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### The Untold Story: A Short History of Black Disciples

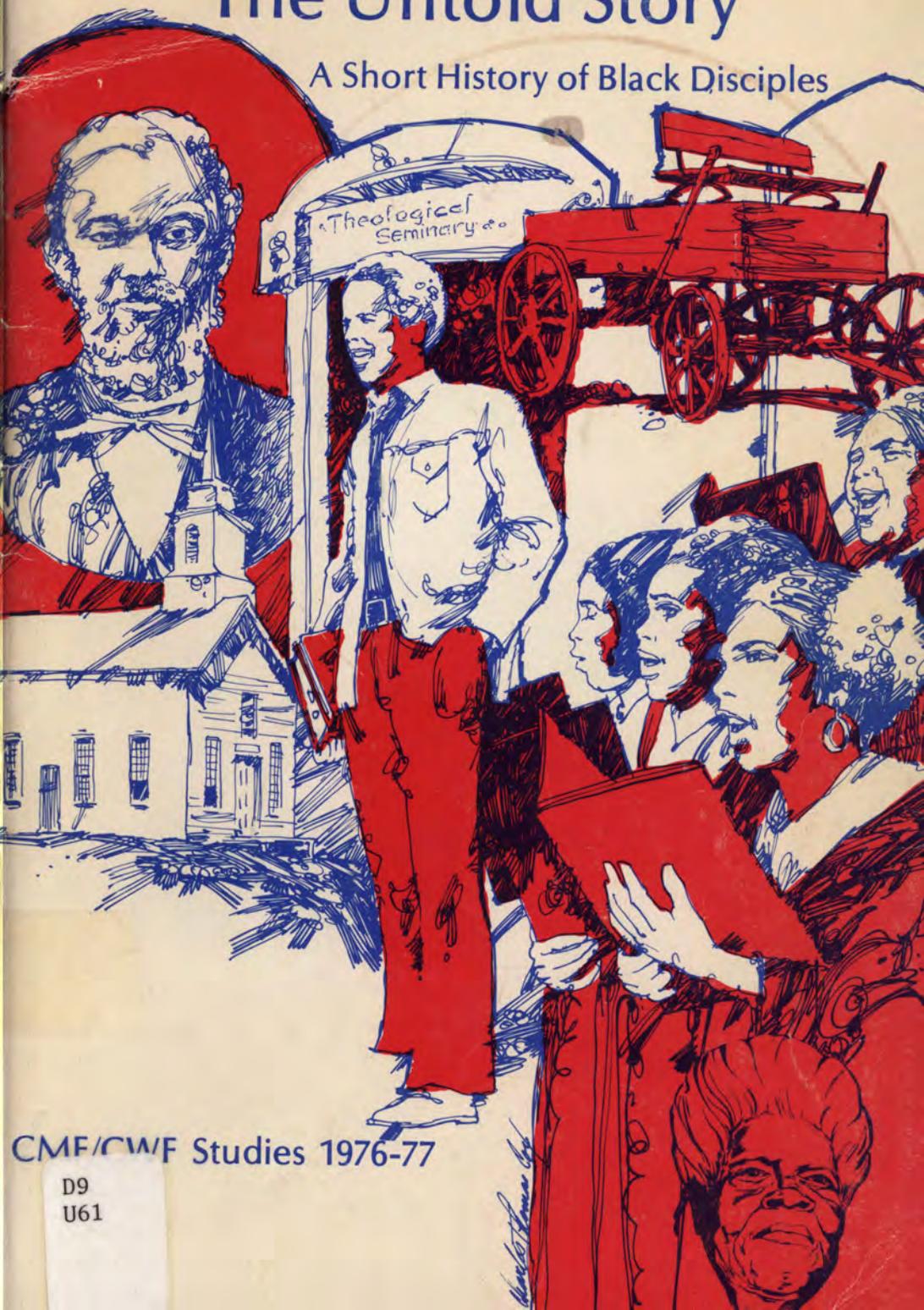
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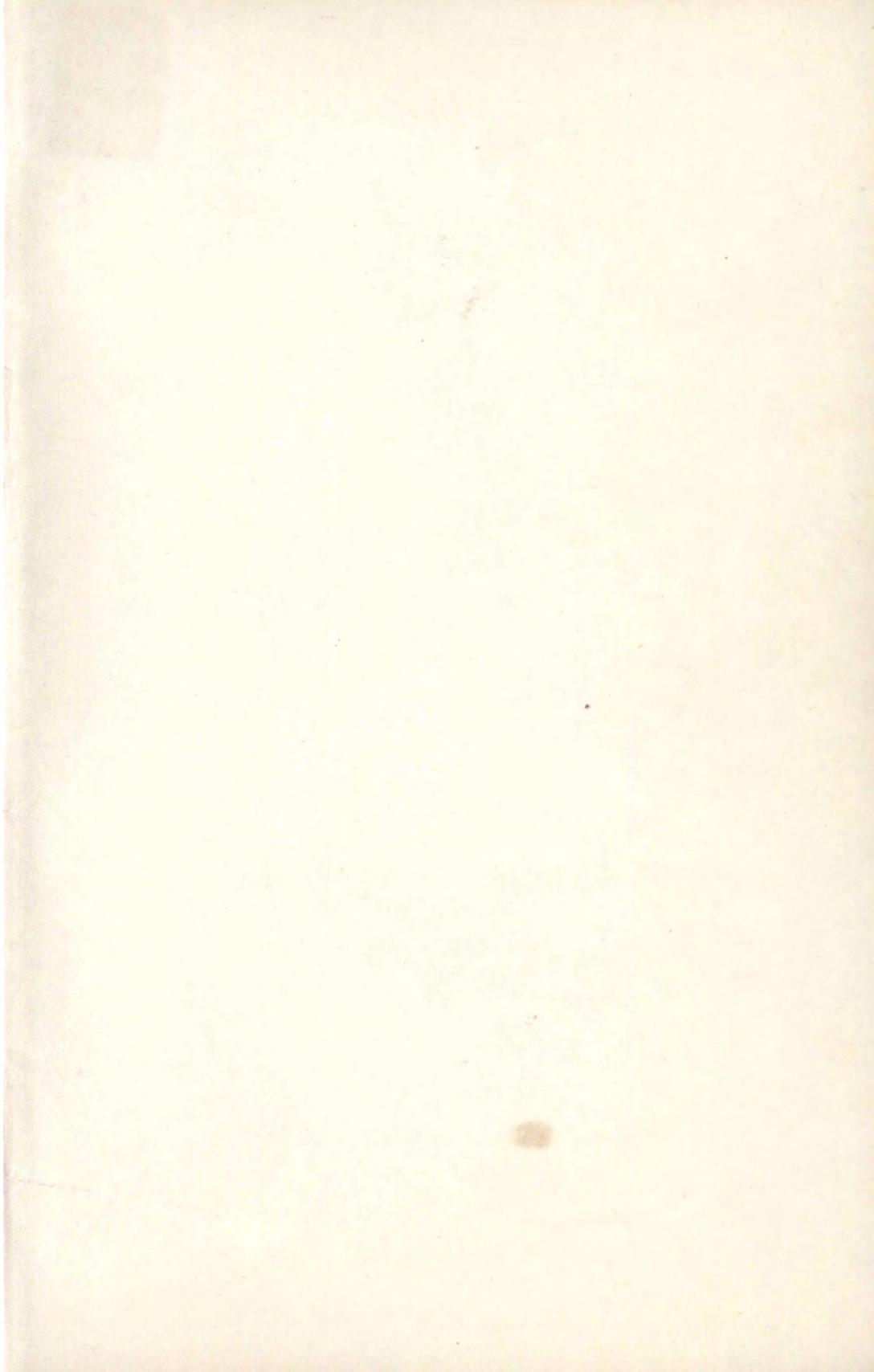
# The Untold Story

A Short History of Black Disciples



CME/CWF Studies 1976-77

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Theme for 1976-77  
Contents

Called to Be ... A People Under God

Before You Begin by William A. Fox

Black Disciples in the Nineteenth Century by the Editors  
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Worship by Rose Page Welch  
Another View of What Is Meant by Ann E. Dickerson  
Study Guidance by Lawrence J. Evans  
Worship by Rose Page Welch

Mission Strategy Among Black Disciples by A. M. Peoples and C.

# The Untold Story

## A Short History of Black Disciples

The Black Disciple Assemblies by William Joseph Barber, Sr.

Study Guidance by Lawrence J. Evans

Worship by Rose Page Welch

**Illustrated by Terri Kurtz**

**Cover design by Charles T. Cox**

Called to Be ... A People Under God  
Another View of What Is Meant by Ann E. Dickerson  
Study Guidance by Lawrence J. Evans  
Worship by Rose Page Welch

**Christian Board of Publication  
St. Louis, Missouri**

*New People—New Nation*  
This book is part of the Christian Life Curriculum, a churchwide program of education in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It was developed by a committee of the Division of Home and Ministry and the Christian Board of Publication.  
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(Church of Christ)

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Christian Board of Publication  
St. Louis, Missouri  
Printed in the United States of America

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## Theme for CMF/CWF in 1976-77

### Called to Be . . . A People Under God

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy.

—1 Peter 2:9-10.

In the midst of any great historical moment, there is an opportunity to review the place of the Christian heritage as an influence on national life. Through experiences of worship, giving, study, service, witnessing, and intimate fellowship with others, the Christian may discover what it means to be a people under God.

### Resources

#### General Programs:

*Called to Be . . . A People Under God*, a book of ten programs for general meetings. These are all based on Bible texts relating to the people of God.

#### Group Studies (four sessions each)

*New People—New Nation: The American Experiment* by James Armstrong. A brief survey of two hundred years in the United States from the point of view of church and state relationships.

*Lands of Faith and Ferment: Southeast Asia*. Describes experiences of Christian leaders in Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Viet-Nam, and the Philippines.

*The Untold Story: A Short History of Black Disciples*. A collection of articles and worship services from the experience of black members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

#### CMF/CWF Studies Sampler

Contains one copy of each of the above items.



# 1

## Before You Begin

by William K. Fox

This document is one of the few in the modern era which attempts to give an authentic outline of the part that black church members have played, and are still playing, in the unfolding drama of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

History validates the reality of persons and a people. The colorful and often controversial churchman and black historian, the late Merle R. Eppse, said, "Black Disciples of Christ history exists like African stories—in the mind of those who have heard about or experienced the event." Dr. Eppse was thinking about the sparse amount of written history about black people who were members of the Disciples of Christ Church. His statement grew out of early twentieth century America. This was an era when census data and mass media referred to blacks as "nonwhite." Actually this meant "nonbeing." This concept of nonbeing was one of the factors contributing to the omission of any significant reference to blacks in American histories.

*The Untold Story: A Short History of Black Disciples* refutes these tendencies. Under the guidance and editorship of Herbert H. Lambert, seven black Disciples of Christ writers and one white Disciples of Christ writer have developed a study-worship resource aid. This document underscores the wholeness of the church as reflected in Jesus Christ and in his prayer "that they may all be one."

### About the Writers of this Book

*The Untold Story* is essentially an outline. None of the writers has exhausted the era or subject which is covered in it. They have given us just enough reference to historical facts and events to indicate that there is a much larger story to be told and understood.

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*Dr. W. K. Fox is administrative secretary of the National Convocation of the Christian Church and assistant to the general minister and president of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).*

Hap Lyda, R. H. Peoples, C. C. Mosley, James Blair, and William Barber have sketched the early development of the Disciples of Christ movement among black people and the immediate background of the present status of blacks in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). *Hap Lyda's* summary is drawn from exhaustive research which he did for his doctoral dissertation in Vanderbilt University. It is an excellent systematic outline of the development of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) witness among black people during the nineteenth century.

*R. H. Peoples* and *C. C. Mosley* are, themselves, pioneer black Disciples of Christ leaders who have been participants in making the history. Their treatment of mission strategy includes interesting interpretations of the Christian Church stance on slavery and institutional missions which could only come from persons who are products of such mission effort and participants in it. *James Blair* is a modern-era black Disciples of Christ whose research in seminary was devoted to a search for group identity. Mr. Blair's treatise on the illustrious black leader Preston Taylor is extracted from research he did in seminary. James Blair is the son of a widely-known black Disciple minister, now deceased. *William Barber* is the foremost black seminarian belonging to the Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, Assembly, churches of the eastern seaboard. He has done research and writing about these members of the Christian Church. His contribution is significant and unique.

There are several things needed now as seen against the background of our history. *Kenneth Henry* and *Ann Dickerson* have listed some of "What is Needed Now." You will want to register a response and possibly add others. Kenneth Henry and Ann Dickerson represent two families which together have contributed some twenty ministers to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Miss Dickerson wrote her article only a few weeks before her sudden death in October, 1975.

But this is more than a recitation of history. It is an opportunity for personal introspection and religious commitment. "Worship Resources from the Black Experience," prepared by *Rosa Page Welch*, can be used in relationship to each study session. Mrs. Welch has been known for years as our "Ambassador of Goodwill." Many know her as possessed with unusual spirituality. This is shared with us in these worship services. Users of this CMF/CWF Unit Study for 1976-77 are also fortunate in having the counsel of veteran Christian educator, *Lorenzo Evans*. He has spent more than a quarter of a century working with black congregations. You will find his guidance material on four of the chapters helpful.

### **The Legacy of Preston Taylor**

Preston Taylor is symbolic of the early black Disciples of Christ heroes

of the faith. The legacy left by Dr. Taylor lives on in the whole church through the National Convocation of the Christian Church—a body which continues to live partially on the fruits of bequests made by Preston Taylor. His successful leadership of black and white Disciples led to the founding of the National Christian Missionary Convention in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1917. This was the one single event of the twentieth century which gave black Disciples of Christ a real sense of national community and purpose.

The forty persons from twelve states who assembled in Nashville that August, 1917, had a basic intention of coordinating the mission effort being made among black people by the American Christian Missionary Society, the Christian Women's Board of Missions, and black leadership in various states. The Convention did more. From 1917 to 1969 the National Christian Missionary Convention, Inc., served as a means for developing churchmanship, leader training, employment of professional staff, and interaction with other agencies of the Church on a peer basis. It also developed recommendations which were submitted to the United Christian Missionary Society and/or the International Convention of the Christian Church. Member congregations accepted goals for outreach giving and the causes of mission received special visibility and promotion in the annual assembly.

### **The National Convocation, 1969**

The press for racial integration, and concern that the structures witness to Christian belief in the wholeness of the church, caused discontinuation of National Convention program responsibilities in 1959 and the merger of Convention staff with appropriate departmental staff of the United Christian Missionary Society. In 1969, there was an abandonment of the annual meeting of the National Convention and a merger with the International Convention which led to the present General Assembly. At the same time, there was created the National Convocation of the Christian Church, which holds a biennial assembly in the even-numbered years, when the General Assembly does not meet.

The assembly of the National Convocation helps fill a void left during the transitional period by the dissolution of the National Christian Missionary Convention, Inc. Many of the 555 predominantly black Disciple congregations are located in areas where the presence of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is weak or where relationships between black and white Disciples is limited, superficial, or non-existent. The Convocation is recognized in the church and operates within the General Office. The convocation has an administrative secretary; its main year-round

function is program assistance and the motivation of black Disciples to take initiative in doing church work.

### **The Movement Toward Wholeness in the Church**

There is a decided movement toward wholeness in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This is not a movement toward uniformity and central authority, but rather an honest recognition of the variety of spiritual gifts and religious experience which constitute the body of Christ—his church. Paul expresses this hope well in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 2.

Since 1969, the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has launched programs like the Reconciliation Fund which collects money from the congregations and distributes funds to selected churches and community organizations which sponsor programs seeking to eliminate the causes of racism, poverty, and powerlessness in the United States of America.

The General Assembly, regional assemblies, and program units of the church have implemented policies of fair representation for youth, women, and racial minorities for its boards, commissions, committees, and elected offices. Keeping such a balance on boards and commissions is a constant challenge.

Since 1969, the church has placed itself under a continuing mandate to urge similar representation in employment by the several institutions of higher education and program units. The struggle to achieve this goal is difficult. Church persons representing racial minorities, women, and youth have shared significantly in the drama and life of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Much more is to be done.

### **Actors in an Unfolding Drama**

The writers of this book themselves represent principal actors in the yet untold story of black Disciples of Christ leaders during the twentieth century. Each actor has played a unique and important role yet to be properly recorded. To a roll including trailblazers R. H. Peoples, C. C. Mosley, and R. L. Jordan must be added the names of deceased pioneers like:

- L. H. Crawford, vigorous pastor and a National Christian Missionary Convention president from the Southwest.
- T. E. Pratt, loyal lay leader from Texas who inspired church school development.
- I. E. Franklin, Christian educator and itinerant pastor from Alabama.

- R. C. Peters, the "Back-to-the-Book" national evangelist from the Piedmont.

- L. L. Dickerson, consistent advocate for civil rights and leader in promoting ministerial recruitment and preparation.

- E. E. Dickerson, gifted journalist, poet, and Kentucky pastor.

- R. L. Watson, silver-haired evangelist in the Middle West and a National Christian Missionary Convention president.

- Patrick Henry Moss, whose birth on a southern plantation is unrecorded and who became the first national Christian education field worker.

- Enoch Henry, Sr., for fifty years dedicated to town and country pastorates in the Southwest.

- Richard H. Davis and Robert E. Latonsche, Jamaican pastors who laid foundations for the church in Chicago.

- N. R. Trevillion and E. K. Burton, typical town-and-country field preachers, whose devotion to duty motivated young and old to higher achievement.

The yet untold story will include a more faithful recognition of Rosa Page Welch, Deetsey Blackburn Gray and others. Such a listing will also include:

- Sarah Bostick of Arkansas, organizer of church women's mission groups and contributor to the foundations of Christian education.

- Elbie B. Titus, vigorous missionary leader in Texas and devoted participant in every Disciple gathering anywhere in the world.

- Women leaders such as Geneva Towns, Luvenia Dorine, H. Kirkpatrick, A. L. Martin, Callie B. Brayboy, and Carnella Barnes, president of the International Christian Women's Fellowship.

Many Black Disciples of Christ stalwarts in the church still labor among us: Cleo Blackburn of Indianapolis; The J. F. and C. L. Whitefields of Washington, D. C., and Baltimore, Maryland; S. S. Myers of Kansas City, Missouri; Blair T. Hunt of Memphis, Tennessee. This incomplete roll call only highlights the fact that in the Bicentennial year of these United States of America, there is much more to the untold story than has yet been revealed.

You may be able to help us tell the story more fully. One way is to send any materials you have to the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1101 Nineteenth Ave., S., Nashville, Tennessee 37212. You may have the missing part or parts needed for telling the whole story.



# Black Disciples in the Nineteenth Century

by Hap Lyda

## Before the Civil War

### Many Black Members at Cane Ridge

Blacks became members of the Christian Church almost from the beginning of the movement. By 1820, there were black members in the two oldest congregations, Cane Ridge, Kentucky; and Brush Run, Pennsylvania. Some early black members of the Cane Ridge church, notably Alexander Campbell and Samuel Buckner, were given ordination and were encouraged to preach to blacks and establish churches in Kentucky and North Carolina.

Before the Civil War the usual practice was for black and white members to be in the same church. The Walnut Spring church near Strasburg, Virginia, received into membership in 1822 "Jordan, a slave of Vanmeter," and in 1825 "Rachel Hunter, a free Negro"; a church roll listed other black members received before 1866. The Church of Christ at Concord, Pantego, North Carolina, had two slaves, Christmas and Gideon, who were charter members of the church, and by 1844, twenty-three of the 149 members were slaves.

The church at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, by 1852 listed 124 members of whom seventy-one were black. Pleasant Grove, Jefferson County, Kentucky, had black members as early as 1821; Old Union, Fayette County, Kentucky, as early as 1823; and Liberty in North Central Texas as early as 1846. Other churches whose records carried black members before the Civil War were Leavenworth, Kansas; Antioch, Fayette County, Kentucky; Louisville, Kentucky; Columbus, Mississippi; Canton, Missouri; Kinston, North Carolina; Boone's Creek, Washington County, Tennessee; Nashville, Tennessee; and Smyrna, King and Queen County, Virginia.

### Involvement with Whites

The participation of blacks in predominately white churches was



limited. Sometimes black persons served as custodians. Occasionally blacks filled the office of deacon, although they served only the black members. There were no black elders or board members of record. A few black persons who excelled at exhortation were ordained: Campbell and Buckner, as earlier noted; Isaac Scott at Raleigh, North Carolina; and Abram Williams at Somerset, Kentucky. Discipline was given to black as well as white church members for the commission of such sins as adultery, fornication, lying, stealing, and "walking provocatively." Separate seating usually was not required unless the black membership became large.

Black slaves often were taken to preaching services, either in servant capacities or because of their master's concern for their spiritual welfare. Persons who heard and believed the gospel were encouraged to present themselves at the front of the sanctuary to confess their faith in Christ; then they were confirmed through baptism in the nearest appropriate body of water. Black members were recognized as Christian brothers and sisters, but not necessarily as equals.

While the founders and early leaders of the Christian Church were whites who preached primarily to white audiences and were supported primarily by the time and money of whites, blacks were not excluded from participation. Thomas and Alexander Campbell acted on the premise that blacks should be educated in the verities of life, the Bible being the chief textbook, and both held classes for blacks. Barton W. Stone, Walter Scott, and the Disciple leader Benjamin Franklin concurred in the view that the religious education of blacks was a serious responsibility for the church.

The white Disciple leaders encouraged an emphasis on biblical religion, and their rational approach gave them a reputation for "head" but not "heart" religion. Thus, "shouting Methodists" and "fervent Baptists" furnished more opportunity for emotional expression to blacks than did the

“New Testament Christians,” who put more stock in religious commands and obedience than in religious experience.

### First Congregations

The earliest black congregation on record was at Midway, Kentucky. By the mid-1830s there were so many black members in the Woodford County churches that white leaders thought it appropriate to organize the “Colored Christian Church.” In 1834, the congregation was constituted, given the Midway church building, and provided with a black pastor, Alexander Campbell; the women’s missionary groups bought Campbell from a Mr. Buford for \$1,000, set him free and provided him with some theological education. The congregation was accorded full church status, and it elected its own officers and conducted its own business. Under Campbell’s leadership more than 300 members were added.

Other black churches in *Kentucky* were formed at Lexington in 1851, Thomas Phillips, pastor; at Louisville, the Hancock-Hill church, J. D. Smith, pastor; in Bourbon County, the Little Rock Christian Church, in 1861, Samuel Buckner, organizer.

The first black congregation of record in a free state was at Pickerelltown, Logan County, *Ohio*, begun in 1838. Henry Newson pastored this church, which became an important station for the Underground Railroad and which, for unstated reasons, was disbanded in 1856. Other congregations in Ohio were located in Cincinnati, in Morrow County at Edgar’s distillery, and in West Liberty.

In *North Carolina* the oldest black church appears to have been the Free Union Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, at Uniontown (Union Community) in Martin County. The Disciples’ church there, comprising both blacks and whites, decided in 1854 to erect a new building; the black members were invited to remain in and receive ownership of the old building.

Other black congregations before the Civil War existed in *Georgia*—in Washington, Johnson, and Wilkinson Counties. Also there was one known black church in *Tennessee*, at Nashville, and one church probably at Washington College in Upper East Tennessee. At Nashville, the Christian Church sponsored two Sunday schools for blacks, and in 1859 gave one of these schools church status; it was named Grapevine Christian. and was provided a building on the General William G. Harding property. Peter Lowery, a free black, provided strong pastoral leadership for Grapevine for many years. In Washington County, the Boone’s Creek church ordained and supported Hesiker Hinkel as an itinerant evangelist.

He is reported to have won many converts and probably established the church at Washington College before the Civil War.

By 1861 the number of black members of the Christian Church was probably about 7,000; perhaps 5,500 of this number were in predominantly white congregations, the rest in black congregations. The largest numbers of members were in the slave states, especially Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

### **From the Civil War to the End of Reconstruction**

In the period from the Civil War to the end of Reconstruction (1861-1876), the number of black congregations multiplied. The legal freedom granted to blacks allowed them to take the initiative in founding churches. The desire of some whites in churches of mixed membership to aid blacks to establish their own churches rather than grant them full membership privileges also promoted the growth of black congregations.

#### **South of the Mason-Dixon Line**

In *Kentucky* perhaps as many as thirty black churches were begun in this period. Campbell, Buckner, George Williams, Leroy Reed, R. Elijah Hathaway, Alpheus Merchant, and Alexander Campbell II traveled extensively preaching the Christian message. If they received pay for their efforts it was usually in the form of meals or lodging; sometimes a "love offering" would bring them a few cents or at most a dollar or two.

White members often gave amounts of money, and the white state missionary society regularly allotted money to pay some of the expenses of evangelistic workers; but all of the workers also farmed or labored to provide their basic support. Some of the churches thus founded which grew to considerable strength were North Middletown (Second), Mt. Sterling, Nicholasville, Danville, Millersburg, and Carlisle.

In *North Carolina* evangelistic work was pushed forward by Alfred (O'fie) Pettiford, Joe F. Whitley, R. Esom Green, and William Anthony (Bill Ant'ly) James on the east side of the Tar River; and by Alfred Lovick, Sr., Demus Hargett, and Allen Chestnut on the west side. The Disciples generally did not evangelize in North Carolina west of the Wilmington-Weldon Railroad because of a "gentlemen's agreement" with the O'Kellyites of the Christian Connection. Both the state and various district white conventions assisted in the evangelistic work, and the state convention helped the blacks organize a state convention as early as 1869. Other evangelists who organized congregations in this period were Yancy Porter; B. J. Gregory, who is said to have received over 3,000 members;

and Charles Randolph Davis Whitfield, who baptized 1,857 persons and gave six sons to the ministry.

In *Georgia*, E. L. Whaley (financially supported by Mrs. Emily H. Tubman of Augusta), George Linder (hired by the white Georgia Christian Missionary Convention), and Joe Corbett organized at least seven churches between 1863 and 1873: Mt. Pisgah and Hopewell at Thomasville, Mt. Olive and Pine Hill in Brooks County, a Christian church in Johnson County, one at Mitchell, and the Savannah church in Atlanta.

In *Tennessee*, Hesiker Hinkel continued his evangelistic work in the eastern area. In Central Tennessee Rufus Conrad led in the formation of the American Christian Evangelizing and Educational Association in May, 1867, at a convention in Nashville. The Association was instrumental in establishing congregations in Friendship, Trenton, Lynchburg, Pinewood, Fosterville, Little Rock, Capleville, Jamesburg, and Concord. Conrad appealed to the American Christian Missionary Society for financial and educational assistance, asserting that Tennessee was a particularly ripe field for evangelization. The ACMS deferred action, and the Association finally faded away; neither the ACMS nor the Association apparently had resources to sustain it.

Grand Gulf was the site of the first black Disciple church in *Mississippi*. In this cotton landing and loading town, Elder Eleven Woods (Levin Wood) from the area of Jeff Davis Bend, Louisiana, was assisted by a white, Brother Owens, in establishing the Salem Christian Church. In 1869, Woods came preaching a "new gospel." The only church in Grand Gulf was Baptist, and it immediately had Woods arrested and tried for heresy. The judge ruled, after requiring Woods to preach him a sermon, "that gospel is preached by elder Woods could not be counterfeited." Woods was freed, and a Restoration church was founded. Charles Pearson a white, donated land and the new members erected a building.

Woods moved quickly to establish several more churches along the river from Vicksburg to Natchez. He recruited such leaders as W. A. Scott, Sr., John Turner, W. A. Parker, John Wormington, George Hall, Ned Patterson, Frank Slater, B. F. Trevillion, Miles Smothers, W. R. Sneed, King R. Brown, and John Lomax. He obtained assistance from white leaders Thomas Munnell and George Owen, and used the legal services of Ovid Butler of Indianapolis in property matters. By 1873 Woods and colleagues had organized approximately thirty churches, some of them admitted as whole congregations from the Baptists.

Woods originally came from Warren County, Mississippi. Through his own study of the Bible and the influence of William T. Withers, a white Kentucky businessman who owned farmland in Mississippi, he arrived at beliefs similar to those held by Disciples. Withers received him into the

Christian Church at Jackson. Woods' main complaint with the Baptist Church, from which he came, was that it required an "experience" as necessary to salvation; he preached only confession of faith and baptism by immersion as the necessary steps of church membership.

The General Christian Missionary Convention, the national mission organization of Disciples formed in 1869, took a particular interest in the work among freedmen in Mississippi. It sent hymnals, Bibles, and various materials; and it paid some funds toward the support of Woods and Owen. Its 1873 report claimed twenty congregations, nine preachers, four meetinghouses, and 3,000 members in Mississippi.

### **North of the Mason-Dixon Line**

In Indianapolis, *Indiana*, a Sunday school for blacks was conducted by Christian Chapel (now Central Christian Church) as early as the 1840s. In 1866, Chapel Elders Ovid Butler and D. Orr led in expanding the school to include worship and other usual church functions and called it the Christian Mission Chapel. A frame building at the corner of Second Street and Lafayette Railroad was purchased for \$800 and was used at this location until 1873 when it was moved to Fifth (now Fourteenth) and Illinois streets. Through an arrangement with the city of Indianapolis, the first public school education for blacks in that city was carried on in this building. In 1867, the Mission Chapel was constituted as a church, and Rufus Conrad was called as pastor and hired by the city as schoolmaster. The school later became Public School #23, and the church changed its name in 1869 to Second Christian (African).

Thomas W. Cross moved from Virginia to Ohio to *Michigan* in 1869. He settled at Wheatland, Mecosta County. There he found persons from various stations in life interested in the Restoration principles. In 1870, he gathered blacks, whites, and Indians and organized them into the Wheatland Church of Christ. From the beginning the Wheatland church was integrated in both membership and ministry, although Cross remained the sustaining as well as the ruling elder. In 1876, Cross was ordained, became pastor of the church, and was the first of a long line of Crosses to lead the congregation.

In 1861, there were known black churches in the states of Kentucky, Ohio, North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee. By the end of 1876, congregations were organized in the additional states of Indiana, Texas, Virginia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Michigan, Alabama, Kansas, Missouri, and Louisiana.

During the era of 1861-1876 there were marked gains in the numbers of black churches and members: from churches in five states to churches

in fifteen states; from about 7,000 to approximately 20,000 members.

### **The Last Quarter of the Century**

From the end of the Reconstruction era to the turn of the century, black Disciples were primarily concerned with evangelism, the organization of conventions, and education.

In the region east of the Mississippi River and south of the Ohio River, with the exception of Eastern North Carolina, black churches were planted in the new fields of Maryland, Florida, and West Virginia. In this region church members not only organized and worked through their own state conventions, but also worked in close cooperation with the national structures of the entire denomination. Leaders were particularly interested in providing schools, both for religious training and for general education. Such institutions were opened in Kentucky, Mississippi, Alabama, and Virginia. By 1900 the largest numbers of black churches and members were in this region. The 307 churches claimed 33,145 adherents, and valued their property at \$100,000. Not only were area and state conventions constituted, but also a second national one, the National Convention of the Churches of Christ. Two Kentucky pastors, H. Malcolm Ayers and Preston Taylor, led the formation in 1878. The Convention met with some regularity throughout the rest of the century both for fellowship and for planning cooperative work.

### **Development in the Middle West**

In the part of the country north and west of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, the number of churches was increased to about fifty-five with approximately thirty-five preachers and an estimated 3,000 members by the end of the century. Preston Taylor, hired as National Evangelist by the General Christian Missionary Convention in 1884, helped struggling churches win members and secure meetinghouses in Ohio and Illinois. At least eight congregations, claiming 350 members, were established in Kansas by the end of 1899. The work moved forward notably in Missouri where A. B. Miller and E. F. Henderson evangelized effectively. The Woodland Avenue church was established in 1876 in Kansas City and its membership was built rapidly under a succession of able pastors. By the end of the century there were approximately forty churches in Missouri with about 2,000 members and 25 preachers, and a viable state convention which met yearly from 1874.

## On the Eastern Seaboard

In *North Carolina* east of Raleigh and north of Wilmington, black "Disciple Churches" or "Churches of Christ" were formed prolifically. The usual method for organizing a new church was for a preacher to gather adherents in a mission congregation. After a time, if the preacher and congregation satisfied the district assembly's requirements, the mission could be accepted as a church. In this region there were many O'Kellyites, Stoneites, Free Will Baptists, Union Baptists, and others who held quite similar religious beliefs, and an aggressive evangelist could readily gather a mission band and develop them into a congregation. Black members were generally wary of white or "free ishy" assistance in this region, but John James Harper, later one of the founders and presidents of Atlantic Christian College, under the auspices of the white state convention, did give timely help in the matters of finance, organization, and ordination of clergy. By 1899 it is estimated that there were at least 100 black churches with perhaps 8,000 members in Eastern North Carolina.

The perfecting of assemblies was also a major concern in this region. Quarterly Conferences, Union Meetings, District Assemblies, and the General Assembly were organized with precision. These delegated assemblies, District and General, carried legislative and disciplinary powers over local churches and ministers. A Chief Elder was elected to preside over the General Assembly. In 1898, the Assembly began collecting funds for an area normal school for the training of its ministry.

## In the Southwest

In the region of Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas, efforts to recruit new members were particularly effective. By 1900 *Texas* may have had as many as forty black Disciple churches with 3,000 members. Few of the names of these churches are known but they included True Vine in Paris, led by G. W. Crawford; Clay Street in Waco, led by M. T. Brown; Mt. Vernon, led by Warren Mitchell; and others in Hunt, Gregg, Anderson, Grayson, and Williamson Counties.

After 1877 and before 1892, the first black Disciple churches were established in *Arkansas*. At Pearidge Christian Church, Lonoke County, Sarah Lue Young had been attending for some time and had become attracted to a member there, Mancil Bostick. On April 24, 1892, she transferred her membership to Pearidge from the Baptist church, Mancil was ordained, and the two were married by pastor Henry Martin. Mancil became the organizer and rejuvenator of black churches in Arkansas, and Sarah Lue became the tireless founder and leader of women's missionary

work in the state and in a dozen other states. Sarah Lue was born May 25, 1868, at Glasgow, Kentucky, her father being black and Choctaw, and her mother black and white. She first married Perry Young, but he and their infant son died of yellow fever. Mancil was born in South Pittsburg, Tennessee, October, 1864. His mother was black, his father white. Mancil earned his living as a physician and gave his profits generously to sustain struggling congregations, support pastors, and finance Sarah Lou's extensive travels in behalf of women's work.



At the end of the century there were approximately twenty-six churches in Arkansas with a membership of about 1,000. Other leaders were Tom Busby, G. W. Ivey, Jake C. Guydon (Guiden), Joe Williams, E. H. White, W. H. Dickerson, Wayman M. Martin, A. Matlock, A. B. C. Turner, and evangelist Henry Martin.

Texas and Arkansas black leaders consolidated their new members in district and state conventions, which helped to hold them in the church and to make possible further expansion. Large numbers of converts were reported in Louisiana during this period, but no organization was developed and no converts were left by the end of the century.

## Structural Aids in Evangelization

Texans, especially, longed for a school of their own that would add to their ministers' singing and preaching abilities the skills of ecclesiastical management. They raised monies and made plans for a school in the 1890s, but their attempts at actual establishment failed; they were left with the option to travel to Southern Christian Institute in Mississippi, which some did, or to one of the Kentucky schools, which very few did.

The evangelistic impulse in the period 1877–1900 resulted in increasing the total number of black Disciple churches in the United States from about 168 to 535; in enlarging membership from approximately 20,000 to 56,300; and in extending the spread of churches from fifteen to twenty-one states and one federal territory. Further expansion of work in this period was hampered by lack of money from either local or national sources, refusal of congregations to pay for ministerial services, lack of theological training, and the fact that blacks in America in this period were unable to assert their full equality and financial solvency simultaneously.

Area and state black conventions, a general assembly, and a national convention were given structure in this period; they were important instruments in the work of the church. Two black periodicals are known to have been started: *Assembly Standard* at Plymouth, North Carolina, by J. T. Pettiford in 1892, which served the Eastern North Carolina region; and *Gospel Plea* at Edwards, Mississippi, by Joel Baer Lehman in 1896, which publicized Southern Christian Institute. A few churches in Ohio, Texas, and Kentucky used the services of the national Board of Church Extension for the financing of building.

In October, 1890, the General Christian Missionary Convention established the Board of Negro Evangelization and Education for the purposes of coordinating and overseeing church work among blacks. By 1892 the Board had hired its first Corresponding Secretary, Clayton Cheynew Smith, a white. By 1899 the Board had received a grand total of \$64,735.09 to support evangelization and education, and it used the monies mainly in the Southeastern states and particularly in Mississippi.

Black Disciples began founding schools as early as 1867, when Peter Lowery chartered the Tennessee Manual Labor University at Murfreesboro. Other schools, begun usually with blacks and whites cooperatively, were Louisville Christian Bible School (1873); Southern Christian Institute, Hemingway, Mississippi (1881); Christian Bible College, New Castle, Kentucky (1886); Louisville Bible School (1892); and Lum Graded School, Alabama (1894). The Board of Negro Evangelization and Education took no initiative in founding schools, but it did furnish some support and exercise control over various schools after they were founded. By 1900 Southern Christian Institute (relocated at Edwards, Mississippi),

Lum Graded School, and Louisville Bible School were the only ones still operating, the first two offering industrial-agricultural-homemaking education and the latter theological.

### Profile of a Black Disciple Leader\*

A typical representative of black Disciples in this era was Charles C. Haley. Born a slave in Missouri in 1838, he was early separated from his mother and sold. He was taken to Texas before it became a part of the Union, and there his master's daughter taught him to read and write. Haley was twenty-seven when the Texas slaves were freed in 1865, and in that year he organized the Clark Street Christian Church in Greenville, Texas. He later established churches at Cason, Dangerfield, and Center Point, Texas.

Four girls and three boys were born to Haley and his first wife, Katie Mae. His daughters recalled times when their father would be gone for a week at a time, riding a mule in all kinds of weather to preach and lead revivals. He returned with a few dollars and the mule laden with vegetables and meat. His children would rush to meet him, sometimes finding that icicles had frozen on his beard. When Katie died, the older children cared for the others until Haley married again. The second wife, Carie, became the first president of the Texas Christian Missionary Society for Blacks.

Haley saw education as a first priority for blacks. He sent two of his children to Southern Christian Institute and another to Mary Alley Seminary in Texas. He hoped for a school in Texas to educate his children, and he gave the first twenty-five dollars toward Jarvis Christian College. Included in the descendants of Charles C. Haley are four ministers, a dentist, two nurses, four high school principals, one national church worker, a musician, an artist, a dean of a graduate school, and many church workers.

\*Information on Charles C. Haley supplied by his grandson, Charles C. Mosley, retired dean of the graduate school at Jackson State College, Mississippi.

Mr. Charles C. Mosley

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## Study Guidance

by Lorenzo J. Evans

### How to Use This Book

The purpose of this guided resource is to provide suggestions for the learners to gain new insights and understandings of blacks, especially within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It is hoped that new learnings and new behavior will result. We can learn from the road we have traveled if we are willing to take a soul-searching view of what we are called to be—a community of faith in this twentieth century.

We are a people who have boasted about being a brotherhood, but have we responded as brothers and sisters in our relationship to one another? These study sessions can help us to respond in new ways and understandings that have never been tried before in our relationships to one another.

If we can face the truth about our history and see how it has affected the lives of individuals, we can move down the road that will produce new and more productive relationships. These relationships will not be bound by the color of our skin or the texture of our hair but will lead toward the goals of unity, justice, peace, and dignity for all people. It is to this objective that we are being called to give our allegiance.

*The Untold Story* is historical material dealing with blacks and their relationships to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Much of this has been omitted from published Disciples history.

This resource is designed primarily for CMF and CWF groups, but it may be used with youth also. Settings such as the following are suggested:

1. Plan a retreat for men and women, including four study sessions based on this book.
2. Have a group meet together on four Sunday afternoons to study this book.
3. Use four sessions during the Sunday church school hour to study black history.
4. Have a group meet on four Sunday evenings, serving refreshments and having youth participate.

Use the setting and plan which best suits your local situation. Wherever possible, arrange for blacks and whites to share in the event.

### Suggestions for Session One

Point out that relatively little has been written and published about the history of black Disciples. Ask the group to think of some reasons why this is true. On a chalkboard, list some reasons why it is important for white Disciples of Christ to know about this history. Have the group suggest some of these reasons. Then have them suggest some reasons why black Disciples need to know more about this history. Write these on the chalkboard.

If at all possible, have all the participants read the articles by William K. Fox and Hap Lyda before the session begins. If this is not possible, have three or four persons read them and discuss their impressions with the whole group. As they read and report, they should consider these questions: What information in these articles surprised you? How would you describe the attitude of the Christian Church toward blacks in the nineteenth century? What was the attitude of individual members? What is implied in these articles about the former relationship between blacks and whites in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)? Is there any comparison with the relationship between these two groups today?

Provide Bibles for the participants and allow time for them to read silently *Exodus 1* and 2. Divide into groups of three or four persons and talk together about: (1) the oppression of the Israelites in Egypt, (2) the oppression of blacks in America, (3) the Israelites in bondage in Egypt, and (4) blacks in bondage in America. Do the participants see any comparison between Egypt and America in the treatment of a minority group? How are the two similar and different? Call the participants back together and ask each small group to report on its discussion. List these questions on a chalkboard and ask for responses from the participants:

1. What is the central theme of *Exodus 1* and 2?
2. What do these chapters say about the oppressor and oppression?
3. What is the message here for the church today?

Role-play a local congregation in which there are both white and black members. Have each person wear a card which indicates whether he or she is supposed to be "black" or "white." Then conduct a business meeting or a worship service in which the whites play a leading part and the blacks are only allowed a subordinate role. After a few minutes, ask those who participated to describe their feelings:

Did you feel sad?

Did you feel a sense of joy?

Did you feel helpless?

Would you have felt different if the group had been all white or all black? Explain your answer.

Would you have felt different if all persons had been treated alike, regardless of color? Explain your answer.

What does this experience say to you about relationships within the church today?

Have the group members suggest a list of things we can do as individuals to work for better relationships between blacks and whites. As these are suggested, write them on a chalkboard for all to see.



## Worship

by Rosa Page Welch

### The Rising Tide of Freedom

*Scripture:* Read Romans 12 from the *New English Bible* or from *The Cotton Patch Version of Paul's Epistles* by Clarence Jordan.<sup>2</sup>

*Prayer:* O Lord Jesus Christ, help the church to be able to see and describe itself as the source of freedom and power, so that it can communicate with the world and participate in the revolutionary changes that are taking place. And help it to find the joy which comes through involvement, with your help, in making men free.

*Meditation:* A Negro minister put it this way, "The bell is tolling and the tide is rolling in, and you can no more stop it than you can turn back the tides of Hampton Roads with your two hands. All of us are bound in every man's bondage; we are free only in every man's freedom." Jesus Christ is the one who has come in order that we might be free.

Joseph R. Barndt, author of *Why Black Power?* wrote that the cause of powerlessness, poverty and despair cannot be found in the minority ghettos of our land. What can be found is only the damage and destruction that the enemy has brought about. The residence of the enemy is the predominantly white, middle, and upper income church and community. That is where freedom is most lacking, powerlessness is most evident,

irresponsibility is most devastating, self-determination is least to be found.

What is already taking place in the black ghetto must also take place in the church and in the white community: *Rebellion!* Rebellion against all that imprisons us and keeps us from acting as responsible children of God. We must rebel against our fear, rebel against our neurotic needs to oppress. We must rebel against the systems and structures in the church and society that foster, support, and perpetuate racism. We must rebel against programs, ostensibly designed to assist the downtrodden, which in reality result in the hindrance of change. We must rebel against all that holds us powerless to act in love and justice toward other persons.

The ranks of civil rights workers, black and white, as well as other groups seeking change in our society, are filled with individuals who would like to believe what the church teaches but can no longer tolerate the way the church acts. The rebellion that is so desperately needed within the church cannot take place without these people, whose conscience has led them to disassociate themselves from the church.

If these people were once again a part of the church and carried out their rebellion within the church, Christianity in America would never be the same. If the insights, courage, and honesty of these people came from within the church and not from without, it would be all that is necessary to lead the church into a new direction.

Perhaps this call to rebellion sounds frightening, but it is precisely what the gospel of Jesus Christ has always been. His life and ministry, his teaching, and his command direct us to defy and destroy the evil powers that seek to take away our freedom and render us powerless to love effectively and justly.

If a struggle for the power of responsible self-determination can be successfully carried out in white America with the same intensity as the struggle is being carried out in black America, and if freedom from racism is discovered by both sides of our racially torn nation, we may begin not only to understand but also to experience the meaning of St. Paul's declaration that there is no race or status among us, for we are all one under God, in Jesus Christ.

*Prayer:* Thank you, our Father, for your patience, compassionate love and forgiveness for us in spite of the dimness of our eyes, the stubbornness of our hearts, and all that keeps us from really being the church. Keep on showing us the way and nudging us to action in Jesus name. Amen.

*Quietly play a spiritual:* "Lord, I Want to Be a Christian in My Heart."

*Offering:*

*Benediction:*

## 2

# Mission Strategy Among Black Disciples

by R. H. Peoples and C. C. Mosley, Sr.

In the early nineteenth century, when the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) emerged, black persons were the center of heated controversy in America. For purposes of representation in Congress, the black was counted as only three-fifths of a person. The Dred Scott decision of the Supreme Court deprived the black person of any rights. It was the period of the Underground Railroad, "bleeding Kansas," and the John Brown episode. While many persons worked to abolish slavery, others defended it. Economists, philosophers, poets, novelists, historians, and outstanding leaders found arguments to support it. Some religious leaders used the Bible as a defense of slavery.

It is often stated that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was one of the few religious bodies in the United States which did not divide over the issue of slavery. The Christian Church resulted when two groups united in 1832, one having arisen in Kentucky and the other in western Pennsylvania and what is now West Virginia. The movement spread mostly toward the South and West, where it was influenced by the attitudes of the people in these regions. The 1851 Annual Report of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society stated that Disciples owned 101,000 slaves. If this number is accurate, their church had more slaves per member than any other denomination in the nation.<sup>3</sup>

The leaders of the two groups which merged to form the Christian Church were Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell. Both of these outstanding religious leaders were slaveholders. Some slaveholders began to give religious teaching to their slaves, even though the laws of several states prohibited such teaching. Alexander Campbell was one of those who disregarded the law against teaching slaves.

### **Blacks and Whites Together**

We hear much about the integrated church today and about the various

efforts to make it work. Prior to the Civil War, the integrated church was almost an accepted fact. Blacks and whites (or rather, the slaves and the whites) attended church together and often both groups sat on the main floor of the church. Some slaves were allowed to join churches which were dominated by whites. Later, churches were built with two floors. Slaves occupied the balcony, often called the "buzzard roost," while whites used the first floor. This "integration" of whites and blacks in the same church held some benefits for both groups. It provided learning experiences for the slave. The master benefited because he could keep his slaves from running away while both attended church.

During the period before the Civil War, a white minister or layman was sometimes allowed to preach to slaves in the presence of other whites. This was more like indoctrination than anything else. Today we call it "brainwashing." Only those passages of the Bible were used which would encourage the hearers to be "good slaves." Slaves were encouraged to think about the happy life in heaven and to forget about their present condition. Even today, the black church suffers because of the imprint made upon it during that period of intense indoctrination in false religious ideas.

An important part of the slaves' education came from the black slave preacher. The white master usually selected one of the slaves and taught him what to say and to preach. There were a few preachers in that day who were talented and persuasive speakers. Most could not read or write, and depended on what they were told to say. They were called by God to preach and were honored by their hearers. They did much to give hope to the slave for a better day. One of the writers of this article recalls seeing, as a small boy, his grandparents weep for joy because God had allowed them to live until they could see "a better day."

### **Missions and Education Among Blacks**

The next phase in the development of mission strategy among blacks is called by historians Garrison and DeGroot "the missionary and educational beginnings" for the slaves.<sup>4</sup> This involved blacks working with whites, or blacks supported by whites, while they helped to elevate the slaves or the descendants of slaves. The American Missionary Society, national mission agency of the Christian Church, engaged in missions among blacks while the Civil War was in progress. The minutes of the Society in 1864 show that many classes for slaves were organized in border states and in the rear of the Union army. Many other instances are found in which whites and blacks worked together to educate blacks for leadership. Churches in Illinois, Nebraska, and Kentucky were at the front in this effort.

The latter part of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth witnessed a change in the education of blacks. Before this, meager efforts had been made to help the blacks through programs to propagate the gospel. Now the strategy shifted toward the building of institutions for the training of ministers and church leaders. The first Disciple institution of this kind was Louisville Bible School, organized in 1873 under the leadership of P. H. Moss. The school remained in operation for only four years.

Southern Christian Institute at Edwards, Mississippi, was chartered in 1875 and began operation in 1882 under the leadership of Mrs. Lutitia Fauret. It had a long and glorious history before its merger with Tougaloo College in 1954. Its students and graduates have made great contributions to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and many are still making them. This institution served effectively but, as we shall show, failed to keep abreast of changing times.

The Christian Bible College at New Castle, Kentucky, was organized in 1886, with J. M. Maimuring and J. August Reed as leaders. It remained in operation for six years. The Lum Grade School at Lum, Alabama, was established in 1884 under the guidance of H. J. Brayboy. It did a glorious work in its field, but it was too short-lived to make a lasting impact on the Christian Church. Piedmont Christian Institute at Martinsville, Virginia, began its operation in 1900 under the leadership of James H. Thomas. It closed after a significant service of thirty-two years.

Jarvis Christian Institute (now Jarvis Christian College) was the last missionary institution established by the Christian Women's Board of Missions. It began operation in 1912 under the guidance of Thomas B. Frost, who was succeeded the next year by J. N. Ervin. Under Ervin, it enjoyed phenomenal growth and became the only accredited four-year missionary institution established for the descendants of slaves. The college has a proud history, and its alumni are making their contribution in many fields of endeavor throughout the nation. Jarvis Christian College is the only missionary institution established by the Christian Church for the training of blacks that is still in existence. One wonders what would have happened to Jarvis if oil had not been discovered on its property!

Several other institutions to educate blacks were established by the United Christian Missionary Society and its predecessors. Several state organizations also attempted to build schools, but they soon passed out of existence. Lack of capable leadership and shortage of funds were largely responsible for their closing.

### **An Evaluation of Mission Institutions**

Some important facts must be remembered about these short-lived

schools for blacks: (1) they showed that blacks themselves were aware of their greatest needs and were willing to do something about them; (2) although these small institutions passed out of existence, they gave blacks the experience of school administration; (3) the schools helped to foster a spirit of solidarity among blacks; and (4) those blacks who tried to build schools by themselves became aware of the fact that resources within their own race were insufficient. The majority of this group soon learned that all of God's people must work together in order to build the kingdom of God on earth.

Much can be said on behalf of the mission institutions set up in order to bring enlightenment to former slaves and to descendants of slaves. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they were an oasis in what for blacks was an educational desert. They prepared leaders for blacks in a society where blacks were compelled to occupy the lowest level. These institutions prepared leaders for an unchanging society, but nothing remains unchanged in a world like ours.

"You people must prepare to be leaders of *your* people" was the typical advice given to blacks in the mission institution. This was the password given to the students by those who came to counsel and lecture them. It was wholesome advice for its time, but not for the late twentieth century. With growing opportunities for blacks came the demand for the "instant prepared black" to take leadership positions in the integrated community. Black colleges throughout the country were besieged with requests for graduates to take positions which blacks had never held before. There were too few to meet this demand.

This is only one example to show the weakness of the mission institution in its preparation of blacks. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) simply gave too little and too late. Like everything else which is unable to stand the rigors of the real world, the mission institution died. Regardless of how much these schools were loved, they passed off the scene of action one by one. With one exception, they were unable to meet the rigorous competition of today's world.

### **Blacks Take the Initiative**

The National Christian Missionary Convention was organized in 1917 under the guiding genius of Preston Taylor. With this event, religious and educational development of blacks among the Disciples entered still another phase. It arose from a great desire among the part of black church leaders for fellowship and consultation on a national scale. Taylor called for a national organization. William Alphin issued an invitation for a meeting to be held in Kansas City in connection with the International Convention of the Disciples of Christ. White administrators of black mis-

sions objected to the proposed new gathering and spoke against it. Only when black leaders showed great determination to form the new conclave of their own constituency were the white leaders of the International Convention willing to make it an auxiliary group.<sup>5</sup>

The first general convention of black Disciples of Christ was held in Nashville, Tennessee, August 5-9, 1917. This joyous occasion brought together black leaders and members from all parts of the nation. It was also attended by white administrators of mission work for blacks. Regardless of the noble reasons given for this new organization, it was essentially a protest meeting. It was mild when compared with some modern protests, but it was a subtle way of saying that black Disciples desired a greater voice in the determination of their own religious destiny. E. J. Dickson was chosen as the first executive secretary of the convention.

Regardless of our limitations as members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and in spite of our divisions and prejudices, we are gradually moving upward and onward. At the General Assembly in San Antonio in 1975, it was emphasized that Christians of all colors, red, white, black, and yellow, are all God's people. We must realize that intelligence and talents are equally distributed among the peoples of the world. Together we must work to bring the kingdom of God on earth. As Paul wrote in Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."



## Preston Taylor: A Doer of the Word

by James L. Blair

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is unique among churches because it is a lay movement. The Disciples must maintain an awareness that they are a priesthood of all believers in which the distinction between laity and clergy disappears. Preston Taylor exemplified this ideal in a way that can guide the members of local churches everywhere. A drummer boy in the Civil War, Taylor became a successful businessman and also an effective leader in the life of the church. This sketch will deal with the formation of his character, his acquisition of practical skills, the utilization of those skills in the building of a better world, his vital participation in the life of the church, and his continuing impact on the church today.

### **From Humiliation to Humility**

Preston Taylor was born at Shreveport, Louisiana, in 1849. It was a time of growing dissatisfaction with the institution of slavery. The Christian Church, which began as both black and white races were caught up in the ecstasy of the Holy Spirit, was only forty years old. During those years the Spirit led many individuals to the practice of perfect love toward others which expects nothing in return. Such a love freed Sam Buckner to found "colored" churches in Kentucky.

Taylor heard a sermon in Lexington, Kentucky, about 1855 and dreamed a dream. He told his parents, who were enslaved, that he wanted

to become a preacher. Part of his commitment to Jesus Christ were the dreams, ideals, and goals that guided him. He spoke of these not only to his earthly parents but also to God. His life was to be a valiant struggle to achieve these early ambitions.

At the age of fifteen, Taylor was a drummer boy with the Union Army at Richmond and Petersburg. He witnessed Lee's surrender at Appomattox in 1865. He had begun life in the humiliation of slavery but had lived to see the humiliation of those who supported the enslavement of human beings. He also saw that conquerors can express humility even in victory, leaving the vanquished the dignity of their humanity. Such dignity enables them to leave human battlefields behind, with their death and destruction, and march on to "The Battlefield for My Lord." Preston Taylor knew the embitterment of slavery and the cost in lives and property as a price of being freed. He also dreamed of a perfect love which would guide skillful hands to build a nation of liberty and justice for all.

### **From Dream to Purpose**

Booker T. Washington, the renowned black leader and advisor to presidents, urged blacks to learn a trade or skill. In his book, *Negro in Business*,<sup>6</sup> he wrote a biographical sketch of Preston Taylor, referring to his skill as a stonecutter and engraver on marble. Returning to Louisville after the Civil War, Taylor found there was plenty of work but none for him because of his color. Undiscouraged, he attended school. He became a train porter on the Louisville and Chattanooga Railroad. At the age of twenty, he became an elder in a black Christian Church founded by Elder Samuel Buckner.

The calling of God to the ministry was a dream that became real for Taylor when he was called to serve the High Street Christian Church in Mt. Sterling, Kentucky. In those days the preacher was the presiding elder of a local congregation. Elders were elected to serve the laity, not elevated by God above the laity. They were lay clergymen rather than priestly clergy who act as mediators between Christ and the congregation. Because these early black Christians were poor (and because they had a hunch about "hirelings"), there was seldom enough money to meet expenses. Some contended that, since there was no "budget" or "constitution" in the New Testament, there should be none in the church.

In this kind of a setting, Preston Taylor set out to define his ministry and the nature of the church. For fifteen years he devoted himself to building up the congregation and erecting meeting houses. As minister of the largest black church in the community, he set the social tone for the community and was consulted by politicians and businessmen. He had to

be a person of high moral stature and practical business acumen in order to achieve this status.

To build an imposing physical plant might have satisfied the ambition of lesser persons, but not Preston Taylor. A man of great vision, he struggled to bring dignity to those formerly enslaved and also to their enslavers. He saw the four walls of the church as a place for worship and education in preparation for life outside the building itself. The Big Sandy Railroad was being built from Mt. Sterling to Richmond, Virginia, and the contractors refused to hire blacks to work on it. Taylor made a bid for two sections of the work and was successful. Fourteen months later he had completed the work and was asked by C. P. Huntington, president of the railroad, to help other (white) contractors complete their work.

Taylor created employment opportunities for a struggling black community, fostering education, making possible home ownership, and demonstrating how to make good news while preaching the good news about Jesus Christ. Many were able to see and know the truth of the gospel, and God added to the membership of the congregation Taylor served. A dream served as a frame of reference for the molding of his character. In 1884 it took visible shape in a building, in the lives of the people of Montgomery County, and in a congregation raised from the humiliation of enslavement to a people of God's own choosing, a potent force for good in the world because of the power of the Holy Spirit within.

### **From Goals to Objectives**

From 1884 to 1888, Taylor worked for M. S. Combs, a white Christian preacher and undertaker. He was elected National Evangelist by the General Christian Missionary convention. He edited a column titled "Our Colored Brethren" for the churchwide journal, *The Christian Standard*.

In 1885 he accepted a call to the Gay Street Christian Church in Nashville. Now thirty-seven years old, he was no longer a mere dreamer of dreams but a planner and builder of dreams come true. His former trade as a craftsman in stone, his ability as a building engineer for the railroad, and now his knowledge of the mortuary business all combined to make his ministry a lesson for all church people of all times. He started a mortuary in 1888, and in 1899 he purchased thirty-seven acres, part of which was to become Greenwood Amusement Park and the rest Greenwood Cemetery.

In black history, the late nineteenth century is known as the Black Renaissance Era. The black bourgeoisie or middle class, led by W.E.B. Dubois and inspired by Frederick Douglass, had championed the arts, the

professions, and the highest cultural development to which humans can aspire. Blacks who had owned slaves, mulattoes whose white fathers had never allowed them to live as slaves, and many who had been set free sought deliverance for their people through higher education, political power, and economic strength. Menial work was unavoidable, but it was not the goal and aspiration of these leaders. Preston Taylor added to these ideas the rugged individualism which characterized the Middle West. Here persons had faced a hostile environment and had survived only by acquiring skills to fulfill their great dreams. Taylor was the "new black man" of which contemporary orators spoke. His background and history are a key to what the black people wanted to do and to be.

### **A Program to Share**

On August 5, 1917, forty-one persons from fourteen states gathered in Nashville to form the National Christian Missionary Convention. In that city they could see the work of the distinguished clergyman-layman who stood to address them. His introduction could have stated that he was President of the Odd Fellows Association, President of the Knights of Pythias Temple Association, President of the Rock City Coal Company, Director of the "Negro Combine," Director of the One Cent Savings Bank, Chaplain of Company G of the Uniform Rank, Owner of Greenwood Cemetery and Greenwood Amusement Park, Pastor and builder of the Lea Avenue Christian Church.

Taylor spoke to the convention on "The Status and Outlook of the Colored Brotherhood." He pointed out that the Christian Church began more than a hundred years earlier at Cane Ridge, Kentucky under the leadership of Barton W. Stone. He said there were six hundred black Christian churches with four hundred ministers, fifty percent of whom were lay preachers without special charges or training. There were six schools for Negroes but no higher education for them, although several individual blacks had gone to white colleges. There was not a black newspaper of national import and no general organization or work in which churches were free to have fellowship and to contribute to the national work of the church. There was no leadership for national promotional work except the *Bible School Secretary*, issued by the American Christian Missionary Society under the wider auspices of the Christian Women's Board of Missions. For twenty-five years, the C.W.B.M. had been charged with all Negro work for the Christian churches.

Preston Taylor was elected president of the National Christian Missionary Convention at its first meeting in 1917 and every year until his

death in 1931. He was a wealthy, renowned, and proven Christian who was forced by circumstances within the life of the church to excel in the business world. He named his firm "Taylor and Company." The "Company," he said, referred to the Lord. His life is a lesson in biblical stewardship. In 1948, a decree of the Chancery Court gave the Preston Taylor estate to the National Christian Missionary Convention.

At the fourth National Convention, in 1920, Taylor made a significant speech which should enrich persons of every race:

realizing that God hath made all nations of the earth of one blood,  
and, that we are brethren  
and, hold to God as our Supreme Head,  
and Jesus, His Son, as our Brother, Friend, and  
Mediator, let the slogan of this meeting be *push and pull until the  
fullest realization of our work is realized*,  
and, pray God that the Kingdom of this World may  
become consolidated into the Kingdom of our Lord  
Jesus Christ to whom be honor and glory forever.

# Study Guidance

by Lorenzo J. Evans

## Mission Strategy Among Black Disciples

Have someone study carefully the article on mission strategy by Peoples and Mosley and then discuss it with the group. It may be helpful to list the three phases of black missions and religious development on a chalkboard:

1. *First phase*, early nineteenth century. Slaves were taught by whites and encouraged to join churches.
2. *Second phase*, late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Schools were established by mission boards. Blacks and whites worked together to train black leaders.
3. *Third phase*, twentieth century. Blacks took the initiative to organize themselves and to plan their own religious life.

Explain some of the problems encountered by blacks in each of these phases. Explain some of the good things that happened during each phase.

What was the advice given to students by those who visited black colleges? Would you say this was good advice or bad?

Explain these terms used by the writers: "buzzard roost," "good slaves," "a better day," "instant prepared black."

## Preston Taylor: A Doer of the Word

Use the first chapter of *The Letter of James* as biblical background for an understanding of Preston Taylor. Encourage all who participate to read the article about this remarkable man. Have someone study the article carefully and review its contents for the group. Does the group consider Preston Taylor a leader? Make a list of some of the qualities of leadership. List some of the leaders found in the Bible. List some nineteenth century black leaders, whether Disciples of Christ or not. Identify some qualities which made them leaders. Were any of these qualities exemplified in the life of Preston Taylor?

Relate the experiences of Preston Taylor as a drummer boy in the Civil War. What effect did this have upon his later life? Think of some of the factors which led him to organize the National Christian Missionary

Convention. Read the statement made by Taylor at the fourth convention in 1920. What does this statement reveal about the man? What was the relation of the founding of this convention to racism? Would you say that the National Christian Missionary Convention made any contribution to the Disciples of Christ? Explain your answer.

Give each person a sheet of paper and have him or her list some qualities of a Christian steward. Then ask each person to share the qualities he or she has listed. Discuss whether or not Preston Taylor was a good steward. What are some of the qualities on the lists you have made which were found in Preston Taylor? What contribution did Taylor make to the whole church?

Make a list of things you can do as a group and as individuals as a result of this study. Here are some suggestions:

1. Support equal educational and work opportunities for all persons.
2. Become more aware of our responsibility to help those who are hurting.
3. Seek opportunities to know other persons better, especially those who have been alienated.
4. Proclaim the gospel in word and deed; avoid reflecting the narrow attitudes of others in our community.
5. Our own suggestions . . .

## Worship

by Rosa Page Welch

### Together on Our Knees

*Scripture:* Luke 24:28-35.

Let us break bread together on our knees  
Let us drink wine together on our knees  
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun  
Oh, Lord, have mercy on me.

Let us praise God together on our knees  
Let us praise God together on our knees  
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun  
Oh, Lord, have mercy if you please.

*Leader:* This is one of the rare songs of the slaves that speak of Communion. It is a call to Holy Communion and blessed fellowship. This song plumbs the depths of the real meaning of Holy Communion when it gives this simple invitation in love to all who would hear and respond. And the emphasis in the invitation is on oneness.

At the Lord's table there is no room for exclusiveness, pride of position, status, or favor.

To understand this call as it was sung by the slaves, and to really enter into it, one must underscore "together" as well as "us." In emphasizing the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine "together," the slaves recaptured the spirit of that first upper room drama.

Did he not give a piece of bread even to Judas the traitor? Did he not say, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them?"

What else does Communion mean if it does not call us away from our state of brokenness and separateness to a togetherness in Christ? It calls us away from our blackness and whiteness, from our pride and vanity, from our selfishness and exclusiveness to a oneness in loving service.

This song of the slaves calls us not only to break bread and to drink wine together but to do so on our knees; a spirit of deep and reverent humility.

Surely the slaves felt that they must bow on their knees before God, the Giver of bread and wine, and the Giver of Jesus, whose body and blood are represented by the broken bread and the blood-red wine. Calling us to our knees was not only humility before God, but also humility before one another. And this is the glory, wonder, beauty, and miracle of the blessed Communion.

The miracle of Communion means the rich bowing down with the poor, the learned with the unlearned, the clean with the filthy, the master with the slave, the privileged with the deprived, the white with the black, and the black with the white.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?  
Were you there when he hung his head and died?  
Were you there when he rose from the dead?

All pray together *The Lord's Prayer.*

*Offering:*

*Benediction:*

# The Black Disciples Assemblies

by William Joseph Barber, Sr.

The Black Disciple Assemblies of the Eastern Seaboard area of the United States of America, with their common origin in Eastern North Carolina, comprise the largest and one of the oldest black Disciples of Christ groups in the United States of America. There are six of these Assembly Groups, comprising between 35,000 and 40,000 members. The three largest groups, the Goldsboro and Raleigh District Assembly, the Washington (N.C.) and Norfolk (Va.) District Assembly, and the Northeastern District Assembly, are fraternally linked through a biennial assembly known presently as the General Assembly of the Churches of Christ (Disciples of Christ) of America, Incorporated.

## The Six District Assemblies

The Washington-Norfolk District was formed prior to 1870, perhaps between 1867 and 1870 and was originally called the Martin County Convention. Some of its congregations date from as early as 1854. The Goldsboro-Raleigh District was formed prior to 1872. The present Western District Assembly was formed out of the Goldsboro-Raleigh District in 1892. During the year 1886 a coalition between the Goldsboro-Raleigh District and the Washington-Norfolk District took place, and the General (Annual) Assembly was formed. Because of certain differences, the Washington and Norfolk District and the Goldsboro-Raleigh District decided to hold separate annual district assembly sessions, but to meet every four years in a General Quadrennial Assembly, the first of which was held in 1914. Later, as persons from these two Assemblies moved north from North Carolina and Virginia, churches were established in Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Newark, New York City, and parts of Connecticut. These churches were formed into the Northeastern District Assembly.

The three Assemblies not legally connected with the General Assembly

are the Western District Assembly (Johnson County, Duplin County, and Sampson County, North Carolina), the Southern District Assembly (Dunn, N.C., and Wilmington, N.C.), and the Union District Assembly (Rocky Mount, N.C., and Richmond, Va.). Each maintains a relationship to the General Assembly and to the other District Assemblies in varying ways.

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## The Black Disciple Assemblies

Goldsboro and Raleigh District Assembly	}	General Assembly of the Churches of Christ (Disciples of Christ) of America, Inc.
Washington (N.C.) and Norfolk District Assembly		
Northeastern District Assembly		

Western District Assembly  
Southern District Assembly  
Union District Assembly

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### Origins of Assembly Churches

Disciples in North Carolina were influenced by the followers of James O'Kelly. In 1848, W. B. Wellons, an O'Kellyite official preached at one of the Churches of Christ (Disciples of Christ) in Kinston. The O'Kellyites had District Conferences in North Carolina and Virginia connected by a General Conference not unlike the black Disciple Assemblies of today. Records show exchanges of ministers and fraternal delegates between this group and the Disciples of Christ in Eastern North Carolina. The O'Kellyite group had a black Conference in Eastern North Carolina duly chartered in 1866. Black preachers and churches, later counted among the Disciples of Christ, were among those on this list. Further, the 1874 black O'Kellyite Conference met at Spring Green Church.

The old Martin County Convention (Disciples of Christ), which is the true nucleus of the Washington and Norfolk District, evidently had its beginnings during 1869 and was a vital organization by 1870. At least one congregation in the Washington and Norfolk District dates from 1854 as a black or minority church. This church, the Uniontown (or Free Union) Church of Christ (Disciples of Christ), was known as the "mother church." Prior to 1854 it existed as a "mixed" congregation (free blacks,

Indians, slaves, and whites) and was known as Welche's Creek Church. Prior to 1830 it was a Free Will Baptist congregation. It became a Church of Christ in 1830 as a result of a general dropping of the Free Will Baptist designation. The term Church of Christ was adopted by several Free Will Baptist and Regular Baptist congregations and conferences in the area. This was done more or less independently of the Campbell and Stone movements, even though there was some connection in terms of origin and nomenclature.

### Relationships of Assembly Churches

✓ The churches of the black Disciple Assemblies have an intricate, yet simple interconnecting system based on delegate representation plus ministerial representation. Each minister is a member of a local congregation. Generally speaking, he does not hold membership in the congregation he pastors, but there are enough exceptions to this to make the generalization only partly true. Each ordained minister in good standing has a seat and voice (vote) in each delegate body above the local church.



Likewise, each church has the privilege of sending one voting delegate to any such delegate body that has jurisdiction in its area. In each case, the ruling of a body in session is binding unless overruled by a higher body. These rulings may be by vote or by ruling of the Chief or Bishop of the body. In the case of the local church, the matter may be settled either by a ruling of the pastor, a ruling of the deacon board, or if necessary, in its final form, by congregational vote. It may be interesting to note that this system, with some modification and updating has served these churches well for over a hundred years, whereas the general Brotherhood (Disciples of Christ) is just getting around to such a delegate structure.

In theory, the General Assembly of the Churches of Christ is the final legal authority. In actuality, however, its subsidiaries, the District Assemblies are closer to the people and wield more authority. The presiding officer is addressed as Bishop or Chief. He has a General Council Board to assist him. Each of the six Delegate District Assemblies is presided over by a Bishop (Chief Administrative Officer) who has an advisory board known as the Board of Seven Councilmen. Each District is divided into subdistricts called Union Meeting Areas. The presiding officer is addressed as Chief. Generally speaking, a Union Meeting Area consists of one to five counties. In the Washington-Norfolk District, for instance, there are three Union Meeting Areas.

The Union Meeting convenes at one of the member churches always on that Friday, Saturday, and Sunday of the quarter which precedes and includes the fifth Sunday of a given month of that quarter. This month is also the one in which falls the quarterly meeting and celebration of Holy Communion by individual churches in the Washington-Norfolk District. The chief function of the Union Meeting is to promote the building of new churches, evangelization, Sunday School work, and the settling of small disputes which do not require District or General Assembly ruling. The officers of the Union Meeting are: (a) the Chief Elder, whose duty is to preside over the meeting, (b) the Assistant Chief, who presides in the absence of the Chief and who acts as an alternate for him should some matter arise which involves the Chief, (c) the Treasurer, (d) the Marshall, and (e) all the various committees needed to carry out the business of the session and to carry out the program of the Union after the Union Meeting has adjourned.

### **Worship in Assembly Churches**

The worship services in these churches can be described only by citing a typical Sunday in a given church. Since the writer is a member of the

Uniontown (Free Union) Church it is best that he select this church for description.

The Uniontown (Free Union) Church of Christ had its roots of origin, as did the other Eastern North Carolina Churches of Disciples of Christ persuasion, in Free-Will Baptist background. Its worship customs have elements which show a carryover from that group. The structure of its worship services also shows that the influences of the customs of its locale have played their part in shaping attitudes and religious patterns of the members of this church. Located in an area where there are no great urban centers for a radius of 100 miles (the nearest being Norfolk, Virginia, at 114 miles), its services follow the rural pattern. Its services are held two Sundays a month and are centered around preaching. As in all churches of all denominations in the area, the parishioners bring food on certain meeting days and stay all day long. Food is served "on the grounds," and communion is held at the three o'clock session on the Fourth Sunday in the months of March, June, September, and December.

On Preaching Sunday the services in these churches have an order somewhat as follows:

1. A Call to Order
2. Selection by the Choir
3. Scripture (Hymn is sometimes "lined out" by "Alternate" just before Scripture is read by Alternate. The more modern practice is to have a hymn or "spiritual" by the choir.)
4. Hymn (Sometimes omitted until after prayer)
5. Prayer
6. Selection by Choir
7. "Bringing forth the speaker" (introduction or presentation) by the Alternate
8. Sermon (remarks and invitation by Alternate)
9. Collection (by finance solicitors, sometimes called "Stewards," with selections by choir and congregation)
10. Closing Hymn
11. Remarks by Pastor
12. Benediction

On Communion (Quarterly Meeting) Sunday the same procedure is followed for the morning service except that the Benediction is omitted. Instead the Pastor or Alternate merely says, "Let us consider ourselves adjourned until (such and such a time)." If dinner is being served in the church yard, a custom which is now dying out, the Minister or Alternate announces that fact.

At the appointed time, The Sexton, the Head Deacon or the Pastor

begins calling the parishioners back inside. The afternoon services then follow the pattern below:

#### Quarterly Communion Service

1. Hymn (Alternate)
2. Scripture (Alternate)
3. Prayer (Alternate)
4. Short introductory remarks
5. Sermon
6. Collection
7. Communion
  - a. Church Mother prepares table
  - b. Elders (ministers) gather around table
  - c. Consecration prayers are offered by Elders
  - d. Communion is served by Deacons while congregation sings
  - e. Pans and towels are passed out by Deacons
  - f. Footwashing ritual takes place
  - g. Benediction (if there is to be no evening sermon)
  - h. Closing hymn as parishioners file out, generally with words from the Pastor or Alternate, "And they sang a hymn and went out. Let us do likewise."

The Alternate mentioned so often in this description of the worship services of this church group may be any visiting Disciple preacher, or preacher who happens to be a member of the local church. If neither of these is present, the Pastor serves as his own Alternate; and in some of the local churches the custom of using an Alternate is dying out altogether.

### Practices and Customs of Assembly Churches

Several of the practices of this group of churches differ from the usual practices of other Disciple groups over the country. These practices are not necessarily to be considered strange. They should rather be understood in the light of their development. Many, though not all, of these practices were inherited from the white Disciples in the area who, in turn, inherited a good portion of them from their Free Will Baptist background. To deny such a background would be "playing ostrich," yet there are many North Carolina Disciples, especially within the black Assemblies, who fail to recognize how much of their thinking is a result of this Baptist heritage. Or they may feel that an admission of such a heritage would lessen their witness as Disciples of Christ. This is no more true than to say that the witness of Christianity is lessened by recognition of the fact that Christians owe a great deal of their heritage to the Jewish prophets and writers who lived in Old Testament times.

Our best historian as far as North Carolina Disciplina is concerned, C. C. Ware, has given us something of a graphic picture of the situation. Ware devotes a whole chapter to this Baptist background of North Carolina Disciples. It is significant to note that he closes this particular chapter with the following words concerning the black Assemblies:

It is to be observed that the colored Disciples of Eastern North Carolina who had received their training from ante-bellum masters, or before North Carolina's full adaptations to the general Disciple Movement, continue to this day ceremonial footwashing, together with some other primitive customs. This marks them as a peculiar group, among American Disciples.<sup>7</sup>

In fairness both to Ware and to North Carolina Disciples, it must be said that if by "full adaptations to the Disciple Movement" he means the shedding of practices stemming from their roots in Baptist background, then many white Disciples in Eastern Carolina have not yet acceded to "full adaptations to the Disciple Movement" and, furthermore, perhaps never will. Therefore, Eastern Carolina Disciples *in general* may be classified as somewhat of a "peculiar group" among American Disciples. Dr. Ware would probably have been the first to admit this.



✓  
*Ceremonial Feetwashing.* The ceremonial washing of feet has perhaps been practiced more or less throughout the history of the Assemblies. The practice was not foreign to the early white Disciples in the area. In fact, Ware devotes considerable space to describing the practice. He states that "Disciples were slow in discontinuing some other Baptist practices such as the ceremonial washing of the saint's feet, quarterly communion, and anointing the sick with oil."<sup>8</sup> It was the ceremonial washing of feet which was to be one of the factors which later would prevent the uniting of the Baptist and white Disciple groups in North Carolina.<sup>9</sup>

*Communion Elements.* In the early days of the black Assemblies, the elements used for Holy Communion were wine and unleavened bread. The writer recalls discussing the matter with the late Deacon George Cordon, president of the Sunday School Convention of the Washington-Norfolk District, and a number of other Assembly leaders. While all of these gentlemen agreed that our present practice in a majority of churches of using unfermented grape juice should be adhered to by all for the sake of uniformity, Brother Cordon recalled that in earlier days his father, George Cordon, Sr., used to make a special communion wine by using pure undiluted grape juice. Brother Cordon's contention was that the present unfermented grape juice is purer "juice of the fruit of the vine" than the present commercial wines.

We have no direct word on the subject, but we suspect the practice of using unfermented grape juice came into vogue during prohibition and that the group had to find an apologetic for the change in practice. Circumstances cause us to believe that the group used fermented wine until fairly recently.

*Terminology.* Throughout this work certain terms have been used that seem strange indeed to Disciple ears accustomed to an environment outside the boundaries of Eastern North Carolina. And yet, for those who remember that the Disciples of Christ profess to be a New Testament Church and who realize that for most Disciples of the nineteenth and early twentieth Centuries, this New Testament was in the King James Version of the Bible, these terms do not seem strange. The terms Chief Elder, Scribe, and others which the outsider is likely to term quaint are really only quaint because one views the Scriptures in a different manner from the people of this group. Until recently the term Chief Elder (generally shortened to Chief) was used for the presiding officer of the group and/or any of its components. The term Scribe was used for the recorder. In most of the districts this is still more or less true. The phrase "I propose" is used to place a motion on the floor, and "I agree" to second that motion.

*Practices Disapproved by the Group.* In the minds of the early leaders of this group, certain practices common within the church life of this

Eastern North Carolina rural area in general, and to the newly formed churches of the freedmen in particular, would weaken the true witness of the church. These practices, it seemed to them, would have made of the church a body seeking emotional catharsis rather than a rational teaching of the word of God. Early in its history, the white Disciples organization of the state had fought rather successfully to keep many of these practices out of its churches. The leaders of the black Disciples, having in many cases been born free, did not necessarily have the same trials and troubles which had plagued former slaves. Whereas the former slave generally felt the need for an emotional outlet through shouting and the like, the free born could better contain his emotional tendencies. And since the white Disciples tended to be rather calm and rational in their worship, their black counterparts also retained the element of rationality at least in part. This held true through the period covered by this chapter although after 1914 certain practices which the old-line preachers considered quite undesirable crept in. While in the majority of the churches one may observe shouting and the like during the services, a few of the old-line churches such as the mother church at Free Union maintain a more subdued atmosphere and one will hardly hear an amen during a service.

*Lodges and Secret Orders.* The white churches had come to grips with the matter of secret lodges in 1868 and had solved the problem in their own way. It was now up to the black Churches to do likewise. This they attempted to do. In 1895, the following statement appears:

Proposed by J. T. Pettiford and agreed that no minister belonging to the Assembly shall be allowed to hold secret orders or entertainments in the church house. Carried.

In 1899, this rule was modified as follows:

... Proposed by Elder J. H. Lee and agreed by Elder L. E. Eborn, that nothing shall be held in the churches of the Assembly except religious worship, any minister allowing anything else to be held in his churches shall be conciled.

In 1907, we find that:

... No minister or member shall belong to any Secret Order ... those in come out and those out stay out.

Ministers belonging to such orders were given one year to reform. In 1908, the Assembly had a change of heart and we find that:

It was proposed by Elder I. Darden and agreed by Elder T. H.

Daniel that Proposal 32, in regard to Societies be erased from the minutes. Carried.<sup>10</sup>

Since 1908, it has been left to the discretion of the individual as to whether or not he should belong to such organizations as the Masons and Elks, but it has been a hard and fast rule that no secret organizations were to be organized within the church structure or permitted to use the church as a meeting place.

*Mourners Benches and Musical Instruments.* In 1895, the Brethren on Grievances gave the following report:

We find the Assembly grieved because some of our preachers are having Mourners Benches and holding Class Meetings. We ask the Assembly to indorse some rule that we may all be in accord.

The assembly acted as follows:

Proposed by J. T. Pettiford and agreed by Henry White that Mourners Benches, Mercy Seats or Anxious Seats shall be excluded from all churches belonging to the Assembly. Carried.

In 1902, a note of finality was added, for we find the following statement:

Be it known that no congregation with the Disciples of Christ will be recognized by the General Assembly that uses a mourners bench in bringing souls to Christ. W. A. James, Chief.<sup>11</sup>

The use of tambourines, guitars, and the like is related to the whole factor of emotion in worship. In the earlier churches they were not used, and later, when some of the churches acquired the practice from surrounding communions, resolutions were passed forbidding their use. The contention was not over musical instruments per se, but over the type of musical instruments currently being used in churches in the area. While the ban was extended to cover guitars and the like, it never included organs and pianos. The writer remembers that when the Free Union Church got its first piano, the writer's grandmother strongly objected to standing or sitting or singing to "the lead of some old idol box." She also objected to having a choir "do the singing for the rest of the people." Once, her daughter, Leora James, the lead singer in the choir, led the choir in a rather quick tempo number called "I'll Live On." The venerable old lady, her hearing failing, misunderstood the words. When they returned from church, she said to her daughter, "It's bad enough that you took the singing from the congregation and started worshipping by the banging on that old idol box, but the next time you stand up there and that choir sing that tune 'Pile It

On,' I'm going to come up there and I'm going to commence to pile it on right then and there!"

### **The Present Situation**

As in every case of a growing organization, time changes things. In the Disciples Assemblies in Eastern North Carolina, there are certain changes taking place which must come but which are painful in their coming. As a result of these changes, there are groups representing three points of view to be found within the Assemblies: a small group which may be termed liberal or progressive, meaning those who want certain changes to take place rapidly; another group which may be termed moderates or middle-of-the-roads, who recognize that changes are inevitable but wish to see those changes come as painlessly and as gradually as possible; and a third group which might be termed conservatives or old-liners who want no changes under any circumstances.

First, there is the idea that there is no validity in the claim of other groups or denominations to be a part of the body of Christ's believers. This is being supplanted by the idea, which was originally taught by the early group, that "while there may be validity in the claims of other groups, ours is the better way and we are sure of our validity, for we follow the simple doctrine found in the New Testament; and, therefore, we are a New Testament Church, speaking where the Bible speaks and remaining silent where it is silent."

Another idea held by the conservatives is that footwashing is necessary in order to be in line with New Testament practices. The liberal elements, however, take the viewpoint that continuance of the practice as carried out at present in the district is a meaningless ritual, placing its practitioners in the position of the Pharisees. The moderates take the viewpoint that since the practice does have Scriptural validity, it cannot be dropped primarily because of its misuse and misinterpretation; furthermore, for the sake of uniformity, the practice must be continued by all as long as it is the will of the majority.

The conservative idea of the absolute authority of the Assembly is opposed by the liberal idea of local autonomy concerning local church practices and affairs. The moderates, of course, admit that the condition must be the determining factor, and that while in certain instances the jurisdiction of the local church obtains, certainly there are clear-cut instances where Assembly authority could be brought effectively and constructively into play. As usual, most of the conservatives are to be found among members of the older group while the liberals generally hail from the younger group. It is to be admitted, however, that there are many excep-

tions to this rule. Moderates are to be found among members of both groups.

The once venerable and now sainted scribe of the Washington-Norfolk District, Elder Noah Boston, often remarked to the writer during his latter days: "God does not change, God's true church does not change; but we change, and God's revelation of Himself to us comes only as we are ready to accept that revelation. Therefore, our viewpoint of God changes." It is the writer's strong belief that the struggles amidst changing times and the internal turmoils in which these Assemblies of Disciples of Christ in Eastern North Carolina find themselves will eventually resolve themselves according to God's Will: And, after all, our only hope is that God's will be done.

### **The Need for Recognition of Service**

Unfortunately perhaps for both, communication between the "main" body of Disciples and the churches of these Assemblies began to wane after 1913. As a result, God's heroes and laborers in this end of the vineyard had limited visibility as far as the general Brotherhood is concerned. Those native to the area who could have brought about a closer relationship have not been given much incentive to return to the area, and those who have returned have become more related to the Assemblies than to the general Brotherhood. Some have gone to other groups.

Bishop James L. Melvin, now the Chief Presiding Officer of the Goldsboro and Raleigh District Assembly, attended Jarvis Christian College. He has said that nobody is going to do for us and so we will have to do for our own. When he was Director of the Goldsboro Christian Institute and of the Christian Education program of the Goldsboro Disciple Institute, Bishop Melvin attempted to do something about this. He initiated a procedure in which the Goldsboro and Raleigh District Assembly at its annual session issued degrees *in honoris causa* to a limited number of those who have labored valiantly in our part of the vineyard. In the past, this has included not only members of the Goldsboro and Raleigh Assembly but officers of the other District Assemblies and the General Assembly of the Churches of Christ as well.



## Study Guidance

by Lorenzo Evans

The Black Disciple Assemblies have made an important contribution to the religious life of their members and to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). They may not have received the attention and understanding they deserve. This is why it is important for us to know something about these Assemblies.

Use *Exodus 9* as biblical background for this session. Have someone read the chapter before the session and explain why it may have special meaning for members of the black Disciple Assemblies. Is there any comparison between the people of Israel in *Exodus* and members of the black Assemblies? Who would you identify as the Moses of the black Assemblies?

If your church is located near the area of the black Assemblies, you may wish to invite a leader from one of them to visit your group. Make a list of questions you would like this person to answer about the black Assemblies.

The author of this article points out that members of the black Assemblies have often felt left out of the general Brotherhood. Why do they have this impression? What could be done to improve communication between the Assemblies and the Brotherhood as a whole? What could be done to help the Assembly members feel accepted by other Disciples?

Describe the way in which decisions are made in the black Disciple Assemblies. Is this like or unlike the procedure in your own church and region? In what way has the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) adopted a form of government long practiced by the black Assemblies?

Have someone explain the worship service in a typical Assembly church. What features of this worship do you find interesting and appealing?

Have someone describe the practices and customs of the Assembly churches. How did some of these originate? Which do you find interesting and appealing? Which of the terms and customs of the Assembly churches are taken from the New Testament?

Explain the three groups in the Assembly churches, the liberals, the moderates, and the conservatives. With which of these would you identify yourself? Do you think there is a place for each of these groups in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)? Explain your answer.



## Worship

by Rosa Page Welch

### Crossing That Deep River

*Scripture:* Psalm 42:7.

Deep river, my home is over Jordan;  
Deep river, Lord, I want to cross over into campground.  
O don't you want to go to dat Gospel Feast,  
Dat promised land where all is peace?  
O deep river, Lord, I want to cross over into campground.

In this song, the slave singers identified with the Hebrews, who with the leadership of the young commander Joshua stood on the banks of the Jordan opposite the promised land and waited the parting of the waters so that they might cross over.

The slaves refer to this "river" many times in other spirituals too: "O Wasn't That a Wide River," "Roll, Jordan, Roll," "Stand Still, Jordan."

The deep river was symbolic of the great divide. It separated their world of slavery from the world of freedom, their world of hope from the world of bitter frustration.

They knew in their hearts that they were born to be free. A slave always knew in his heart that as a slave, the forced servant of his brothers, he was not and could not be at home. His real home, his true selfhood, his personhood lay beyond the river of torture, trials, tears, and forced separation. One notes in this song as well as in many others that in spite of the dehumanizing effect of slavery upon the soul of the slave, he never retreated from the banks of hope and assurance that God's promised land was for him as well as for God's other children. He continued to sing out even in the midst of his frustrated hopes and thwarted ambitions: "My home is over Jordan."

A slave could not expose to his master his deep determination to throw off the yoke of slavery, so he artfully disguised his ambition by making it appear that he was only waiting for the chariot to swing low and carry him off to heaven.

Although the spirit of protest is very pronounced in this song, so also is an expression of a deep, profound though simple and childlike faith in God. The slaves believed that they were moving as directly under the leadership of Almighty God as did the ancient Hebrews with whom they so often identified themselves.

The beauty and glory of this song speaks eloquently to our day and time. For deep, wide, and rolling are the rivers that flow among us. Perhaps we are more conscious of the rivers that divide us than ever before.

And yet we must remember that rivers need not and do not always divide; they can and do often connect. They present challenges to us to build bridges. Beyond them often lie great and wonderful promised lands. Our home—the true home for all God's children—lies beyond all these deep, man-made rivers that divide.

*Prayer:* Let us pray for ourselves, that we may care more deeply for others: Lord God, lead us through Jesus Christ into a closer walk with you; then shall our love be like yours, and our caring be the measure of our love.

Father, help us to find riches in love. Our determination to cling to illusions of superiority or inferiority is evidence of our poverty. From all our illusions, deliver us, good Lord. Amen.

*Offering:*

*Benediction:*



## 4

# What Is Needed Now

by Kenneth E. Henry

In a recent survey of black Disciples leaders, two areas of concern dominated the goals for the future.<sup>12</sup> The first was the need for new methods and focus for effective *evangelism*, and the second was concern for a comprehensive and positive approach to relieving the pressing *social problems* of our times, such as poverty, political and social injustice, and racial bigotry in all forms. These do not sound particularly new. The teachings of Jesus and much of the New Testament reveal the same concerns. What is needed now is an application of these in view of our present situation.

Here is where the history related in this book is most important. The present opportunities were not created by the last General Assembly or Convocation alone. They are the result of our actions over a long period of time, in which we responded with varying degrees of faithfulness to what God calls his people to be and do in each generation. Our major concern in this chapter is to focus on what the past has taught us as we seek to discern the present and anticipate the future. The judgment of history can be humbling, challenging, and inspiring when taken seriously.

The story thus far has shown us that the lives and fortunes of black Disciples have been intertwined with many others. They have given and received, led and followed, gained and lost. The assumption that black Disciples can be neatly packaged and dealt with only at convenient times and places is false. The thoughts and actions of black Disciples have played a significant part in shaping the destiny of America, even if they have not always reaped benefits equal to the labor expended.

Two broad areas of black Disciple history must be examined, while keeping in mind that each complements the other. One area is the relationship of black Disciples with the contemporary black revolution

and the ecumenical church. The second area is that of relationships within the Disciple family, which may be classified as positive trends that need reinforcement, negative elements that must be eliminated, and powerful new forces that must be directed along constructive lines to avoid their potential for harm.

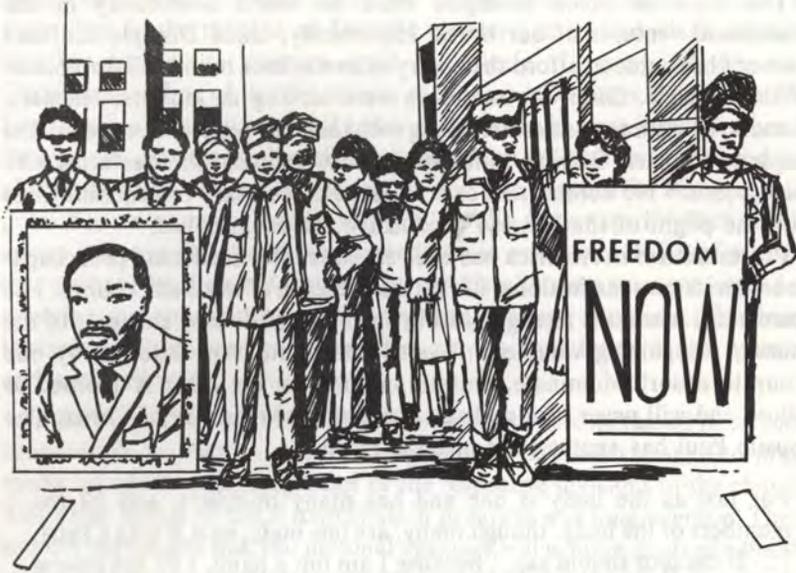
### **Black Disciples and Non-Disciple Relationships**

Regardless of denominational affiliation, all Christians in America who are black are members of the black church. This means they embody the witness to the Christian faith filtered through the black experience in America. Disciples have been slow to accept this fact, although it is well documented in terms of history, sociology, and theology. We cannot and should not deny the heritage of Christianity among black people in America. For Baptists, Methodists, Disciples, Presbyterians, Episcopalians—all of the larger denominations—participation of black members dates back to the period of slavery. Even though Christianity flourished in parts of Africa long before it gained strength in Western Europe and centuries before Europeans came to America, there is no evidence that any of the Africans brought to America were Christian. The Africans adjusted to the yoke of slavery, a strange country and culture, and ultimately the slavemaster's religion.<sup>13</sup>

Independent black congregations among all the denominations came into being for some of the same reasons, whether they created independent national bodies or not. From the time of slavery to the present, American society decrees a distinctive role for black people. Oppressed people, whatever the form of oppression, develop insights and understandings for survival that are not necessary for the oppressors. Therefore, their religion takes on a distinctive quality which grows out of the group experience. Black Disciples must learn from and share with members of all churches who serve a similar constituency.

Our history reveals that black Disciples have moved through various stages of relationship with white Disciples that reflect the general pattern of society. This fact is clearly shown in the chapters of this book and in the history of Disciples by Garrison and DeGroot. Today, however, we face a rising tide of black awareness not inappropriately called the contemporary black revolution.

In every aspect of life in America today we are facing a swiftly developing phenomenon: black Americans are thinking, planning, and acting independently and are not being unduly influenced by white Americans. It is the development of a trend that was imposed initially by white Americans since the days of slavery through various forms of segregation and discrimination. The present trend is a clear rejection of a kind of integration



that meant forsaking everything black as inferior and accepting everything white as superior.

Black Americans and other minorities in the church, school, and elsewhere have heard what America in fact has been saying, "... equality can be achieved only by assimilation into the majority. To obtain their inherent rights as human beings, the minorities must surrender their cultural integrity, and pass into that which they are not."<sup>14</sup> Faced with this impossibility, black Americans are creating an answer of their own. They will not only accept their identity but will strengthen and rejoice in their blackness. Beyond this, however, they will demand respect for their legitimate place in the mainstream of American society.

Any effort among black Americans to evangelize and meet the pressing social problems of today will not survive if it ignores this fact. The same black awareness that drove Jacob Kenoly, a son of ex-slave parents, to serve his people in Africa, or motivated black Disciples of East Texas to save their money to build a school for the education of their own, is behind the demand for black studies programs throughout the country and for the ministry to the ghetto sought by many of our young black ministerial students today. Colby D. Hall writes about the determination of the Texas Disciples in this way: "So it turns out that the one unbroken string on which the pearls of progress of the Negro Texas Disciples came to be strung was the continuous, persistent, unremitting effort to establish a College for the education of their children, especially their preachers."<sup>15</sup>

The voice of black Disciples must be heard continually in the ecumenical ventures of our times. Historically, black Disciple churches have not been able to afford the luxury of irrelevance to the daily problems of their people. Often the ministers were serving as janitors, teachers, farmers, or insurance salesmen along with their lay people. Even today the majority of black Disciple ministers must supplement their salaries with second jobs.<sup>16</sup> No committees or studies were necessary to acquaint them with the plight of the hungry, uneducated, or unemployed.

Protestantism in America has been saved from a deadening preoccupation with its own institutional life by the presence of the black church. The ecumenical witness is strengthened by inclusion of diverse elements of the church, recognizing what each has to contribute. Any attempt by one group to absorb, dominate, imitate, or threaten the other is doomed to failure and will never be a realistic expression of the body of Christ. The apostle Paul has expressed it in these terms:

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. . . . If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. . . . The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable. . . ."

*(1 Cor. 12:12, 15, 21-22)*

It may be that the church in our time is rediscovering its feet, its backbone, and its ability to hear. Perhaps in discovering the strength and beauty of even one alienated member there is hope for the health and function of the whole body. From the local ministerial alliance and joint choir festivals to the highest councils of the consultation of Church Union and the World Council of Churches, the black Disciple witness must be made.

### **Black Disciple Relationships Within the Family**

Optimism regarding the future of blacks within the Disciples of Christ is firmly rooted in the history already surveyed in this book. In the study of black Disciple leaders referred to earlier, there was general acceptance of the direction the Brotherhood is moving. There was registered also a deep concern that we may be letting golden opportunities pass through ignorance or neglect.

It is important for black Disciples to grasp the soundness of the "historic Disciple plea," to update it and to relate it to the contemporary

situation. The idea of the *restoration* of the New Testament Church, so prominent in the thought of Disciple pioneers, must lead black scholars and lay persons to capture again the ideals of Jesus and the early Christians, as free of the distortions of the last 1900 years as possible. We hear much about "liberation" today. Liberation is most tangible when it focuses not only on the limitations from which we seek to be released but also on an ideal that we are free to pursue. The concern for *unity*, equally prominent in pioneer Disciple thought, is valid for an age in which we are aware increasingly of our interdependence in every way. It is unfortunate that we have let the nineteenth century models become stagnant instead of applying our peculiar insights to new and different situations. Our basic Disciple teachings are commendable, but we have failed in the practice and application.

Other trends worthy of positive reinforcement are: increased interracial cooperation in mission, church development, administration, and practically all of the service agencies of the respective divisions of the church. The whole thrust of the Reconciliation program was long overdue. There is more confidence that the national agencies will achieve goals of equality in staffs and services than at any other level of the church.<sup>17</sup> In most instances the mechanisms or structures for cooperation between whites and blacks already exist. The more difficult task is keeping the leaders sensitive to the concerns of the often silent minority.

With some justification, more attention is usually given to the negative elements that stifle our efforts to be fully responsible Christians. For our purpose it may suffice to list categories of problems, and the particular instances may easily come to mind. (1) Often we encounter a confusion of cultural nonessentials with the spiritual essentials. Both have a place in the total experience of the faith, but they are not identical. We may substitute stereotypes of the 70s for the stereotypes of the 60s, 50s or other periods and still manage to overlook the spiritual wastelands in which we roam. Many of the current debates about music, preaching style, usher uniforms, money-raising techniques, and the like, do not lead to a consideration of the purpose sought through the various approaches. "Soul" may be found, or not found, in the most unexpected places.

(2) Similarly, familiar methods or patterns may dominate us when the immediate situation may require a new and different strategy. This problem is greater when strong personalities, vested interests, and sources of support become involved. Disaffections, if not open breaks within our ranks, are often related to this loss of vision of the ultimate goal.

(3) We may fail to keep lines of communication open. Many more programs and services could be mutually supportive through more effective sharing. Two-way communication is required, speaking and listening

on all sides. Duplication, competition, and the frustration of feeling alone in the task may be reduced. While communication across black-white lines is important, sharing is equally significant for seminaries and churches, inner city and suburb, curriculum writers and curriculum users, and countless other relationships. Surrounding these are clusters of problems to which our experience of the past must be applied for resolution.

We are mindful of powerful new forces at work that hold the promise of tremendous growth for the church. The improved techniques for collecting, analyzing, and storing data must be used to detect and understand the needs and concerns of our world. Genuine Christian concern for the well-being of all persons can transform dehumanizing forms of surveillance and control into opportunities to meet human needs.



Challenges to the traditional sources of power and authority should not place the church on the defensive. Calls for a more equal distribution of the intellectual, material, and spiritual resources of this world are just other ways of admonishing Christians to be good stewards of the Creator's bounty. A church should not stand fearfully, trying to protect its empty educational plant, while gangs of youth roam the neighborhood unguided, unwanted, and unhappy.

The expertise of many disciplines must be utilized by the church. Hardly any institution in the community embraces a more varied range of gifted people than the average church. Moreover, these individuals are in touch with forces in the community with which the church may join for effective ministry. The church must not abdicate its role as judge and transformer in relation to the culture, but it defeats its own purpose by assuming a hostile posture towards every development that does not originate in the sanctuary. Out of necessity the black church has assumed a posture of community service, for often it was the only institution in the black community able to respond to needs.

This survey of black Disciple history tells a story of struggle and triumph, a message of hope. Advancing from the status of slave membership, in the beginning, to the point when a black Disciple, Dr. Walter D. Bingham, was elected moderator of the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) marks progress by any standard. Similar advance could be reported in many areas of church life and work. What is needed now is consolidation of these gains for every member of the church. The story should be clear to every Disciple. God is made known to us through the historic revelation in Christ and is affirmed in our own being and in the continuing witness of the church.



## Another View of What Is Needed

by Ann E. Dickerson

If the Disciple movement is to be viable and meaningful to blacks in the present and in the future, black Disciples cannot relinquish the heritage that is theirs as members of the black church. It is a heritage of strong faith, inspiration, information (the black church in its own way has been a teaching church), hope for tomorrow, and emotional satisfaction. Black Disciples traditionally have utilized the best of this heritage without

becoming extremists. This black Disciple heritage should be an asset in attracting the black person who is in today's mainstream of society, if he or she can be reached at all. Ways and means must be found to expose the wider black community to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Other members of the Disciple movement must recognize that the black Disciple movement is a legitimate aspect of the Disciple church and that strength comes from diversity. Just as in Christ we are not Jew or Gentile, male or female, we are more than black or white, but all parts of the same body, all with indispensable functions. Perhaps it is in such a time as this that black Disciples have their greatest opportunity. We can help our fellow Disciples become more ecumenical by introducing them to the wider black church. Black Disciples may provide other Disciples with an opportunity to witness and to share, within the immediate Disciples family, the forms of worship, the organization and structure, and the manner of serving Christ which is commonly found in the black church. A truly catholic, evangelical, and reformed church is a "big bubbly stew," where all parts of the church are mixed, and recognized, and respected as having a legitimate right to be where they are and to contribute together to the purpose of the church. It is not a melting pot where the "strong" majority absorbs the "weak" minority so that the "weak" are no longer distinguishable. The privilege to work in the church of Jesus Christ is open to everyone. This must be recognized by both the "strong" and the "weak." The "weak," however that may be defined, must have a feeling of belonging, of acceptance, and of value.

If the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada is to experience a wholeness, it must accept the legitimacy of black thought, black opinion, and black worship styles. The spiritual and evangelical nature of the black church, as expressed among Disciples, provides renewal of an evangelical spirit within the church that goes even beyond the gift of blacks to the church.

Finally, members of black Disciple congregations must expand their vision and concern. Because of the many problems and difficulties the local black church has had to face in order to survive, problems which were a reflection of the same difficulties that characterized their immediate environment, their energies, resources, time, and talents often have been exhausted in a relatively limited space. However, black Disciples must recognize the needs beyond their areas of personal involvement and respond with the same interest, enthusiasm, and commitment they have shown in meeting their own individual problems. When black and white, rich and poor, learned and uneducated work together to overcome the ills of this world, the fulfillment of mission of the church here on earth will begin to appear possible.

# Study Guidance

by Lorenzo Evans

Use *Ephesians 4* as biblical background for this session. What does this scripture say about the matters discussed in this session?

## **Black Disciples and Non-Disciple Relationships**

Have someone read carefully the section of Kenneth Henry's article by the above title, reporting to the whole group. Decide why the author believes it is important for black Disciples to affirm their relationship to blacks in other churches. What does the author mean by "the black experience?" Why is it important for all Disciples, black and white, to know something about this experience?

Use the following quotations from this section for discussion by the group:

"Oppressed people . . . develop insights and understandings for survival that are not necessary for their oppressors."

"The present trend is a clear rejection of a kind of integration that means forsaking everything black as inferior and accepting everything white as superior."

"Black Americans . . . will not only accept their identity but will strengthen and rejoice in their blackness."

Select other quotations in this section for discussion. Read the quotation from *1 Corinthians* and discuss its meaning in relation to this session.

## **Black Disciple Relationships Within the Family**

Have someone read this section of Kenneth Henry's article and report on it to the group. What good features does the author see in these relationships at present? What are some of the negative elements?

Find out what your church is doing toward the Reconciliation program of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). For further information about the program and what you can do to help, write to Reconciliation, Box 1986, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206.

The author stresses the need for better communication across the barriers that divide us. Have the group list some things that blacks can do

to improve communication. Some things that whites can do. Some things that your own group can do. Remember that, in the words of the author, "Two-way communication is required, speaking and listening on all sides."

Study the last paragraph in the article by Kenneth Henry. Does he feel that there has been real progress in black Disciple history? Then what is needed now?

### **Another View of What Is Needed**

Have someone study this brief article by Ann E. Dickerson and explain it to the group. What does the author believe black Disciples can contribute to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)?

What attitude should white members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have toward black Disciple, according to Ann Dickerson? What must the Christian Church do in order to experience "wholeness?" What does the author say that black congregations need to do?

## **Worship**

by Rosa Page Welch

### **We Are the New World Coming Swiftly**

*Scripture:* 1 John 4:13-21.

*Leader:* Anna Arnold Hedgman expresses her belief that God is working through the black people:

We the black people are the new world coming swiftly. No individual nation or ethnic group can wholly claim us. Since no one has claimed us and since we are of everyone, it may well be that God has given us a special mission. Perhaps it is our responsibility to help the United States, which is, in some measure; a mixture of all the people of the world, to find its relationship not only to itself, but to the

world. If this be the mission of the Black people, then we must forget the horror of the past, we must struggle now to help white America free herself of the idolatry of the love of whiteness, of the arrogant assumption that only whites have created in this country and in the world. Perhaps it is our mission to make clear that hate destroys and that love brings wholeness to mankind.<sup>18</sup>

Fred D. Wetzel, paraphrasing scriptures from the New Testament, speaks of the oneness that we have in Christ.

Let every white man be brotherly in equal measure to his white neighbor and to his black neighbor. For there is no respect of persons with God. Is he the God of the white man only? Is he not also the God of the black person also?

Seeing it is one God who shall redeem the white man by faith, and the black man by faith. Let us therefore call them our people who until this time were not our people, and our kindred, who until this time were not our kindred.

Yes, now let every heart be open, and every door swing wide, and every church make room for the glad brotherhood of all peoples.

And to him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, to him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.<sup>19</sup>

Let us thank God for the new race which is created in Jesus Christ, in which the power of the Holy Spirit overcomes racial pride and fear; that within every nation there are Christians whose supreme loyalty is to Christ as Lord and who recognize all persons as brothers and sisters in him.

*Prayer:* Our Father, who has made all men in thy likeness and lovest all whom thou has made, suffer not our family to separate itself from thee by building barriers of race and color. As thy Son our Saviour was born of a Hebrew mother, but rejoiced in the faith of a Syrian woman and of a Roman soldier, welcome the Greeks who sought him and suffered a man from Africa to carry his cross, so teach us to regard the members of all races as fellow-heirs in the kingdom of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—  
*P. B. Clayton.*<sup>20</sup>

*Offering:*

*Benediction:*

# Notes

1. Mrs. Charles C. Mosley, *The Negro in Mississippi History* (Jackson, Mississippi: Hederman Brothers, 1950), p. 170; Mrs. Charles C. Mosley, *The Story of Negro Disciples in Mississippi* (ca. 1950), pp. 2-4.
2. Association Press, 1968.
3. W. E. Garrison and A. T. DeGroot, *The Disciples of Christ: A History*. Bethany Press, 1948, p. 468.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 476.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 481.
6. Booker T. Washington, *The Negro in Business*. Hertel and Jenkins Co., 1907.
7. C. C. Ware, *North Carolina Disciples of Christ*. Christian Board of Publication, 1927, p. 77.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 98-108.
10. Minutes for 1895, 1899, and 1907.
11. Minutes for 1895 and 1902.
12. Kenneth E. Henry, *Integration With Integrity*, Unpublished S. T. M. Thesis, Yale Divinity School, 1969, p. 27.
13. E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America*. Schocken Books, 1963, pp. 7-10.
14. Seymour W. Itzkoff, "Cultural Pluralism in Education." *School and Society*, November, 1966.
15. Colby D. Hall, *Texas Disciples*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1953, p. 332.
16. Clarence L. Johnson, Jr., "Report on Salary Supplement Support for Black Disciple Ministers." Submitted to the Department of Ministry and Worship, Division of Homeland Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 1973, pp. 4, 10.
17. Henry, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
18. From *Heads Bowed Together*, ed. by Ann Simon. Friendship Press, 1966, pp. 53-54. Used by permission.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 50.



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