

The Star of Zion

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH

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WHY NOT EQUAL LAY REPRESENTATION?

BY MR. B. T. PARSONS.

ITS ORGANIZATION

For over a hundred years this Church of ours has come down through changing scenes of time, ages playing its part in the work of the galaxy of the churches. As an organization and through the succeeding years the church has and has been composed in general of Superintendents or Bishops, ministers and laity.

OBJECTS OF ITS ORGANIZATION

The objects of such important organization aside from its desire to withdraw from its mother church where it could have a better opportunity to worship God, can be summed up in the following:

1. To perpetuate itself as an organized body;
2. To prepare and send forth such a well-trained God-called ministry that it might do its part in Christianizing and evangelizing the world;
3. To so educate and train the rank and file of its communicants that they might be fully qualified not only to fill any position in the secular field, but to occupy, successfully operate and administer any position given by the General Conference the highest tribunal of our Church;
4. To lay, foster and carry on financial system that all its operators and institutions might be maintained;
5. The power to so legislate for the harmonious working of the whole.

INTELLECTUAL STANDPOINT

In the early history of the church, it could be truthfully said that the intellectual standing of the ministry was far above that of the large constituency of the church in general. The Bishops, with the other parts of the ministry at that time, could promulgate, and of necessity was and should have been the great promulgators of the laws that should govern the church. The part of the great body had by intellectual fitness, personal contact and practical training prepared itself to dictate the policies of this great body and see that the mandates of these laws were carried out. In this matter the laity was not prepared to take an equal part with the ministry.

But since then a mighty change has taken place. The first great step of civilizing any race or people is to create a desire, and ways and means prepared to satiate said desire. If a race or people knows nothing, it desires nothing. If it sees nothing it will follow wherever any one leads. Gov. Berkeley, the tyrant of Virginia in colonial days, seeing the great power in educating his people, said, "I thank God that there are no free schools and printing press; and I hope we shall not have any these hundred years." As soon as people begin to read, write and understand, they begin to feel their power and rightfully so, and they begin to desire to assist in making laws for governing themselves. Does one think or say that the laity of our church are different from a like number in any other organized body? Should they not aspire for those prerogatives that any other intelligent people would contend for? Most assuredly they should. Fifty years of training in the sabbath schools has given them a fair knowledge of and prepared them for the greater work of the church proper; fifty years sitting under the preached word of God and the administration of the laws of the church has instilled into their hearts and minds the great underlying principle that should govern all religious bodies and the polity of the church of their choice; fifty years they have been taught and trained organizations and thus become very proficient in the science of great conventions, but the thousands of public free schools, and the hundreds of higher institutions of learning have turned their intellectual guns on the forts of ignorance, the walls have largely been battered down, and the prisoners are out real men capable of handling any position in life.

To say that the laity are incapable of equal representation from intellectual deficiency is to condemn the work of these thousands of free

schools and over this country, these hundreds of higher institutions of learning, saying nothing of the instruction that is being given by our eight schools that are fostered and maintained by the thousands of dollars that are willingly contributed annually by the loyal members of the connection. Why not equal representation?

BURDEN BEARERS.

In the matter of running any organization, one of the serious problems that confronts the operation or directions is to provide ways and means necessary for its successful operation. The plan may be perfect and the ways well thought out, but if the burden-bearers waver and strongly note objections to the plans and without the means, the successful operation of that organization will be much handicapped, work hindered and many of its institutions irreparably crippled.

But the laity of our church are willing intelligent burden-bearers in most cases, not from standpoint of fear, but from a standpoint of love of the cause and denomination they represent. The pastors' salaries are agreed upon and paid; the laity earnestly bestir themselves raise amounts pay the same, besides donating if the pastors are giving satisfaction; the P. E.'s salaries are laid by the District Conferences the reports are carried to the laity with the aid of the pastors the money is raised and the P. Elders go on their way rejoicing. The General Conference agrees upon a budget to run the General Church the Bishops and their cabinets, attend the amounts have been assessed by the committee on the conference assess these amounts among the churches of their conference districts; if properly presented the members of these churches set to work like leavers to raise these

assessments with but little if any kicking. The Bishops are made to feel glad and all concerned are happy. If there is a Varick's Memorial Fund to be raised present the cause to the laity and the same is an accomplished fact. But what say you about that \$37,500 Girl Dove have had the matter in charge they will tell you that most every circuit and station of the connection answered O. K. I will venture to say that 80 per cent of the budget is paid by the laity saying nothing of the buying building and beautifying churches, and parsonages. Why not an equal lay representation?

VARICK CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR UNION.

"Personal Service Campaign"

On May 20, 1915, it will be three years that we have headed the Varick C. E. Union. During all this time we have made no special request upon the local workers for support, but all have been urged from time to time to support the pastors, presiding elders, and general church, leaving the Union to be supported as the law directs and as one's conscience may dictate.

Reports from pastors and presiding elders at quarterly, district and annual conferences, and hundreds of letters that we have received, show that thousands of dollars have been raised by local Endeavorers and others who have been influenced by Christian Endeavor principles all of which went directly to the local and general church and to the support of the ministry. We are rejoiced to know that Christian Endeavorers have helped so much in this way.

We have now inaugurated a "Personal Service Campaign" to raise sufficient funds to carry out our plans to advance Christian Endeavor throughout Zion during the year, and ask that every Endeavorer and member of the A. M. E. Zion send us a personal contribution.

In every church we desire a number of ladies and young people to solicit donations for the Union and for this purpose we will supply all who make application with authority to go before the public. Send for authority to solicit for us. Who will be the first to send in \$1.00, \$5.00, \$10.00, or \$25.00 to help spread Christian Endeavor in Zion and throughout the world.

Remit all money to Varick C. E. Union, Aaron Brown, Secretary, Box 859, Pensacola, Fla.

THE SOUTH FLORIDA DISTRICT CONFERENCE

The South Florida District Conference of the A. M. E. Zion Church met at Mt. Sinai Church Jan. 12-13, 1915.

Bishop Geo. W. Clinton, D. D., presiding, rev. Chas. A. Ransom, pastor.

Organization: W. C. Higgs, P. E., S. A. Chambers and J. J. Sanders, Stated Clerk, Rev. O. H. Perry, Marshals, Iteys, A. B. Higgs and J. L. Lundy; Reporter, J. E. Westberry.

After the election of officers remarks and announcements by the Bishop the opening sermon was preached by Rev. A. W. McWilliam. He gave us a good paper sermon which was well received.

THURSDAY

During the morning personal and general claims were collected.

In the afternoon a conference was continued for the benefit of pastors who had not paid. This business was being transacted by Doctor W. W. Sargou of the Episcopal church, who has been working among our people for twenty years, came in to visit the conference. He was introduced and called on to speak to the conference. Among the things he said that made the strongest impression was his exhortation to great pastors and his advice to the presiding elder and his advice to the presiding elder to maintain a high standard. "To strive to live up to the Bible standard of life."

Bishop Clinton then turned to his timely advice and exhorted to take issue with the world and reference to the matter of the laity have done for our church.

In most cases the laity are ready to do anything that will help our development and

the church was electrified and Doctor Sargou felt like making another speech.

At 7 p. m., Rev. W. J. Sanders preached an acceptable sermon basing his discourse mainly on prayer as a theme. After this service the welcome exercises took place.

First on the program was His Honor Mayor D. M. McKay judging from the length of his address we were led to think that he lives more in deeds than words. He assured the conference that he was interested in us and our work to the extent he would leave off his business affairs which were numerous and important to be in our midst. He said that notwithstanding the fact that only a small per cent of Tampa were church people that the city is dominated by religious influence.

The humorous Doctor Pittman of Bethel Baptist church addressed on behalf of the twenty Negro churches and 4000 members in the city of Tampa. His address was practical and genuine and his welcome cordial. An excellent paper was read by Miss Henry; Solos were sung by Mr. Ernest Norwood, Miss Juana Noyes, and Mrs. Stella Alexander. The program in every respect was high class.

Following this splendid program was the grand reception given the conference by Mt. Sinai church members. This sumptuous feast closed at high twelve and we left for our homes. The weather was chilly overcoats and wraps were a necessity and oil heaters were in full blast.

FRIDAY

Business was light, pocket books thin and the results of the panic more and more apparent. Visiting preachers came in and with short lively speeches and antidotes relieved the situation temporarily.

Reports of Presiding Elders feature of afternoon. Rev. J. R. Shepard read his report for the Jacksonville District. This report showed that both Presiding Elder and pastors had worked faithfully and successfully during the year. A number of missions had been organized and one church built.

Rev. R. W. Ballard read the reports of the pastors of the Tampa District. From these reports Rev. A. L. Higgs stands at the head of the class.

SATURDAY

The W. H. and F. M. women had good program which was enjoyed by all.

SUNDAY

Preachers: Bishop Geo. W. Clinton, D. D., 11 a. m., Rev. J. R. Shepard, 3 p. m., Rev. F. Sims, at 4:30 p. m.

APPOINTMENTS

Jacksonville District—Rev. R. W. Ballard, P. E.
Walters Chapel—Rev. W. W. Blair
High Spring Circuit—Rev. J. L. Lundy.
Evanston Circuit—Rev. F. Sims.
Orangebend Circuit—Rev. J. M. Jenkins.
Center Hill Circuit—Rev. R. M. Williams.
Bartow Circuit—Rev. J. M. Phillips.
Leesburg—Rev. W. J. Adams.
Haines City Rev.—O. E. Griffin.
Gainesville—Rev. J. R. Montgomery.
Seville Circuit—Rev. S. M. Davis.
Putnam Hall Circuit—Eli Martin.
East Port—Rev. W. W. Spann.
Romeo Circuit—Rev. J. W. Whigham.
Key West District, Rev. W. J. Sanders, P. E.
Coniah Chapel—Rev. J. R. Shepard.
Mt. Sinai—Rev. Chas. A. Ransom.
Plant City and Seffner—Rev. A. L. Higgs.
Alafia—Rev. G. W. Cook.
Ybor City circuit—Rev. L. L. Whitfield.
St. Petersburg—Rev. Jas. A. Dudley.
Palmetto and Bradento—Rev. F. R. McIntyre.
Homeland Circuit—Rev. W. O. Perry.
Kissimmee—Rev. J. E. Westberry.
Miami and Coconut Grove—S. A. Chambers.
Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach—Rev. W. G. Clark.
Nassau—Rev. W. A. Bain.

Wonderful Tidings.

BY REV. J. E. TRANSUE, A. M., D. D., PASTOR OF TRANSUE GOSPEL TEMPLE, 214 N. BROAD ST., CHARLOTTE, N. C.

Dr. Clement:

Happy New Year to you, the force of the STAR of Zion and to all the readers of this article, I am still at the old stand 3600 Federal Street doing business for the church I love so well. We have been in this city over three years, organized a Zion church and have kept it in first class running order ever since.

Dr. H. J. Callis is the hero of Walters A. M. E. Zion church. His recent rally shows that he is the right man for the place. He raised \$125.00, Hurrah for Dr. Callis! yes he won the fight, a bitter indeed! Dr. Callis is in the race for the Bishopric well he is a good man and should be considered by the Church.

I must congratulate you for the splendid work that you are doing, you are doing your work well and why not the Church gratify your greatest ambition by electing you Bishop in 1916. The man who was born in Zion, sucked Zion's milk, rocked in the Zion Cradle raised up in Zion worked in Zion all of your life, suffered in Zion as well as having a good time in Zion and is still working and looking after the church, you are the man who ought to be honored to the Bishopric and I trust that you will be one of our next Bishops and the Hon. John C. Dancy be placed at the head of the Publication House.

Our Bishop the Rt. Rev. G. L. Blackwell visited our city and preached a great sermon the second Sunday in Dec. His visit was very satisfactory to the members and pastor of Walters A. M. E. Zion church.

Miss Stubbs one of the nurses of the Providence Hospital treated Transue Gospel Temple, Sunday school with a nice Xmas tree which was enjoyed by the little folks.

Mr. Wm Birdine is the Chicago correspondent to the WESTERN STAR of ZION. He writes some good news.

Chicago, Ill.

New Hymnals, 60 cents each by mail perpaid. This is the regular Dollar Hymnal with music. Send for one. Six Dollars per dozen express not prepaid. Send for a dozen.

SOME REFLECTIONS

BY REV. J. H. McMULLEN.

Let us "forget the things that are behind and reach forth for those which are before us," is the advice of the great apostle to the Gentiles. The year 1914 is a thing of history, but it holds many sad incidents, forget it. In this connection let us forget the unpleasant statements the intended assaults, and unintentional injuries hurled at us during the past year, and remember, all of us are thinking beings, and that wisdom does not die with any man or with any set of men.

Dr. J. H. Anderson is one of the fairest writers among the staff of correspondents to the STAR of ZION and one who is not afraid to give credit to one deserving it, no matter whom it offends. He is the only writer to our connectional organ who believes and says that the Rush Church in New York City should have been built to save Zion there and who does not curse the man who made it a possibility, even though the General Church was involved heavily for its maintenance. Being human, Dr. Anderson has under lasting obligations to him for kind and truthful compliments, when the sting of bitter criticisms have pelted us for the thing which our ordination to the Zion ministry demanded of us and which our chief pastors send us forth to do. Thank you Dr. Anderson. If your election to the STAR editorship was dependent upon us you are elected now. Fairness is a most commendable trait in an editor and you possess that quality in a high degree.

If we have entertained ill feelings toward any one we have left it behind us in the old year, and the only thing we are unwilling to give up our own opinion and

the given us the right to see if our matters which concern us as greatly as they concern any others with respect to our Church. A sad day that will be when to think differently from even, the Bishops, one must be put to death, or exiled as they do policemen in New York City when they dare carry out the law, or do their full duty as their oath of office requires. And so with malice toward none we must think and act as we see it, and not in the groove of another's mind circle.

I wonder if any other Zion preacher has dared run to shelter of the old "ship of church" in a crisis in order to save the local situation, and if so, we shall "watch and wait" to see if he is crushed between the upper and nether mill stones of bitter criticism.

Our recent fair realized the sum of One thousand sixteen dollars (\$1016.66) and sixty-six cents, and we are now engaged in a revival for the salvation of men and women with fair prospects for a successful campaign.

Between the Democratic administration and the European war there is no telling what 1915 will bring forth, but one thing is most certain that after two years more the Democratic party will end its control of the government, and the youngest voter now will be an old man before it gets control again. Away with the "new freedom" and Democratic "forward looking" as advocated President Wilson.

To one and all we wish you a happy New Year. We shall do our whole duty by the General Church but we shall not forget that without the local church there can be no General Church.

Rochester, N. Y.

New Disciplines, Name in Gold Engraved on Cover.

One of our men in Our Own Job Department will put your name on 1912 Discipline in Gold Leaf.

Send us One Dollar and we will send you a Discipline with your name on the cover for Fifty Cents more. Fifty Cents for the Discipline and Fifty Cents for Engraving name.