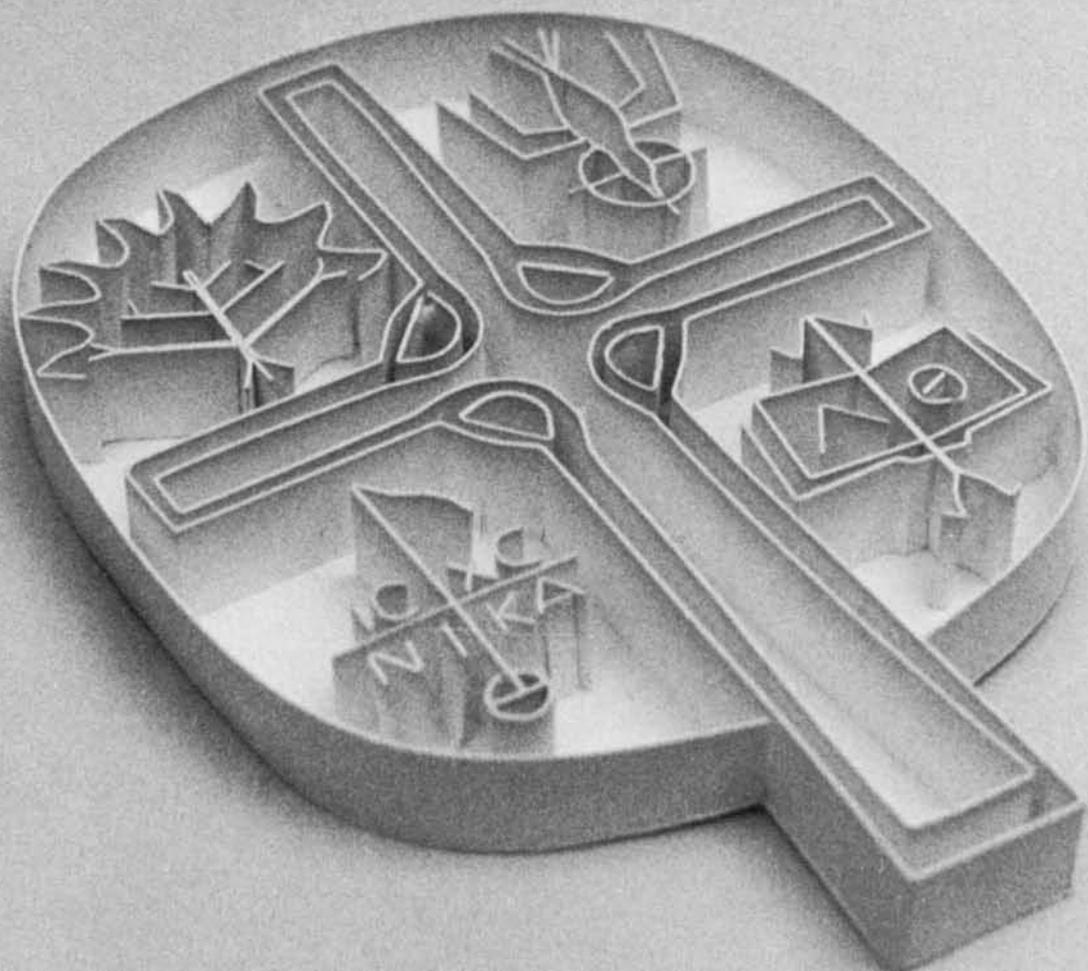


PERISCOPE ~ 2

BLACK PRESBYTERIANISM—YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW
175 YEARS OF MINISTRY—1807-1982





Rev. John Gloucester, 1771-1822

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INTRODUCTION

Periscope 2 is the second of two issues commemorating 175 years of Black Presbyterianism. The time frame between the Civil War era and the present is given major attention, but some thought has also been given to the years immediately ahead that will lead us into the 21st century.

The mood of the journal articles is one of black self-confidence and hope which should be recognized for what they really are: a tribute of genuine appreciation to our forebears and our contemporaries who have suffered the indignities and disabilities of discrimination in the exercise of their ministry. They have endured, in spite of it all; and having endured, they have been a blessing to the whole church and have bequeathed to us a legacy of perseverance and achievement through trial. They lived in the awareness that the true church is a community of God's people seeking to become an instrument in establishing the rule of justice, righteousness, and peace in the life of all peoples.

The lead article, a reflective editorial statement, borrows from that legacy by suggesting that our church will experience no redemption from the values and attitudes of this world apart from a new and vital relationship with Blacks—one that enables their fullest participation in the work and witness of the church and shows sincere regard for the perspectives they bring to it. Such also is the mood of the symposium writers who suggest that Blacks must look to their leadership and their support community to be the most likely source for overcoming their "reunion" anxieties and apprehensions and preparing a future for them of dignity and usefulness in the reunited church. If there is reason to wonder about the basis of this confidence in a black "deliverance," it will be profitable to read and read again the historical overview, *The Spirit of Black Presbyterianism*. It is a story of perseverance and achievement through trial.

The point is further driven home in the essay on the four Moderators whose recognized gifts have brought new strength to the denomination and increased appreciably the credibility of its witness among Third World peoples here and around the world. The mention of their leadership also brings to mind the persons such as Irvin Underhill and James H. Robinson whose participation in the church's presence in Africa were influential in overseas mission policy changes and in opening doors for other Blacks to serve.

Two other articles, one on church-related school educators in the south during the decades following the Civil War and the other on contemporary congregational ministries, underscore the tremendous influence these two institutions have had in the forming of a people who were once regarded as no people. Through their participation and endurance the church is enabled more fully to become the body of Christ, the temple of the living God. Today they are the source of our self-confidence and hope.



First African Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, PA

The concluding paragraphs of the epilogue to **Periscope I** provide a helpful stimulus to our reflections upon the information and ideas set forth in this current issue, **Periscope II**. In these words there is a reminder of origins, a call to contemporary responsibility and a forecasting of destiny: "Black Presbyterianism survives, persists and, in some ways, flourishes within the context of a system which struggles valiantly to transmute the "Household of Hope" into a community of prophetic accomplishment. In this sense, the celebration in which we engage is an act in tribute to the faith of our forebears, a resonant call to courageous faithfulness by communicants and leadership in this generation and a challenge to the vision, commitment and integrity of the whole church for the century ahead."

Black Presbyterians and Black Presbyterianism cannot be sorted out or unravelled from the fabrics interwoven within the texture of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Black persons and black congregations became Presbyterian in ways and for reasons similar to the motivations and prompting which led others into the American brand of the Reformed witness, tradition and ecclesiastical structure. From the establishment of the first Presbyterian church in North America at Southold, Long Island in 1640 to the date of the first General Assembly in 1789 there was, undoubtedly, a trickle of Black traffic in and out of this communion under a variety of conditions. By the time of the founding of the First African Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia in 1807, there were

A CONTINUING PILGRIMAGE

Black Presbyterians and Black Presbyterianism

at least two generations of black persons with some kind of Presbyterian contact and identification.

As we celebrate the one hundred seventy-six years of black Presbyterianism, some of the oldest members of our families take considerable pride in tracking their Presbyterian affiliation through seven or eight generations. One of the questions addressed by **Periscope I** in the article entitled "The Spirit of Black Presbyterianism, 1807-1861," was this "Why would black people join a church as racially oppressive as the Presbyterian Church, and remain in it?" It is likely that no completely satisfying or convincing answer has been or will be given to this question. The need to wrestle with this question becomes more pressing as we move across the years into the twenty-first century. Perhaps why they remained is more difficult to rationalize than why they joined.

During these one hundred seventy-five years about which we have been talking and writing, the black experience has been so assaulted and impacted by peculiar conditions, circumstances, impasses and negations that the principle of volunteerism and open options has been subverted by what were considered to be strategies of survival. This subversion has operated even in matters of moral/ethical commitment and religious affiliation. Is there today any ambivalence in the stance of black Presbyterians? Does the history of seventy thousand black communicants and four hundred black congregations suggest that through these seven or eight generations we have been perched precariously on the brink of denominational schizophrenia?

Black babies were born into black Presbyterian families and were nurtured in the faith of the family through childhood into the years of young adult decision-making. As a matter of course, children of the third generation became staunch adherents to the faith of their parents. And so, the line moved on. To this must be added the influence of the one hundred thirty schools as conservers of the faith in young persons from Presbyterian homes and propagators of the faith among youth from other or no religious persuasion. As illustrative of this process, one might be permitted a brief autobiographical digression, as follows: I was a child of the manse at the begin-

ning of this century. Life in the home, in the church, in the parochial school, in a Presbyterian secondary school, college and theological seminary laid broad and deep foundations of faith and practice without any severance of association in the black community or any detachment from the most rugged aspects of the black experience. To be Presbyterian was to be aware of oneself as a disciple of Jesus Christ, to be sensitive and responsive to the needs, aspirations and endowments of other persons and to grow into widening spheres of usefulness with the inspiration, challenge, undergirding and discipline of a supportive community of faith. This is not an isolated testimony. There was the great-uncle whose ministry included the Midway Presbyterian Church in Liberty County, Georgia in the 1870s and a father who served as pastor and evangelist in the Carolinas from 1891 through the first quarter of the 1900s. Rootage in Presbyterianism was deepened as members of the family attended church-related schools in Liberty County and later became students at Scotia Seminary (now Barber-Scotia College), Biddle University (now Johnson C. Smith) and Lincoln University, Pennsylvania. This story "on becoming a Presbyterian" can be told by thousands of the faithful who have found in this communion a reassuring instrumentality for discipleship and witness.

Just as congregations from time to time re-examine the nature and direction of their call to mission, so must the individual parishioner review critically the difference between the formalities of church membership and the essentials of Christian discipleship. Some of the factors that affect one's choice of a particular church or denomination result in decisions that are inevitable, coincidental or intentional. For many children born into Presbyterian families "the die is cast," the choice is made out of loyalty or yielding to tradition. For others it is instantaneous reaction to a "great experience"—a radio sermon, attending a service of public worship, engaging in a human service project, appeal of a friend. The intentional decision issues from a quest for meaning in the major engagements of one's life and the search for affirmation and reinforcement in pursuit of "the abundant life." The experience of black Presbyterians at this juncture in the life of the Presbyterian Church in the United States

of America gives cause for thoughtful assessment of the character, quality and effects of the Black presence in a church writhing in the travail of reunion.

The basic reality of being integral to the structure, equipment, purposes and priorities of the household of faith is discovered in the shared life of local congregations. This reality is manifest in every engagement in mission and in every decision on the deployment of the human and material resources of the church. It is clearly visible in the overtures and actions of every decision-making body from the session of First Presbyterian Church to the General Assembly of the Church reunited. The dynamics of this shared life extend from the agenda of the annual congregational meeting to the farthest reaches of concern about the plight, problems and potentialities of the whole family of God, locally and worldwide.

However politicized and conservatized may be the postponements of decision on crucial issues in the life of the church, it is possible that the reunited Church may be enabled to transcend itself and experience the reality of "one family under God" in the global mission of the church. In this experience there could be over-ruling manifestations of the Sovereignty of God and the Headship of Jesus Christ in the lives of God's people and in the composition and operation of their institutions. With our vision so lifted and our courage bolstered, the whole church would recognize that the oneness which is ours in Jesus Christ has its functional and symbolic variations in the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, the United Church of Northern India, the Presbyterian Church in the Cameroun, the National Evangelical Church of Syria/Lebanon, The Kyodon in Japan, The Presbyterian Church in Korea, and beyond. On another level we share a faith and make a common witness through such bodies as through the All Africa Conference Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the World Council of Churches and through celebrations such as World Communion and One Great Hour of Sharing. As the fact of physical presence becomes the guarantee of full franchise in all the affairs of the concerned bodies, then we are saying that in all essential ways, "we belong to God and we belong to one another."

In reaffirming the identity of black Presbyterianism with the message and mission of the Presbyterian Church USA there is awareness of need for a communion of mind and spirit stronger than networks of programmatic communication, richer than resources for church growth and new church development, and more redemptive than up-dated schemes for a "new evangelism." Together in the whole church we are called to the high adventure of giving God a chance with all our forms and expressions of faith. For a church so enthralled by life-denying attitudes, procedures and structures there will be risks and some tribulations. In this moment in its history the soul of the church may be recovered and its ministry revitalized by listening again to the words of Jesus to the disciples "In the world you will have tribulations, but be of good courage, I have overcome the world." So, in our quest for wholeness, let us trust God and see the difference; let us respond to the working of the Holy Spirit and take the consequences. Even in the midst of serious doubts, we do not lose heart. God sustains us in our hope. Such an earthen vessel as black Presbyterianism can be a transforming agent releasing fresh streams of understanding, compassion and adventure into the life of the whole church.

To move confidently into the next century of Presbyterianism, the whole church must reckon with some stubborn questions about itself in reference to the black presence, perspective and participation. A point of beginning for such introspection is to re-assert the assurance contained in the closing verses of chapter two of Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, "You are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are co-citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord . . ."

The Presbyterian Church USA begins with an extended docket of old business and new business with respect to social justice, racism, sexism and power based upon class and economic affluence. Of these, the spectre of race and color has been the most alarming and disconcerting item on the denominational agenda. A review of the record indicates that on this item both parts of the church reunited have been as

much "of the world" as "in the world" in fundamental attitudes and performance. There is wide discrepancy between policies and resolutions formulated through General Assemblies at the national level and the practices of congregations and lower judicatories at the local and regional levels. One of the results of reunion will be the broadening of the base of the conservative center and reducing the size and the clout of forces to the right and left of center. The cutting edge of the church on matters involving race, poverty, employment, uses of nuclear power, housing, political and economic corruption will be severely blunted. Among the effects of this broadened base of conservatism may well be the reduced black presence at the power centers of the church where far-reaching decisions are made and long-range priorities are determined.

A brief listing of questions that must be addressed in reference to the presence and participation of blacks in the membership and leadership of the church would include the following:

1. What are the discernible indications that the Presbyterian Church USA is ready to deal with issues involving the black presence and participation in the whole mission of the church?
2. What are the basic principles guiding the work of the Committees on Representation, so that the patterns of representation will be church-wide and not regional or sectional?
3. What deferred actions of the reunited Church require immediate review and prompt resolution?
4. What influence will black leadership have on decisions regarding minority institutions?
5. How will questions of social justice and racial/ethnic leadership remain high in the mission priorities of the church?
6. What are the resources in black membership and black leadership for the enrichment and extension of the church's mission?

There are indicators of oneness in the Body of Christ which go farther and deeper than the statistical, structural and procedural measures of participation. These more subtle and significant

signs of “varieties of gifts, but the same spirit” and “varieties of service, but the same Lord” will be more convincing and reassuring evidences of wholeness in the behavior of the reunited Church:

When Blacks are expected to take the initiative in joining the issue and pressing the dialogue on matters other than racial/ethnic justice and minority education;

When the acceptability of Blacks is neither determined nor enhanced by their being objects of pity, pun and paternalism;

When the black presence in prominent positions in the church does not mark them as “tokens,” “Toms,” “window-dressing” or “front-runners”;

When Ministerial Relations Committees do not consider it an affront to receive dossiers from black candidates for pastorates in non-minority congregations;

When urban ministries in ethnic ghettos have a real stake in the mission priorities of the church;

When the inclusion of aspects from “the black idiom” and “the black religious heritage” is welcomed as a source of enrichment in the discipleship and worship of the whole church;

When it will be unnecessary to make the disclaimer from the General Assembly platform that a black person was elected moderator, not because he or she is black, but because of knowledge of the church and demonstrated competence as a church person.

Black Presbyterianism is distilled from the compounded agonies, vicissitudes, aspirations and certainties issuing from the experience of the whole black community. Black persons and black families have found in the Presbyterian “faith and order” a relationship and an instrumentality struggling to respond to God’s commands for justice and righteousness in the land of the living. This is a pilgrimage of faith. It has been and continues to be within the boundaries of a nation grappling with the weight of iniquity in all its institutions and within a church suffering from the contradictions between the demands of its mission as the “Body of Christ” and the sin of its conformity to the demands of the “market place”

and the “body politic.”

As members of this Community of Faith, black Presbyterians will remain steadfast in the continuing pilgrimage. Surrounded by disturbing question marks, they still have the courage to be and the capacity to hope. They are sustained, as were their forebears, by the knowledge that the reality of God in history is confirmed by the reality of the Spirit of God in the human heart and the amazing power of the Holy Spirit in the affairs of the people of God.

The quality of faith too frequently observed in the pilgrimage has been fraught with uncertainty, plagued by unpredictability and saturated with innocent sentimentality. This continuing venture requires hardy faith infused with the awareness of things hoped for, the assurance of things not seen. It will mean that Blacks in this church will not be too impressed with being Presbyterian, but more impelled by being disciples of Jesus Christ. Clergy will be less enamoured with the vestments of the priest and more enthralled by the virtues of the prophet. Laypersons will be less eager for the honor of high office and more enraptured by the satisfactions of a high calling. In refreshing their energies as instruments of Liberation, black clergy and laity will recognize that black bigotry is as repulsive as white bigotry, black demagoguery is as offensive as white demagoguery, black chauvinism is as objectionable as white chauvinism.

The black presence, perspective and participation in the total mission of the whole church will move into dimensions without boundaries or limitations as black membership and leadership in church move . . .

- from grateful recipients to self-reliant contributors,
- from faithful functionaries to resourceful practitioners,
- from crafty verbalizers to committed craftpersons,
- from comfortable conformists to creative catalysts,
- from ruffled reactors to forceful initiators.

Again and again the people of God are *called out and called onward*. The urging of the “cloud of witnesses” is unmistakable. John Gloucester, John Chavis, Henry Highland Garnet, Theodore Wright, Lucy Laney, Francis Grimke, Mary McLeod Bethune, James J. Wilson, Edler Hawkins and a host of others say to Black Presbyterians today, “Tell the people of God to go forward!”

—Frank T. Wilson, Sr.

A SYMPOSIUM: Visions, Dreams, Expectations as Blacks in the Reunited Church.

The three clergypersons and one lay person have written out of their life experiences in the Church—two, who are at the beginning or early stages of ministry; two whose life and experience in the Church qualify them as veterans.

A VISION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The eighties confront black Americans in general and black United Presbyterians in particular with serious challenges posed by the changing circumstances of our times. Throughout black America, there is a feeling of isolation; of turning back the clock; retreat from civil rights gains and social service programs established after years of struggle; of increased violence against Blacks and other minorities from far-rightist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. In certain areas, the black teenage unemployment rate is over 40%; and the median income among black families remains at half that of white families. A new tide of economic and political conservatism delays the social change needed to revitalize and rebuild our cities. Affirmative action programs are being challenged.

The words of the late Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. may very well reflect today's mood:

People are depressed, frustrated, downtrodden. They see no hope. They see no tomorrows . . . Promises have been broken and their dawn refuses to rise. They are walking in the midnights of sorrow, in the midnight of frustration, in the midnight of despair. Too long have they waited in vain—poor and illiterate—for better jobs, better housing, better education, better hospitals. Yet, the conditions have not changed except for the people who have always lived in the penthouses.

For the people who live in the basements, in the cellars, their lives are still drab, ugly, and without hope.

In some areas the church seems to embrace the philosophy of the Reagan administration. The recent cloudy stance on the Bob Jones University issue at the Hartford General Assembly may be an example. Two predominantly black, church-related educational institutions, Boggs Academy and Barber Scotia College, are in financial difficulty. There is a decline of Blacks on decision-making boards/committees at presbytery and synod levels. The Plan of Reunion does not guarantee full Black participation in power positions. Blacks in the south stand a chance of losing executive positions, churches, and concerns for mission to minorities.

A group of black pastors in the Synod of the



Piedmont, in October 1982, identified the following implications of the Plan of Reunion:

Negative Implications:

- Possible loss of administrative positions
- Loss of churches due to dissolutions and mergers
- Program funding curtailments
- Loss of Identity
- Loss of black history
- Loss of Interest In judicatory affairs
- Loss of potential ministerial colleagues
- Loss of black participants on governing boards or synods, presbyteries and General Assembly
- Change in life style
- Loss of power
- Loss of community
- Depersonalization
- Operating under Robert's Rules of Order rather than Rules of Judicatory
- Mandatory retirement
- Re-examination of ministers as they move from Presbytery to Presbytery.

Positive Implications:

- Reuniting of the Body of Christ
- Operating under a more strict interpretation of the Book of Order
- Session's oversight given a better definition
- Better utilization of resources
- Greater contact across racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Force the church to be "The Church"
- Louder national voice
- Congregations must take a more honest and committed view of stewardship
- Blacks and Whites are placed in a position to confront each other
- More creativity in our ministries
- Cause for personal and corporate re-examination
- Reuniting of PCUS and UPCUSA black ministers and congregations
- Being a prophetic voice within the denomination
- Larger commitment for caring and sharing
- Larger commitment to the concept of community

The above perceptions may help to formulate the working agenda for the 1980's. Regardless of the reunion vote, we must begin to make plans for the future.

My vision of the future church is based on my struggle with two basic questions:

1. How will Blacks utilize their gift of blackness to address the current problems and

work toward building a brighter tomorrow under the Lordship of Jesus Christ?

2. How will the Presbyterian Church witness to the good news of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and assist Blacks, youth, and women reach their full potential within the church and within a wider hostile society?

If we permit the Holy Spirit to use us and our creative energies, I envisage a resurrected church and a reforming church that manifests itself as:

1. **Christ-centered and where the liberating power of Jesus Christ is the central message of the entire church program**

In this church the power in the future will be obtained from the Holy Spirit. This power will lead to renewal and commitment to the love of Jesus Christ. With this power we all face the uncertainties of the future and become more obedient to the Spirit's leading. There will be a pervasive spirituality reflected in prayer, life, social action, christian education and evangelism. Laypersons will discover how to integrate their faith and daily actions. By learning how to think theologically, they will become lay theologians. Members will be able to articulate their experiences of God and of Christ, and the meaning which those experiences give to their lives.

Return to Christ-centeredness will enable evangelism and church growth to become a central feature of church life. The good news of Christ will confront not only individuals with the need for salvation, but corporate structures as well. People, communities, and corporations will be transformed. This fully conceived evangelistic thrust will generate fruits of changed individuals, changed economic balances between the rich and the poor, more representation of minorities in political offices, and more people from the working class or lower class on membership roles.

This Christ-centered approach preaches and teaches a gospel without a dichotomy between social-religious, soul-body and priestly-prophetic categories.

2. Mission-oriented

More dollars will be spent on outreach efforts than on institutional causes. Structures will facilitate mission. People will feel, see and hear the Good News. The church will maintain its pro-



phetic stance. While social policy issues will be addressed, direct services will still provide for hunger projects, job training projects for black teenagers, housing projects, senior citizens programs and minority education as a priority. The church will live what it preaches by depositing monies in black financial institutions, some black contractors will provide services and supplies to the churches, and there will be more visible Blacks in administrative and decision-making jobs.

Johnson C. Smith University, Barber-Scotia College, Knoxville College and Johnson C. Smith Seminary are still supported by the church. These institutions are providing qualified leadership for the church, community and nation. Johnson C. Smith Seminary prepares white and black seminarians for the pastorates in black and white congregations. No other Presbyterian seminary is adequately equipped for this unique mission.

3. Committed to the self-development of people in its ministry

Children, racial-ethnics, seasoned citizens, single parents, the homeless and people of color around the world will be provided opportunities to reach their potential. A headstart will be provided in a nonpaternalistic way. These people will define, plan, and determine their own destiny. The Euro-centric way will be only one way to view reality and interpret the Christian experience. Each experience will be validated by God.

The church's structures, programs, policies, and program resources, will enable people to achieve dignity. An intentional effort will be made to help the poor and oppressed. A concentrated effort will be made to link our lives existentially and eternally.

4. Pluralistic in its life and witness

The cultural integrity of Blacks is maintained now in the UPUSA church. Historically, black congregations, have been open and accessible to all worshippers; this will be maintained. God's gift of blackness will be shared with the

total church community. Black caucuses will be maintained and legitimized by Blacks and Whites, and strengthened so that they can become the source of sustenance and strength. They will provide the spiritual food that enables us to stand proudly beside our white Christian sisters and brothers. The Black Church is understood to be a movement that God used to sustain a people, to help a people keep their sanity. Today, the Black Church can be God's instrument to empower black people and liberate all people. Black culture and history are no longer viewed as inferior to white culture and white history.

The best of the black religious experience is found in the traditional black songs, worship styles and preaching styles. Here, also, approaches to mission are accented and appreciated. The black religious and cultural history is integral to the future vitality of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

I believe the vision will become reality. I believe that faith in God, hard work, discipline, and prayer will make the difference. The future of Blacks in America and in the Presbyterian Church is not ultimately based on a new structure, or the changing political tide, but on the fact that "truth crushed to the earth will rise again."

Some difficult days are ahead. Resources and talents must be shared. Coalitions on issues must be formed. We must live out our faith and grow in our knowledge and wisdom of the God we serve. God's power will see us through. I admit the vision is blurred. Obstacles obstruct the view. The darkness of sin, hatred, racism, classism, and sexism prevents one from seeing more clearly.

But, in the words of the gospel song:

"I don't feel no ways tired. I've come too far from where I started from. Nobody told me the roads would be easy, but I don't believe He's brought me thus far to leave me."

Lonnie Oliver



Rev. Katie G. Cannon

REUNION—What Can We Expect?

Now that reunion of the United Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in the US is a reality, there are many Blacks who wonder what the effects of this merger will be for the black constituency of the two churches. Will reunion result in a more pluralistic church or will it become stifled, and less pluralistic? As compromises are made for the sake of reunion, will there be continued compromises on those issues that affect our survival and witness in the new denomination? Will Blacks have to shout louder, push harder and strategize more seriously, in order to assure that our concerns are placed on the agenda of the reunited Church? These questions arise, not in opposition to reunion, but rather out of concern about some features of the adopted plan.

In sorting through my own reactions to reunion, I must admit that my initial response is that of apprehension. I have not been able to share the absolute confidence of many Whites in my Presbytery, who feel that reunion is merely a formality that will have little effect on any of us, especially when there is no geographical contact with any Presbyterian Church in the U.S.

Some of my anxiety can be attributed to being a young pastor who has only recently gone through that post-seminary experience of "learning the Church." There is a sense of accomplishment and confidence that comes after the trial and error process of establishing the formal and informal lines of communication, learning the specifics of where to go to have concerns addressed expeditiously, and discovering the "best" way to handle matters in our system. The thought of having changes occur in the structure, with which I am now familiar, threatens my new found sense of confidence.

Secondly, a portion of my apprehension can be attributed to being a woman concerned about the inclusiveness of women in the life of the total Church. Certainly all United Presbyterian congregations have not overcome the sexism that exists in our Church and society, but there is an awareness that our Church is addressing this issue. Knowing that the Presbyterian Church in the US has not made some of the moves that our Church has made in this direction, leads me to an expectation that United Presbyterian women will experience the reunited Church as less sensitive

to women's concerns than presently experienced.

Thirdly, I have experienced, as many other Blacks have, the lonely and sometimes frustrating experience of being the only black person on a committee. Therefore, I attribute some of my anxiety to an assumption that this will occur more frequently because, numerically, we will be even more of a minority. Are these apprehensions warranted? What does the Plan for Reunion forecast?

In the area of structural change, the plan calls for maintaining the existing boards and agencies. The issues of coordinating, combining and incorporating responsibilities will be worked out by the transitional body of the General Assembly Council. Thus, we will possibly see no dramatic structural change on the national level for five years or more. What the new design will be and if there will be a different structure, as opposed to simply a larger or expanded one, remains to be seen.

With regard to specific issues, such as ownership of church property and support of seminaries, where the Reunited Church will permit two practices to exist indefinitely, we perhaps are headed toward what may be a bitter struggle. After new synod and presbytery boundaries are established, it would seem impractical to have different support systems for seminaries in the same judicatory, and to permit a former Presbyterian Church in the US congregation to own its property while a neighboring congregation, formerly of the United Presbyterian Church, cannot enjoy the same privilege.

What is the plight of women? Needless to say, the fifteen-year exemption from the ordination of women as elders that the plan provides for those churches which prior to reunion did not ordain women raises questions. Are we entering into a relationship with a Church that does not affirm the inclusiveness of women to the same degree that our present denomination exhibits? Our Church has been intentional in trying to demonstrate its belief that women are equal partners in mission and ministry. This intentionality has resulted in mandates concerning the involvement of women in the decision-making process, and the development of strong women's organizations and committees, e.g., United Presbyterian Women, Council on Women and the

Church, Third World Women's Coordinating Committee and the Office of Women in Ministry.

The language of the plan indicates that the joint committee was aware and sensitive to the issue of inclusiveness. This is reflected in a number of provisions throughout the plan.

First of all, this statement of belief is part of the package of reunion. Although it was approved by the Presbyterian Church in the US General Assembly of 1962, it has not gone through the same kind of process that was required of our Confession of 1967 (UPCUSA).

Secondly, although it is an interim statement, it is to be "utilized with the Confessions of the Church in the instruction of Church members and officers, in the orientation and examination of ordinands prior to ordination, and of ministers seeking membership in presbyteries by transfer from other presbyteries or other Churches." (Article 3.3)

Thirdly, the Articles of Agreement promoted the practice of re-examination of Presbyterian ministers who are transferring from one Presbytery to another. Having witnessed how the examination process can vary with the given personality of a presbytery, this practice could become a basis for regional rejection of ministers, especially those who have been outspoken advocates for justice in our Church. What implications does this have for racial/ethnic ministers? For women? Does this practice contradict our understanding that when one is ordained he/she is found acceptable for ministry in the entire Church? Is re-examination necessary? When clergypersons attempt to relocate, should they be called into question about their fitness to minister, even though they have been previously ordained by our Church, approved by the congregation and/or the committees with which they have had contact prior to a particular call being extended?

I began by asking whether we will have to strategize more seriously in order to assure that our concerns are placed on the agenda of the reunited church and to assure our survival. All of the issues raised indicate that serious strategizing will have to happen. We will have to be vanguards throughout this transitional period. Blacks in the new church will have to dialogue and unite our strength to insure the continuation



of our valuable involvement and constantly remind the Church that it *must* go beyond present provisions in the plan.

I conclude with an affirmation of reunion. For me there is no question of the value of broadening our denominational arena, combining the resources that both Churches offer and creating more vocational opportunities. This is particularly advantageous for seminarians who will soon be preparing to search for placement opportunities. In a divided Church, some would undoubtedly duplicate my experience.

However, are their concerns strong and explicit enough to sustain our confidence in this plan; especially, in light of 1.9 of the Articles of Agreement, which states that every policy statement shall be in effect only "until rescinded, altered or supplanted by action of the General Assembly" of the Presbyterian Church in the USA?

Does this statement leave room for our moving backward? Although the United Presbyterian Church has a mandate concerning women being ordained as elders, we know this did not come about without opposition. Whether there are still a significant number of congregations desiring to see this obligation removed from the constitution, no one knows. However, the door is open for such congregations to form a coalition with Presbyterian Church in the US congregations who, by their omission of a specific statement, imply no sense of need to make the ordination of women a mandate.

When we review the plan in terms of its application to racial/ethnic persons, what becomes prominent is the insertion of a Committee on Representation for all governing bodies above the session. This concept is a strong affirmation! However, real concern has been echoed throughout the Church that the Committee on Representation will function only in an advisory capacity. Remember the old excuse? "We can't find any

qualified racial/ethnics." A Committee on Representation, because of its limitation in authority, will be forced to play the same game that we have had to play for so long, where the problem is presented but never resolved. The committee will have no authority to enforce its recommendations.

Some areas, because of a high concentration of racial/ethnics, will have no problems with fair representation. However, in these areas, there remains a possibility of serious conflicts in mission priorities and focus of ministry. A prime example of this possible conflict is the southeast region, where reunion will bring together a black constituency that has historically not shown a forceful urban witness. This reality coupled with the plan's weak statement on social ministry (G. 30300-G-30400) should concern all of us as much as persons who labor in that area.

Fortunately, the plan speaks more concretely on the reunited church's commitment and affirmation of our educational institutions? It commits the Church to serving the operation of black colleges and secondary schools.

Another issue that must be noted is the concern raised in the COWAC commentary on reunion (January 1982), on the *Brief Statement of Belief*, and its utilization.

I recall my own reluctance to consider placement in PCUS churches. Despite being favorably impressed by some southern churches that I visited, there was the tension of not wanting to sever connections with the Church in which my particular seminary experiences had prepared me. Reunion will provide more flexibility in placement for seminarians and indeed for all of us.

Although I have apprehensions about specific aspects of the plan, I again, affirm reunion, for it will provide a greater unity in mission with our black colleagues in the PCUS.

Gloria J. Tate



HOPES, DREAMS, AND ASPIRATIONS THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)

I write as a son of the manse. Born in a small town, I grew up in a rural setting in South Carolina. I have pastored in a small town in North Carolina for 33 years. I have seen the church take on many new forms and address itself to many changes during my lifetime. To this point in my life, I have never experienced any real relationship between Blacks and Whites in the two Churches—during the period of study and discussion of the plan. In the southeast where United Presbyterians are predominantly Black and the Presbyterian Church US is predominantly White, there has been no dialogue or evidenced concern from either group. Many of you in the church have not experienced what we in the South encounter where we are totally apart from our southern brothers and sisters. There are no Union Presbyteries in our area, which means there is no working relationship between or with each other; not even on a talking basis.

The concern that most of us have in this area of the country is the numbers games that are generally played on most minorities. If the US church fears being swallowed up by “liberal UPCUSA”, imagine what a black congregation in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia feels about being swallowed up by a group of racists who don’t want to be bothered with you to begin with. In North Carolina alone, we are outnumbered 15 to 1 in membership, 7 to 1 in churches, and 9 to 1 in ministerial leadership. What will the “numbers game” mean to Blacks in the new church in North Carolina?

Other anxieties about reunion include attitudes, working relationships, racism, support of missions, minority education, special ministries, minority pastors and representation by minorities. With all of the admissions of the Committee that the church has not included us as full partners in the family of the church, little has been done to relieve suffering, abolish discrimination and establish justice. The full personhood of women has been denied. Handicapped persons and racial/ethnic groups have been denied. Knowing that the above mentioned things have happened in the past and knowing the present attitudes and feelings of the brothers and sisters in the Presbyterian Church in the US, especially in a small community where UPC is doing mission to help all people, it is difficult to be hopeful.



Leadership Training Group, Stony Point, NY

It goes against the grain of the establishment, who are Presbyterian US members representing the political and economic power in the community, and they fight you tooth and nail to take away what you have or to destroy your image in a given community. When you have experienced these kinds of things, you tremble with fear and feel better apart than together, where there is no real meaning and sincerity in the act.

What is going to be the stand of the new Church on minority education? Our schools are important to us—to instill certain in-depth values and maintain a heritage that we do not want ever to lose. How will we feel in the new Church and what kind of supportive attitude will be evident? My greatest concern about reunion is attitude. We know that it is not going to be a “shoo-in.” There will be opposition on both sides and understandably so because of the past.

What will be the basic philosophies concerning theology-liberation vs status quo; worship style and format; traditional vs contemporary modes of ministry; program priorities; Blacks in mission vs objects of mission; social concerns such as peacemaking, economic and racial justice at home and abroad.

I don't want to be totally negative about reunion, but I want to point out the frustrations and fears that I have as a clergyman in the UPC where I have been treated with a degree of freedom, dignity and respect. I do have some hopes,

dreams, and aspirations as a Black in the Presbyterian Church USA:

1. That a black clergyman, outnumbered and in the minority, will be treated with respect, dignity, and freedom. That we will be treated as adults and not as children. It seems to be very hard for southern white men to respect any American Black as a man within his own right.
2. That the new church will be a truly united church, not just a paper arrangement; that love, health, and understanding will prevail; and that a sense of unity and oneness can be realized and a spirit of Christian cooperation prevail.
3. That there will be a sharing of resources in order to carry out mission for the best interest of all concerned, regardless of whose priority it is. I say this because we do mission differently in many ways.
4. That minority leadership in the church will be recognized and utilized in the development of the new structures.
5. That the members from both churches will come into reunion with a deep sense of dedication, and commitment to make it work,—with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Let the miracle be done: and may God bless us all!

Grover D. Nelson



NEW OCCASIONS . . . NEW DUTIES— FORWARD

I believe that the Church of Jesus Christ is one—and that our denominations and separations are not consistent with our Lord's Prayer—"that they all may be one." My affirmation for the Reunion of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA and the Presbyterian Church US is based on our oneness in Jesus Christ—and not on the concerns that I hear in the hallways, lounges and around the luncheon table i.e., "the bigger the better;" "the hard work of the Committee merits our positive vote;" or even, "that the continued withdrawal of conservative churches jeopardizes the survival of one of the denominations."

New occasions teach new duties—and I trust that it is the Holy Spirit that is guiding the reunion of the two churches in the new mission, new duties and new agenda in the 80's of a reunited Presbyterian Church, and not the structural compromises and manipulation of women and men as they vie for greater recognition and more power,—or even as they acclaim reconciliation when there is no reconciliation. I trust that the Holy Spirit will guide both churches in the new duties, tasks, commitments that press upon us.

I hail and affirm reunion—and yet, as I sort out my own reactions, my affirmations are mixed with apprehension. I do not share the complete affirmation of some of my friends and colleagues that reunion will make no difference whatsoever to those of us in areas where there is no geographical contact with any PCUS body. Mainly, my anxieties arise out of who I am.

As a black woman, I served on the national executive staff of the UPCUSA for nearly thirty years—in this country and overseas. I worked during my entire professional life in the educational ministry of the church, working with clergy and laity in black and white churches, helping them to bring biblical and theological criteria to their struggles and to their prejudices. I was involved in the struggle to make the pictures and illustrations in the teaching resources and curricula for children, youth and adults, inclusive of black and other ethnic minorities in the church. (Finally, achieved two black children in the choir on the cover of the Primary Department book in the then, "New Curriculum," in 1949). I wrestled with writers and editors to make the language, concepts and methodologies of the teaching re-

sources relevant to the experiences of people in urban as well as suburban and ex-urban areas. I struggled together with others to make our national staff and the boards and agencies of the Church racially inclusive—and often I was there to welcome the first black member of the Church's boards, agencies, and an increasing number of black executive staff.

During the twelve years that I was on the staff of United Presbyterian Women (and PWO, its predecessor) my work was devoted to helping women of the Church understand the mission and work of the Church and their part in it; and to encourage them to respond affirmatively to the call to ministry with preparation and commitment.

I might well borrow a line from Langston Hughes poem, "Life for me ain't been no crystal stair." And—in a measure—UPCUSA has responded. At times, in the process, we forced attention to reality. At times, we named the evil and expressed and often adopted a vision of social justice or a social structure that made it easier—for ethnic minorities and for women—to live humanly and humanely. We have come a long way in the UPCUSA in thirty odd years! We have not yet arrived, but we must not be set back!

Therefore, because I am who I am, high on my anxiety scale relative to reunion, is black people and other minorities in the new church. How will we fare—in the new church as an even smaller minority? Will priorities be shoved to the rear burner? Will the lines be drawn in the Southeast with its large majority of blacks in the UPCUSA Church to nullify our corporate voice? Will we return to token black status? And what about women? Will we lose ground in the new church—where there will be a double standard relative to women elders? Will women continue to help make the decisions relative to raising the budget as well as spending the budget?

The Plan for Reunion has a strong affirmation re racial/ethnic persons in that a Committee on Representation is authorized for all judicatories above the session—but that committee is advisory only. It will be unable to implement its own recommendations.

Several councils and caucuses of black clergy and laity, discussed elsewhere in this magazine, have provided through the years in the



UPCUSA Church a strong, corporate, black presence and have served as a catalyst and prod to the church. BPU continues to provide such a force. A strong black caucus is a sensitizer and often the "thorn in the flesh" of the whole Church. It would appear that Black Presbyterians United with even greater participation from black clergy and laity in the new church, by the power of God, has its job waiting for it. BPU will be called upon again to keep on the agenda of the Church the moral issues of racism, sexism and classism until the color of one's skin no longer determines where you work, where you live, where you worship, where you go to school—or whether you are treated fairly as a child of God. The New Church will still have a long agenda.

For many of us in both churches, we will no longer be dealing primarily with stereotypes of blacks, or with pathologies of prejudiced whites (some of us have moved beyond these). Now we have an economy that continuously maims the people of the under-class—our black institutions and churches and our priorities in urban areas. This happens, not always out of active malice, but because of greed, ignorance, a middle-class narcissism and unthinking acceptance of American myths rooted in assumptions of sectionalism, of individualism, or privatism and spirituality.

Thank God—we stand, PCUS/UPCUSA, at the door of a new Church—reunited. We would enter—new women and men in Christ—with eyes open and sensitive to the potential for good and evil in reunion; hearts committed to Jesus Christ; and with voices unmuzzled, set free, to be what God calls the Church to be.

Emily V. Gibbes

**PROFILES OF FAITH:
Four Black Moderators of the United
Presbyterian Church**



As we move into a new and reunited Church, it is imperative that attention be given to the preservation of those historical highlights which are certain to inform and inspire those who are to come after us. The struggle to arrive at a degree of partnership and mutual respect within the denomination, as a base for reunion of two great branches of the Church, is worthy of preserving for posterity.

Foremost in this struggle are the efforts for recognition and affirmation on the part of those members of the Church who are black. Persons who successfully aspired to the highest elective office of the Church carried that struggle to the very summit and, thereby, have elevated the whole Church.

Among those uniquely qualified servants of our Lord and His Church are three men and one woman. They are: the Reverend Edler G. Hawkins, the Reverend Clinton M. Marsh, Ruling Elder Thelma C. Davidson Adair and the Reverend James H. Costen. Dr. Costen has the distinction of being the last Moderator to preside over a General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church prior to reunion.

None of these persons was "just another Moderator," nor "just the next Moderator" in the sequence of Moderators over the past 194 General Assemblies. Neither did they come to office merely by virtue of shrewd political campaigns in annual ecclesiastical popularity contests.

As "ministers at large" to the whole church, they exercised the extraordinary gifts of sensitivity, understanding and conviction derived from deep rootage in the spiritual, intellectual and ethical disciplines of the black experience. Beyond their qualifications of knowledge, experience and contact throughout the church, they symbolized some of the issues and aspirations confronting the whole church in relation to the divisive and explosive events in the social order during the third quarter of the twentieth century.

In fulfilling the comprehensive demands of the moderatorial role, they proved to be exemplary embodiments of the spirit of Black Presbyterianism.

Edler G. Hawkins was a trailblazer in the truest sense of the word. In 1964, he became the first black person to be elected to the position of Moderator. This achievement can be largely at-

tributed to his fierce loyalty to Presbyterianism: a loyalty which prompted him to prove that Blacks are an integral part of the United Presbyterian Church. He sought to establish this fact through visible evidence that even its highest office might be successfully claimed and achieved by a Black with enough persistence and sheer audacity.

A massive and impressive campaign was waged in 1963, but Dr. Hawkins lost the election by two votes to Dr. Herman Turner of Atlanta, Georgia. The Moderator-elect insisted upon having Dr. Hawkins serve as Vice Moderator. A combination of two factors fairly assured his election as Moderator the following year: (1) the gracious dignity with which he accepted defeat; (2) his winning the hearts of people as he moved across the Church in the role of Vice Moderator.

By his performance, he raised the *consciousness of the denomination* to the existence, the abilities and the inherent rights of its minorities, blacks in particular, as perhaps no other event in the previous history of the Church.

A stellar role model, Edler Hawkins was a proponent of faith in one's self; of holding steadfast to that faith until that in which one believes is accepted by others and, therefore, becomes manifest. He looked for no excuses: no rationalizations for conceding even the possibility of second rate church membership for Blacks. Being convinced of who and what we are, he held fast, unruffled by circumstances, unmoved by apparent defeat, until his perseverance was completely vindicated in victory. A veritable Rock of Gibraltar—he was firm, quiet, deceptively strong, and immovable in purpose.

Dr. Hawkins was certain that blacks are destined to play a divinely ordained role in the nation and in the Church. This is eloquently expressed in an address made in 1975 at a seminar held at the Princeton Theological Seminary:

"America began with the hopes of a Protestant ethic that suggested something of a 'chosen' people's role—to bind up the wounds of those who are scarred. But the 'chosen' idea was tied to a Covenant that included the element of suffering, if a people were to remain chosen.

"It just may be that the Black experience illumines something of the meaning of being chosen, and it may be that America must see that it

faces a choice for survival in this land. It must either join the ranks of those who suffer, and maybe know the meaning of humiliation (beginning perhaps with admitting our failures in Vietnam and willingness to lose face, if that be our cross this moment in history). Either this, or there will be no chosen people in this land. It may be that atonement is the remedy, not only as the answer in this quest for racial equality, but the answer to our survival as a nation.

"How, except we understand the Black experience, can this nation be led into a true community with the non-white, the wretched of the earth, of which there are so many. For those who have suffered and have known the meaning of deprivation may trust no leaders who do not come with a willingness to share that suffering, for they will only listen to those who understand this tragic sense of life that the Black community has lived with all its life. It has an identification with three-fourths of the people of the world who have been excluded from the definition of mankind. And one of the earliest tasks we need to set ourselves to, as we start another century, will be to help define for the first time the full dimensions of what it is to be human. For I suspect that a real appreciation of the humanity, in the highest sense of the term, of the people of Vietnam, might have found us earlier on the side of stopping the awful slaughter of human life that has taken place in that little part of the world, rather than sending in the equipment for death.

"Here, in the heart of American life, is a Black experience which is our major first-hand link to the alienated, humiliated, rebellious millions in the world outside America. We should not fail to use that link. America might then be able to really begin a new life by introducing itself to the quite still invisible men and women right in its midst, so that it may know in its own life (as it really identifies with them at the level of equality) the meaning and quality, and indeed, under God, the glory of that suffering.

"There's an interesting account in today's New York Times, on its editorial page entitled, 'Playing with History'. 'We know we're not really making history, just sort of playing with it,' said the man who staged the rerun last week of Paul Revere's ride.

"The nature of the article was that this, of

course, is no time for playing loose with history, and then it went on to say— . . . as the nation recalls the triumphs and sufferings of its revolutionary forebears in the months ahead, responsible citizens will seek to pierce the veil of history, as Archibald MacLeish has suggested, for something, glimpsed and lost again—some distance not of measure but of mind, of meaning.

"I suspect that before I saw it, that was really all I wanted to say tonight, and I'm sorry for stretching out your time, when he said it in those few words so much better.

"A present day Black preacher, drawing on the image of the Exodus which has a great deal of meaning in the Black experience, said it another way:

'Moses looked at a few thousand slaves in Egypt and with the help of God, saw a new nation. Martin looked at a few crippled black people in Alabama and, with the help of God, saw a new nation. We need so desperately that new nation, as we face an unfinished revolution, and the hope will be that we will draw upon some of the very profound theological institutions that might help us along the way.'

Dr. Hawkins died in 1977 after forty years in the ministry and in the ongoing battle for equality and human dignity. He leaves a precious legacy to the Church whose history has been so greatly enriched by his life and work—a history profoundly treasured by the black constituency of our Church.



Clinton McClurking Marsh was elected Moderator of the 185th General Assembly which met in Omaha, Nebraska in 1973. Coming into the leadership of the United Presbyterian Church during a time of turmoil and social upheaval (the turbulent sixties), Dr. Marsh brought his own unique gifts to the Church. His basic understanding of people, his profound belief in the gospel as the rectifier of social ills, and his rare ability to work with persons of diverse beliefs and persuasions, earned for this quiet, scholarly and powerful pulpiteer a unique niche in the annals of the Church.

His influence is beyond measure and is still



Rev. & Mrs. Clinton McClurking Marsh

observed as the Church moves from a stance of parochialism to a global perspective in mission. Dr. Marsh may well go down in history as the denomination's "Apostle of Reconciliation."

He makes his own assessment of his contribution as Moderator—"The early 1960's was a period of great tension within the United Presbyterian Church. The church had been in the forefront of increased involvement in the stresses of domestic and world society. The concept that the church had to be more than a Good Samaritan and had to deal with the robbers on the road created conflicts. The concept of the Self Development of People inevitably placed the church behind powerless and/or oppressed people, encouraging and aiding them to challenge the structures of their societies. Not just hunger and poverty were the targets, but their progenitors—structural sin and institutional iniquity.

"This was true of the United Presbyterian Church on the domestic scene and through the programs of the Self Development of People in other countries as well. The World Council of Churches, with United Presbyterians such as John Coventry Smith in the lead, was also deciding that verbal support and Christian sympathy for the oppressed was inadequate. From the Upsala Assembly in 1968, the Council began to enter the self-development process, and The Program to Combat Racism. The United Presbyterian Church had begun to side with those for whom legal justice was difficult to obtain.

"Opposition to these involvements had been quick to arise. There were protests that the

church's task was saving souls and any other emphases were improper. The church was accused of getting involved in issues in which it had no qualification. One could safely assume that powerful vested interests felt threatened by their own church.

"The obvious difficulty for minority persons to get justice in many cases gave birth to a program of legal assistance. Since in any local situation, United Presbyterians were likely to share in the community attitude, it followed that financial assistance to defend unpopular persons would draw fire from Presbyterians. The national expression of this was, of course, the Angela Davis case.

"The net result of these and other developments in the life of the church was that deep resentments were present in the spirits and actions of some members of the church. The Lay Society and The Layman papers were a major expression of and instigator of this resentment. The general failure of the church in evangelism, a factor that had been developing long before the new level of social involvement, was blamed on church leaders who were accused of having no interest in anything but 'social meddling.'

"Inevitably this discontent was fanned into reduction of support for the national church, although the extent of this could never be determined. Inflation, the growing costs of the local church program, and the growth of presbytery and synod mission programs under restructure were contributing factors to that decline.

"It was into this situation that I came as Moderator. Like every moderatorial candidate, I had struggled with what would be my emphasis if I were elected. Upon reflection, it was gradually forced upon me that my emphasis should be on reconciliation. My ministry, theology, deep involvement in evangelism and in the church and social concerns gave me a foot in both camps.

"My theology is conservative and I am committed to a dynamic evangelism in the church. At the same time, I find aggressive involvement in society to be rooted in the same scripture as the mandate for evangelism.

"My moderatorial sermon, preached in The First Church, Omaha, was on reconciliation. It was repeated many times across the country. It said that God was in Christ, reconciling the world

to himself—the world, not just individuals.

"But from the beginning I had an uneasy feeling that something more than preaching needed to be done. From coast to coast and abroad I pressed the thought that God called his church to minister to broken persons and the broken society and that these two were in essential unity.

"Also, from the beginning I had an awareness that there were alienations abroad that demanded something more than sermons before congregations and presbyteries. Some people needed to talk to each other. I asked Stated Clerk William Thompson whether there were any funds for a conference on this subject and he responded favorably. In December 1963, there gathered at Stony Point Conference Center persons of very disparate positions on the ministry of the church. The leaders of the national agencies and their most powerful critics, leaders of the Lay Society and Presbyterians United For Biblical Concerns spent two days in eye-to-eye, head-to-head conversation. The Holy Spirit worked no miracles in this experience, but some clarifications were accomplished, some people said things to each other instead of just about each other and in a setting where answers could be proffered.

"This was not the first time that someone had tried to get some communication, but it was the first on this scale and setting.

"It is quite possible that the greatest benefit of this effort was not what took place there, but the impact around the country. Having been seen as one dedicated to reconciliation and open to strong communication with the conservative element, I found a new openness among many church people after the conference. My message of reconciliation was probably much better heard after I had been identified as a reconciler.

"One of the complaints of some of the conservative persons in the church was that they were not considered in appointment and nominations. Finding that there was some validity to this complaint, I sought to give balance by naming persons representing the conservative positions to posts that were filled by the Moderator.

"No Moderator can hope to 'turn the church around' in even one phase of its life. I hope that did make a contribution to the well-being of the church by diminishing alienations and increasing

communication.”

Dr. Marsh is now serving as President of his Alma Mater, Knoxville College. At great sacrifice, he and his devoted wife Agnes, have assumed the prodigious task of saving the institution from a threatened demise. They firmly believe in the role of the black college as the most effective arena for the development of black leadership. For some time in the future, disadvantaged young people will need to be “reached where they are” and carefully nurtured to their full potential. The small black colleges provide this opportunity. Dr. and Mrs. Marsh are committed to this noteworthy endeavor.



Elected Moderator of the 188th General Assembly (1976) of the United Presbyterian Church, Thelma Adair’s moderatorial year was an historic period for the nation as well as the Church. The Republic observed its bi-centennial birthday as the Church marked a continuing breakthrough for women and for blacks.

She recalls with amusement the excitement of her election over four formidable candidates. With victory coming after many hours of balloting, the jubilation of family and friends found expression at a midnight gathering of triumphant rejoicing.

In listing some events of particular significance during that special year, Dr. Adair referred to her travels which covered thousands of miles, touching every continent except Africa. Thelma takes to travel as a bee to blossoms. A trip to Australia coincided with the merger of the Methodist Congregational and Presbyterian Churches to form the Uniting Church in Australia. Visiting with the Presbyterians during their last days of existence as a denomination, she marked their reluctance to relinquish cherished tradition on the one hand, and the hope and anticipation with which they moved toward the new entity, on the other.

In Japan, she identified easily with Koreans who are a minority group in that country, suffering some of the rejection and humiliation to which Moderator Adair was no stranger. “I was determined to identify with the suffering and deprived wherever I found them,” she declared.



Thelma Davidson Adair

She experienced keen disappointment in not having the opportunity to visit at all in Africa during the year. Having spent considerable time on the continent previously with study teams and on teaching assignments, she yearned to share this year of special significance with those of our common ancestry. What a thrill it would have been to have an interpreter say to young seminarians or to women’s groups: “She, a woman, is the Moderator; not just an elder but indeed the Moderator of a great presbyterian denomination on the continent of North America.” Thelma’s eyes sparkled as she envisioned that inspiring scene which was not destined to occur. “But one cannot have everything,” Thelma sighed philosophically, adding in the next breath, “But I had most of it.”

There were scores of churches on the moderatorial itinerary: large, small, rural, urban, ornate, plain—all filled with wonderful people; in some cases, all of one racial identity; in others, beautifully mixed.

There was something quite unique about visits to black churches. After the formal service, there was usually a gathering in a home for a warm time of sharing with those who felt so much a part of all that this Moderator was and did. As a minister’s wife, the visits to churches were, indeed, a highlight, as were visits to schools and colleges to Dr. Adair, the educator.

A grand and fitting climax to this exciting year was the communion service at the Philadelphia Assembly. “As I viewed that vast assembly, my mind focused upon all of the miles traveled, the thousands of persons I had met, the warm friendships formed and the memorable events experienced. It was a moment brimful of gratitude and emotion,” Dr. Adair continued, “out there in the sea of faces were those very close to me,

without whose support I could not have carried the multitude of duties which fell to my lot. My husband Eugene, my sister, brother, children, my husband's family, our extended family and the faithful friends—were all there blending with the great Church family. What a year it had been!"

She combined the duties of minister's wife, mother of four, university professor and ruling elder with the heavy responsibilities of Moderator of the Church. A hair-raising balancing act—but Thelma did it.

In assessing her contributions, she feels that the efficiency of the General Assembly Mission Council was increased to a point which she found quite gratifying. All other accomplishments were taken in stride. "Both the duties and the privileges of office were mine to cherish and extend as I sought to serve the Church," she remarked.

She was aware of the fact that her election had very special meaning for women and for Blacks. "All of the odds were unfavorable," she smiled. Ministers' wives are seldom elders in their husbands' churches. Very few elders become candidates for the office of Moderator of the General Assembly. Even fewer women elders are in the running for the office—and for a black woman elder to offer—how unlikely!

On a sober note Thelma continued, "My election was a gift, an opportunity to contribute to the heritage of the church and to increase the hope of the church as the fulfillment of the ministry of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

The interview with Dr. Adair was interspersed with reflections on occasions made precious to her because they were shared with her beloved husband, the late Rev. Dr. Eugene Adair. One got the feeling that this was, in truth, a blessed partnership.

Her final statement became almost a whisper as the impact of that memorable year held her afresh within its grip:

"The Moderator's Cross often attracted the attention and admiration of people with whom I was visiting. I took great pains to explain its symbolism and the words from Ephesians which are engraved upon it: 'Fill Your Ministry'. And that is what I attempted to do as Moderator."

Dr. Adair is currently serving as President of Church Women United and is only the second

black woman to head this national movement.



When asked to describe the state of the church as he found it during his moderatorial year, James H. Costen remarked: "The United Presbyterian Church is indeed in an 'up beat' mood." This optimistic assessment of the spirit of the church reflects the personality of the widely traveled Moderator himself. The infectious smile, the hearty handshake, the positive approach to vexing issues: these positive traits all make the man definitely an "up beat" person.

It was the "up beat" manner with which Dr. Costen offered himself as a candidate for the highest office of his church which completely captivated the Commissioners to the 194th General Assembly (1982), making him their overwhelming choice for Moderator.

This was also the quality which pervaded the entire Assembly as Moderator Costen held forth with dignity, fairness and good humor during its turbulent sessions. It was the saving grace which moved differing factions toward a recognition of the common need for reconciliation and healing throughout the church, thus averting the disastrous and completely demoralizing breakdown which hung like a pall over the Assembly as the Bob Jones University issue was discussed.

When the question of reunion came before the Assembly, the Moderator's enthusiastic and positive demeanor spread like a blessed contagion among those assembled. With a minimum of debate, that momentous issue received a healthy vote in the affirmative, ending in a period of joy and jubilation.

That he has become known as the "Reunion Moderator" is attributed, not only to the historical event which dominated his moderatorial year, but also to his prodigious efforts toward creating the climate in which the act of reunion of the two denominations could indeed be consummated. He will go down in history as the Moderator who presided over two General Assemblies. It is apparent that our "up beat" Moderator is indeed a man of destiny.

Jim Costen views reunion as anything but a threat to Blacks and other racial/ethnic persons. Rather, he sees it as a new opportunity for coming



James H. Costen Conferring with Antonio Welty of the Program Agency Staff

into our own: for taking our rightful place as an integral part of the new church.

"Reunion provides us a chance to build a new consensus, especially here in the South," Dr. Costen declared. He continued by pointing out the fact that most black presbyterians are to be found in the southern states and have shared geography with the former PCUS church. This provides a base for local support for concerns and institutions instead of always looking northward for assistance. These institutions and concerns now become ours in the widest sense of the word."

He continued that, "we must be aggressive in taking responsibility for demanding and producing an able, vigorous leadership. That we must be ready to ascend to the heights of theological and academic excellence; that the attitude of merely getting by must be discarded as a relic of the past." Dr. Costen urges that we be ready to penetrate the whole church, to abandon parochialism and provincialism in favor of ministry in a global perspective.

"As the church is one, so are all of its people," he affirms, adding that, "We have more to give than even we ourselves realize. This is our chance to make the church aware of it."

In relation to the church as a whole, Dr. Costen envisions a deepened commitment to evangelism, with a resulting increase in membership. He believes that we are ready for a sound

theological basis of stewardship which will lead to adequate funding of the whole mission of the church. He wants to see a renewed emphasis upon Bible study and christian growth. He has a burning concern for the nurture of children and youth, an area which is currently lacking to a degree. He sees the proclamation of the gospel and the maintenance of divine worship as the continuous core of the life of the church.

He expressed the desire that mission and ministry become the preoccupation of the church during the next ten years, with structure merely serving to support and enable that major concern.

His ablest and most faithful supporter is his talented wife Melva (Dr. Melva Costen). As Director of Music and Worship at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta where the Moderator serves as Dean of the Johnson C. Smith (Presbyterian) Seminary, she combines a heavy professional responsibility and the many demands upon the Moderator's wife with admirable graciousness and apparent ease.

Copiously endowed with spiritual depth, a genuine love for people, a wide knowledge of the church and extraordinary interpersonal skills, this dedicated servant as Moderator, seems to have been especially called of God to execute this specific role at this historic moment in the life of Christ's Church.

Agnes Wilson

THE SPIRIT OF BLACK PRESBYTERIANISM: PART II



Henry Highland Garnet



Hiram Revels

In the years immediately prior to the Civil War, black Presbyterians had to rely on organizations outside of their denomination to carry on the struggle against slavery. One such body was the Evangelical Association of Presbyterians and Congregational Clergy of Color which was formed in 1859 as a forum for the exchange of ideas to ameliorate the conditions of Negroes, to help destitute churches and to secure the employment of an evangelist to promote the social and religious interests of Negroes. Henry Highland Garnet voiced the mind of this "caucus" when he criticized the Presbyterian Church for reflecting the standards and views of the world by its conspiracy of silence against slavery, "the vilest under heaven," rather than proclaim a message of a new heaven and a new earth. It was the view of the Association that the church was being held hostage by the slavemasters whose economic well-being would be adversely affected by emancipation and therefore the church could not be expected to speak a prophetic and redemptive word to the nation. When the Civil War began in 1861 it was Garnet, Jonathan Gibbs, William Catto and their fellow clergy who called the Negroes to take up arms in defense of the Union and fight for their freedom.

With the cessation of hostilities and through the period of Reconstruction, black Presbyterians—clergy and lay—made their leadership felt in significant and dramatic ways in the society. The time for this kind of recognition and opportunity still had not come in their own church. Some achieved positions of distinction and significance. The Reverend Hiram Revels, pastor of the Madison Street Presbyterian Church of Baltimore, Md., became the first black United States Senator from Mississippi, elected to fill the unexpired term of Jefferson Davis, 1870-1871.

Jonathan Gibbs, a black layman, served as Secretary of State in Florida from 1868-1872, and later was appointed Superintendent of Public Instruction, and held that post until his death in 1874. He is credited with having established a legitimate public education system in the State of Florida. At about the same time, Francis L. Cardoza served as Secretary of State in South Carolina and in 1872 he became the Treasurer of that State.



Francis J. Grimke

The Reconstruction period was as brief as it was spectacular in providing Blacks with leadership opportunities. By 1877 it was all over: President-elect Hayes withdrew the Northern troops from the South as soon as he took office, the white backlash moved swiftly and vindictively against Blacks in public office, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan brought a wave of violence and intimidation, and life in the South for Blacks was severely limited by the passage of segregation laws—aided and abetted by the Supreme Court decision of 1896, *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, which established the “separate but equal” doctrine.

Against this turbulent background the Reverend Francis J. Grimke rose to prominence as an articulate and uncompromising spokesman for social justice for the nation’s Blacks. Grimke, a Lincoln University graduate and student at Princeton Seminary, received a call to the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church, Washington, DC in 1878. During his career in the ministry Grimke gave the Presbyterian Church no peace on the issue of race. By 1890, Presbyterian colleges that had welcomed Blacks immediately after the Civil War began, in the period of the post-Reconstruction era, to bar them. Grimke blasted his own alma mater, Lincoln University, for its failure to appoint Blacks to the faculty. After a long and bitter struggle that policy was changed.

The reach of Grimke’s passionate and prophetic plea for justice went far beyond the Presbyterian Church to the farthest corners of the nation. He was fiercely proud of his Blackness and chastised those who knuckled under and were subservient to the evils of white racism and “traitors” to the cause of black freedom. In a sermon preached in his pulpit the day before Christmas 1918, he admonished his listeners:

“The colored man, if he has an ounce of brains in his head, will have but one policy in regard to his rights, and that is the policy of being always on the job. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, and unless we are eternally vigilant, we will never get it. Let us hear no more of this nonsense, never mind from whom it comes, about letting up for a season. Not less activity, but more activity; not less agitation, but more agitation; not less plain speaking, but more plain speaking.”

This spirit of black pride and protest against the injustices and inequities in the church and in the nation, so characteristic of Grimke’s ministry and his predecessors who were instrumental in forming the 1859 association of clergy, found expression again in the formation of another black organization, the Afro-American Presbyterian Council, in 1894. Its purpose was to satisfy the need for fellowship, to overcome the sense of alienation by status as second-class Presbyterians. From its founding in Philadelphia the group included lay and clergypersons, affording them in their few and widely separated congregations the opportunity to develop a common and united voice—indispensable to the struggle for recognition, dignity and a sense of being partners with others in the church’s mission.

Black Presbyterian work in the South from the closing years of the nineteenth century on represented the same assertive spirit of black Presbyterianism. Separated from the mainstream of the Church and relegated into the four synods of Atlantic, Catawba, Canadian and Blue Ridge, these churches had to battle paternalism and every bigoted idea and attitude that Blacks could never be the equal of their white counterparts. They produced fighters, men and women, who never relented in their drive to achieve full dignity and status within the church and society. By the mid-fifties they were successful in seeing the Department of Colored Work in the Board of National Missions come to an end. The segregated synods and presbyteries were eventually eliminated. Because of their aggressive, determined efforts, black Presbyterians in the South produced leadership that has made its presence felt across the church.

Even by the middle of this century, the number of black congregations in the North and West was relatively small—in some presbyteries or synods only one or two churches in a presbytery, or even a synod. Often there were no black commissioners from the churches in these areas. The full burden of black representation and articulation of issues from a black perspective generally fell to those coming from the segregated synods. It was a time, regrettably, when the line separating the North from the South was tightly drawn, and there was limited knowledge of—or communication between—the black churches in the South and their counterparts in the North and West.

Thus, in the early years of the Afro-American Presbyterian Council, the annual meetings often provided the only opportunity to share and interpret problems, programs and decisions of the General Assembly and its agencies. If, perchance, there had been a commissioner from a black church in the North and West at General Assembly, or maybe a synod meeting, or even a meeting of a presbytery, interpretations were shared, discussed and relevance for the black church sought. Much of the agenda of these council meetings had to do with responding to such questions as: What does this policy mean? How do we relate to this program, this priority, this emphasis? Questions were asked and answered by the Blacks of the North and West.

It was not until the late 1940's and early 1950's that individual bridges began to link the black leadership in the separated regions and they began to attend the meetings of the council where experiences, perceptions and recommendations were shared. Because of these segregated structures, not only separating Blacks from whites but also Blacks from Blacks, black presbyterians as a whole were in a divided household not of their own making. In addition to that, the feeling was compounded by the lack of equal and meaningful participation in the higher judicatories, particularly in the General Assembly; thereby leaving blacks to practice a form of Presbyterianism often with insufficient substance and meaning because it lacked the input from higher judicatory involvement.

By the decade of the fifties black presbyterian leadership was busily redefining what it

regarded should be the nature and intent of Black participation in the church, i.e. toward wider, more meaningful participation and the end of enforced segregation, exclusion and other discriminatory practices. An early priority was the appointment of black men and women to the staffs of General Assembly agencies and their election to the boards and councils. Other priorities included the identification of Blacks in denominational resources, an increase in the number of young people from the North and West in Presbyterian colleges, summer camp programs and seminaries, and the creation of policies and procedures such as a rotation plan assuring the attendance of Blacks at meetings of the synods and General Assembly.

Without serious threat to the peace and unity of the church these priorities were realized. There was ample reason to believe a new spirit was blowing through the church, a spirit expressed in the denomination's commitment to "a non-segregated church in a non-segregated society." In accord with the mood and movement of the church and desiring to remove any racial designation from its name, the Afro-American Presbyterian Council became the Presbyterian Council of the North and West in 1947.

Ten years later, in Baltimore, Maryland the Council took another significant step and voted to dissolve as a way of witnessing to the hope that was in it: that the United Presbyterian Church was moving steadfastly toward the goal of an integrated church and black Presbyterians wanted to be seen as hastening rather than impeding the day of its coming. A segregated structure, driven into being by the perils of racism and discrimination in 1894, voluntarily ended its existence in 1957 to symbolize the promise of a new church.

By the beginning of the 1960's, it became quite apparent that the goal of a truly integrated church was still a far off dream and that tokenism and paternalism were still deeply embedded in the life of the Presbyterian Church. Moreover, a new mood and dynamic had begun to emerge across the racial justice and reconciliation landscape: the integrationist motif was being superseded by the claim of racial pride. Against the backdrop of this new ethos, black clergy and laity began meeting again—at first informally and in



Mrs. Leslie Taylor,
in the highest tradition of Black Presbyterianism



E. Wellington Butts

*The membership roster listed Lillian Anthony, Cornelius Berry, Ulyesses Blakely, Eugene Callender, Clarence Cave, James Chambers, James Costen, St. Paul Epps, Milton Galamison, Bryant George, Emily Gibbes, Walter Greene, Edler Hawkins, Reginald Hawkins, Everett Hewlett, William Hill, Robert Johnson, Clinton Marsh, James McDaniel, Herbert Nelson, LeRoy Patrick, Rufus Perry, James Robinson, Metz Rollins, James Smith Jr., Furman Templeton, Edgar Ward, James Wadsworth, Gayraud Wilmore, Frank Wilson.

different parts of the country, at the call of Bryant George, Edler Hawkins and Gayraud Wilmore. The need for a new council or caucus of some sort to identify critical issues for black Presbyterians and to develop appropriate action strategies was beyond dispute. In 1963, a group calling itself Concerned Presbyterians, was formed and described itself as "a compact, disciplined, purposeful group."* The timing was strategic and the need critical for a caucus type instrument to fill the void of a black constituency without voice or influence in those places where decisions were being made.

Beginning in 1963 and for the next five years, Concerned Presbyterians developed and put in motion an agenda for black progress and participation hitherto unknown in the church. Determined that the time had come for Presbyterians to make real in concrete terms their pronouncements and teachings on race and social justice, the organization met with the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations (COEMAR) and other General Assembly Agencies regarding their policies and practices; played a major role in the future development of Johnson C. Smith Seminary; raised critical questions about the policies of the other Presbyterian Seminaries; vigorously supported the candidacy of Edler G. Hawkins for Moderator of the 176th General Assembly (1964); pressured the church to assure the availability of accommodations to all commissioners in those cities where the Assembly met; and advertently managed the establishment and development of the Commission on Religion and Race (subsequently the Council on Church and Race), its membership, staff, budget and mandate. When the question was raised about the necessity of Concerned Presbyterians continuing in business now that a racial justice entity had been put in place, the opinion was expressed that until the present and future concerns of minorities in the church are addressed, we must remain Concerned Presbyterians United (BPU). In the fall of 1968, immediately following the closing session of the Second Annual Meeting of the National Committee of Black Churchmen, the Rev. E. Wellington Butts, a young activist pastor, became the first president and a new churchwide caucus came into existence with essentially the same purpose and agenda as Concerned Presbyterians but with new leadership and a structure



James Forman & Metz Rollins

that provided for a much broader base for participation.

These were troubled times. The peace of a segregated society was being shattered by the contradictions between the promises of democracy and the reality of racial and economic oppression. The nation was in crisis and the United Presbyterian Church, among others, was riven with controversy and distrust. Cities like Little Rock, Knoxville, Charlotte and Greensboro, Orangeburg and Sumter were feeling the impact of the Supreme Court decision of 1954 on desegregation; the Freedom Riders were challenging the segregated public facilities of the South; James Forman confronted the General Assembly in San Antonio in 1969 seeking reparations for Blacks in his Black Manifesto and Angela Davis' day in court divided Presbyterians between the view that they were subsidizing Marxism or realistically assessing the prospects for justice when one is Black and brought into a court of law without adequate defense. Malcolm X had delivered the word from on high that "Black Churchmen and the spiritual power had been heard and explicated by the National Committee of Black Churchmen and the spiritual power of the Martin Luther King forces was marching across the South desegregating the land and bringing the pharaohs down from their throne.

If BPU did not have the power necessary to

affect change in the life of the church and elsewhere, it had the message about the kind of change that was needed and the kind of understanding basic to that change. Some of the earliest goals were these:

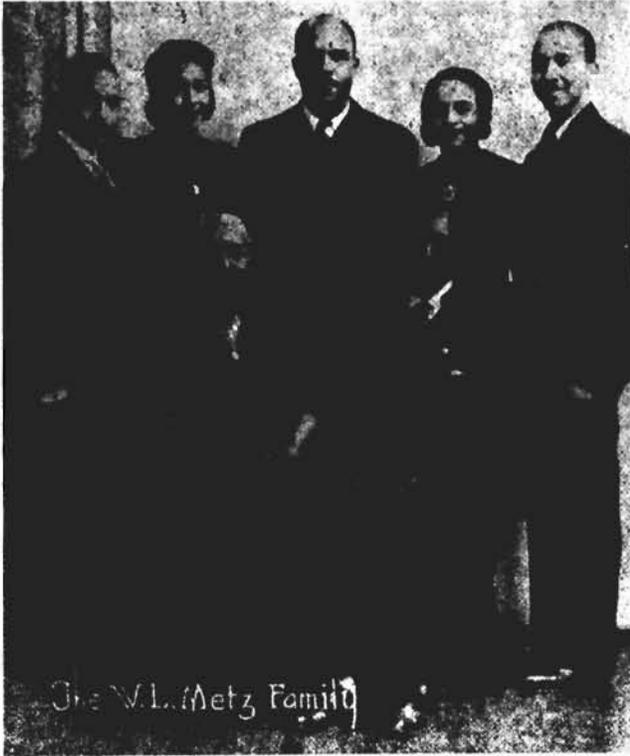
- Raise the level of our consciousness as black people in order to affirm our humanity;
- Encourage black unity and solidarity in the exercise of our ministry;
- Recover and affirm the historic role of the black Church as a part of our legacy;
- Enlarge our participation in the whole church so that it will become more responsive to the concerns of the black community.

A summary statement of its "credo" issued at the 182nd General Assembly (1970) by BPU expressed a conviction and a hope that have the same urgency for us today, thirteen years later:

The rising tide of black consciousness among black Presbyterians and other black people validates the black perspective, a point of view from which we can assess and determine the special interests and needs of all black people. This black perspective is essential if we are to preserve our integrity as churchpersons and our sense of personhood as black people.

Metz Rollins

BLACK EDUCATORS IN PRESBYTERIAN SCHOOLS



Dr. & Mrs. William (Billy) Metz

As a prologue it ought to be stated that the pioneer teachers entering the southern mission field were on a journey of faith. Their reports to the Board were replete with such words as “incredible,” “amazing” and “unbelievable” in their attempt to describe the dehumanized masses which assembled for instruction. The pupils ranged in age from the very young to the very old and in knowledge of the rudiments of education.

These pioneer educators arrived on the mission field dedicated to lifting the fallen and extending a helping hand to those who were sorely afflicted. Many of the pioneer educators had been trained in the New England Latin School and in higher branches of education. They brought with them their passion for religion, order and cleanliness. In deepest sincerity they also brought with them their puritan yen for honesty and a high regard for knowledge. They were a dedicated, praying band of industrious people insistent upon frugality, the value of time and doing a job well.

What Mrs. F. B. Bohannon, a Selden Institute teacher, said of Miss Carrie E. Bemus, founder of Selden, in commemorating her death, could well be said of a majority of the early educators: “She was a pioneer Christian worker in the field of education, a friend of humanity, regardless of race, color, or creed, one who gave the full measure of her life in service to others and one who for many years gave sacrificial service to education and the spiritual needs of young Negro men and women.”

Among the earliest Presbyterian pioneers in education for Blacks, was the Reverend John Chavis, the first black man to be ordained by the Presbyterian Church. He was commissioned as a missionary to Black people in 1801. He preached to both white and black congregations in Virginia, and the Carolinas until a law was passed forbidding Negroes to preach following the Nat Turner rebellion. Chavis then turned his talents to teaching. He taught at various times in Chatham, Wake, Orange, Gransville and other counties in North Carolina from 1801 to 1830, when he retired. Among his pupils were free Negroes and children of prominent white families, many of whom became physicians, ministers, lawyers, teachers and politicians of some distinction.

The New England patriots did not work in vain nor alone. A limited number of courageous

Southerners joined the adventure in faith.

In addition, in several states there were inspired Blacks with some claim to formal training who organized and operated several schools under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church. Examples follow: J. H. Crawford, a one-arm ex-soldier, who founded Albion Academy in North Carolina; the Reverend and Mrs. Francis Potter, who founded Ferguson Academy in 1880; the Reverend Mssrs. Alexander and MacMahan who founded Cotton Plant Academy in Arkansas in 1880. Additionally, Beaufort Academy in South Carolina, founded in 1881 by the Reverend W. R. Coles; the Reverend and Mrs. Johnston assisted by Miss Anna E. Grenage who founded the Richard Allen Institute at Pine Bluff, Arkansas in 1886; the Reverend George Clayton Shaw who founded the Mary Potter School in Oxford, North Carolina in 1889; the Reverend C. S. Mebane who founded the Monticello Academy, in Monticello, Arkansas in 1891.

Some of these people gave long years of distinguished service to the institutions. Miss D. E. Peace began her career of thirty-four years in 1908, at the Mary Potter School in Oxford. The Reverend Herman S. Davis joined the teaching staff in 1921 and became Chief Executive in 1933. He gave yeoman service, raising it to the level of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1934.

Barber-Scotia College, until the advent of Mabel Parker McLean, was synonymous with the name of Leland Stanford Cozart who became a member of the teaching staff in 1916. After serving in the Army, he returned in 1919 as a teacher and administrative assistant. He remained until 1926. He assumed the Presidency in 1940 when the affiliation between Johnson C. Smith and Barber-Scotia was terminated. It became a four year college in 1949. In 1954 it became co-educational, eliminating all reference to race or sex and received Class A rating by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1958. Dr. Cozart retired in 1964 after 32 years of outstanding service.

Haines Industrial Institute in Augusta, Georgia was synonymous with the name of its founder, Lucy Craft Laney. She was the daughter of the Reverend David Laney, pastor of one of the first black congregations in the Presbyterian Church at Macon, Georgia. She opened the school in

1886 and after two months moved her overflowing enrollment into The Old Haunted House. Her trips to General Assembly began to bear fruit in 1889 when her courage, patience, self-determination and good common sense attracted attention. She began with a few, but at the end of the first year reported seventy-five students under her care.

At the end of the second year, she had two hundred thirty-four. In the first issue of *Periscope*, it was reported that Mary McLeod Bethune was inspired to seek an education by the call of Lucy Laney at her door.

In 1908, shortly after his inauguration as President of the United States, William Howard Taft visited the Haines Institute. Speaking of Miss Laney, he said to friends with him, "That a colored woman could have constructed this great Institution of learning and brought it to its present state of usefulness speaks volumes of her capacity. Therefore, I shall go out of this meeting despite the distinguished presence here, carrying in my memory only the figure of that woman who has been able to create all this."

The Larimer School on Edisto Island was synonymous with the name of the Reverend William Lee (Uncle Billy) Metz. He and his wife were commissioned, to take charge of the church and school on Edisto Island in 1918. Dr. Metz was a warm humanitarian scholar, without sophistication, intellectually keen, witty and unafraid. He served the institution more than thirty years, and was succeeded by the Reverend U. L. Brewer who was principal until the program was discontinued by the Board in 1955. Dr. Metz had a column, "Blazers and Chips" published in the *Afro-American Presbyterian* which highlighted the work of the Presbyterian Churches programmed for Blacks, and which made him well known throughout the circulation area of the paper. He had refused offers from Harbison College and elsewhere to accept the work at the Larimer School and St. James Church on Edisto Island.

The Coulter Academy, Cheraw, South Carolina was synonymous with the name of one man, George Waldo Long. It was founded in 1881 and he took the reins as principal in 1908. He introduced many significant changes. The school was officially named Coulter Academy and became co-educational. He extended the land development from 1915 through 1918. He often

stated he had become attached to forgotten boys and girls, men and women and was filled with the desire to build an institution. In 1933 a teacher training course was added and Coulter became a Junior College. He died suddenly on August 3, 1943 and was succeeded by the Dean, Henry Lawrence Marshall, who became acting principal.

Harbison College, Irmo, South Carolina which was founded at Abieville, South Carolina in 1885 as Ferguson Academy, was synonymous with two names. The first was the Reverend Calvin M. Young, Sr., who served the school faithfully for twenty-four years, beginning with his induction as President in 1907.

Buildings were increased and a Farm Home Project was made part of the school's curriculum. In 1943, the other name came into focus, Dr. T. B. Jones, former president of Mary Allen Junior College, Crockett, Texas. Dr. Jones was a shrewd administrator with rich experience and his wife was the former Vivian Young, daughter of the Reverend Calvin M. Young, former president. The school closed in 1958, but the Harbison New Town Development Project carries on the name.

The Arkadelphia Presbyterian Academy founded at Arkadelphia, Arkansas in 1882 was synonymous with the name of the Reverend W. D. Feaster who was elected principal in 1906. During the Feaster administration the plant was remodeled, the curriculum completely revised and the school began a long career of service to town and community. In 1914, there were three hundred thirteen pupils enrolled and a faculty of eight. Dr. Feaster, intellectual, industrious and determined, was successful in guiding the school to a level of acclaim and respectability both locally and at the national level of the church. He died on March 25, 1926 after twenty years of distinguished service.

There was a brief inter-regnum under the Reverend Elmo Haymes, a Sunday school missionary, who was succeeded by the Reverend Levi W. Davis. In 1933 this school was merged with the Cotton Plant Academy with the Reverend Levi Davis remaining as president of the consolidated school at Cotton Plant, Arkansas. Cotton Plant was synonymous with the name of Hyder M. Stinson, who served that institution for a long period of time. Dr. Harold Nathaniel Stinson, his

son, was for a number of years principal at Boggs Academy.

The Reverend C. S. Mebane was principal of the short-lived Monticello Academy in Arkansas. His name was given to an Academy in Hot Springs, Arkansas which was founded originally as a parochial school by the Reverend A. A. Torrence in 1880. The school was never a large one but was highly regarded locally and at the national level for its program of culture, quality education and religious instruction. Dr. Mebane left the work in 1904. In 1920 after the Reverend William E. Houston, Sr., came to Hot Springs to pastor the church to which this school was related, Mebane Academy became the Hot Springs Community Station, an independent school without any further Board assistance.

Boggs Academy was synonymous for many years with the name of the Reverend Charles W. Francis who succeeded the founder and builder, the Reverend John Lawrence Phelps. Dr. Francis gave twenty-one years of rich experience to the program at Boggs and made the transition easy.

He resigned in 1942 and T. S. Ross became the principal for a brief period, until May 1, 1943, when Harold N. Stinson, a science teacher in the program at Boggs, was appointed principal. Though young, Stinson attracted the attention of the Women's Board, and other higher level organizations of the church to the tremendous strides Boggs was making and aid was tremendously increased. After twenty-five years of success at Boggs, Dr. Stinson resigned to become president of Stillman Institute under the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

The Gillespie Institute was founded in 1902 by a black man, the Reverend A. S. Clark. The school's name was changed in 1904 to Gillespie Normal School. Dr. Clark was an amazing man, a musician who played several instruments and sent many of his youngsters out into the music world. The school began with a small campus of two frame buildings, three faculty members and an enrollment of 28 boys and girls. "Leaps and Bounds" is the phrase the Board used to describe its rapid growth by 1903 to one hundred forty students. In 1910 a library was organized, a band was started and the student enrollment was three hundred eighty-eight. Gillespie merged with the Selden Institute of Brunswick in 1933 and an

ambitious expansion program was begun in 1937. In 1941, after thirty-nine years of service, Dr. Clark retired and Lucien S. Brown succeeded him. Mr. Brown had served five years as an executive at Brainerd Institute in Chester, South Carolina and one year as principal of Harbison.

Brainerd Institute in Chester, South Carolina was synonymous with the names of the Reverend Samuel Loomis and Dr. J. D. Martin, Sr. Dr. Martin was appointed president of the institution in 1928. Under his administration the first all black faculty was employed at Brainerd. After adding the Junior College work in 1930, increasing the teaching staff to fourteen and seeing twenty-eight students graduate at the end of the school year, Dr. Martin retired in 1934. He was succeeded by Lucien S. Brown, also a layman. Professor Brown had come to Brainerd under the newly re-organized Board's "Unit of Work with Colored People" and sensed the deep concerns of the black community regarding the possible ramifications of the new organization. Professor Brown strove in vain for five years to establish the necessity of Brainerd for black people, but the school was closed in 1939.

Byrd R. Smith and T. B. Jones are names synonymous with Mary Allen Junior College at Crockett, Texas which began in 1886, approximately six years after the Reverend S. F. Tenny had begun a parochial school for Blacks there.

In 1924, the Reverend Byrd Smith was commissioned to take charge of the work at Crockett and gave thirteen years as teacher and pastor. In 1940, his brilliant administration was ended by a heart attack and he was succeeded by Professor Thomas Bayne Jones. The school was closed in 1943.

Albion Academy evolved out of a parochial school which was established in Franklinton, North Carolina in December 1865, by the aforementioned J. H. Crawford, a one-arm black man who had been a soldier in the Civil War. In 1878, the Reverend Moses Hopkins, the first black man to graduate from Auburn Theological Seminary, was chosen as chief executive of the school. Also giving leadership for a period was the Reverend John Anthony Savage who died in 1933 the year when Albion and Redstone Academies, were consolidated into the Mary Potter Academy.

Swift Memorial College at Rogersville, Ten-



Dr. & Mrs. J. D. Martin

nessee became synonymous with the name of the Reverend C. E. Tucker, the Reverend W. H. Franklin and the Reverend W.C. Hargrave. They gave inestimable service over a period of years stretching from 1904 to the closing of Swift in 1941.

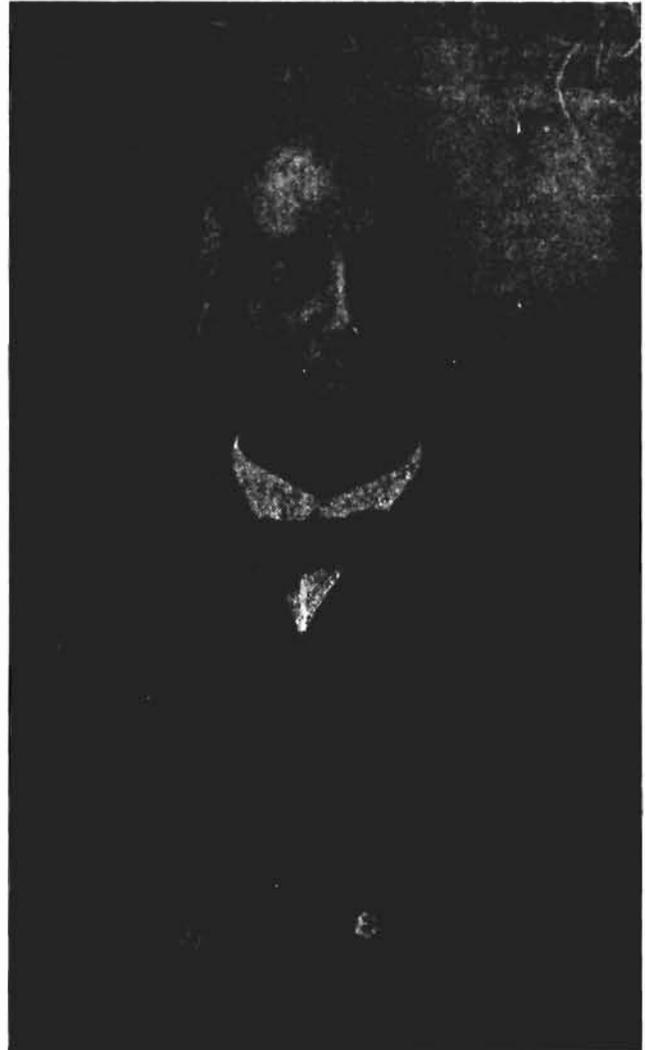
Alice Lee Elliott Academy in Valliant, Oklahoma is synonymous with the name of J. D. Stanback who succeeded the Reverend W. H. Carroll who had previously been in Monticello Academy in Arkansas. Dr. Stanback, a native of High Point, North Carolina graduated from Bidle University as an honor student in Greek. He pastored in Fountain Inn, South Carolina and went to Oklahoma in 1918. He pastored the Mount Olive Church in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, then went to Valliant in 1919 after his marriage to Ruby Boulware of Muskogee. He developed Alice Lee Elliott Academy to the point of being an accredited high school from the eighth grade when he went there. The school was closed in 1936 after years of distinguished service. Dr. Stanback died in 1939.

Henderson Institute in Henderson, North Carolina and Jubilee Hospital were synonymous with the name of the Reverend J. H. Cotton. He was the first black president of Knoxville College, born in Clay County, Kentucky, and educated at Knoxville College and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. His first year at Henderson was 1903 and he introduced manual training, domestic science, dressmaking and teacher training to the curriculum of the school. Part of the facilities are now being used by the city as a public school.

The Reverend and Mrs. Lewis Johnston and Miss Anna E. Grenage, an educated black woman, began the work of the Richard Allen Institute in 1886-1887. They were the names synonymous with the work of the institute which continued from that period until it became the Richard Allen Community Station in 1932.

Much could be said of the Reverend Sudor Q. Mitchell at Selden Institute in Georgia and the Reverend James W. Manoney at Brainerd and countless others whose names are filed away in the hearts of the many people whose lives they touched.

Inez Moore Parker
W. Eugene Houston



Dr. W. H. Franklin of Swift Memorial College

BLACK PRESBYTERIANS IN OVERSEAS MISSION

The continuing interest of black Presbyterians in overseas mission and the difficulties which faced Dr. Irvin and Mrs. Susan Underhill in 1928 are indicative of the ambiguous situation which has confronted the Presbyterian Church's mission involvement.

While it is true that the Board of Foreign Mission's own attitude toward the involvement of black persons in overseas mission work had begun to change by 1928, the vestiges of racial discrimination among white missionaries were to remain even into the 1970's.

The Underhills applied to the Board of Foreign Missions in 1927. The Mission Board said yes, but the white missionaries in Cameroun said no. Their response, supposedly, was based on the belief that a black American missionary would not be accepted by the black people of Cameroun. Finally through the assistance of Dr. John Mackay, President of the Board of Foreign Missions and President of Princeton Theological Seminary (from which Irvin Underhill had graduated), the Underhills were sent as missionaries to the Cameroun. In an interview with Dr. Underhill early in 1982 he revealed some of the basis for the resistance by white missionaries to his coming to that mission. During his ten years of service he discovered that the attitude of the white male missionaries was that the Camerounians had to be treated as children because they were not prepared to be dealt with in any other way. He protested, and was told that the Camerounians wanted this kind of relationship. Irvin Underhill also discovered that by 1930 no Camerounian pastor or evangelist had ever been invited into a missionary's home for a meal.

Dr. Underhill left the Cameroun in 1940 a sad man about Presbyterian mission. First, his first wife had died in the Cameroun following surgery. Secondly, some of the white male missionaries told him during one of his furloughs not to return to the Cameroun without a wife. Thirdly, the Board of Foreign Missions seemed unaware of the attitude and behavior of its missionaries abroad. There is no evidence that the Board of Foreign Missions ever gave Irvin Underhill credit for what he accomplished for the Presbyterian Church and for the cause of Christ in West Africa.

However, in the years which followed there was to be *another black voice* which would chal-



lenge the integrity of the Presbyterian Church's overseas mission involvement and the place of black persons in it. The voice was that of Dr. James H. Robinson, whose love for Africa was unparalleled among black or white Americans of his day.

From the position of founder and pastor of the Church of the Master, Morningside Avenue, New York City, Jim Robinson visited West Africa first in the 1950's. He returned and reported to the Board of Foreign Missions about what he had seen which, apparently, was the continuing vestiges of what Irvin Underhill had experienced years earlier in the Cameroun. Jim Robinson challenged the denomination to face up to the changes which were on the horizon for Africa and to help prepare the churches of Africa for the new day by including black persons among the missionaries who were being sent to Africa.

It was probably due to the efforts of Jim Robinson that during the 1960's three persons served overseas from the membership of the Church of the Master. Yenwith Whitney and Muriel Whitney went to the Cameroun as missionary teachers at the Cameroun Christian College in Libamba, 1958-1966. Today as the Africa Liaison for the Program Agency Yenwith Whitney occasionally finds some of his former students among the leaders of the Presbyterian Church in the Cameroun.

Ricky Porter,
1983 graduate of Johnson C. Smith Seminary

The third person associated with the Church of the Master to go to Africa was Mrs. Gladys Callendar Strachan. Gladys went to Kenya for three years under the auspices of the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations from 1964 to 1967. Today Gladys continues to give leadership in the United Presbyterian Church as a Program Agency Women's Program Staff for the Eastern Area.

During the late 1950's and 1960's, among the black missionaries to go to Africa were Kermit and Irene Overton. The Overtons served as fraternal workers in the Cameroun and Nigeria from 1958 to 1968. Today the Overtons are providing leadership to the historic First African Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia which celebrated its 175th Anniversary in 1982.

There were other black women missionaries during this period. Mary Jane Patterson, who comes from a long line of black Presbyterians, served for three years in Kenya as a social worker helping to organize a hostel for young women with children out-of-wedlock. Today Mary Jane is the Director of the Program Agency's Washington Office, the only black person to occupy such a position for a major U.S.A. denomination.

Lillian Anthony, a member of the former United Presbyterian Church of North America was the first black female to serve in Egypt, as teacher in the Pressly Memorial Institute in Assiut, Egypt—and the first black from her church.

Lillian served in the Chicago office on the United Presbyterian Women's Staff after merger in 1959. Since then, she has earned her doctorate degree and is a consultant in her own firm in Washington, D.C.

The field of Christian Education was to have during this period the services of Emily Gibbes. Emily was with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa as a consultant in Christian Education between 1968 and 1972. Her job was to work with a Kenyan counterpart in preparing to provide Christian Education services to a growing church. Some years after Emily's service in Kenya, I met the young man she trained. He introduced himself with pride as the "young man who Miss Gibbes trained in Christian Education." Emily earlier had served as Women's Program Staff for the Board of Christian Education of the United Presbyterian Church, and retired several



years ago as Associate General Secretary for the Division of Education and Ministry, National Council of Churches of Christ.

Africa was not the only area to receive black missionaries in the postwar period. Darius and Vera Swann were missionaries destined for China, but like so many others their plans were interrupted by the revolution. The Swanns served instead for seventeen years in India as teachers. Through the leadership and inspiration of the Swanns one of their Indian students attended Johnson C. Smith University and today is the Associate Director, Christian Medical Commission of the World Council of Churches.

Today, the Swanns continue to be deeply involved in the life of the United Presbyterian Church. Vera is Associate for Urban Ministries, National Capital Union Presbytery, Washington, D.C. and Lee is a professor at George Mason University, Virginia. He is also a member of the Board of the Program Agency.

In 1957, Frank Wilson was recruited from the deanship of the School of Religion at Howard University, and served for 10 years (1957-1967) as Secretary for Education in the newly established Office of Education of the United Presbyterian Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations. This was an appointment to "Mission Through Education," in partnership with Presbyterian related schools, and colleges, universities

and theological seminaries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. Work with the leadership in these church-related institutions was designed to strengthen indigenous administrative and faculty personnel, and to assist these institutions, as "Partners in Mission," to make an effectual Christian witness, in the nation and to the nation, under the auspices of the church.

During this period, Bryant George was a missionary in Pakistan, serving in that country shortly after the partitioning of India and Pakistan. Upon his return to the United States, he continued his ministry as a top executive in the Board of National Missions of the United Presbyterian Church.

There are several observations to be noted about black Presbyterian involvement in overseas mission in the postwar period. First, the apparent influence which a single individual, Jim Robinson, had on this church's mission overseas. He saw a challenge for change, he took the issue to the doorsteps of authority, and insisted that something be done. But he did not stop there. He took up the challenge himself and began recruiting blacks for overseas mission. The second observation is that during the period of greatest social and racial ferment in our own society, black persons heard the call to "go into all the world," so they went to China (intent), India, Pakistan, and Africa. These were persons with excellent skills who interrupted careers in order to serve the cause of Christ in other parts of the world. Thirdly, all of these persons have demonstrated the increased capacity which they now have to serve Christ's cause more effectively in the United States of America. They all have a larger view of the glory of God and the nature of the Body of Christ because they have dared to go into a "far country," and live among "strange people."

Although I have some intimate acquaintance with United Presbyterian Church mission during the past fifteen years, it is not clear that the number of black laborers in the overseas mission during this period is the result of major changes in policy. The way in which policies have been implemented and the interest of black persons are probably the major factors. This conclusion is all the more reliable when seen in the context of the 1970's and 1980's. During this period there

has been only one major policy change, which has made it possible to appoint persons with subsistence support for one or two years. While these persons are treated like regular missionaries who may be appointed for three to four years, the subsistence workers are always appointed for a shorter period of time.

Possibly because of this change, there have been a number of younger black persons who have been able to enrich their learning and growth as subsistence workers overseas. Regrettably, what has been missing in this same period is a comparable number of older blacks with more diversified skills serving for longer periods. There was one important exception during the 1970's. Eugene and Leatrice McClendon served in Kenya from 1971 to 1980 in a village Polytechnic Program, taking a leave-of-absence in 1980 for reasons of health.

Minority persons involved in overseas mission during the past decade have numbered 56. Of these 12 have been Black, 28 Asian, and 16 Hispanic. The largest number of the Blacks have been students or recent graduates of Johnson C. Smith Seminary at the Inter-denominational Theological Center. Among these have been Marsha Snulligan-Haney, Sudan; Ricky Porter, Cameroun; Brenda Brooks, Malawi; and James Powell, Sudan, agricultural extension work, who is in his second term of service in the Sudan. The Sudan Council of Churches has requested that Jim be re-appointed for two more years. The Reverend Dorothy McKinney was appointed in 1982 to serve for three years as study secretary for the Institute of Church and Society, Ibadan, Nigeria. The enlistment of these young persons has resulted from the commitment and determination of Dorothy Gist, Professional Recruitment, Vocation Agency, and James H. Costen, Dean, Johnson C. Smith Seminary.

There was a period in the late 1960's and 1970's when recruitment of personnel for overseas work virtually came to a halt. However, the problem has taken an about face since the closing years of the 1970's. Positions for overseas workers have gone unfulfilled. Although there was a period when the concept of moratorium* in overseas mission was talked much about and misunderstood, the situation today is unmistakably clear. There is a place and a need for mission

J. Oscar McCloud

personnel for overseas work. There is a willingness and desire to increase the number of minority persons, especially Black.

There is also a strong desire in many African Churches to receive black persons in the belief that some of the identification problems and cultural barriers can be overcome more easily. There is a sense in which the situation during the past half century has become a complete reversal of what existed in 1928 when the Underhills went to the Cameroun. There is acceptance in overseas churches and commitment on the part of the Program Agency to appoint black persons for mission service abroad. But the "laborers" are far too few.

What seems to be missing in this current situation is leadership in black churches which takes seriously the opportunities and challenges of overseas mission for black Presbyterians. The time may have returned when the Program Agency and the Vocation Agency should convene a conference with representatives of black congregations to lay before them the challenge of the Gospel for black mission workers to serve Christ's Church overseas. There are places overseas today where black Christians are not only needed, but may in some instances be preferred due to the particular experience of blacks in America. For example, not only is there a readiness and opportunity for black Christians to serve in Christian witness in many African countries, but elsewhere as well. Many black Presbyterians are unaware that there is a large "Negro"*** community among the population of Brazil. In 1979 the black population of Brazil numbered more than one million.

There has been some limited outreach into this segment of population by Brazilian Presbyterians, but nothing comparable to the outreach into Indian communities in some other Latin American countries. Several black Brazilians have expressed a desire for closer relations with some black Christians from the United States of America because of the peculiar expression of racial injustice in Brazil.

It was the articulation of the Gospel from the perspective of Blacks, in large part, that led to the experience of abolition. It was the same black articulation of the Gospel in more recent times that—in large part—led to acquisition of civil



rights and the "gains" in the struggle for black humanity. This latter is still before us and, to a considerable extent, needs to be more on the continents of Africa, Latin America and Asia.

Black Americans, particularly those in the Christian Church, have not only an obligation to consider the urgency and potential of ministry overseas—but the obligation also to take the initiative. Black Presbyterians are not in the predicament of the Irvin Underhills and cannot pretend that Jim Robinson and others have not prepared a new environment of challenge, opportunity and need—on all six continents.

As the churches overseas are playing an increasing role in the life of their respective nations, it is important that the Presbyterian Church provide the very best and most committed Christian workers that the witness of the overseas churches might be more effective in bringing the gospel of salvation to the whole of their nation and the world. The decade of the eighties will be a time when black Presbyterians either recover or completely lose our place in overseas mission involvement of USA Presbyterian witness.

J. Oscar McCloud

*Moratorium: During the late sixties and early seventies there was a suggestion that "foreign" mission boards should temporarily cease sending personnel and money to churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It was thought that the churches in these areas of the world need a period of time without the presence or involvement of churches and missionaries from outside. This concept of moratorium received the greatest attention within the All Africa Council of Churches and a few Africa churches.

**Negro: The term used in Brazil to refer to those persons who are direct descendants of the Africans brought to that country as slaves.

VARIETIES OF MINISTRIES

Introduction



Black and predominantly black congregations of the United Presbyterian Church—four hundred strong and mainly urban—range across the nation from Key West to Seattle, from Boston to San Diego. If Philadelphia is their birth place then the Carolinas are their heartland. About 80% of these congregations have less than two hundred members and only two have exceeded a thousand. Like most black congregations, their economic existence is marginal. Having neither endowments nor over-subscribed budgets, they go from month to month—precariously, yet in hope—spending an inordinate amount of time raising funds for current expenses, denominational commitments and woefully underfunded programs. Such are the economic realities of ministry in the black community. It's been that way in the best of times and the worst of times.

In matters ecclesiastical, such as the form of government or the exercise of discipline, these congregations practice their Presbyterianism with a zeal worthy of any Calvinist body. However, in matters having to do with the church's mission and ministry, as you will subsequently note, they form a rather solid phalanx marching to the beat of a different drummer—the Black Church. From its earliest years as an “invisible” church on the plantation to its current prominence and presence at the crossroads of rural and urban Black America, the overriding mission agenda for the Black Church has been the issue of racial justice and freedom from oppression. If, to some, it seems necessary to say so, say it we will: black Presbyterians today, no less than black Baptists and Methodists and others, feel it their duty to be faithful to this ministry of freedom and justice. When has it ever been otherwise?

While there may be a broad consensus among black Presbyterians regarding the nature of their service in the world, they are not of one mind regarding their service of worship in the sanctuary. Increasingly this has been the case since the call for black pride and the recovery of one's roots. When the Bethany Church in 1978 formed a gospel choir, bringing to that Lumberton, North Carolina sanctuary a new sound full of rejoicing and embellished with bodies swaying and hands clapping to a pulsating beat, it sent a shock wave through the congregation. But it was only a short time thereafter that acceptance

came, and more—a sense of pride. What is happening is that black Presbyterians no longer feel they must appropriate every jot and tittle of white Presbyterian ways—if, in fact, they ever did. In ever growing numbers they are convinced that black is beautiful and that this heritage of the black past, rightly used, can glorify God in the sanctuary and serve his kingdom in the community.

Church Beginnings

Pentecost is not a fixed formula for establishing a congregation. It is a divine/human experience, the visitation of the Holy Spirit poured out upon all who are gathered in one place to form the church, The Body of Christ. For the Freedom Church in Statesville, the first black Presbyterian congregation in North Carolina, the Pentecost experience occurred in 1865 when a Scottish born missionary named Sidney S. Murkland was dismissed by his presbytery for expressing abolitionist sentiments. When freedom came to the slaves he gathered them in his home for worship and became their first pastor. Other congregations have had other experiences of Pentecost. It was the dream of Joseph P. Thompson that one day, somehow, the Lord would use him in starting a congregation. And so it was. In the late 1870's his dream became a reality when a classroom in his home, filled with the presence of the Holy Spirit, led to the end of his illiteracy and the beginning of the Shiloh First Church in Winnsboro, South Carolina at the "Thompson Place." Many congregations have had their Pentecost because blacks refused any longer to endure the pain of discrimination and humiliation, secured their letters of dismissal from the First Church on Main Street and marched proudly to a rented house of worship to become a Body of Christ in that place. Today, the birth of a new congregation is less often the fulfillment of a missionary/evangelist's labors or the vision of an inspired layperson. More commonplace is the presbytery's process for a congregational presence in response to a new community development, a neighborhood undergoing racial change or the promising recommendation of a strategy committee's report. However prosaic the process, the power of the Holy Spirit is still in it. It has to be or else there can be no formation of the church as inspired by that first Pentecost.

Sometimes it is the love and labor of what has been called "the company of the committed," a band of believers who build their own house of worship. That is the story of Grier Heights Church in Charlotte which began with the purchase of a garbage dump site. The men did the digging, the women did the clearing and loading and the youngsters hauled away the trash. Some secured the brick from a demolished house and cleaned it while others prepared the cement for the brick laying.

Just as the manner in which the church came into being may vary from place to place, so also will there be variation of style and characteristic in ministry. The apostle Paul, referring to the individual Christian, made the same point in words that are memorable: "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one." (1 Cor. 12:4-6)

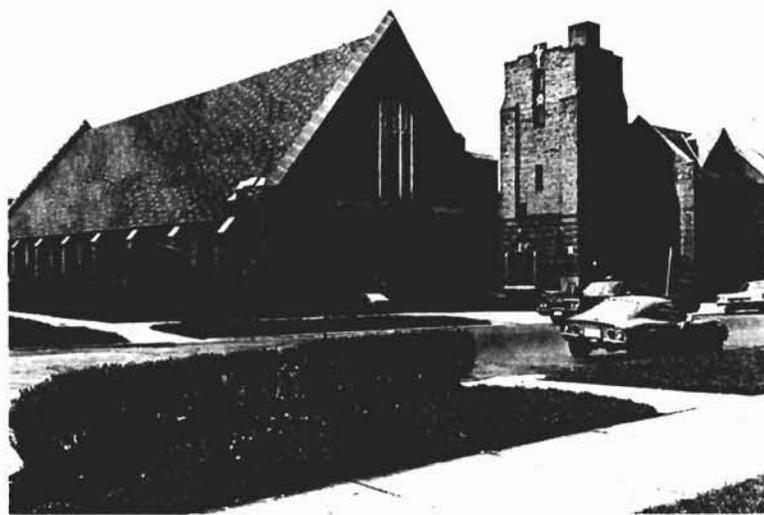
That same spirit of self-giving is still very much in evidence but in a different form; today, it is reaching out with concern and compassion in ministries dictated by need and fulfilled with the gifts of faith.

Rural Churches

Sardinia is a farming area in rural Clarendon County, N.C. one of the poorest counties in the nation where illiteracy runs high, public welfare for many families is a matter of survival, educational offerings for Blacks are less than adequate, and the prospects for a skilled or professional job must begin with migration northward. The human condition is not noticeably different in Winnsboro. There, too, life for Blacks is a struggle against the devastations of racism. In the midst of such bleak circumstances one is not likely to find a Presbyterian church. But that is precisely where the Melina and Shiloh First congregations are, and their ministries have made a difference in the quality of community life as they have prevailed against terrible odds. Up from slavery, fourth and fifth generation Presbyterians worship in these sanctuaries and send their sons and daughters equipped for service into the world, several of whom are now rendering distinguished service in the United Presbyterian Church.



Bethany Church, Lumberton, NC



Crerar Memorial Church, Chicago, IL

On James Island, just seven miles off the coastal waters of Charleston, South Carolina, is the second largest congregation of black Presbyterians. What is notable about the St. James Church is its rapid growth since the 1970's and the not inconsiderable mission presence it has in this rural setting. From good planning and trained leadership has come an institutional ministry, putting in place a broad range of church and community programs which serve the community at every point of need. These ministries include a response to crisis situations, attention to the developing years of early childhood and the matured years of the elderly and an awareness of the critical social and political issues that daily impinge upon the life of the people. In addition to the planning and staging of these programs, there has been another important element in the making of this ministry—growth in discipleship through stewardship education. Mission support is no longer at the mercy of fundraising activities; in its place is disciplined giving as becomes the faithful steward.

Given the rapid growth of our urban existence over the last forty years, many of us may be without full appreciation, if not awareness, of the many contributions of the rural church to our life and ministry today—the remarkable strength and vitality of the faith it has practiced, its perseverance against the devastating forces of injustice, the continuing gift of committed leaders who occupy our pulpits and our pews and a proud tradition of black Presbyterianism which claims our allegiance.

Witness of the Laity in Church and Society

A 1981 survey, jointly sponsored by Black Presbyterians United (BPU) and the Program Agency's office of Black Mission Development, identified leadership development as the top priority for the decade of the eighties. Surprising? It shouldn't be, not when you consider the challenge the decade of the sixties has placed before the black congregation, particularly its leadership, to exercise its gifts and its faith commitment in new and more meaningful programs of social involvement. Christ Church in San Diego has made public education a program priority, an emphasis that has brought city-wide attention to the congregation. For more than twenty years someone from this church has sat as an elected member of the San Diego School Board. But the involvement of the congregation has not stopped there. At the parish level educational needs are being met by a tutoring program, Head Start for four hundred children and a bilingual reading program for the Laotians.

The Northminster Church in Columbia, South Carolina has what might be regarded as more than its fair share of professionally trained laypersons. The same is true of Christ Church and several other congregations around the country. For the Columbia congregation this privileged circumstance is quickened by a deep sense of social responsibility and a commitment to use one's talents for fundamental change. At Northminster these laypersons are involved at the local level and in area-wide activities as a part of their Christian witness. Their being involved in

these places is doubly important because of what they bring: a certain expertise and a faith commitment, a memory of the black past and a present awareness of the need for radical social change for the whole community.

Equipping the laity for ministry in Harlem and in United Presbyterian structures is an intense and intentional mission effort at St. James Church. The task is to develop and deploy skilled, caring persons for service on boards and committees and for involvement in programs of various sorts that move toward a common goal—the making of a new Harlem. Involvement in denominational structures is not optional. It is, quite to the contrary, part of the same mission task. It is linked to mission in Harlem. It is this mutuality in mission, the visual presence of St. James Church in Harlem and the tacit presence of the whole church, that defines in part the genius of Presbyterianism.

Congregational revitalization happens when the laity get involved. Racial change came to the St. Paul's Church community in the 1960's and left in its wake a church faced with the stresses of integration and the decline of membership. The new pastor called in 1975 immediately went to work developing a cadre of lay persons. There it all began to happen: self-support in five years, membership decline stopped in its tracks and the beginning of dramatic growth. This Los Angeles Church is a renewed congregation in the community now, the hub of community activities and issues, respected and looked to when a matter of urgent concern requires competent and compassionate resolution. Another example of equipping the laity for witness in church and society is to be found in the Sojourner Truth Church* in California's bay area. Incredibly, this congregation in its first and only decade has sent seven sons and daughters into ministry as ordained ministers. The worshipping people in Richmond offer no explanation for the prolific activity of the Holy Spirit. They are satisfied to receive it as an act of Providence, beyond human understanding.

Education for and participation in mission is not new to the women of Haymount Church in Fayetteville, North Carolina. In the early 1950's, *Outreach*, a denominational publication, became their textbook on mission. Organizing themselves into circles they studied the particulars of where

Presbyterian mission was taking place, the form and character of the mission and what was the background that led to the church's involvement. Here, as in many other churches, Presbyterian women came to a personal identification with mission activity near and far through special projects such as "opportunity giving," "summer medical mission," the "Thank Offering" and the "Fellowship of the Least Coin." The discipline of study and financial support has served the whole congregation well and others in times of extremity: by bringing emergency relief to families devastated by a tornado, or victimized by unemployment, discrimination and tragically inadequate welfare programs.

Specialized Congregational Ministries

History will sometimes place before a congregation a special concern that seemingly will remain with it for all time; at other times a present circumstance will last only for a season. When the founding members of St. James Church purchased a house for worship in 1869, they immediately recognized the need and opportunity to use it also for the education of children and illiterate adults.

There was not at the time a program of public education for Blacks in Greensboro, North Carolina. When the community finally awakened to its responsibility, St. James again became involved in the evolving concerns of public education. The pastor and members of the congregation became the first principal and teachers, respectively, of the little school on Percy Street. Ministry in education has persisted across the decades for St. James, shifting from that earlier school house to a present establishment with five predominantly black colleges and universities in the area. For the Lloyd Church in Winston-Salem, on the other hand, the ministry in education was of short duration. It began during the first decade of the 20th century in a one room "Little Red School House" with a single teacher and several elementary grades and came to a hapless end in 1934 when it was demolished.

*"I went to the Lord an' asked him to give me a new name. And the Lord gave me Sojourner because I was to travel up an' down the land showin' the people's their sins an' being' a sign to them. . . . Afterward I told the Lord I wanted another name 'cause everybody else had two names; and the Lord gave me, Truth, because I was to declare truth to the people."

burgh is nothing short of a ghetto. With that as context within which to carry out mission, the session, in attempting to follow its Lord in compassion on the disinherited and outcasts, must provide a broad gauge ministry of redeeming social, recreational, educational, cultural and spiritual value. That is the task of the community center, a task that involves the collaborative efforts of a governing board of session and community representatives, a staff of twenty-one paid workers, a corp of volunteers from the congregation, a presbytery committed to provide financial undergirding and a small company of public and private community services. Four to five hundred people pass through the center's doors on a weekly basis and another twelve hundred residents of the area are benefited from the services housed at Bethesda. It is a grim business of survival and coping in the face of terrible odds—and for the ministry of Bethesda, the promises of the Gospel are the tools for witness.

Black Presbyterianism came to Phoenix, Arizona in 1953 when five persons showed up for the worship service. Today, three decades later, it is fair to say that from that less than enthusiastic community response one would be hard put to find a person in South Phoenix whose life has not been touched by the ministry of Southminster. A large statement, to be sure, but, in the view of those who know, a reasonable assessment. The explanation, in part, is Project Uplift, a publicly funded training program for unemployable school drop-outs; a child development center for one hundred thirty pre-school children; a health clinic; an adult education program, hot meals for the elderly, language development, and more.

Six downtown churches in Charlotte, North Carolina have come together ecumenically to form the Uptown Cooperative Ministry, a mission strategy for addressing the broad range of individual and social needs in the black community. First United is one of the six participants. Not only have these congregations reached out to the poor with their shared resources; they have also reached out to each other in worship and fellowship. Because First United is a black participant in the Uptown Cooperative Ministry, it needs to be noted that the traditional pattern of Whites as subjects of mission and Blacks as objects of mission does not obtain. What appears to be in

evidence here is a partnership in mission with the possibility of confronting the barriers of race and class.

The Renaissance Center is the symbol of Detroit's renewal. Not far removed is the St. John's Church whose parish is a complex of private housing developments offering accommodations for the near poor, those of moderate means and the more affluent. Urban planning and renewal have set before this congregation a challenge to be a different kind of mission: a parish that is racially, economically and socially heterogeneous. St. John's, on the other hand, brings to this contemporary challenge a congregation that has been nurtured on pride of race, that has a healthy confidence in its leadership and a keen sense of vocation. Given these attributes for witnessing the St. John's congregation can be instrumental in helping a diverse community move from tolerance to acceptance to affirmation of its differences by celebrating such diversity in its own ministry.

The poster was prominently displayed for all to see. It read: "The Black Church reminds you that a voteless people is a hopeless people. Support your Black Church. Join the NAACP." There is nothing unusual or inappropriate about such a sign being posted in a black church. Each has a long history of walking hand in hand with the other, warriors in the struggle for justice and liberation. Some congregations have both the leadership and commitment that enables them to view the church as an instrument for social change. As such they do not see themselves as digressing from the work of the church but as proclaiming the gospel in a different mode.

Mission for social justice and social change is, for example, a major agenda of the Thomas M. Thomas Church in Chester, Pennsylvania. It may involve demonstrations against police brutality or political corruption or fighting City Hall and doing that with the same religious fervor that is brought to a service of worship or to introducing youngsters to dressmaking skills or to equipping another young man or woman about to enter the professional ministry of the church. In this, the Thomas M. Thomas Church is in the best tradition of the Black Church.

The intersection of Broad and Diamond Streets in North Philadelphia is the site of a fast



Burned down Haymount Church, re-built (inset)



Shiloh First Presbyterian Church,
Winnesboro, SC

food restaurant, a shabby gas station, a dormitory of Temple University and the imposing edifice of Berean Church. The area, exclusive of some scattered pockets of renewal, is a massive black enclave which, in turn, envelops the university campus. Berean has a century-long reputation for a style of ministry characterized by a warm evangelical fervor and an equally vigorous concern for social justice. The two strands of witness are still held in creative tension by the congregation, enabling it to form alliances with other religious and secular bodies to address those issues that weigh so grievously on the disadvantaged police-community relations, joblessness, health services and inadequate housing.

On the other side of the coin there is the call to, and claims of, discipleship: the proclamation of the Word, the Word expressed in community service, the structured educational experiences of the congregation, visitation of homes and more. Berean and the T.M. Thomas Churches are also participants in the metropolitan mission program of Philadelphia Presbytery, housing a community center ministry that reaches out to the

young and the old.

It will be 1984 before the Martin Luther King, Jr. Church of Springfield, Massachusetts celebrates its fifth anniversary, and yet the signs are everywhere that this congregation has a future of exceptional promise. The thrust of ministry is at least three-dimensional: the upbuilding of the spiritual life through worship and church education; a witness that penetrates every facet of community life with insights of the gospel and the values of the black experience, and the development of leadership for participation in the whole spectrum of Presbyterian life and witness. The spirit of this congregation's ministry is captured in a comment on the theme of the October 1982 issue of *Faith Journal*, a monthly publication of the congregation: "... when Black men and women recognize the activity of God in their lives, something miraculously positive happens. Efforts in the Black Church, in Black homes and, indeed, in the Black community as a whole move mightily toward the goal of that love, unity, and progress which we all seek."



Seniors at Grier Heights Church, Charlotte, NC



Community Basketball Team, St. James Church, Greensboro, NC



Youth Summer Project, Pine Crest Church, Houston, TX



Westminster Home, Laurinburg, NC

The cultural center of the Crerar Church in Chicago has given added dimension to an already highly regarded ministry. The center began in 1978 when the available congregational talent confronted a particular community need. Through the passing years there has been growth of staff and pupil enrollment and benefits beyond expectation for students of the piano, flute, clarinet and violin. Congregational worship has been enriched with instruments and the dance. It has been a godsend to the church, providing growth in numbers and its sense of mission responsibility. For the Westminster Church in Laurinburg, North Carolina the turning point in the life of the congregation came in 1974. That is the year when the Westminster Homes was established. It is a forty-three-bed nursing facility for the elderly and infirmed. This healing ministry has been a blessing not only to the residents receiving nursing care but to the congregation as well. Members of the church are anxious to tell how it has turned their ministry around. More has followed: a county-wide blood pressure screening center through the cooperative efforts of the Westminster Homes and congregation and the denomination's Major Mission Fund. And now certification has been granted to add thirty-one more beds to the nursing home, making a total of seventy-four. In and around Laurinburg, Westminster Church is described as the small church in a small community doing mission in a big way.

The Brookland-Woodridge Chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) makes the Northeastern Church in Washington, D.C. its headquarters.

The congregation has made the chapter an integral part of its ministry. Clearly, the relationship is symbiotic. Nine hundred AARP members are on the roll and five hundred can be expected to be in attendance at monthly meetings. This is the chapter that gets the district's attention, a status it could not enjoy without the congregation's investment in it as an integral part of its ministry. There is something going on every day that feeds the body, mind and spirit of these retired persons from the Federal establishment and other pensioners from the private sector. There is an impressive assortment of activities including arts and crafts, dancing, photography, physical exercises, French and Spanish classes,

card playing, current events and lectures in religion. Not to be overlooked is the opportunity, indeed the obligation, to share some of what they have been fortunate to acquire with those who have far less, or almost nothing.

Houston's fifth ward is a predominantly black area and the home of the Pinecrest Church. The congregation has a long and enviable record of social witness, reaching back to a ministry to the poor and hungry during the depression years, entertaining the troops during World War II, organizing the first black Boy Scout troop in Houston and, more recently, jointly sponsoring a program of housing rehabilitation. Pinecrest is witnessing today on yet another front—the female jail population. The program is called Women for Justice and it is attempting to address some of the ugly realities hidden from public view. A case in point: although black women represent less than 12% of the female adult population in the U.S., they constitute 50% of the incarcerated female population. Minority women as a group are over-represented in the prison population, a sign both of their severely limited opportunities in society and of the discrimination they suffer in the criminal justice system. Pinecrest is doing something concrete about it.

Urban Ministries

Black Presbyterians practice their faith in urban communities—or, more specifically, in the inner city. For some the word “ghetto” seems harsh and demeaning—and so it is, but that is precisely how the white majority perceives the black community.

The pastor of a posh suburban church put it squarely to a white colleague who was determined to make a go-of it in the city, “How would you like,” he said, “to leave a graveyard and go to a garden?” The offer was rejected but the perspective of the suburban pastor must not be overlooked. It is more than a personal opinion. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, eighty-five percent of all Blacks were living in urban areas in 1980. Yes, there's movement into the American mainstream but Blacks are bringing with them less income, the worst jobs, more poverty and more unemployment than Whites. And that, by our definition, is what a ghetto is.

The parish of the Bethesda Church in Pitts-



Day Camp, Bethesda Church, Pittsburgh, PA



Members of Southminster Church, Phoenix, AZ



Westminster Home, Laurinburg, NC

Conclusion

The all too brief account of these churches is intended to form a mosaic of black Presbyterian styles of ministry, a mosaic that nonetheless retains in each church the essentials of the Reformed tradition. Thus, black Presbyterians in rural congregations of the South hold much in common with their urban counterparts in the North and West.

It was pointed out in the introduction that black congregations have not ordinarily had an abundance of financial resources. While this is altogether the regrettable truth, the evidence is clear that this has never restricted them from developing some form of ministry that changed the quality of life within the reach of their ministry. One must therefore conclude, it would seem to us, that black Presbyterian churches have a real sense of mission, and that that mission is enhanced by a dedicated and informed laity of

men and women, young and old, professional and non-professional.

Clearly, black Presbyterian churches have been influenced by a predominantly white denomination, a rather normal expectation given the connectional nature of the church. But that identification has not caused them to repudiate their commitment to social witness nor forget their roots in the family of black churches.

Irrespective of denominational ties, black Presbyterians know how crucial the church is in the life of their community for it is there that they have been engaged in ministry. The challenge of the future, we dare believe, is to keep inviolate that witness of an authentic black church as an essential component of the whole mission of the whole denomination in the whole world.

Clarence L. Cave
Kermit E. Overton

EPILOGUE

The Celebration of One Hundred Seventy-Five years of Black Presbyterianism has been a time of review, renewal and rededication. The focus of review has highlighted the quality of witness and ministry of individuals and institutions whose lives and livelihood were both circumscribed and inspired by the peculiar features of the “black experience” in America during the 19th and 20th Centuries. Renewal of energy and hope has issued from assessment of the variety of gifts, talents and resources by which the black presence enriches, ennobles and extends the mission of the whole Church. Rededication is manifested in reaffirmation of trust and expectation that the Presbyterian Church in the USA will exert undiminished effort, as a “Community of Faith,” toward establishing the rule of righteousness, justice and peace in the affairs of human kind.

In retrospect, the testimony of faith and faithfulness by earlier generations of Black Presbyterians places the intentions, actions and ambitions of the current breed of Black Presbyterians under almost embarrassing scrutiny. Some questions for the twenty-first century will include, but go beyond, black concerns and will reflect heightened and extended conceptions of the whole Family of God, the Body of Christ, the Community of the Concerned. There will be continuing anxiety about the nature and extent of black participation in the Presbyterian denomination. This anxiety will find some relief in the certainty that Black Presbyterianism, as a vital ingredient in Global Presbyterianism, is striving to witness to the redeeming and liberating Power of the Holy Spirit, embracing the People of God in America and to the end of the earth.

The composite of articles and editorials in *Periscope I and II* gives not only a useful historical summary of the “actions and passions” of Black Presbyterianism in the past, but also a forecasting of intentions and expectations for the indeterminate future. Herein, there is no sounding of trumpets for a partisan assault upon “the establishment.” Neither is there intrusion of an alien or irrelevant agenda; nor pleading for acceptance of a doctrinaire position on issues which are central in the life of the Church, as the embodiment of the Love of God in the midst of the tribulations and triumphs of the People of God.

At this point in the witness of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., the voice of prophecy rings loud and clear—“What doth the Lord require of thee?” the Black presence and Black participation will strengthen and enrich the Church still further “to do justice, to love kindness and walk confidently with God” toward the health and healing of the Nations. Black Presbyterians respond in their renewed commitment to the Church as an instrumentality through which justice may “roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everlasting stream.”

—Frank T. Wilson, Sr.

Appendix

Inadvertently, the name of the Reverend Charles Marks, formerly on the staff of the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, was omitted from the list of black executives on page 17 of the first issue of **Periscope**. He is presently the Associate for Racial Ethnic Enlistment in the Vocation Agency.

Congregations Mentioned in "Varieties of Ministries"

Bethany Church

The Rev. Arnold Walker, Jr.
Lumberton, North Carolina

Freedom Church

The Rev. Rufus Jamerson
Statesville, North Carolina

Shiloh First Church

The Rev. James Hudson
Winnesboro, South Carolina

Grier Heights Church

The Rev. Lloyd Morris
Charlotte, North Carolina

Melina Church

The Rev. Carnell Hampton
Sardinia, South Carolina

St. James Church

The Rev. Cornelius Campbell
James Island, South Carolina

Christ Church

The Rev. George Smith
San Diego, California

Northminster Church

The Rev. Richard Dozier
Columbia, South Carolina

Lloyd Church

Vacant
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Crerar Church

The Rev. Clarence Lennon
Chicago, Illinois

Westminster Church

The Rev. Grover Nelson
Laurinburg, North Carolina

Northeastern Church

The Rev. Shelton Waters
Washington, D.C.

St. James Church

The Rev. Lenton Gunn
New York, New York

St. Paul Church

The Rev. Leon Fanniel
Los Angeles, California

Sojourner Truth Church

The Rev. H. Eugene Farlough, Jr.
Richmond, California

Haymount Church

The Rev. Harry J. Miller
Fayetteville, North Carolina

St. James Church

The Rev. Lloyd Green, Jr.
Greensboro, North Carolina

Pinecrest Church

The Rev. Edward T. Triem
Houston, Texas

Bethesda Church

The Rev. Leroy Patrick
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Southminster Church

The Rev. G. Benjamin Brooks
Phoenix, Arizona

First United Church

The Rev. Raymond Worsley
Charlotte, North Carolina

St. John's Church

The Rev. David Harmon
Detroit, Michigan

Thomas M. Thomas Church

The Rev. Johnnie Monroe
Chester, Pennsylvania

Berean Church

The Rev. J. Jerome Cooper
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Martin Luther King, Jr. Com. Ch.

The Rev. Ronald Peters
Springfield, Massachusetts

Books by and about Black Presbyterians

- Murray, Andrew E. *Presbyterians and the Negro—A History*. Presbyterian Historical Society, 1966. This book describes the frustrations of Black Presbyterians in relation to their white fellow church persons and to the wider community.
- Newbold, Robert T., Jr., ed. *Black Preaching—Select Sermons in the Presbyterian Tradition*. This book is an attempt to bring to the reading public all the best sermons by outstanding black Presbyterian preachers—men and women—African and Afro-American.
- Ofari, Earl *Let Your Motto be Resistance: The Life and Thought of Henry Highland Garnet*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1972. A biographical essay on one of the most controversial figures in the America of his day. The volume also contains ten of Garnet's important writings.
- Parker, Inez Moore *The Rise and Decline of the Program of Education for Black Presbyterians of the United Presbyterian Church*. San Antonio, Trinity University Press, 1977. A Historical survey of the church's contribution to the educational and cultural development of the freed slaves and their descendents in Presbyterian schools and colleges between 1865 and 1970. This study represents more than forty years of research by the author, including her own educational and teaching years at some of the institutions about which she writes.
- Schor, Joel *Henry Highland Garnet*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977. A biographical and interpretative work of a radical social thinker, and abolitionist and a Presbyterian minister whose influence on Frederick Douglass and other Black leaders was considerable. The book examines his ideas and his importance on the American scene prior to and following the Civil War.
- Wilmore, Gayraud S. *Black Presbyterians: The Heritage and the Hope*. Geneva Press, 1983. An examination of long-standing institutionalized racism in the American churches and the prejudice that continues to exist in society including a graphic description of what it is like to be Black in a predominantly white denomination.
- Wilmore, Gayraud S. *Last Things First*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982. A consideration of ultimate questions about death, judgement, heaven and hell, and a provocative treatment on Christian hope rooted in the black religious experience. An appendix provides questions for reflection and discussion.
- Wilmore, Gayraud S. *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1972. Gayraud S. Wilmore feels that the "red thread" that binds black religion together is Black Radicalism. In eight chapters he takes the reader from the religion of the Black to contemporary Black Power and Black Theology. It is a good introduction to the persons and movements that have moved through and caused movement in black religion. The bibliography alone makes it a worthwhile volume to own.
- Wilson, Frank T., ed. *Black Presbyterians in Ministry*. New York: Vocation Agency, UPCUSA, 1979. Brief sketches of forty-two clergy and laypersons in various forms of ministry which were earlier published in the 1973, 1975, 1977 issues of the Journal of Presbyterian History.
- Young, Henry J. *Major Black Religious Leaders: 1755-1940*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1977. An examination of black religion and black liberation as lived out in the lives of twelve religious figures, including James W. C. Pennington, Samuel R. Ward, Henry H. Garnet, Edward W. Blyden.

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