

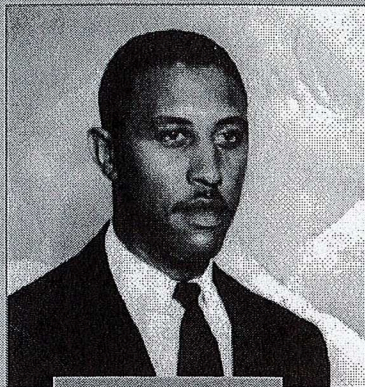


Celebrating the Life
of Evangelist

George H. Patrick Rainey

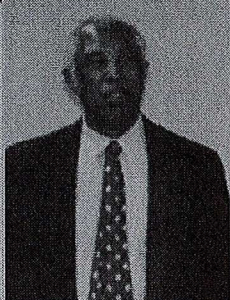
Obituary

October 19, 1923 ~ November 8, 2006



George Rainey, one of six siblings (Catherine, Dorothy, SC, Beatrice and Pauline) born to Slymer and Elizabeth Rainey. With the exception of having lived in Pittsburgh, Pa., for a short time, the family lived in Danville, Va., until they moved to an 88 acre farm in Ridgeway Va., that his family inherited from their grandparents.

Living on the farm was so exciting yet hard work for young Rainey. The family kept warm around a fireplace or an old iron stove. He had to cut wood and haul it home; get up early in the morning and start the fire. The family had to grow most of its food, yet feeding six children in those days was not an easy task. Their survival was left to a merciful God for Rainey's father died at an early age and his mother had to work in the homes of white people to provide for her family.



During Rainey's education he was kept out of school many days because he was tall and strong enough to work. He earned a dollar a day. During his high school years, he took a job at a sawmill working for his great uncle cutting down trees and hauling them to town for sale. Rainey earned enough money to help his mother buy clothes and food to feed support the family. When a little older, he got a job at W.M. Bassett furniture factory in Martinsville, Va., about 10 miles away from home.

Military Leads to God's Service

World War II began Dec. 7, 1941. Shortly after he was drafted in the Navy and served for two and a half years. He wanted to serve in the army but he was glad the Navy won out. It proved to be what he needed and while serving on a ship he was called by God to serve Him. George loved to tell the story in his evangelistic efforts about how he had to battle the powers of the U.S. to keep the Sabbath while he was in the Navy.

After being discharged from the navy, Rainey enrolled at Oakwood College in Huntsville Ala. At Oakwood College Rainey met his life companion, Martha J. Ricks, to whom other than God, he owed most of his success in the gospel ministry. The couple remained together for 56 years and had six children, Cyndy, Jeanetta, Georgetta, Ricks-Rainey, Gordon, and Patrick Ricks.

The Call and the Mission

The Rainey's graduated from Oakwood in 1950 and immediately received a call from the South Central Conference to conduct evangelistic meetings in Mississippi. With the help of Robert Seard, the couple baptized 600 souls and organized five churches during those years. That was only the beginning of a vibrant and spirit-blessed ministry. Evangelism was his focus from the very start and he proved to be not only gifted, but anointed for it. While serving as an evangelist, he earned his masters of Divinity at Andrews University.

There are many remarkable memories and stories to share, but one of the most memorable was the moving of a church from a slave plantation to a main street in the city of Hollandale, Miss. This was monumental because it was the first Seventh-day Adventist Church purchased in Hollandale and the first Adventist group organized there. All of this was accomplished before Rainey was ordained.

His ordination came in 1953 and he became the evangelist for the South Central Conference. In 1956, he was called to the Allegheny Conference located in Richmond Virginia at the time. As conference evangelist, Elder and Mrs. Rainey held two consecutive summer meetings in Richmond. Approximately 275 souls were baptized in these two meetings. In 1958 the family moved from

Richmond and began evangelizing in Norfolk, Va. About 100 souls were baptized in the Atlantic Ocean as hurricane Helen was passing through and assisted the baptism with a very high wave.

During the summer of 1959, he held a meeting in Roanoke Virginia. In 1960 he started a church in Lynchburg and also held a church meeting in Petersburg.

Elder Rainey became pastor/evangelist of the Allegheny Conference in 1961. He also served as associate ministerial secretary for the Atlantic Union Conference, located in South Lancaster, Mass. He was the first black person to hold any position in the Atlantic Union Conference. He was asked to live in New York for one year before moving to Massachusetts. During that time, Elder and Mrs. Rainey organized two new churches in Bronx New York: one African American and one Spanish American church after baptizing more than 250 souls. Evangelistic meetings were also held in New Haven and Hartford, Conn. Finally after 18 months, the Rainey's were allowed to move to South Lancaster, Mass.

The Rainey's spent the summer of 1965 in Buffalo, New York. Mrs. Rainey says it was a glorious summer. Sometimes the family drove across the bridge to Canada to view Niagara Falls. In the fall of 1966, the Raineys spent four months on the beautiful island of Bermuda. Upon returning to Massachusetts, he continued traveling and performing his duties as associate ministerial secretary.

Rainey held many evangelistic meetings even in Canada and Maine. It was so cold in Maine that he preached nightly in an air bubble reaching thousands. In spite of the challenges of life the couple said their ministry in the Atlantic Union was rewarding.

A Heart for the Inner-City

In 1972-1974, the Raineys moved to the Lake Region Conference in Detroit, Mich. Elder Rainey became the administrator of an Inner City Outreach Center for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist.

In 1974-1995, the Rainey family moved to Los Angeles California to pastor the University Church. During his two-year tenure, he held an evangelistic meeting with the help of pastors, Bible workers and church members. He conducted a field school for Andrews University, which was only one of many more to follow. Approximately five students came from the University to work in the meetings. During one of these meetings, Richard Penniman (Little Richard) was baptized.

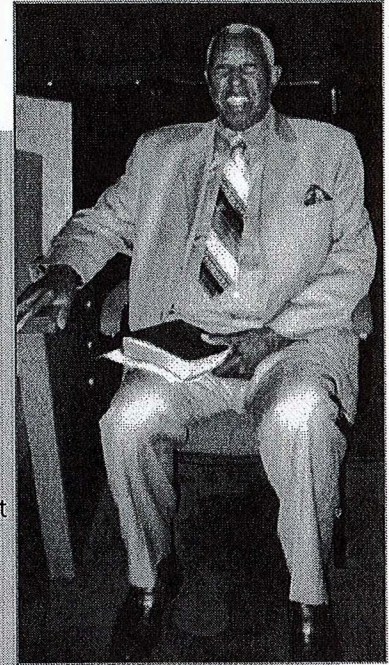
Elder Rainey organized several churches in South California Conference including Maranatha, Smyrna, Compton Community, Carson, Watts and Mount Carmel. He held tent meetings for Tamarind, Breath of Life, Ephesus and assisted with building up several other churches in the metropolitan Los Angeles area. He also evangelized in San Diego for the Southeastern California Conference and planted the Maranatha Church.

A city-wide evangelistic meeting in Oakland, Calif., yielded more than 200 souls under the preaching of the gifted evangelist. The couple conducted a meeting in Portland, Ore., for the North Pacific Union and they were loaned to the Lake Region Conference, in Chicago Ill., as well. With the help of a group of ministerial students from Andrews a new church was organized.

There was a city wide Evangelistic meeting in Oakland California. Elder Rainey baptized over 200 souls. Elder & Mrs. Rainey conducted a meeting in Portland Oregon for the North Pacific Union. Approximately 215 people were baptized. Evangelist Rainey was loaned to the Lake Region Conference, in Chicago Illinois, and with the help of another group of Andrews' University Ministerial Students, approximately 222 people were baptized and a new church was organized.

Evangelist & Mrs. Rainey also held a meeting in Lexington Kentucky for the Southern Union where 67 new believers were added to the church.

All over the United States, Evangelist & Mrs. Rainey had many church meetings where many souls were baptized. Elder Rainey was called upon when needed to serve as interim pastor, and would lead



Obituary (continued)

souls to Christ and baptism during those times as well.

World-wide Evangelists

Evangelist and Mrs. Rainey conducted numerous successful crusades outside of the United States. He has held evangelistic efforts in Canada, Bermuda, Trinidad, Jamaica, Barbados, Central America, Bahamas, Japan, Indonesia and London and other parts of the world.

After leaving University Adventist Church as pastor in 1977, Rainey went to Porta Spain Trinidad. Following E.E. Cleveland, he had a second evangelistic meeting and baptized over 300 precious souls and started a church which was named, The Rainey Temple. Evangelist went to St. Lucia in the Caribbean. Little Richard helped in his ministry there. This was a large hall meeting, which was well attended to overflowing. George added to the church 200 members, and a famous cricket player was also baptized. During this time, Evangelist Rainey sermonized throughout the region, Island hopping preaching and proclaiming the good news of Christ Jesus.

In 1980, Evangelist Rainey returned to Trinidad and added to the Rainey Temple congregation, where over 200 more souls came to know the Lord. God gave Rainey the

privilege to preach in Kingston Jamaica two times. The first time he baptized over 300 souls. Two years later, he returned to Kingston when approximately 1000 souls were baptized. It was an exciting time, when the Jamaica Conference had many pastors and Bible Instructors worked for God. You can imagine after Elder Rainey gave evangelism instruction every day, the workers would go out into their designated territories spreading the Word of God. Many of them had to walk all afternoon working for God. When the baptism came there were 10 baptismal pools scattered around and all hands were raised when Elder Rainey gave the charge from God "I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." It was a Pentecost experience. People were perched in the trees looking, listening, and witnessing the Holy Spirit being poured out upon the new believers.

Evangelist Rainey's ministry took him to Barbados when he baptized over 300 souls. Another church was organized and called "The Rainey Temple." Like Paul, he was fortunate to visit this church several times and gave encouragement to the saints. In the interim of 1980, Rainey held an Evangelistic Worship Ministerial Seminar on Evangelism in London England. Evangelist returned a year later, conducting a large evangelistic crusade for the London England Conference adding more than 100 new believers to the church.

His evangelistic ministry in Tokyo, Japan was the highlight of his ministry. The evangelistic program was highly organized. The meetings were widely publicized and Rainey preached in an auditorium in downtown Tokyo. In the mornings, he enjoyed riding on the Bullet Trains with the conference officials (Japanese) in order to be on time for the preaching appoints. The auditorium was overflowing with people by 10 a.m. University students were witnessing in the streets, markets and other facilities. People came with shopping bags to hear the gospel. He returned from the city in order to rest in the afternoon in preparation for the evening meetings, which was held in the Tokyo, Japan's hospital auditorium. While many people accepted Christ and took their stand, because of the influence of Buddha, these individuals were placed in baptismal classes.

The last overseas evangelist meetings George Rainey held were in Montego Bay, Jamaica. The Lord blessed and over 200 souls were baptized, and a new church was organized. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

