seventh-day Adventist Convert

It was not until the Adventist movement found its way into the West, around 1859, that African-American came into focus. The first documented Black convert baptized was Charles M. Kinney. Born a slave in 1855, Kinney attended a tent evangelistic meeting held in Reno, Nevada. J. N. Loughborough was the speaker, and God gave him 20 new members and a new church. Kinney was elected clerk of the first church

in Reno. Later he attended Healdsburg College, where he finished the two-year ministerial training course.

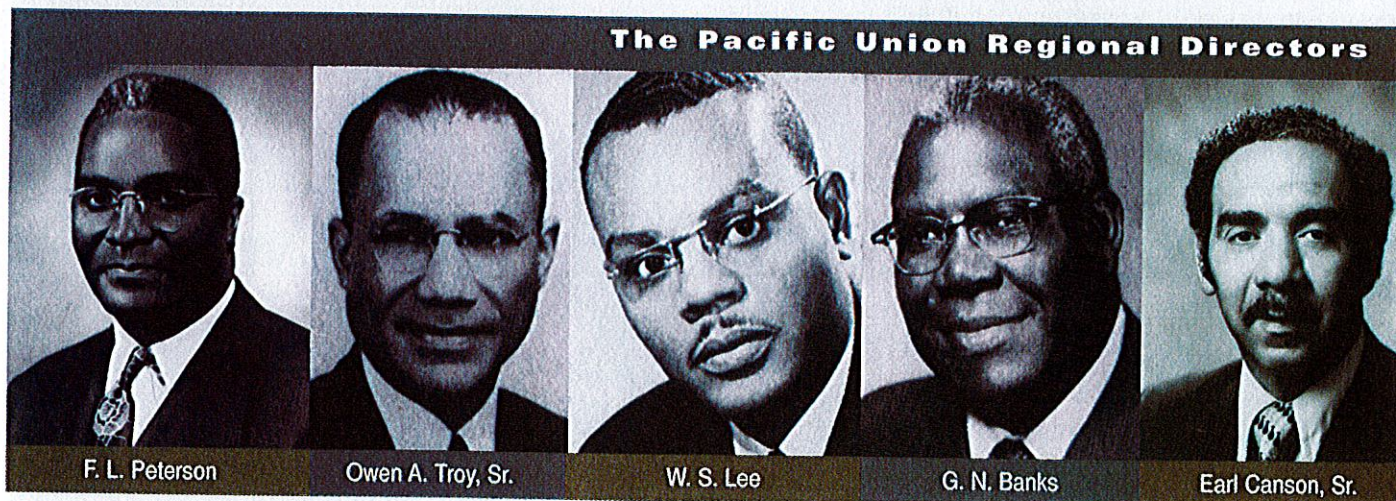
Kinney became a successful pastor and was the first Black ordained minister in the church. During his long life of 96 years, he filled many pastorates and often felt the sting of racism in the church. He was one of the first voices to call for Black conferences, and lived to see their organization and explosive growth.

The very first Black church organized on the West Coast was in Berkeley, California, in 1906. Jennie L. Ireland, a young Caucasian graduate of Battle Creek Sanitarium, joined the members in the Los Angeles area. Theodore and Estella Troy, with their young son, moved from Memphis, Tennessee, to Los Angeles. Jennie Ireland joined the Troys in giving Bible studies.

God worked in a marvelous manner to get His work done. From this humble start, 28 new converts were baptized, and the Furlong Track Seventh-day Adventist Church was organized in Los Angeles. The church grew rapidly to 100 members and later was renamed the University SDA Church, the mother church of the southern California Black work.

## The Western Schools: Trained for Service

The Black membership grew and new churches were added throughout the 1920s. Education was provided for the new Black church members' children at the Glendale School





and San Fernando Valley Academy, Healdsburg College (later, Pacific Union College), and College of Medical Evangelists (later, Loma Linda University). John King was the first Black to graduate from Loma Linda, in 1911. Frank L. Peterson was the first Black to finish Pacific Union College, as a pastor in 1916. Dr. Ruth Temple was the first female and the first Black to finish Loma Linda as a medical doctor, in 1918. Dr. Temple was also one of the first females to finish a degree in medicine in the state of California.

The Seymore Webb family moved to Watts, in Los Angeles, and started a new church. The Webb family gave the West two outstanding preachers: William and Adolphus. William pastored in California. Adolphus ministered in the East and was pastor of the Ephesus, New York City, church at one time.

**L**ater Sydney Scott, a powerful evangelist, was sent to Blythe, California. Among his first converts were members of the Dennis Black family. The son, Dennis Black, finished La Sierra University and became a powerful preacher and church builder. His sister, Evelyn, was the mother of Earl Canson. A successful pastor, builder and director of the Regional work for Pacific Union for 15 years.

Owen A. Troy, Sr., and G. J. Millet graduated from Pacific Union College in the early 1920s. Millet, an educator, later served as president of Oakwood College and as associate director of the General Conference Department of Education. Troy was the first pastor of the Market Street church in 1924. Troy and G. E. Johnson held a crusade in San Francisco in 1930, and a new church was organized. Troy and Johnson moved on to San Bernardino in 1931. A successful tent meeting there led to the establishment of the Sixteenth Street church. Later a new church was started in Riverside, now called the Kansas Avenue church.

The year 1942 was an important year for the Regional work in the West—the Pacific Union chose Frank L. Peterson as the first Regional Department leader. There were 1,500 Black members in the Pacific Union that year. This move in leadership came three years before the first Black conference was organized.

PUC graduates Harold Lindsey, Wendell Nelson, and Norman McCloud, joined the Pacific Union ministerial team in the early 1940s. Nelson was a successful evangelist and opened new churches in northern California. Lindsey was a powerful preacher and church builder in the Los



Charles M. Kinney, 1st Black SDA Ordained Minister

Angeles area. Mc-Cloud restored the San Francisco church and built up the membership.

A new team of Black pastors finished Pacific Union College in 1946: Major C. White, Earl Canson, Eric C. Ward, Warren Banfield, and Owen A. Troy, Jr. White, Canson, and Troy remained to labor in California. Ward and Banfield joined the newly organized South Atlantic Conference.



Major White, 1st black secretary, Pacific Union

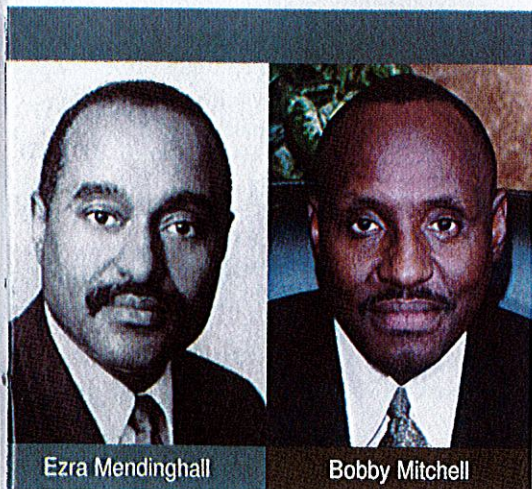
### The First Regional Affairs Directors

Major White was called as the first Black secretary of the Pacific Union, serving 21 years. Earl Canson was elected union Regional affairs director. He served for 15 years. George Rainey and Byron Spears came later in the 1980s to add thousands of new converts from evangelistic meetings held in all sections of the Pacific Union Conference territory.

Owen A. Troy, Sr., followed F. L. Peterson as Regional affairs director. W. S. Lee followed as director, serving later as president of the Central States Conference. G. N. Banks and Earl Canson served, respectively, followed by Ezra Mendinghall.

Today Bobby Mitchell serves as Regional Affairs director. When the department was organized, in 1942, there were 1,500 members in 20 churches. At the close of 2004, the membership had reached 28,000 members. Tithe was more than \$8 million.

Certainly, thanks to a dedicated and committed constituency, the "Western family" has kept pace with the Regional work back east. To God be the glory for the great things He has accomplished in the "Golden West." ▼



Ezra Mendinghall

Bobby Mitchell



# THREE BROTHERS FROM CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE

BY FRANK L. JONES

**T**he Adventist Church celebrates its faithful families. Chattanooga, Tennessee, produced William, Earl, and Harold Cleveland, brothers in God's service. God has used these three mightily to reach sin-sick souls.

## William James Cleveland, the First Son

William was the first son of William Clifford and Eunice Pettigrew Cleveland. His father was converted to the Sabbath after finding a discarded Adventist tract. A World War I veteran, Father Cleveland was threatened with being shot if he did-

**Thousands  
have been  
baptized by  
this trio**

n't work on Sabbath, which he refused to do.

Young William grew into a strong and athletic young man. When William graduated from high school, he marched into his father's room and announced that he was going to the state college so he could play football. Father Cleveland had a different idea. "You are going to Oakwood College," he said. William repeated his

decision: "His father answered, "You are going to Oakwood, or you go nowhere!"

The decision to attend Oakwood was pivotal in William's life. Though he might have been a bit rebellious at first, sometime during his first year William and his roommate knelt on

the grass of that great campus and dedicated themselves to the Lord. In addition to ministerial training from Elder C. E. Moseley, William received one other great blessing at Oakwood. He met Rita Thompson, an elementary education major from Washington, D.C., who became his life's companion. Their union lasted 51 years until his death and was blessed with five children.

After pastoring several churches in the South Central Conference territory, William moved his family to Seattle, Washington, where he served seven years as the first pastor of the newly organized Black SDA church. He was ordained while a pastor in the Washington Conference. In 1952, Cleveland relocated to the Southwest Region Conference, where he pastored in Dallas, Austin, and San Antonio, Texas, and Baton Rouge and New Orleans, Louisiana.

In 1970, Cleveland was elected Southwest Region Conference president and served two terms. In 1976,



Left to right: Harold L., William J. and E. E. Cleveland; earlier days (inset)



Elder Cleveland moved to Birmingham, Alabama in the South Central Conference, where he pastored the Ephesus church, and later the South Park church, organized after a city-wide crusade by Elder E. E. Cleveland. He and Rita made their home in Birmingham until his death in 1991. Rita survived her husband by 12 years.

### **Edward Earl Cleveland, the Second Son**

Father Cleveland was determined that these three sons learn early to prepare for a God-planned service. Earl also attended Oakwood College, where he met God anew and studied under Spirit-filled teachers. It was at Oakwood where he met the true love of his life, Celia Marie Abney. Celia was a talented pianist, Bible instructor, choir leader, and homemaker. In the early 1940s, Earl started as a ministerial intern in the Carolina Conference. The evangelism explosion started for the Clevelands after the South Atlantic Conference opened for business in 1945.

**I**n 1954 Earl, now the the Southern Union evangelist was assigned to Montgomery, Alabama where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, the Civil Rights explosion was just ahead. The Montgomery evangelistic meeting netted nearly 500 new members and a new church.

That same year Earl was called to the General Conference as associate ministerial secretary. A worldwide service started for Elder Cleveland. Over 1,200 ministers worldwide were trained. He preached on six continents, adding thousands of new converts by God's mighty power. Nearly every one of his large crusades during these years resulted in a new congregation. One of the greatest campaigns of his ministry was held in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. The union and local conferences joined to provide 63 workers, and God gave over 1,000 new converts to start a brand-new church, which today is one of the largest Adventist congregations in the world.

A life in evangelism has given Elder Cleveland the opportunity to become an innovator in the art of soul-winning. His sequencing of sermons and phased introduction of what we term "the testing doctrines" is still in use today, along with the gift Bible program, the daily quiz (invaluable in obtaining names and addresses), the often humorous question-and-answer period, and other features. Many wonderful musicians offered their talents in this work over the years. Two who deserve special mention were the late Elder Charles L. Brooks and Elder T. Marshall Kelly. These men took time from their jobs and joined Elder Cleveland often almost wherever he pitched a tent. Mrs. Celia Cleveland led an army of wonderful Bible workers.

The next phase of Elder Cleveland's ministry led him to Oakwood College, where he taught his evangelistic art for 26 years. He has received over 100 awards, honors, and citations over the years. Andrews University bestowed on him an honorary Doctor of Laws degree. In 1993, he was inducted into the Martin Luther King Board of Preachers and Collegium of Schol-

ars at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia.

God has truly blessed Elder Earl Cleveland's 60-plus years of service. He is now 84 years old and "retired," though still preaching nearly every Sabbath. His ready mind and pen have turned out a dozen books to challenge us to greater service for God. Mrs. Celia Cleveland passed to her rest two years ago after 60 years of marriage. She was renowned as one of this church's greatest Bible workers and musicians and as Elder Cleveland's faithful and loving partner. She helped make possible his ministry to thousands of God's children around the world.

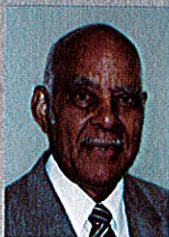
### **Harold Lovell Cleveland, the Third Son**

Harold, third son of William and Eunice Cleveland, followed his brothers, William and Earl, to Oakwood College to study for the ministry. Harold's future took a distinctive upward turn when he met Elizabeth Carter. They fell in love and were married June 2, 1951. In 2002, they celebrated their "golden anniversary." A native of Bridgeport, Connecticut, Elizabeth Carter attended Oakwood College to study to be a teacher. Following her graduation and marriage, she began her career as an educator, serving in this capacity for 35 years. A partner with her husband in the pastoral ministry, Mrs. Cleveland served as Bible worker for their numerous evangelistic campaigns.

Ordained in 1956, Elder Cleveland served pastorates in the South Atlantic Conference and the Allegheny West Conference. He held 33 evangelistic meetings, baptizing over 5,000 from Savannah to Atlanta to Cleveland. As a pastor, Elder H. L. Cleveland built two major church buildings and renovated more than 16.

In 1967, he accepted a call to the Cleveland Glenville church, following which he was elected president of the Allegheny West Conference. During his more than 12 years as president, the conference gained significantly in membership, churches, and infrastructure. Churches were purchased or constructed in Ashtabula, Cincinnati, Columbus, Dublin, Toledo, and Akron, Ohio; Kimball, West Virginia; and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Elder Cleveland also served as mentor to numerous young people, many of whom serve in prominent church leadership positions today.

In 1971, he was recognized by the Union Theological Seminary with the awarding of an Honorary Doctor of Divinity degree. In 1996, he was inducted into the Martin Luther King Board of Preachers and Collegium of Scholars at Morehouse College. Now retired, Harold and Elizabeth Cleveland are thankful to God for their four grown children, Sharon, Michele, Harold, Jr., and Denise, their grandchildren, and the opportunity to serve their church. ▼



**Frank L. Jones** is Director of the Office for Regional Conference Ministry.



# THE REGIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL

BY ROBERT L. LISTER

**D**ivine providence birthed Adventism. Nineteenth-century American Christians, of various denominations, studied the Daniel and Revelation prophecies. Out of their study arose a movement of destiny—a vehicle for the proclamation of the Sabbath doctrine and the imminent, literal second advent of Jesus Christ. These Second-Advent believers, or “Adventists,” followers of William Miller, passionately urged a return to the Bible for all Christian beliefs and doctrines.

Their convictions led to a break from the nominal denominations of the day. Following the Great Disappointment, a group of Advent believers returned to the Bible, discovering the seventh-day Sabbath along the way. These “Adventists” progressed rapidly into churches, state conferences, unions, and divisions. Later, a General Conference organization fostered the new denomination’s worldwide work.

Simultaneously, Adventism began to attract our African-American foreparents in large numbers, many newly freed from the scourge of slavery. To better foster the work among African-Americans in this country, a daring and innovative step was taken by the young church—Regional conferences were voted into existence. These conferences were instantly successful; the explosive growth of the Black constituency of the Seventh-day Adventist Church over the past 60 years has been nothing short of breathtaking.

- On September 26, 1944, the Lake Region Conference was inaugurated as the first Regional conference.

- From 1944-1947, the Northeastern, Allegheny,

South Atlantic, South Central, and Southwest Region conferences, and the Central States Mission, quickly followed,

- In 1967, the Allegheny divided to become the Allegheny East and Allegheny West conferences.

- In 1981, the South Atlantic split and became the South Atlantic and Southeastern conferences.

The early Regional conference presidents were either “state men” (pastors who oversaw the Black churches in a state conference; they reported to the White conference administrators) or pastors of certain “flagship churches.” Experience in evangelism, successful local church administration, or promotion of the church’s growth statewide equipped these men for leadership. However, Regional conferences themselves became

training grounds for future leaders as experience was gained through participation in office assignments. Leadership training is today being made available for our people by our people.

Constituents ask, “Is there is a trend or a pecking order for a person to be chosen as president once they become a part of the office staff?” In the earlier years, yes. In reviewing the last four presidents elected to each of the nine Regional conferences:

- Ten presidents had served as executive secretaries just before their elections

- Six had served as pastors

- Four union officers elected had all come from the secretariat area

- Three had served as stewardship directors

- Three had served as treasurers

- Three had served as youth directors

- Two had served as educators

- One has served in each of the following categories:

Regional Conference Presidents (As of 1st Quarter 2005)



Charles L. Cheatham  
Allegheny East



James L. Lewis  
Allegheny West



G. Alexander Bryant  
Central States



Norman K. Miles  
Lake Region



Trevor H.C. Baker  
Northeastern



Vanard J. Mendinghall  
South Atlantic



Benjamin P. Browne  
South Central



Willie L. Taylor  
Southeastern



Billy E. Wright  
Southwest Region



conference vice president, personal ministries/community services director, editor, president of another conference, and GC associate youth director

- Most of these leaders had served in various other conference positions.

- Four of the youth directors had moved to executive secretary and then on to the position of president.

In analyzing the last four administrations of Regional conference presidents:

- The last three elected included only one pastor, and he came from the last conference that was organized.

- Four administrations ago, five of the six presidents were pastors. Clearly the trend is to choose our presidents from conference administration and department leaders. However, leaders who gain experi-

ence through congregations and/or conference office leadership have to depend on the same Holy Spirit for success.

We are steadily marching toward Zion, the city of God. Who would have believed in 1945 that we have grown from:

- The original seven presidents to approximately 270 employees working in nine Regional conference headquarters

- \$17,000 to \$145 million in annual tithes

- 17,000 original members in the charter Regional membership to approximately 280,000 of the 1 million NAD members and nearly 15 million in the world church.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord. "Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a (good) future" (Jer. 29:11, NIV). ▼

## REGIONAL PRESIDENTS AND WEST COAST REPRESENTATIVES

Note: This list of Regional conference presidents and West Coast representatives shows in parentheses the offices they held immediately prior to their presidencies.

### **Allegheny Conference (Organized 1945; Reorganized 1966)**

John Wagner (pastor/state man), William L. Cheatham (pastor), W. A. Thompson (executive secretary/treasurer)

### **Allegheny East Conference (Organized 1966)**

W. A. Thompson, (president), Edward Dorsey (executive secretary/treasurer), Luther Palmer, Jr. (executive secretary), Meade C. Van Putten (executive secretary), Alvin Kibble (vice president/ministerial), Charles L. Cheatham (executive secretary)

### **Allegheny West Conference (Organized 1966)**

Walter Starks (pastor), Donald B. Simons (communications/personal ministries), Harold L. Cleveland (pastor), Henry Wright (educator), Willie Lewis (stewardship director), Hector Mouzon, interim (executive secretary), James L. Lewis (treasurer)

### **Central States Conference (Organized 1947)**

Thomas Rowe (state man), Frank Bland (executive secretary), W. W. Fordham (president), W. S. Lee, Sr. (Regional affairs director), D. L. Crowder (pastor), Samuel D. Meyers (pastor), Sherman H. Cox (youth director), J. Paul Monk (editor), J. Alfred Johnson (personal ministries/community services), Phyllis Ware, interim (executive secretary/treasurer), G. Alexander Bryant (youth director)

### **Lake Region Conference (Organized 1944)**

J. Gershon Dasent (pastor/state man), T. M. Fountain (pastor), H. W. Kibble (pastor), C. E. Bradford (pastor), Jessie R. Wagner (pastor), Charles D. Joseph (pastor), Luther Palmer, Jr. (union executive secretary), Richard C. Brown (executive secretary), Norman K. Miles (educator)

### **Northeastern Conference (Organized 1945)**

Louis H. Bland (pastor), H. D. Singleton (president), R. T. Hudson (pastor), G. R. Earle (pastor), L. G. Newton (stewardship), Stennett Brooks (treasurer), Don King (union executive secretary), Trevor H.C. Baker (executive secretary)

### **North Pacific Union Conference (Appointed First Representative in 1978)**

Edward White, Wayne Shepherd, Roscoe Howard, Alphonso McCarthy

### **Pacific Union Conference (Appointed First Representative in 1942)**

F. L. Peterson, O. A. Troy, W. S. Lee, G. N. Banks, E. Canson, E. Mendinghall, B. Mitchell

### **South Atlantic Conference (Organized 1946; Reorganized 1981)**

H. D. Singleton (pastor/state man), John H. Wagner (president), Warren S. Banfield (pastor), Robert L. Woodfork (pastor), Ralph B. Hairston (executive secretary), R. Peay (union associate executive secretary), Vanard J. Mendinghall (youth director)

### **South Central Conference (Organized 1946)**

Herman R. Murphy (pastor/state man), Walter W. Fordham (pastor), Frank L. Bland (president), C. E. Dudley (treasurer), Joseph W. McCoy (executive secretary), Benjamin P. Browne (union mission president)

### **Southeastern Conference (Organized 1981)**

James Edgecombe (pastor), James Doggette (pastor), R. R. Brown (executive secretary), Willie L. Taylor (executive secretary)

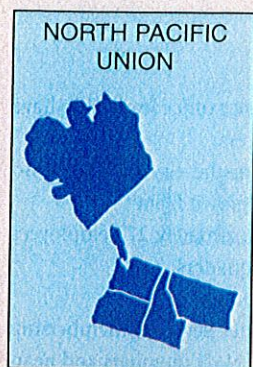
### **Southwest Region Conference (Organized 1946)**

W. W. Fordham (evangelist), H. R. Murphy (president), V. L. Roberts (treasurer), W. J. Cleveland (pastor), William C. Jones (pastor), Richard E. Barron (General Conference associate youth director), Robert L. Lister (stewardship), Billy E. Wright (executive secretary)



**Robert L. Lister** is Assistant to the President for Church Growth, South Central Conference.





# REGIONAL WORK IN THE NORTH PACIFIC UNION

**I**n the population upheavals during the years following the turn of the century, African-Americans appear to have been slow to discover the beautiful north Pacific region of the United States. Blacks migrated west in large numbers from the east, south, and southwest, seeking a better life and increased economic opportunities, but most of them settled in California. The African-American population of the Pacific Northwest grew slowly, and thus the Black work in the Pacific Union Conference got a head start.

However, as Blacks migrated north and began to settle in such cities as Portland, Oregon, and Seattle and Spokane, Washington, Regional missions and churches begin to spring up in the North Pacific Union Conference area. Calls to the organized Regional conferences provided experienced workers to evangelize the Northwest. J. H. Laurence conducted numerous evangelistic series (in his inimical style) in those early years, adding hundreds of new converts and establishing scores of churches. W. J. Cleveland was called from the South Central area to pastor the newly established Black congregation in Seattle, giving years of dedicated service.

By 1974, the SDA work among Blacks in the Northwest had grown to the point at which an administrative unit was needed. Edward White was chosen to serve as the first Regional affairs director for the North Pacific Union. A well-organized and dynamic leader, Elder White was a pace-setter in bringing in evangelists to direct large evangelistic meetings to add new converts. In addition, pastors in the territory were trained to be more effective evangelists.

The North Pacific Union Regional Affairs Department today oversees churches in the Alaska, Oregon, Idaho, Upper Columbia, Montana, and Washington conferences. Land-wise, the North Pacific Union territory is one of the largest in the North American Division. Thus the Regional affairs director has a huge territory to

cover, and providing workers for small churches scattered over such vast distances is very expensive. In spite of all the difficulties, the Black work has more than tripled the membership in the past 29 years.

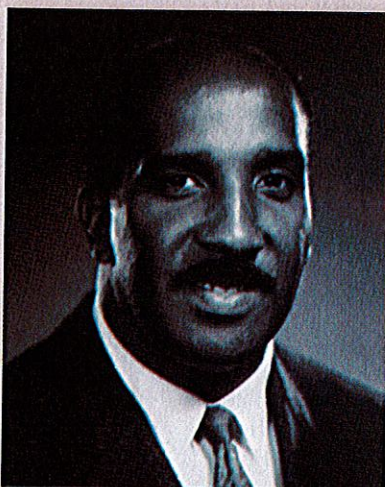
E. Wayne Shepperd, formerly a departmental leader in the Southwest Region Conference, followed Edward White as Regional affairs director. His years of leadership gave the North Pacific Regional work a great lift in all facets of church life. The youth found a true friend in Elder Shepperd, and an inspiration to seek higher heights of educational attainments

to better serve the church. Roscoe Howard was the next Regional affairs director. He had spent his whole career in the North Pacific in pastoral and departmental leadership. He brought youth, enthusiasm and solid leadership to the office. His leadership years were great growth years for the North Pacific Union Regional work.

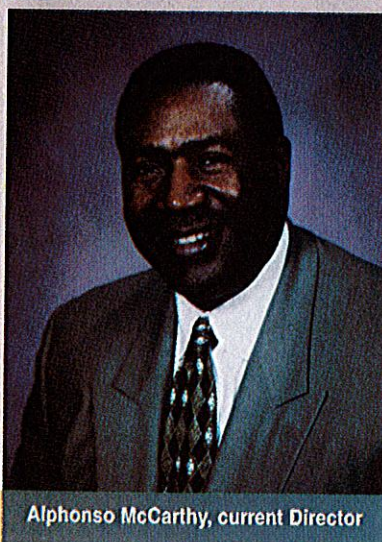
Alphonso McCarthy, who is the current Regional affairs director, followed Elder Howard. Elder McCarthy served as a pastor-evangelist for many years. McCarthy has made the Regional Convocation a great camp meeting experience for Black families in the Northwest.

From a very small start in 1976, the Black work in the North Pacific Union Regional Affairs Department has grown steadily. When Edward White helped to organize the Regional Affairs Office, just over 700 members were scattered throughout the union. In 1985, the membership had grown to 1,166 members returning \$437,797 in tithe. By the close of 2004, the membership had reached more than 3,000, almost tripling in 20 years. The tithe in 2004 reached \$1,392,154. Baptisms reached high marks when men such as George Rainey, from the Pacific Union, conducted large successful evangelistic meetings in the area.

Behold, what God has wrought through 15 pastors in 11 churches and a willing group of laypersons committed to build up God's work in the Northwest. ▼



Edward White, 1st Regional Director



Alphonso McCarthy, current Director



# GAINES PARTRIDGE: A LIFE IN ADVENTIST ACADEMIA

BY LESLIE N. POLLARD

**I** was born in 1923, in Omaha, Nebraska. My parents moved from Alabama to Omaha, where there was less segregation. There were two White SDA churches and one Black SDA church named "Omaha Third." I was partially responsible for changing the name to be "Sharon SDA Church."

After graduating from high school in 1940, I attended Oakwood Junior College because I wanted the experiences of a predominantly black school. I then attended Union College, a full four-year college, majoring in psychology and education.

Returning to Omaha, I taught at our church school—all seven or eight grades in the basement! The church raised some of my salary, whatever it could collect for that month, giving me what they could. I was at home with my parents, so that helped. For young people today that's almost inconceivable.

I continued my education. I just piece-mealed my advanced degrees—when I could . . . a course here, and there. And eventually I earned a doctorate at the University of Nebraska.

For nearly twenty years, I was chair of the Department of Psychology at Oakwood College. I worked as assistant to Presidents Peterson, Millet, Pinkney and Hale. I was sort of a disciplinarian, yet with empathy and understanding. That's why Elder Peterson selected me to teach in the Education Department, as well serve as dean of students.

## "Go West, Young Man . . ."

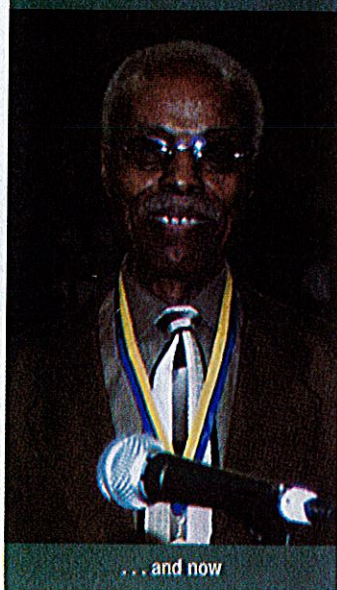
The Union College president had been looking to hire a Black person. When he became Loma Linda University president, he continued his search. I was lucky, I guess. I didn't even apply, but he knew me and remembered me as a student. Around 1970, Loma Linda University hired me as dean of students, with the special task of encouraging Blacks to come. I became the first African-American administrator and dean, of a White Adventist institution in North America.

I felt like I was wearing three hats. In addition to my regular work, I was on practically every major committee of the university. I was definitely overworked.

We didn't yet have many African-American students, but I



Dr. Gaines Partridge at Oakwood: Then . . .



... and now

recruited as many of them as I could, I was not blocked by the presidents. Academically, any student who I felt could make it in this environment, I wanted to give them the opportunity. Whites may not have given them that opportunity.

## "I Had a Dream . . ."

During my 23 years at Loma Linda University, I was able to participate in some major campus improvements. The university at the time had a little old gym, pathetically inadequate for students at an institution of that size. This was a health institution, and they didn't have a decent gymnasium. I offered my conviction that a representative facility was needed.

Under Dr. Lynn Behrens' administration, the university officials were finally convinced. The state-of-the-art Drayson Center, started with a dream—my dream.

The famous Good Samaritan sculpture is another story.

That statue was what Whites at the time considered "subversive art"—a Black good Samaritan caring for a White man who has fallen . . . and the White men are walking away. One's a minister and one's an academic. Their attitude? "I know that I should look after you, but I can't really touch you."

And then here is a Black man, with an Afro, bent over taking care of a White man. (After it was up about six months, someone came and cut the head of the Black man off and it was never found. Collins redid it—with a smaller Afro!) The university president let

that happen, and they haven't taken it down yet. This controversial sculpture has in the intervening years become an inspirational message of caring that crosses racial, cultural, and gender barriers.



## The Final Exam Question

What would I like people to say long after I've gone? That I was a fair Christian man, that whatever I did, I did it in the spirit of Jesus Christ. I love my people. ▼

**Leslie N. Pollard, M.B.A., D. Min.,** is vice president for diversity at Loma Linda University.



# OFFICE FOR REGIONAL CONFERENCE MINISTRY IN NORTH AMERICA: "THE BLACK SDA "UNITED NATIONS" AT A GLANCE

**S**everal articles in this sixtieth anniversary commemorative edition have already chronicled the history, pioneers, milestones, and bright future of the North American Division's Regional conferences and its West Coast "Regional" successes.

Here, the Office for Regional Conference Ministry (ORCM), the "hub" of the African-American ministries in North America, will both capture and capsule God's successful and unique outreach. Once again:

- 1944: The General Conference and the Lake Union vote to create a new conference for Blacks.

- 1945: The Allegheny, Lake Region, Northeastern, South Atlantic, and South Central conferences opened for business. These new conferences were the plan of White leadership rather than to integrate Blacks into leadership positions in already established conferences. There were about 20,000 Black SDAs scattered across the nation at that time.

- 1946: Pine Forge Institute (Academy in 1965) began with about 90 students, to be a "Black Northern school as a necessary compliment to Oakwood College, which so valiantly served the south."

- Oakwood Junior College was the training school that soon achieved accreditation as a full four-year college (1958). Pastors, business leaders, teachers, and secretaries were preparing to join the new conferences.

- 1946: Southwest Region Mission (later Conference) began.

- 1947: Central States Conference commenced.

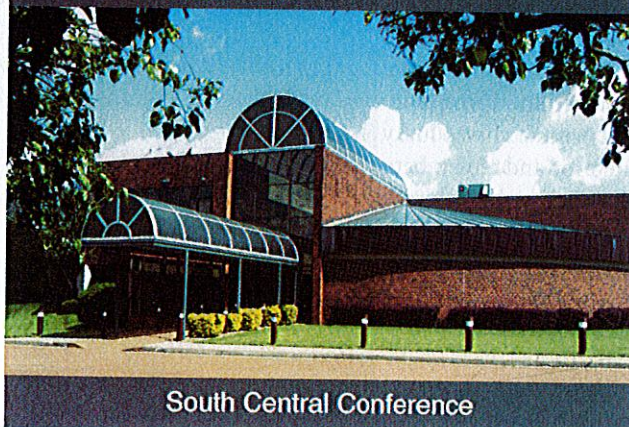
- The Pacific Union had a large number of black members, but they chose to remain



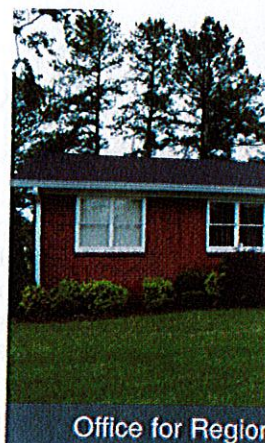
Allegheny East Conference



Lake Region Conference



South Central Conference



Office for Regional



Allegheny V



Northeaste



Southeaste





Conference Ministry



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in the local conferences already operating.

- New schools were opened, camp meetings became a great gathering and nurturing service, stewardship was promoted with vigor, and new churches were added.

- 1967: The Allegheny Conference subdivided and became the Allegheny East and Allegheny West conferences.

- 1970: The North American Division approved a "Regional Conference Presidents' Council," which annually convenes the officers for planning and promotional

sessions to spark growth and solidarity; later the Regional Conference Officers' Council and the Black Caucus were established.

- 1981: the South Atlantic Conference divided to create the Southeastern Conference.

- 1985: 40 years later, the now-nine Regional conferences had amassed 158,125 members, with 18,887 members in the Pacific and North Pacific unions.

- 1996: with Regional conference membership and tithes at 230,067 and \$92 million, respectively, ORCM began to direct and coordinate these Regional conferences' growing ministries.

- The Regional conferences (and the Pacific and North Pacific union Regional offices) annually fund ORCM, to operate and support all programs chosen by the group, namely:

1. *Breath of Life* TV ministry
2. Oakwood College's annual United Negro College Fund Banquet
3. Loma Linda University's Black Alumni Ball
4. BAYDA (Black Adventist Youth Directors Association) National Youth Congresses

5. Laypersons' congresses
6. Deaf Ministry
7. Pathfinder Camporees

ORCM's website ([www.RegionalMinistry.org](http://www.RegionalMinistry.org)), for example, displays the conference's yearly calendar of events.

- 2000: The Regional Conference Retirement Plan and the Healthcare Plan became operational.

- February 23, 2005: ORCM received "NAD Church Status," and is now recognized as an official church entity, and is to be listed in the *General Conference Yearbook*.

As 2004 began, the nine Regional conferences had:

- 271,671 members in 1,031 churches
- 1,728 workers employed in its conferences, churches and institutions
- 7,450 students in 103 church schools and eight academies
- \$3 million+ in literature evangelism sales
- 9,150 baptisms
- Tithe receipts totaling \$142,168,855, or \$518 per capita. In other words, no other division, save the North American Division, returned more tithe than the Regional conferences! ▼



Central States Conference



South Atlantic Conference

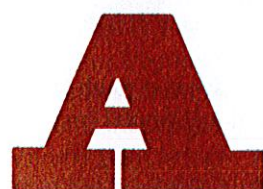


Southwest Region Conference



# HAROLD D. SINGLETON: REFLECTIONS FROM A "STATE MAN"

INTERVIEW BY CARLOS MEDLEY



fter graduating in 1928 from Oakwood Junior College—then a 14-grade school—I pastored two years in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in the old Cumberland Conference. The Cleveland and Rowe families were in that congregation. Jesse Rowe was a dynamic singer whose brother, Thomas, pastored New York City's Ephesus Church. Bill, Earl, and Harold Cleveland all became preachers; Harold was born during my pastorate and was named after me.

Another Chattanooga church member at the time, Anna Knight, who had previously served as a missionary in India and later supervised the Black elementary schools in the Southern Union, paid for my education at Union College (1931-1933) and later introduced me to my wife.

## Barnstorming Across the South

Next I pastored in Ocala, Florida, and later built several churches in Daytona, New Smyrna, Belle Glade, and Fort Lauderdale for the Florida Conference. The Lord gave me the ability to go to a town, preach the word, raise up a congregation, rally the members, and build a church—debt free!

Later, I pastored churches in Rocky Mount, Goldsboro, High Point, and Raleigh, North Carolina, for the Carolina Conference. Additionally, I was Carolina's "state man," the Black pastor who promoted the conference president's program among the Black churches in the state. White leaders felt that the conference program would be more successful if a Black man led out in the Black work.

In 1942, the Southern Union placed me over all the Black work in the union area. I followed F. S. Keitts.

## Birthing the South Atlantic Conference

The White leaders labored for Black folks because it was their duty, but they didn't want to be identified too closely with the Black work. When the time came to organize the

South Atlantic Conference, (SAC) W. W. Fordham, the Florida Conference state man, and I were nominated to serve as president. Some have said that the constituency session had a little air of politics; however, when I was voted in, Elder Fordham came up and hugged me.

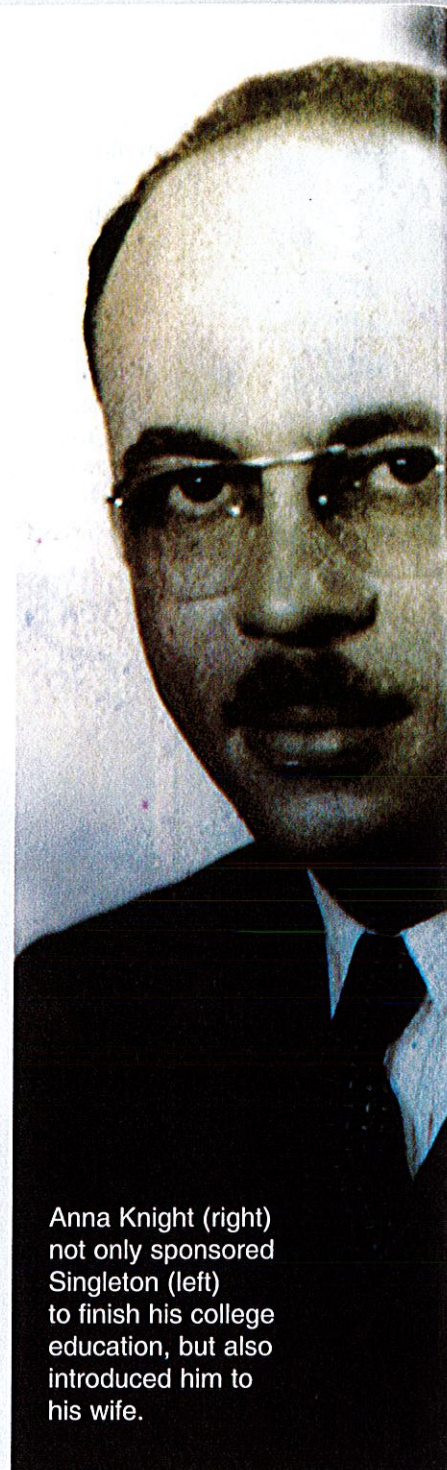
With the Lord's leading and guidance, I believed that we could make a go of this new venture. The South Atlantic Conference began with 3,523 members and 62 churches. The conference immediately began growing in membership and prominence.

## SAC: Success by Promoting Youth and Truth

At that time, we had a great group of young ministers who would later serve the church with distinction. E. E. Cleveland was an intern, already showing his ability in evangelism. Fitzgerald H. Jenkins, our youth and education director, came to us from the Pacific Union Conference. He recruited Eric C. Ward and Warren Banfield. Later Calvin B. Rock came along. I got the reputation of being able to find young talent.

## The "Warning"

I emphasized evangelism because I wanted the conference to grow. I was never much of a preacher, but through my humble efforts, the Holy Spirit brought many precious souls



Anna Knight (right) not only sponsored Singleton (left) to finish his college education, but also introduced him to his wife.





to the truth. But even more, we emphasized that the Lord was coming soon. We were always concerned, asking, "Has this part of the state been warned? Has that part of the state been warned?" We were expecting the Lord to come any day. I hope that urgency has not been lost.

#### **The Rest of My Ministry . . .**

After serving as South Atlantic Conference president, I succeeded Lewis Bland as Northeastern Conference president in 1954. I then succeeded F. L. Peterson as General Conference Regional Department secretary in 1962, where I served until retirement.

During the years of my ministry, the Lord has blessed me to experience the early years of the work among Blacks *before* the establishment of Regional conferences and the stellar achievements in church growth *after* the establishment of Regional conferences. I can enthusiastically say, "What hath God wrought?" May He bless us to continue to go forward in faith until our Savior's triumphant return. ▼



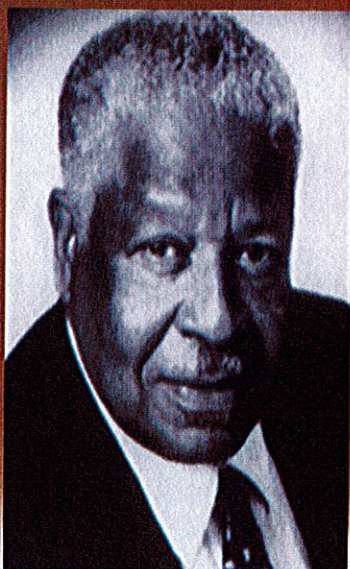
**Carlos Medley** is associate editor of the *Adventist Review*.



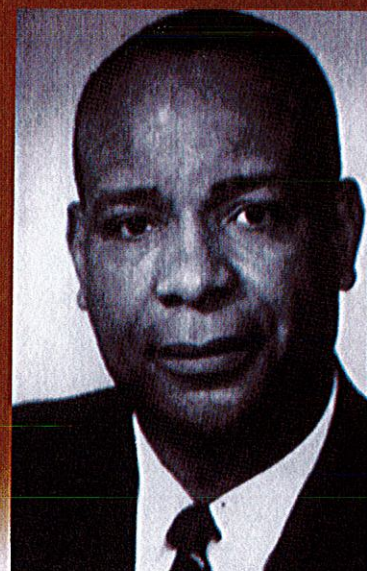
# BCI Bradford Cleveland Institute



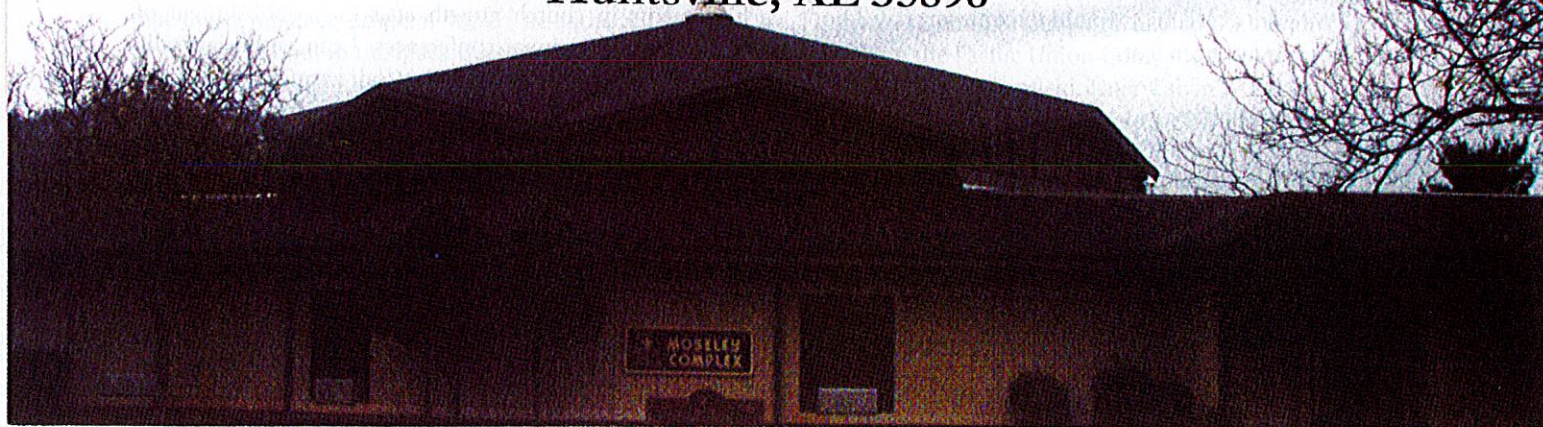
**Continuing a Tradition  
of Innovative Service**



The BCI Building Project is an investment in the future of church leadership. The years of dedicated service by Elders Bradford and Cleveland are a true motivation to excel in ministry. This new addition will provide much-needed space for the equipping of current and future ministers. We need your help to make this dream a reality. Your gift of at least \$250 will support this project and ensure your name on the BCI donor board. Mail your contribution to:



**The Bradford-Cleveland  
Institute Project  
P.O. Box 30158  
7000 Adventist Boulevard, NW.  
Huntsville, AL 35896**





# BLACK TO THE FUTURE

BY RYAN D. LANG

**H**aving been a member of a Regional conference since I was 8 years old, and having been a student in a Regional conference school since kindergarten, I feel that I have been in the system long enough to evaluate it. Since they were instituted in 1945, Regional conferences have provided an organizational structure for Black Adventist churches around the country, and because of them, we have come a long way. Now our outreach has expanded to Hispanic and Korean congregations.

Why do we still need these conferences if we already have perfectly fine conferences already well established? The answer is twofold. First, Regional conferences cater to Black churches in ways that other conferences cannot. Our conferences look out for the small churches as well as the large churches. Also, in our Regional conferences, we put greater emphasis on evangelism, and that is the reason behind our phenomenal growth. Regional conferences benefit the greater Adventist Church by consistently baptizing more people into the church than other conferences in the North American Division.

Some people think that Regional conferences are only re-segregating the Adventist Church, but that is not true. In fact, Regional conferences help to integrate the Adventist denomination by reaching out to racial and cultural minorities. Regional conferences have become much more diverse, and they now include not only African-American congregations, but also many Hispanic and Asian congregations. These churches in Regional conferences help ensure that the Adventist Church continues its mission to minister to "every kindred, tongue, and nation."

## The Regional Conference in My Life

There is no doubt in my mind that the Regional conference system has positively affected my life. Without it, there would not be an opportunity for many people, including myself, to benefit from a Seventh-day Adventist Christian education. My experience at Oakwood Adventist Academy has been very memorable, and I have made friends that I will keep for life. I have also had the privilege of learning in a wholesome atmos-

phere from teachers who love God and care about us students like we were their own children. Students from Regional conference schools across the country can attest to this also.

We must continue to support Seventh-day Adventist Christian education. We are the next generation, and if the church does not support us, then many will not stay faithful to the church and will leave. Evangelism is very important to our Regional conferences, and Christian education is one of the most effective means of evangelism. Regional conferences must keep the youth and children a high priority.

## The Church of the Future

Regional conferences have reached a new level of greatness. We have bigger congregations, and we have made great strides in the implementation of technology in our churches and schools. So, what can we expect in the future from Regional conferences?

More and more people will be baptized because of the evangelistic efforts of our conferences, churches, and schools. As membership grows, we will see an increase in the number of churches, and we will move into areas that we have not entered before. With better technology, we could very well see virtual churches in which members can worship from their computers. More people will be able to hear the Adventist message using technology. Tracts could be sent by E-mail.

The quality of our schools will continue to improve, and our teachers will become even more qualified. We can also expect the use of distance learning to reach students in remote areas. With this increase in quality, we must continue to support our schools so that they do not die and so that the next generation of youth can also experience a quality Seventh-day Adventist Christian education.

Regional conferences have a special purpose in the Adventist Church, and that purpose is to reach out to minorities in ways that other conferences cannot do. Happy sixtieth birthday, Regional conferences! I pray that God will allow Regional conferences to continue until He comes. ▼



Ryan Lang (Courtesy: Bob Gathany, The Huntsville Times)

Ryan D. Lang is a 2005 senior at Oakwood Adventist Academy, Huntsville, Alabama



# A SNAPSHOT OF OUR FUTURE THROUGH GENERATION X'S DIGITAL LENS

**W**hat is today's/tomorrow's church thinking, believing, and predicting? Four representatives of Generation X (ages 21-40) now tell us. Our panel:

**Gwen-Marie Davis**, 24, second year, University of Baltimore Law School, from Emmanuel SDA Church, Brinklow, Maryland.

**Shirmah Davis**, 24, graduate student, Pfeiffer University, from Berean SDA Church, Charlotte, North Carolina.

**David Peterson**, DPI, 28, owner, Dynamic Performance Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation, Inc., from Oakwood College Church, Huntsville, Alabama.

**James L. Suttles, Jr.**, 33, electrical engineer, from Bethany SDA Church, Macon, Georgia.

## **Regional Voice: In what ways does Adventism affect your daily life?**

**Gwen-Marie Davis:** Adventism affects my life when my peers know that I am an Adventist and though they don't quite understand the religion, their expectations of me seem higher. On Friday nights they might say, "This is Gwen's Sabbath," or "I heard you were SDA, is that true?" I have to make sure I am doing the right thing because clearly people are watching.

**James Suttles:** It affects my personal and professional relationships and diet.

**Shirmah Davis:** Adventism played a major role in molding my morals and values. Therefore, it is a part of my being.

**David Peterson:** [Adventism] seems to be everything, in a sense, as to how I view life through Adventist shades: how I see salvation, relationships with others, and even with my wife.

## **In what ways do you see yourself as a "Daniel in Babylon"?**

**Gwen-Marie Davis:** Sometimes the best legal job fairs and networking opportunities for law students are on Sabbath. I

can always just go, but in this case I must "dare to be a Daniel" and know that my job and contacts are already secured. When they don't fall on Sabbath, I try to be there.

## **Which is more challenging: being an Adventist around other SDAs, or being an "Adventist minority"?**

**James Suttles:** Being an Adventist minority. People will continually test your conviction when you share your belief.

**David Peterson:** Being an Adventist around other SDAs,

because when you are around other Adventists, your light often times feels compromised by the challenge to fit in based on what level of Adventism that others have. But when you are "a light in a dark room," you are forced to shine; they don't know what you're supposed to know, so you have the opportunity to market your faith.

## **Is the need for Regional conferences as critical today in 2005 as it was 60 years ago in 1945?**

**Gwen-Marie Davis:** It is clear but sad why Regional conferences were needed in 1945, and that is because racism was present in our church. Blacks needed a place to worship, too, which probably had a lot to do with the start of Regional conferences.

**David Peterson:** No, because the civil rights issue is not as prevalent. It appears that the need of the

church should be to be more like a mirror of heaven: Red, Yellow, Black, and White.

## **Do you feel Regional conferences are merely "re-segregating" Blacks and other minorities from Whites?**

**Shirmah Davis:** I am not sure how the conferences are put together; however, people tend to associate with others that are like them. If church members are comfortable with

***The church meets my needs in terms of associating and fellowshiping with my fellow church members. However, I believe it is my responsibility to meet my own needs spiritually. Also, I contribute to the church financially and support it any way I can. The church has successfully met any expectations I have thus far.***



the conferences as they are, then why change them?

**David Peterson:** Yes, this church should not be segregated at all; show the world what heaven will be like.

**From your "crystal ball," what will the SDA Church look like in, say, 2015?**

**Gwen-Marie Davis:** Probably just bigger churches because Adventism is growing so rapidly . . . maybe even tithing online.

**James Suttles:** I see a church moving closer to a multicultural appearance. We will still have the option of going to a building to worship, but I believe the Internet will make it possible to worship with any congregation we choose.

**Shirmah Davis:** I hope there will still be youth federations, etc., in order to fellowship with other SDAs like myself.

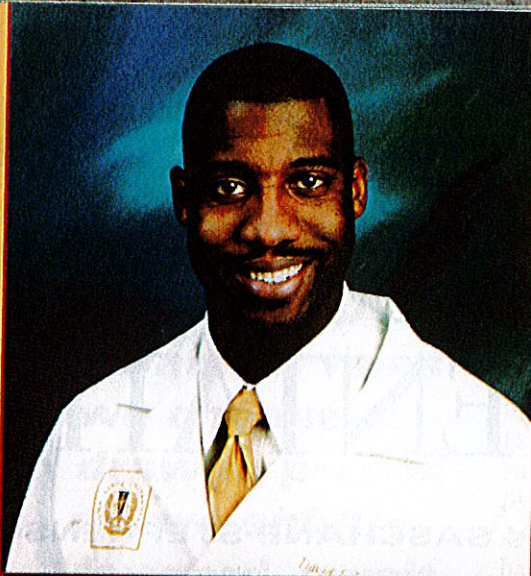
**Gwen-Marie Davis:** Youth federations in 2015? I hope so, because that was one of the most memorable experiences for me growing up.

**As a young Black professional, how, if at all, does the church address your needs—spiritually, financially, entrepreneurially, socially, professionally, etc.?**

**James Suttles:** Right now, the church helps by recharging my spiritual battery!

**Gwen-Marie Davis:** Overall, my church is meeting all of my needs. There are so many young and old Adventist professionals in my [Emmanuel Brinklow] church, it's amazing. Whatever you are interested in, there are people who can mentor and guide you. Socially, my church has a group called ACTS, where you can meet and build relationships with other singles in the church.

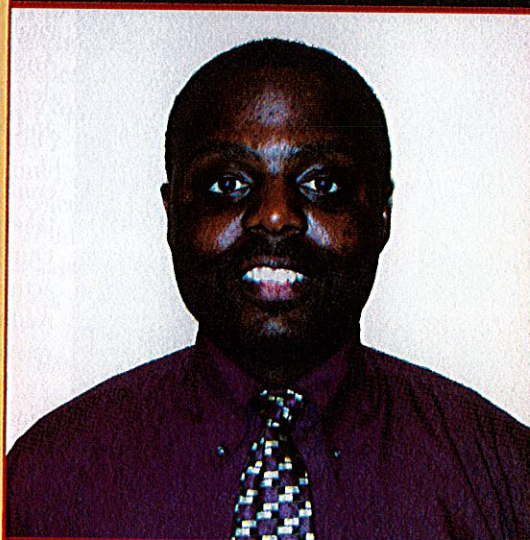
**Shirmah Davis:** The church meets my needs in terms of associating and fellowshiping with my fellow church members. However, I



David Peterson



Gwen-Marie Davis



James L. Suttles, Jr.

believe it is my responsibility to meet my own needs spiritually. Also, I contribute to the church financially and support it any way I can. The church has successfully met any expectations I have thus far.

**David Peterson:** Spiritually, it provides me with a place to worship and learn more about God's love. The members of the church provide a haven for prayer and wisdom. Financially? Yes, because being faithful to God allows [blessings to] come back above and beyond. Entrepreneurially? Yes, because the church supports their own; so when it knows that you are Adventist they come and patronize you. Socially? Yes, because there is a community of people that have similar beliefs and activities professionally. The professionals in the church really come together and motivate each other to succeed.

**What do you feel can be done to balance out the male/female ratio in our Black churches?**

**Gwen-Marie Davis:** Fathers are key role models to their sons. Fathers, go to church! Your son looks up to you and will one day pattern your behavior. Also [we need] more fun church activities while they are still in the church, so hopefully, they will stay.

**James Suttles:** Prayer. Stop preaching to the young males about how to live and, instead, start witnessing to them.

**Shirmah Davis:** Programming can be increased that targets males in the church, such as big brothers or some sort of mentoring program.

**David Peterson:** Add more outreach activities that require assistance from males: tent meetings, motor pool trainings, or self-defense classes. Primarily, things that require male assistance.

Thank you, panel. ▼



# MY REGIONAL “FRESHMAN ORIENTATION”

BY SASCHANE STEPHENSON



Although I've been a Seventh-day Adventist all my life, embarrassingly, I knew very little about the organizational structure of our faith, until a few years ago. My first authentic exposure to Regional conferences came about in a rather uneventful manner.

This past semester, I questioned various seminarians at a rather poorly attended forum addressing race, power, and the future of Adventism. The discussion was significant in light of the growing multi-cultural landscape that inevitably challenges how “we” and “they” worship. I longed for answers that explained why our Adventist territories justly warranted division in leadership.

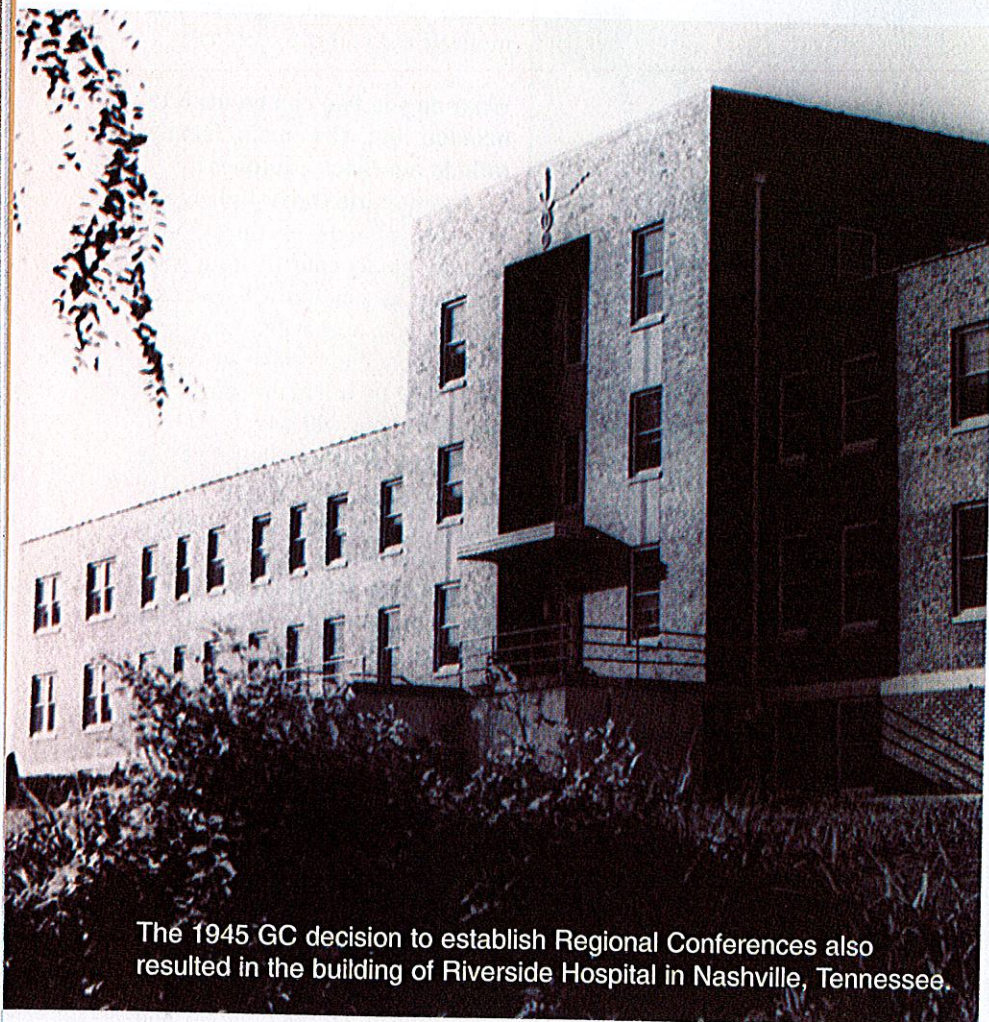
The separation was easily dismissed, and legitimized, in a slew of hushed excuses and comments alluding to differences in language and culture sandwiched between the customary “them” and “us” explanations that prevail among the heaven-bound saints. I departed, querying, “Well, ... what now, as we stand on the edge of the future? Can division, along whatever lines we choose to draw it, prevail as we shuffle forward, awaiting Christ’s return?”

More important—“What shall we all make of this separation among our churches? Are Regional conferences still vital to the work of Adventist evangelism?” And: “Are conference separations—the demarcation between statewide unions and Regional conferences necessary?”

Any determination of the Regional conferences’ relevance cannot be undertaken in the vacuous box of the present. Our past anchors our present operations, activities and achievements, and relevance. Additionally, our mission embodies our relevance, as an outgrowth of our need.

Two of the primary measures of relevance in the nonprofit sector are the presence of unfulfilled needs, and how a nonprofit organization (here, the Regional conference) solves them effectively.

Unfortunately time, poor communication, and the widening gulf between gen-



The 1945 GC decision to establish Regional Conferences also resulted in the building of Riverside Hospital in Nashville, Tennessee.



erations has created a wall of ignorance surrounding Regional conference history. Some believe:

1. Regional conferences began when Black Adventists chose to separate from their White counterpart.

2. The separation didn't exist before the establishment of Regional conferences.

For those who've forgotten (or never knew) the truth, Regional conferences were not our choice, but the result of a majority rule decision.

### **The Black Adventist "Shot Heard Around the World"**

Sister Lucille Byard's death fast-forwarded Regional conferences. In 1943, Washington National (now Adventist) Hospital denied her treatment because of her skin color. Abandoned on a gurney for some time, she developed pneumonia and died after being transferred to Freedman's Hospital, a Washington, D.C. colored hospital.

The enraged brethren appealed to the General Conference president. At the 1945 Spring Council, the president asked the voting members to choose: (a) either integrate the church or (b) give Blacks their own conferences. Instead of sharing the pie, the vote was to give Blacks a slice and send them off to feed their own. This decision initiated Oakwood College's becoming a senior Black educational institution and the building of Nashville's Riverside Hospital for Black health care services. Parallel to the wider society, meritocracy has been sold within Adventism, but never fully realized.

**W**e must remember that we accepted the concession to have our own conferences to ensure the development and nurturing of Black evangelism. There was a need to bring the hope of Christ to our communities, and our preachers needed congregations. For 60 years, our clergy have seeded and harvested an overflowing vineyard. Subsequently, they rose to world church leadership positions—why? Because they received Regional conference training at churches they could call home.

Finally, relevance is built on and fostered by cooperative commitment to mission. Sometimes, amid our "Black bourgeois spiritualism" and the bustle of making sure we one-up each other, we fail to realize the shoulders we stood atop that enabled us to sit down.

In the 1970s, when brothers and sisters (both within and outside the church) began achieving unprecedented successes, money and complacency easily numbed our previous pains. And in the frenzied striving to belong and gain approval, we dropped the baton, shedding memories of yesterdays. Consequently, we inaccurately assess the disconnect—that widening gulf between apathy and respect for the past—held by those in our church who fall below age 35.

**As we stand on the edge of the future, can division, along whatever lines we choose to draw it, prevail as we shuffle forward, awaiting Christ's return?**

### **Fellow Black SDA Gen-Xers: The Young and the . . . Ignorant?**

The disconnect among young church members has nothing to do with ignorance. Rather, this group's waning lukewarm devotion to Regional conferences—their legitimacy, afforded equity, and relevant separateness comes from their (our!) lack of identify with the past. Experiences, specifically shared experiences, build identification. The present (young or newly baptized, lest we forget) constituents and you forerunners have no shared experiences. Our predecessors ran the race and then fell silent, choosing to leave the batons on their desks as trophies, or tucked them away in trunks for occasional viewing, or simply threw them in the trash along with

all the other unconventional relics. Unfortunately, from your actions or inactions, the race was over—because you had achieved.

Today we should recapture and revise the original vision. Our communities and congregations are becoming increasingly diverse; however, our ethnicity continues to play a silent role in the administrative access granted to groups within our Adventist structure.

Let the church be honest with itself: the achievements of the Regional conferences have been remarkable and often unduplicated by statewide unions with larger budgets. It's indisputable that our conferences continue to have merit. Yet let's not allow complacency to flourish amid our satisfaction. God has propelled the Black work, as Ellen White predicted: "God will co-operate with them and give them the victory" (*Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 202).

Our numbers may increase; however, our strides for representation on the voting committees and councils which equates to bargaining power—still remain dismal.

If we are concerned about staying relevant and building support for future generations, the answer lies in repositioning the way the conferences are perceived, within the territories and across the division. Relevance requires changed messages built on sound strategies.

Acknowledging the relevance of Regional conferences—60 years of progress, joys and sorrows, intentional community enhancement and contribution—is more than nostalgia. Our anniversary honors the certainty that we've made it this far in unison; and thus we'll only move ahead, whatever the course, in unison. ▼



**Saschane Stephenson**, principal graphic designer and president of Tephla Designs, recently completed an M.A. degree in communications from Andrews University.



# PINE FORGE ACADEMY— A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE

BY CYNTHIA POOLE-GIBSON

"The General Conference Committee had voted to allow the Allegheny Conference to purchase a piece of property for a permanent campground, junior camp site, and boarding school." —*Columbia Union Visitor*, Dec. 27, 1945.

Pine Forge Academy ([www.pineforgeacademy.org](http://www.pineforgeacademy.org)) is a private coeducational boarding school serving grades 9-12, located in Pine Forge, Pennsylvania. Pine Forge is one of only four remaining historically Black boarding academies in the U.S. A "snapshot" of our school shows:

- We currently enroll 188 students (96 males and 92 females).
- Current students represent 22 states and the Virgin Islands; two SDA divisions, seven unions, and eighteen local conferences (eight of the nine Regional conferences).
- We have a 99 percent graduation rate and a 98 percent entrance rate for our students seeking higher education.

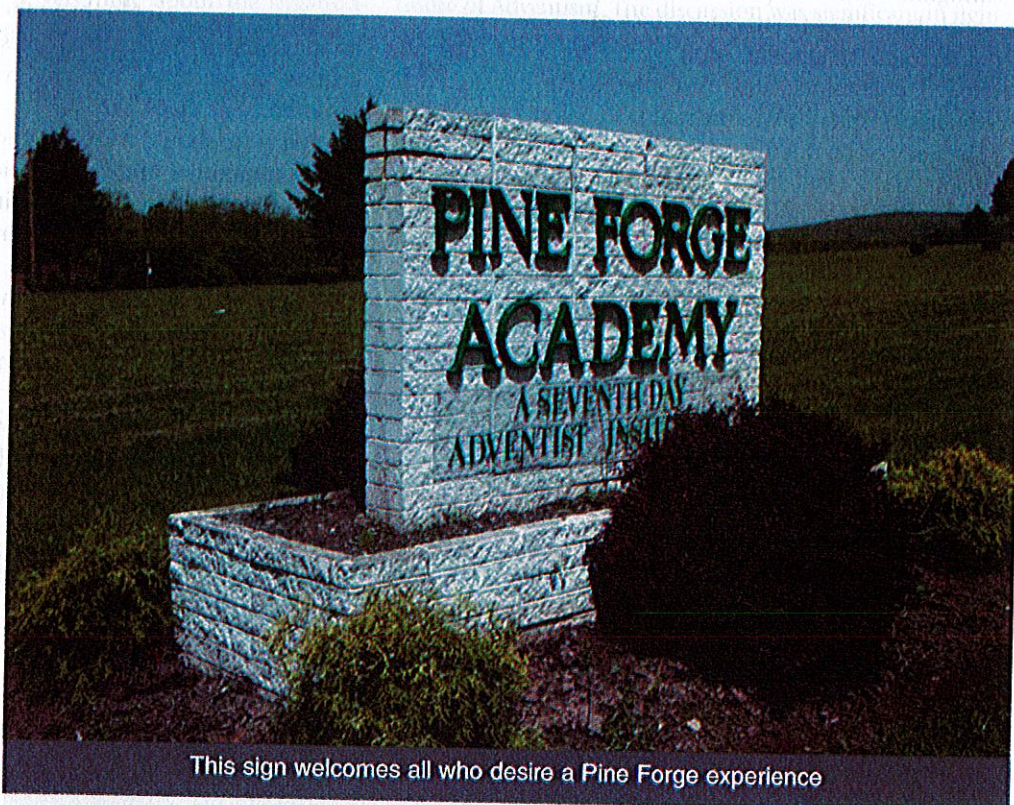
## Back in the Day . . .

Pine Forge, established nine months after the Allegheny Conference was organized in 1946, was to be a "Black Northern school as a necessary complement to Oakwood College, which so valiantly served the south."

Originally Elders J. H. Wagner, J. L. Moran, F. L. Bland, J. H. Lawrence, and M. S. Banfield scouted possible sites, and Elder Bland, pastor of the Philadelphia church spotted the present location. On November 4, 1945, together with Columbia Union president F. H. Robbins, they visited the grounds and were enthusiastic about what they saw.

With the slogan "Heed the Call; A School by Fall," Allegheny members raised over \$40,000 in three months!—and pur-

chased the 575 acres of rolling woodlands, divided by the Manatawny (Indian: "Here we drink") Creek. On September 9, 1946, more than 90 students began Pine Forge Institute (named after Hampton and Tuskegee institutes; changed to "Academy" in 1965).

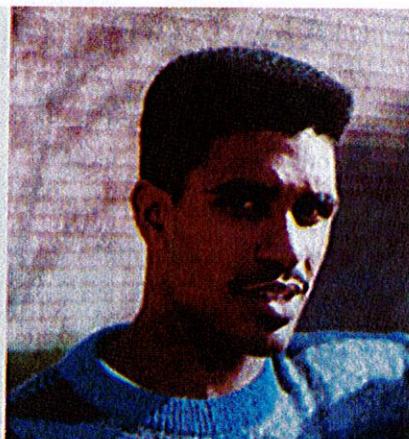
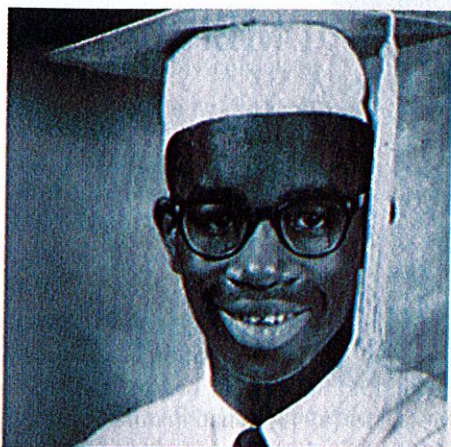


This sign welcomes all who desire a Pine Forge experience

## Looking Ahead . . .

- The Pine Forge Academy Foundation, Inc. ([www.pfafoundation.org](http://www.pfafoundation.org)) solicits and receives the academy's private and corporate gifts.
- The Pine Forge Academy Strategic Plan 2003-2010 offers a clear picture for mapping the Academy's future.
- Forging the Future is the seven-year, \$52 million capital campaign to fund the seven following strategic initiatives:
  1. Making building improvements and historical restoration
  2. Constructing new dormitories





Can you name these former PFA students? Answers below

3. Enhancing the technology infrastructure
4. Developing advanced academic programs
5. Providing faculty support and development programs

6. Building community partnerships and industry opportunities

7. Funding endowments and scholarships. ▼



**Cynthia Poole-Gibson** is the Headmaster of Pine Forge Academy

Answers (left to right) Barry Black, Walter Pearson and Joey Kibble

### Principals/Headmasters of Pine Forge Academy

1946-1948	Elder J. L. Moran
1948-1954	Prof. Robert Reynolds
1954-1961	Elder Ercel I. Watson
1961-1963	Elder Charles L. Brooks
1963-1966	Elder Luther R. Palmer
1966-1969	Elder Cleveland B. Tivy
1969-1976	Elder Adrian T. Westney, Sr.
1976-1979	Elder Auldwin T. Humphrey *
1979-1981	Prof. Paul Robert Jones *
1981-1982	Dr. Rothacker Smith
1982-1985	Elder W. Augustus Cheatham *
1985-1989	Elder Conrad Gill
1989-1991	Prof. Richard Mills
1991-1993	Elder Stephen Richardson *
1993-1996	Prof. Richard Smith
1996-2003	Prof. Diana A. Carguill
2003-2004	Dr. George E. Thornton
2004- Present	Prof. Cynthia Poole-Gibson *

\* Alumni

### Prominent Alumni

**Marguerite Anderson-Dixon** (1947), the first African-American female to earn a Ph.D. degree in nursing

**Charles Morgan** (1949), the first graduate of Pine Forge Academy to earn a medical degree

**Calvin B. Rock** (1948), chair, Loma Linda University and Oakwood College Boards of Trustees

**Benjamin F. Reaves** (1950), vice president, Spiritual Ministries, Adventist Health System

**Charles L. Cheatham** (1954), president, Allegheny East Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

**W. Augustus Cheatham** (1959), vice president, Loma Linda University

**Alfred Fornay** (1960), first editor-in-chief, *Ebony Man* magazine; author, *Fornay's Guide to Skin Care and Makeup for Women of Color*

**Walter L. Pearson** (1963), general field secretary, General Conference; director/speaker, *Breath of Life* telecast

**Clifton Davis** (1963), actor, singer, composer, producer, and minister

**Samuel H. Turner** (1965), president and CEO, Shawnee Mission Medical Center

**Rear Admiral Barry Black** (1966), former chief of chaplains, U.S. Navy; chaplain, U.S. Senate

**W. Wendell Cheatham** (1966), corporate vice president and chief medical officer, MannKind Corporation

**Melody Mayberry-Stewart** (1966), chief technology officer, city of Cleveland, Ohio

**Allen Sampson** (1972), physician, Board of Directors, Sutter Lakeside Hospital

**Vernetta Sampson-Johnson** (1972), medical director, Department of Anesthesiology, Sutter Lakeside Hospital

**Frederick L. Johnson** (1972), credentials chair for Sutter Lakeside Hospital, managing partner, Lake County Anesthesia Medical Associates

**Beverly Rivers** (1983), former secretary, city of Washington, D.C.

**Janice Chandler-Eteme** (1983), lyric soprano

**Joey Kibble** (1989), member, Take 6

(Source: the National Pine Forge Academy Alumni Association, [www.pfaalumni.org](http://www.pfaalumni.org).)



# OAKWOOD COLLEGE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF BLACK SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM

BY CALVIN B. ROCK

**T**he central role that Oakwood College has occupied in the growth of Black Seventh-day Adventism is due to several identifiable factors. The first, and most obvious, is the school's theological impact. All of

Oakwood's academic departments have effectively advanced the individual, congregational, and institutional well-being of this sector of our denomination. However, the long line of pastors, Bible teachers, chaplains, and dedicated laypersons produced by Oakwood's Religion Department has been more determinative for the biblical understandings and the denominational loyalty of Black Adventism than any other study discipline.

It is important to note, in this regard, that 80 percent of Black Christians in the U.S. belong to all-Black (Black administered)

denominations—African Methodist Episcopal, Colored Methodist Episcopal, etc. This means that the vast majority of Black Christians in the United States have long since either separated from their White counterparts or, in truth, were never joined in the first place. Black Adventism's not having experienced major schisms or division from the larger body in spite of many obvious injustices is a sterling tribute to the steady focus of its ministerial leadership—more than 80 percent of which has historically come from Oakwood.

A second crucial contribution of Oakwood to the development of Black Seventh-day Adventism has been its equipping so many youth for occupational and professional endeavors. When Oakwood (the fortieth school established by Christian churches in the U.S. in their noble effort to do what land grant schools refused to do—educate the children of slavery) was founded, its curriculum minimized liberal arts and maximized trades. The institution's name at that time (1896) was Oakwood Industrial Training School. However, because of rapid growth in matriculation and wise response to societal chal-

lenges, its name was changed in 1904 to Oakwood Manual Training School. Curriculum and matriculation continued to rapidly expand, and in 1917 the school became Oakwood Junior College; 26 years later (1943), it had matured to a full-fledged senior college.

At each step, not only did its faculty and academic offerings grow, so did the number of church member attendees who left the school better equipped to earn a livelihood and to contribute meaningfully to their disciplines, their communities, and, as this report must rightly emphasize, the many hundreds of Adventist congregations they have staffed, supported, and sustained.

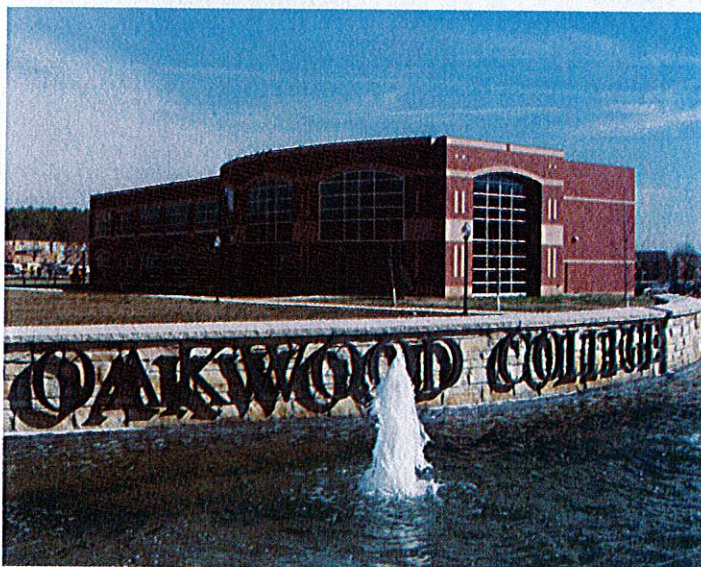
The present and persistent scale of Oakwood's equipping role is forcefully revealed by the fact that while approximately 50 percent of African-Americans who attend Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities attend Oakwood, approxi-

mately 90 percent of those who graduate from Adventist colleges and universities do so from one of Oakwood's sixteen academic departments.

A third primary factor is Oakwood's social impact. From its very beginning, Oakwood has been the major crucible for the formation of friendships and families among Black Seventh-day Adventists. SDA Blacks who attend Oakwood are much more likely to bond with others of their religious background than

African-Americans who attend non-Adventist schools of higher education or even White-administered Adventist colleges and universities.

In other words, Oakwood's social advantage accrues from the dual reality of lessening of the pressures and presence of non-scripture alliances at non-Adventist institutions while at the same time establishing friendships that last far beyond attendance or graduation. This latter good is not at all common for Adventist Blacks who attend one of the other (White administered) Adventist schools of higher education. By this very special sociocultural reality, Oakwood has historically





provided a palpable dynamic unquestionably crucial to the continuing advance of Black Seventh-day Adventism.

A fourth contribution of Oakwood College to the vibrant development of Black Seventh-day Adventism is the lasting lure of its very physical presence. Oakwood's acreage, with its grounds and halls of sacred memory, is not just sentimentally precious to its vast alumni; it is where many return each Easter weekend in animated worship and social joy. The gathering of ten to twelve thousand of Oakwood's former attendees, along with their families and friends, each Homecoming Weekend is a spirited happening—an annual pilgrimage of Oakwood's supporters to their spiritual Mecca. This weekend has high significance for the broader church community because its devotees, having revisited their corporate moorings and having been enthused by the school's special mystic, return to their cities and churches recharged with the mission of the school and, by extension, that of the ecclesiastical body to which it belongs.

And the influence of the school's physical aura is evidenced by yet another telling phenomenon—the increasing volume of attendees and graduates who, after completing their careers in cities throughout the nation, relocate within and about the school's environs. Highlighting this evidence of the “pull of the place” is the fact that many who graduate or attend the school become so enamored with its presence and programs that they never leave the Huntsville area in the first place. The city of Huntsville, the state of Alabama, and the church (the South Central Conference and the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, in particular) have richly benefited from this infusion of tithes and talent.



The recent addition of Oakwood Memorial Gardens Cemetery, where plots are being sold to individuals far and near who wish to meet their returning Lord from Oakwood's acreage, is yet another striking demonstration of the mother-lode sentiment the school holds for Black Seventh-day Adventism.

A fifth of Oakwood's contributions to this sector's health and hardiness is its prophetic mystique. This influence stems from several realities that establish Oakwood as a product of divine revelation. They are: (a) the fact that it was the writings of Ellen White, the church's prophet, that inspired her son Edison to build the boat, the Morningstar, from the decks of which he planted the scores of mission schools that surfaced the need for one central place of education, (b) the fact that the prophet herself encouraged and endorsed the purchase of the original 360 acres in 1894, (c) the fact that she herself visited and spoke at Oakwood on several occasions (1904 and 1909), and (d) the fact that Oakwood is mentioned in the prophet's writings as ordained of God to do a special work for Black Adventism.

These realities serve as powerful reinforcement of this sector's remnant awareness and prophetic mandate. Very few of the other 16 Adventist schools of higher education are so privileged.

The sixth of the ways that Oakwood College augments the development of Black Seventh-day Adventism is the high sense of self-worth it fosters. Even prior to 1932, when the first African-American president, J. L. Moran, was installed, Black SDAs were inspired by the presence of the few of their ranks chosen to labor there. What has occurred during the administrations of the eight African-American presidents who followed Moran has exponentially increased that sense of dignity and self-worth. While the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists owns Oakwood and provides its basic constituency, the fact that for decades the school has been successfully operated by a board, administration, faculty, staff, and student body pervasively African-American is a matter of justifiable pride for the church's Black constituents.

It is this factor as much as any other that establishes Oakwood College as the jewel of Black Adventism, the quintessential example of its ability to achieve, the premier statement of its denominational identity, and the unquestioned recipient of the providence of God, who, through the influences of this unique institution, has so greatly blessed this people. ▼



**Calvin B. Rock**, D.Min., Ph.D., is the Chairman of the Oakwood College Board of Trustees

## BLACK PRESIDENTS OF OAKWOOD COLLEGE

YEARS OF SERVICE	NAMES
1932 - 1945	JAMES L. MORAN
1945 - 1954	FRANK L. PETERSON
1954 - 1963	GARLAND P. MILLET
1963 - 1966	ADDISON J. PINKNEY
1966 - 1971	FRANK W. HALE, JR.
1971 - 1985	CALVIN B. ROCK
1985 - 1996	BENJAMIN F. REAVES, JR.
1996 - PRESENT	DELBERT W. BAKER



# THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE RETIREMENT PLAN: FROM CONCEPT TO REALITY

BY JOSEPH W. MCCOY

**M**y introduction to retirement issues and inequities for Black conferences in the North American Division (NAD) happened almost simultaneously with my entry into the Seventh-day Adventist ministry. From the beginning, I witnessed the frustration of our Regional conference presidents over the unfair percentages required by the Adventist Church in North America. No consideration was made over the negative economic forces impacting our Black constituency, or the enormously smaller numbers of workers in our conferences and the short span of years our conferences had been in existence.

A turning point came during my days as youth director in the early 1980s, in a conversation I had with my president, Elder C. E. Dudley. He was distressed because one of our senior pastors was ill and would have to go on "medical retirement" after more than 30 years in the ministry. The compensation he would receive wouldn't be enough to pay his rent. It was then that I suggested to him that we should start our own *supplemental retirement plan*.

The president remarked that it probably was against policy and that "the brethren" would never allow it.

"What is the policy," I asked.

Elder Dudley thought, then responded, "You know, I don't think there are regulations about supplemental retirement plans; at least I have not heard of any."

"Well," I said, "If there is no policy, there can be no violation."

Despite some initial reluctance Elder Dudley went to work, and the next time I heard about it, he had formulated a plan. It required employees to contribute \$50 per month for ten years and the conference would contribute an amount equal to one pastor's annual salary. At retirement at age 65, in addition to the North American Division (NAD) benefits, the plan would provide \$400 per month to each participating worker. The other Regional conferences in the NAD could have joined the plan. But for reasons too numerous to list, they declined.

In the early 1990s, mounting liabilities caused the NAD to

announce pursuit of a plan to move from a Defined Benefits Plan (benefits are defined and the employee *does not* contribute to the plan) to a Defined Contribution Plan (both the employee and the employer contribute, but the employee is totally responsible for his/her retirement). Remembering past complaints and having participated in the creation of the South Central Conference Supplemental Retirement Plan caused me to believe that this was an opportunity to effect change.

The NAD announcement was a disturbing change in the church's philosophy of taking care of those whom Ellen White had lovingly called "broken down workers." If the NAD was "freezing the old plan" and creating a plan that made workers responsible for their own retirement, after having

worked forty years for a "missionary" wage, then someone needed to stand up and do something. To ask Black workers already saddled with historic inequities to share increasing liabilities for a plan woefully underfunded was too much to bear. The time had come to free ourselves, and to do it without initiating a "rebellion" or having our actions threaten church unity.

By this time I was serving as president of the South Central Conference. I challenged my colleagues to act. Could we withdraw legally from the NAD retirement

plan? In 1995, we secured legal assistance to research the issue. Each conference shared the expense and raised the \$19,000 needed for the study. It revealed that if the matter went to the courts, we probably could not lose. However, since courts avoid interference in affairs of religious organizations, they would likely recommend that we handle it internally. If left to the organization we would be at its mercy, and we could not forecast the result.

Nevertheless, with legal opinion in hand, we began to move. South Central Conference was first out of the gate. In 1999, after waiting for a couple of years for the other conferences to join us, the South Central Conference Executive Committee voted the following:



"Something to smile about. To God be the Glory." (left to right): Frank L. Jones, Willie L. Taylor, G. Alexander Bryant, Joseph W. McCoy, Del Johnson (Administrator of the NAD Retirement Plan) and Stanton G. Reed.



- Do the appropriate actuarial study to certify viability.
- Conduct a series of town meetings over a period of months to inform the membership.
- Hold a special constituency meeting to have the membership formally approve the direction.
- At the appropriate time, officially withdraw from the NAD Retirement Plan.

All of this was done with the understanding that we would wait a reasonable period for the other Regional conferences to join us. However, if they declined, we were prepared to move forward alone.

On October 30, 2000, the unified Regional presidents made a presentation to the NAD at the annual Year-End Meeting, declaring that historical unfairness to our conferences made it impossible for us to go along with their new plan. That presentation was a declaration of intention to create a Defined Benefits Plan for Regional Conferences.

On December 5, 2000, on the campus of Oakwood College during the annual Evangelism Council, eight of the nine Regional conference presidents signed an agreement that created the Regional Conference Retirement Plan. Prior to that date, and during the discussion and refinement phases of this unfolding saga, eight of the nine Regional conferences, with approval of their respective executive committees, began withholding the NAD-approved 10.75 percent of tithes designated for retirement benefits from all conferences. This began on January 1, 2000. The remaining "sacred percentages" were faithfully sent to the appropriate unions, the division, and the General Conference, as the regional conferences continued to fully support our world mission.

### **The Regional Conference Retirement Plan Had Become Fact**

The Regional Conference Retirement Plan was now in effect. Its features and benefits were in many ways revolutionary to the church. However, there were liabilities and we soon discovered that a scientific formula as a basis for decisions was nearly impossible. So we picked a number, benchmarked it, and came to agreement. The driving force was to be fair and let

#### **Plan Features at a Glance**

Date started: January 1, 2000  
 Potential number of employees covered: 1,780  
 Retirees at close of 2004: 110  
 Plan sponsors: all nine Regional conferences  
 How funded: 10.25 % of tithes from the nine conferences  
 Cash invested close of 2004: \$61 Million  
 Number of years for vesting: 5  
 Number of years of service for full benefits: 30  
 What percent of last salary calculated for benefits: 67 percent of the average of the highest three years  
 Is there a healthcare plan?: Yes, same as NAD plan for retirees  
 Possibility of fully funding the plan: 15-20 years  
 Is it a Defined Benefit Plan?: Yes, and is IRS approved and managed by Mutual of America Insurance Company

the Lord lead us to common ground. The core issues were:

- Funding retirement for Regional employees already receiving benefits from the NAD Plan.

*The solution: Pay for them from "our share" of cash assets in the NAD Plan. The Regional Conferences have in effect paid cash for the liabilities of those already retired.*

- Funding liabilities for active and full-time employees in the Regional conferences.

*The solution: Regional conferences agreed to assume all past liabilities in the NAD Plan for all their employees' active and full-time as of January 1, 2000.*

- Funding liabilities for all vested and terminated employees in the NAD Plan.

*The solution: Regional conferences assumed liability for all vested and terminated workers not working for Regional conferences as of January 1, 2000. Liability is to be paid over 20 years at the rate of 1 percent of our annual tithes.*

An undisclosed amount of cash from liquid assets went with the Regional conferences from the NAD Plan. It was the final piece in the agreement after more than a year of multiple meetings with NAD officers and union presidents, a historic NAD actuarial study certifying inequities, and strategic meetings by the special committee created to draft a mutually beneficial agreement.

Finally, on October 30, 2001, the NAD Executive Committee gave its approval. Clearly without prayer and the Lord in our hearts and by our sides, we never could have reached consensus. Indeed, He was the unseen guest in every conversation and meeting.

### **The Future**

Under God, the future for our plan is bright. Current realities indicate the possibility of a fully funded plan in 15-20 years. Then we will face the great challenge of continuing to share our wealth to support our ministries-in-common. That unique sharing will strengthen our soul-winning ministries, assist congregations and conferences in the world field, and improve the quality of life for all who call themselves "the remnant" and who carry the third angel's message to the world.

Many people from every corner of our country deserve heartfelt thanks for this stellar achievement. It is a monument to vision, courage, and cooperation.

Back in the 1990s, when I initially presented the retirement issue to my executive committee, one member remarked, "Elder, it is a good idea and I commend you for courage, but it is an exercise in futility." I am thankful that ours is a God who sequesters futility and utterly frustrates the efforts of those who only see impossibilities. Ours is an awesome God. All glory and honor be unto Him forever and ever. Amen. ▼



**Joseph W. McCoy** is the Executive Director of the Regional Conference Retirement Plan.



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# MAKE EVERY VOTE COUNT

BY ROSCOE J. HOWARD, III

**O**n June 29, 2005, the fifty-ninth General Conference session will convene in St. Louis, Missouri, for the purpose of voting in officers, proposing constitutional changes, and establishing, amending, editing, and deleting polices for the worldwide church. Proposals for constitution and bylaws changes will be discussed and debated. The church will receive reports from the divisions around the world.

A celebration of the millions of baptisms that have taken

the local churches, conferences, and union levels of the denomination's membership. These names are then sent to the respective divisions for a final vote at their committee meetings.

Thirteen divisions make up the worldwide distribution of members. The North America Division, which encompasses Canada, Bermuda, and the United States of America, was allotted 195 delegates out of the total 2,000 for the 2005 General Conference session. This represents a little less than 10 percent of the total delegate count. According to formula, the North American Division was given delegates that represent every level of the church structure.

The present membership is just a hair above one million members. North America represents approximately 7 percent of the world church membership, which is fast approaching 15 million. Out of the 195 North American Division delegates, 61 individuals are Black. This represents 31 percent of the membership of the division. Twenty-one individuals are Hispanic, five are Asian, and the remaining 107 are Caucasian.

Out of the 61 Black delegates, seven will sit on the nominating committee for the GC session. Here again, the seven who sit on the nominating committee are a 31 percent representation of Black membership. A process for choosing these delegates will be decided on at a future date. The North American delegates will choose nominating committee members from the 195-delegate pool.

What, then, can be taken as a vital lesson from this process? Simply this. Though our vote is small in number, our influence can be as large as life. Black people have a valuable stake in the future of the Adventist Church, and our leadership must not only impact the lives of Black people, but the lives of millions of God's children around the world. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is predominantly people of color all around this globe.

As the Black work grows in North America, our influence and leadership will be crucial to the church. The spiritual, mental, physical, and financial health of Black people are crucial factors that will weigh heavily in establishing policies and protocols for the future work of the Adventist Church in North America and the world. We must make every vote count. ▼

**Roscoe J. Howard III**, is Secretary of the North American Division

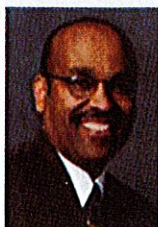


With proper advanced preparation, planning and prayer, regional constituents will be heard.

place in the last five years will be showcased on video screens throughout the America Center Arena in St. Louis. Fellowship and worship will be a daily privilege among this vast cultural mosaic that God is preparing for His coming.

Thousands will attend the session, but only 2,000 individuals will represent (with voice and vote) the more than 14 million members around the world. These 2,000 delegates will take an active part in shaping the church and its future plans and initiatives for the next quinquennium.

Delegates are chosen in each division by General Conference constitution and bylaws mandate. A formula is designated for calculation of these delegates representing divisions, unions, conferences, institutions, and church representation. Ethnicity, gender, and geographical location are carefully considered when choosing the delegate pool. The union executive committees send names that have been carefully chosen from





# BREATH OF LIFE: TELEVISION OUTREACH TO BLACK AMERICA

BY WALTER L. PEARSON, JR.

*Breath of Life* begins its fourth decade blessed by God in so many ways. A legacy of quality broadcasting for the preaching of the everlasting gospel was established from the very beginning.

## In the Beginning

Walter Arties One of Adventism's most widely known soloists and conductors had a dream. Why couldn't Black Adventists utilize the broadcast media to reach Black America for Christ? he asked. The answer was, "Yes we can," but many complex and expensive obstacles needed to be overcome.

Elder Arties joined KHOF TV, a Glendale, California religious music station. Arties had an outlet to reach the Black community with the three angels messages.

His pilot program featured Evangelist Samuel D. Myers, pastor of the University SDA Church in Los Angeles, California's largest Black Adventist congregation. The favorable KHOF-TV audience responses compelled local church leaders to propose a similar model for Black America *en masse*. Crusades and tent efforts garner local triumphs, they reasoned; but the airwaves will attract heretofore-unreached masses.

In 1973, Elder Arties invited Southern California Conference leaders to view a pilot. Subsequently, the local, Pacific Union, and General Conference representatives enthusiastically endorsed this "Breath of Life" concept. Because of his pastoral/evangelistic successes and "mediagenic" presence, Charles D. Brooks, General Conference general field secretary, was asked to fill the post of director/speaker.

## Two Decades of Televised Evangelism

*Breath of Life* commenced in 1974, featuring Elder Brooks' preaching and the original *Breath of Life* quartet: second tenor Clyde O. Allen, bass James L. Kyle, baritone Shelton E. Kilby III,

first tenor Walter E. Arties, and arranger/accompanist Myrna Matthews-Haynes. The program was a resounding success.

During the Brooks/Arties 23-year leadership tandem—and assisted by Reginald O. Robinson—the TV ministry and public crusades were blessed with more than 12,000 baptisms. *Breath of Life* congregations were established in: Memphis, Tennessee; Ft. Washington, Maryland; Culver City, California; Rochester, New York; Jacksonville, Florida; Columbia, Missouri; Barbados; Kingsboro, New York; Newark, New Jersey; Seattle, Washington; Nassau, Bahamas; and Moree, NSW, Australia.

A firm foundation was laid that ensured the continuation of the broadcast. Whatever successes *Breath of Life* has enjoyed and will enjoy in the future must be traced to the provi-

dence of God expressed in the exploits of these outstanding innovators. They carved the path and established a tradition of excellence in media evangelism for people of color. The current staff of *Breath of Life* considers it a privilege to recognize Elder Charles D. Brooks, who has retired as general field secretary of the General Conference, and Elder Walter Arties, who continues his media ministry as manager of the *Voice of Prophecy*.

## A Time of Transition

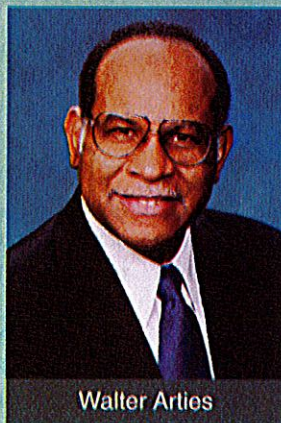
In 1997, I accepted the invitation to become speaker/ director of *Breath of Life*. This ministry has been a profound blessing to me and to my family, and has given me the opportunity to share the Lord I love with untold thousands. I am humbled by the blessings of God on this unique ministry and how the Holy Spirit has used it to transform lives.

The transition from one speaker to another represents a challenge for any television ministry.

I have witnessed the direction of a Divine Hand in prepar-



Early *Breath of Life* Quartet (left to right); Shelton Kilby, Philip Grayson, Walter Arties, Clyde Allen and James Kyle with Speaker/Director C. D. Brooks (seated)



Walter Arties



ing me for this ministry. Years ago, Walter L. Wright, now president of the Lake Union Conference, invited me to be a guest on his family's popular television broadcast in Dayton, Ohio. Elder Wright's enthusiasm for communicating the gospel on television was sufficiently contagious to permanently infect this pastor, who had no previous interest in media ministry.

In the late seventies, Charles Williams, now production manager for Media Ministries at the Allegheny East Conference, visited the church where I was pastoring. After the worship services, Williams assured me that I would one day be in television ministry (how did he know?). A few years later, Williams' prophecy came true on a smaller scale. We collaborated with Charles Cheatham and Bill Morgan to create a magazine-format broadcast titled *Daybreak*. Elder Cheatham and I interviewed people who were making a positive difference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Gwendolyn Foster energized the program with discussion of health topics, and the late Paul Monk offered thought provoking editorials. It was a life-altering experience for everyone concerned.

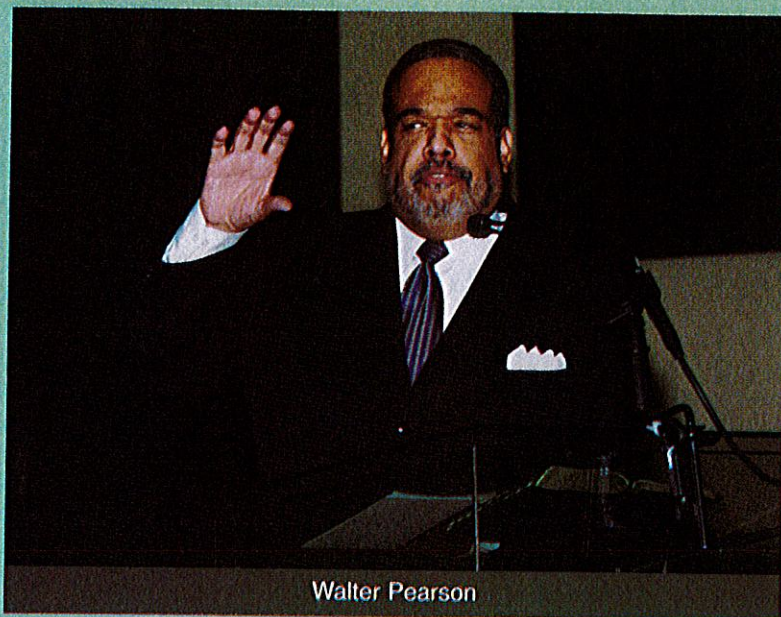
In Atlanta, Georgia, I served as director/speaker for a more traditional television program centered around the worship services at the Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church. In retrospect, each of these events, I believe, was being orchestrated by the Lord for His future use. And I can certainly say, whether through television or in person, success comes "not by might nor by power, but by His Spirit."

### Spreading the Gospel Over the Airwaves

During the past seven years, *Breath of Life* has remained true to its commitment to spread the gospel. Twenty-one major evangelistic outreach events have been conducted. Scores of camp meetings, revivals, and evangelistic rallies have been interspersed; and hundreds of successful sermon appeals made.

### Net 2004: Wings Over North America

The North American Division asked *Breath of Life* to conduct the satellite outreach project "Experience the Power," in October of 2004. From the very beginning, the power of the Holy Spirit was palpable in this series. God welded the spirits of disparate individuals together in a marvelous way. J. Alfred Johnson volunteered to serve as "chief of staff." S. Peter Camp-



bell was drafted to be stage manager. Charles Williams had worked previously with the staff from the Adventist Media Center, and that cordial nexus was a blessing.

Email messages and phone calls practically from around the globe affirmed what local participants felt each night. The entire operation was guided by a Divine element. People rushed to downlink sites to experience the power of God's Holy Word. Suc-

cess was inevitable, but not because of any professional expertise. It was the Lord! Credible sources report that "Experience the Power" reached approximately 1,100 sites in North America, with another 1,000 in the Caribbean and tens of thousands around the globe. It was interpreted into Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Swahili.

The love of Jesus was revived among our members and faith was strengthened in our fundamental beliefs. More than 4,000 were baptized as the result of "Net 2004." *Breath of Life* treasures the opportunity to help spread the truth as it is in Jesus. And that is our future—until Jesus comes.

### You Can Participate in Broadcast Ministry

*Breath of Life* can be seen on the Church Channel, the Black Family Channel, TVOne, and DirectTV as well as 3ABN and the Hope Channel. In some instances, funding for the airing of *Breath of Life* on local access channels is provided by a single individual who believes that the ministry changes lives by the grace of God. *Breath of Life* has edited sermons from "Experience the Power" to be broadcast along with two new series. One addresses practically every aspect of family life. These biblically based messages have been well received across the country and will soon be available as a complete series.

Faithful supporters of *Breath of Life* have made it possible for thousands to be baptized over the past quinquennium by their generous gifts. Subsidies from our sponsoring organizations have been reduced significantly in recent months. More than ever, *Breath of Life* needs your support to continue drawing individuals to Christ. ▼



Walter L. Pearson, Jr., is the speaker/director of *Breath of Life* telecast.



# WHOSE FUTURE?

AN ASSESSMENT OF TRENDS IN THE BLACK ADVENTIST CHURCH

BY GREGORY J. ALLEN

**T**o whom does the future of the Black Seventh-day Adventist work in America belong—to God or to us? If the future belongs to us, then it is clear that we must re-calibrate our plans and methods

at once. Despite our enormous success since the mid-1940s, we now face a future in which the trends seem against us.

In the Black community, we encounter urban blight and human hopelessness, violence, teen pregnancy, illiteracy, HIV/AIDS, and poverty. Local church resources are inadequate to meet the need. Black Seventh-day Adventist evangelistic growth among African-Americans is stagnant, and old formulaic answers and approaches no longer have currency in a post-modern church.

So if we apply a human analysis to the challenges we face in both the church and society, our projections may be less than optimistic.

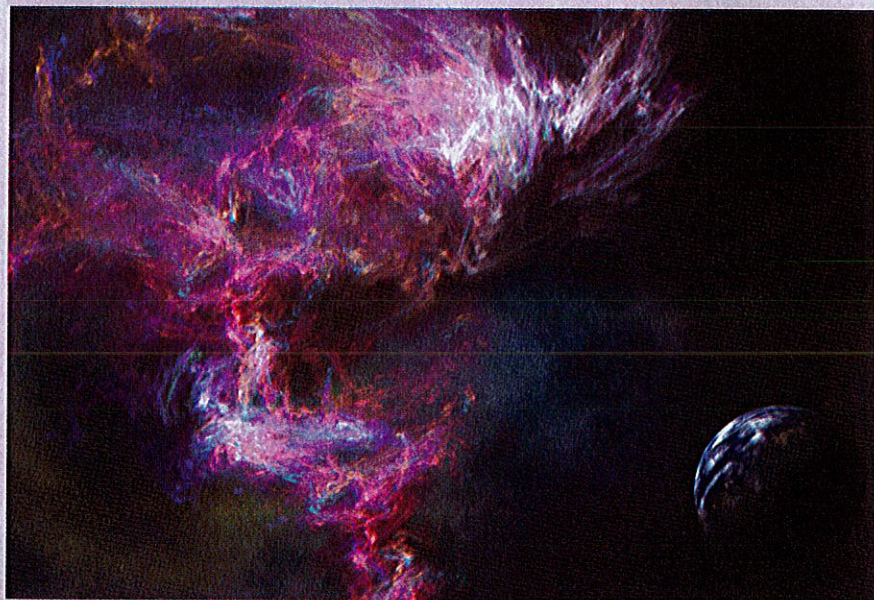
But if our future belongs to God, then our focus must be on what Scripture says about His future. Only when we ponder from the perspective of Inspiration God's vision of the future and how He intends to accomplish it can we assess our individual and corporate roles.

## God's Glorious Future

The most vivid picture of God's future is found in Revelation 21:1-8. Here John describes the culmination of all divine activity since the Fall. In verses 1-4, the shape and character of the new creation, necessitated by the corruption of God's original plan, is revealed. In the New Jerusalem, the new headquarters of the universe, there are no vestiges of wickedness—nothing that is against God's sovereign reign.

The key to God's future is captured in these words: "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them. And they will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain. For the old order of things has passed away' " (Rev. 21: 3,4). Here is the essence of God's future; the original union is restored; God is in their midst. Now, finally, what God sent Jesus to die for has been achieved, eternally.

But before God's glorious future is realized, Scripture reveals that the people of God will face unprecedented trials and hardships. Trouble is in God's future, and that trouble will impact the church. According to Ellen White, the people of God are prepared for this trying hour when mercy no



longer pleads for humanity. Their preparation is the reception of the character of Christ. They have searched their hearts for unconfessed sin, and cling to the power of God. But those who are not prepared will not be able to resist the trials of Satan. Their confessions reflect fear of punishment rather than true contrition (see *The Great Controversy*, pp. 613-621).

God's glorious future is certain. Christ will intercede to rescue His people and finally defeat and destroy the enemy. God will accomplish the future through the same paradoxical and disturbing means that characterizes His activity throughout salvation history: through divine power, and not through the power of men (see Zech. 4:6).

It is true that God uses men and women, leaders, lay, and clergy. He gives abilities, gifts, talents, and resources. However, the primary means of accomplishing God's purposes is through divine power. Thus there will be no grounds for human boasting. Christ, the wisdom and power of God, is Heaven's means of accomplishing the future (see 1 Cor. 1:26-31).



## God's Future and the Black Work

What role do God's people play in His future? Does God have a unique role for the Black church to play based on our unique experience?

In the book *Sit, Walk, Stand*, by Watchman Nee, the three words in the title serve as metaphors to describe proper living before God. For Nee, "sit" discloses our position in Christ, "walk" describes our life in the world, and "stand" depicts our attitude toward the enemy.

Through the power of God, Nee states, believers are seated now in the heavenly places with Christ, and we must begin and continue our spiritual life from this position of rest. "To sit down is simply to rest our whole weight—our load, ourselves, our future, everything—upon the Lord. We let him bear the responsibility and cease to carry it ourselves" (p. 15). Our "seated position in Christ" indicates that we are called to absolute confidence and dependence on God alone.

In the book of Acts, Christ directs the activity of His church, especially His leaders, through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The church, gifted by God and acting on His behalf, never moves independently of God. Human and material resources are marshaled based on divine guidance. Even Jesus, while on earth, said: "For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of the one who sent me" (John. 6:38; cf. 5:30). How much more should this be true of God's church?

Nee continues: "Walking is the practical outworking of that heavenly position here on earth" (p. 28). The secret strength of the Christian walk is the power of the rest in Christ. Those who sit can walk; for God, the one follows the other spontaneously. "We sit forever with Christ that we may walk continuously before men" (p. 34).

How does the call to "walk" relate to the future of Black Adventism? God's people must continually yield to God's formative work in their lives. Sanctification, the formation of the character of Christ, is God's primary aim. God is seeking a broken people, a people totally surrendered to God, a church that has relinquished control. It is only from this posture that the Holy Spirit is able to reproduce the life of Christ, the fruit of the Spirit (see Gal. 5: 22-24). As God's people become broken bread, He distributes them for the benefit of others, especially for the marginalized in society.

The Black church must redefine the focus of its evangelism, away from a primary emphasis on numbers. Our emphasis must be on discipling, reproducing what we are becoming through the power of the Holy Spirit. We must develop a new type of evangelism that leads to a deeper spirituality and a more sustained commitment to Christ. As we follow the program of Jesus, we demonstrate genuine concern for people and

**In the Black community, we encounter urban blight and human hopelessness, violence, teen pregnancy, illiteracy, HIV/AIDS, and poverty. Local church resources are inadequate to meet the need. Black Seventh-day Adventist evangelistic growth among African-Americans is stagnant.**

a passion to relieve human suffering.

Nee further states: "Every Christian must learn also to stand" (p. 52). Standing involves our spiritual warfare against Satan. Standing recognizes that Christ's victory on the cross has secured His supremacy over the whole realm of darkness. Our role is to defend the territory that is already ours.

How do we as Black Adventists stand, individually and corporately?

The church must never forget that our warfare is against Satan, the enemy of Christ. The scope of the conflict is cosmic. This understanding is important, first, because our human abilities are impotent against the enemy. No matter how well we plan, fund, or implement our strategies, we are no match for Satan. Could that be the reason for so many setbacks in our work? It is well known that we may baptize 100 and in less than a

year be able to contact only a few.

Second, Satan's methods are subtle and deceptive. Do we recognize that the adversary pits us against one another, whether laity or clergy, Black or White, old or young? Do you think that it is a coincidence that at this crucial moment in history, energy is drained from our work by ethnic rivalry? In spite of the present popularity of prosperity theology, Christianity and capitalism are not the same. You cannot serve God and money. Is it not time that our homes, schools, churches, and conferences study the strategies given by God to defeat the enemy of our souls?

## Conclusion

Beloved, our future belongs to God. Our hope is anchored in the faithfulness of God. We are able to persevere because we know that Jesus Christ will triumph. "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jer. 29:11). ▼



**Gregory J. Allen, Th.D.,** is chairman of the Department of Religion and Theology at Oakwood College.

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# MESSAGE MAGAZINE: ONE HUNDRED SEVEN YEARS AND COUNTING

BY RON C. SMITH

**S**ince 1898, *Message* magazine, North America's oldest Black Christian lifestyle periodical, has grown and developed as the church's journal witness to Black America. James Edson White, son of SDA Church co-founder Ellen G. White, began *Message* magazine as the *Gospel Herald* in 1898, featuring a unique witnessing approach.

Because racial hatred and its violence endangered newly freed Southern Blacks pursuing formal education, White's *Morning Star* sailed Mississippi's Yazoo River as a cruising publishing, printing, and circulation steamboat, providing both safety, mobility, and wide unique distribution channels!

In the early 1900s, White established the Gospel Herald Publishing Company in Nashville, Tennessee. Here additional magazines, books, and other printed materials further educated and evangelized Southern Blacks. Then as now, *Message's* mission as a Christian-lifestyle magazine concerns itself with education, financial independence, mental health, and Christian development. *Message* continues to link Black Christian people around the world to spiritual, emotional, and physical camaraderie in the presence of challenging times.

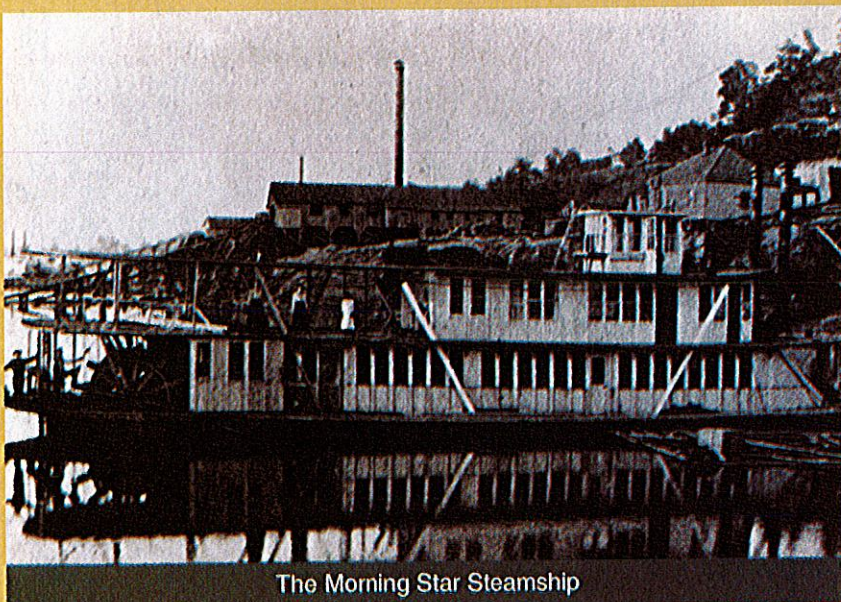
Along with appeals for educational and evangelistic support, *Message*, since inception, urged Adventist families to move back to the South to enrich their entrepreneurial journey due to emerging business opportunities. A significant portion of Edson White's two-fold goal was to strengthen the relationships between Southern Blacks and Whites. Subsequently, *Message* has participated consistently in civil rights causes, self-determination struggles, and ethnic diversity awareness campaigns.

Education, economic development, emotional wellness, and evangelism remain immutable *Message* commitments. Consequently, *Message*:

1. Heightens the self-image of our almost 100,000 readers by reinforcing the truth that all persons are created in the image of God, and as such possess inestimable worth.

2. Presents a Jesus Christ applicable to real life. Therefore and occasionally, *Message* may alienate some who've grown too comfortable in their Christianity!

3. Establishes a platform for a Christian, church-based, and powerfully liberating theology that so models the biblical witness that it is potentially world-changing; and



The Morning Star Steamship

4. Extends the skills necessary to maximize your interfamily relations despite everyday hardships. *Message* also wants to familiarize Black Christians with materials and methods that enhance holistic family enrichment.

Thirteen editors and 107 years later in this new millennium, *Message* is still changing lives. This new millennium should not heighten our pessimism or fear. Instead, it offers us a new window of opportunity for hope and faith en route to eternity.

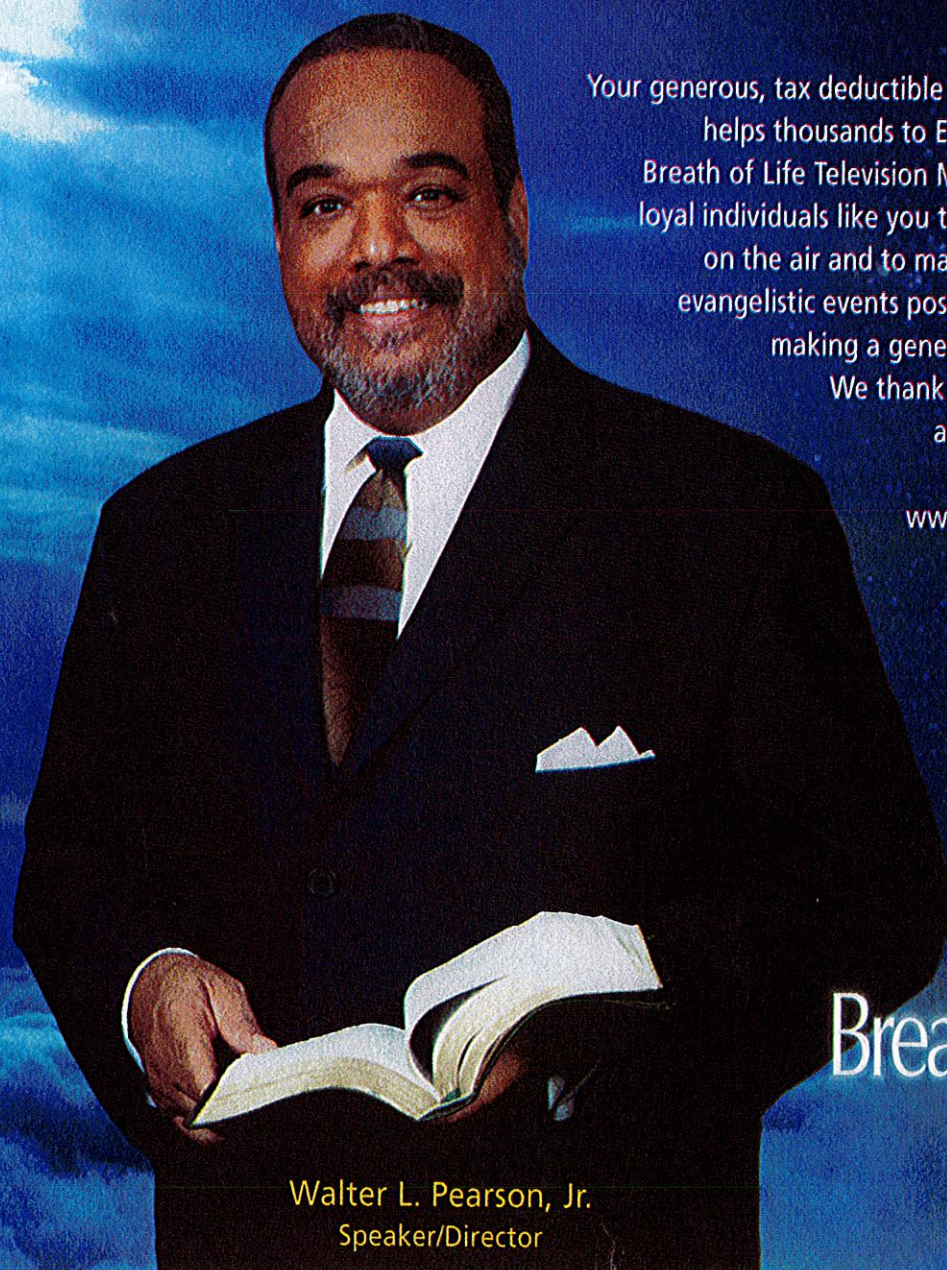
What a time for *Message* to stand tall! ▼



Ron C. Smith, D.Min., Ph.D., is vice president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association and Editor-in-Chief of *Message* magazine.



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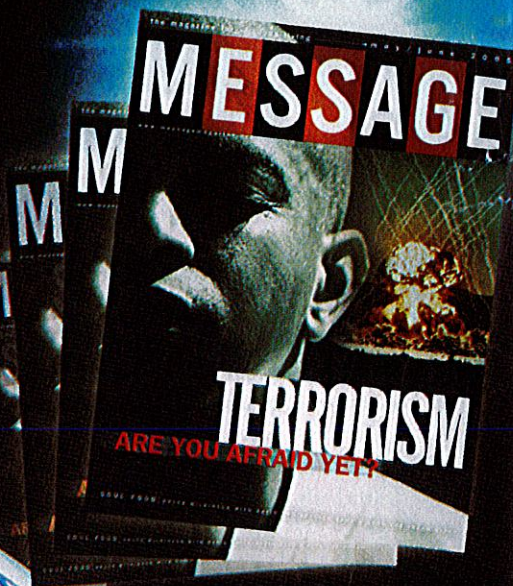
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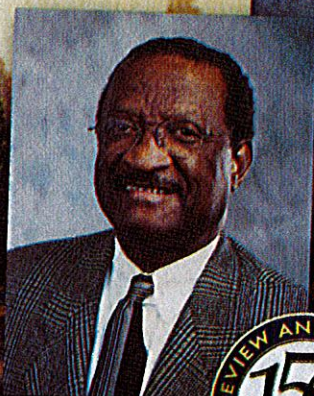


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