

# Africo-American Presbyterian

"AND YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."—John viii 32.

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## RADICAL PROPOSALS WITH RESPECT TO THE UNITED NEGRO CHURCH

By Dr. Carter G. Woodson

Taking up the matter of uniting all Negro churches, some persons have come forward with various plans of a radical order. An A. M. E. minister would like to see the number of bishops of his church further reduced to twelve rather than increased again to eighteen by electing four new bishops to fill the vacancies caused by death since their last Quadrennial Conference. He insists that the A. M. E. Church does not need but twelve bishops inasmuch as the fourteen now active have not enough to do.

This minister, however, does not go far enough. All of the Negro Methodists in the world if united, would not need more than twelve bishops. This number of well prepared and energetic workers could direct and supervise the activities of the Negroes of this sect throughout Christendom. What sense is there in having three or four bishops, each teaching the same faith and practice while duplicating the work of the other in the same area merely because a long time ago somebody following the ignorant oppressors of the race in these churches committed the sin of dissension and strife? For all of this unnecessary expense our impoverished people have to pay.

If the number of bishops of the various Negro Methodist churches were reduced to about twelve or fifteen, as they should be, the amount of a hundred thousand or more now being paid to support the unnecessary number could be used to maintain properly at least one accredited college; and what is now being raised here and there to support various struggling but starving institutions kept alive by ambitious bishops and preachers could be saved to the people. With this money diverted to a more practical use the race would be able to establish some other things which would serve as assets rather than as liabilities.

I say liabilities, for practically all of our denominational schools which are bleeding the people for the inadequate support which they get are still unable to do accredited work. There are so many of them that the one impoverishes the other. Outstanding men of the church, therefore, have to acquire their advanced education by attending other schools in the beginning or by taking additional training elsewhere after learning all our denominational schools can offer. J. W. E. Bowen, R. R. Wright, Jr., Charles H. Wesley and W. Y. Bell are cases in evidence.

By proper unification and organization the Negro churches can support one or two much needed universities of their own. With the present arrangement of two or three in the same area and sometimes as many in one city there is no chance for emerging from the trying, poverty-stricken state. To qualify for certification in the professions the Negroes must go to other schools, where, although they acquire the fundamentals, they learn much about their "inferiority" to discourage them in their struggle upward.

Another A. M. E. minister writes me that he has been thrown out of his conference for advocating certain reforms, chief among which is the elimination of the presiding elder, whom he regards as an unnecessary interloper, coming around periodically to extort a certain amount of money. Adding what he exacts to that which must be paid to the bishop and other officers, this minister finds that 90 per cent of all pastors get only about 40 per cent commission on the

money they are required to raise during the year. A presiding elder says, too, that he has to press down on the pastors because others are driving him, and if his churches answered all the calls upon his district they would have to raise about \$6 a month for each member. The poor preachers, then, says the complainant, can hardly get enough to pay for the necessities of life, and their churches can not give much aid to other enterprises for social uplift in the community. These men, therefore, are crying for deliverance through re-organization.

A fiery A. M. E. minister would get rid of the bishops altogether. He insists that episcopacy is incompatible with Methodism and that the founders of the sect never intended to have it work out as it has. He says that it is superimposed machinery brought over from a worldly agency, and it will always prove to be a corrupting agency in the church.

In this sweeping proposal Baptists will readily agree, for they do not believe in too much dictation as to what they should do, and would never accept any plan of unification which would bring them under the rule of bishops. While the Methodists have too much of the wrong sort of organization the Baptists have practically none of any kind and because of their democratic tendencies they do not want any. The Baptists insist that although with their large numbers they may not be able to accomplish certain things because of disunion they, nevertheless, escape the evil of being subject to the authority of persons who are often unprincipled and corrupt, and at the same time are so strongly entrenched by politics that they can not be removed. When charged with misconduct the accused in gangster-like fashion, is white-washed by his co-workers who must stand together or die, for if one of the gang goes down, all will go.

It is unfortunate, however, that Baptist preachers, as a rule, hate the bishops. Instead of hating the bishops they should in Christian-like fashion, pray for them that they may not extort too much from the poor, that they may not break up too many homes, and that they may not produce illegitimate children. In this way the cause of the Lord would be better served. But the Baptist preacher, as a rule, does not see this as his duty. He hates the bishop because with an organization behind him the bishop is a man of more influence than one with nothing but the support of one congregation. The Baptist minister has so much prejudice against Methodist polity that he cannot accept their system of doing things by organized methods, that he, too, may have that sort of prestige.

The Baptists unfortunately, like disorganization, and consequently they work indirectly to weaken themselves and the people. Wherever you find a Baptist church, division is always in sight or just out of sight, for it will be more than apt to appear that the church has recently divided or it is broken up into factions, and there is some renegade minister ready to lead them to a separate altar for exploitation. When I think of the procedure of the Baptists I see the picture set forth in my father's favorite hymn about the sheep going astray and breaking the fold of God, each wandering in a different way, but all the downward road.

Showing his antagonistic attitude toward the Methodist

church, I recently heard a Baptist preacher make a contrast of the "inviting situation in his church" with what he considered undesirable in the Methodist. He deplored the fact that the bishop has so much authority, especially that of assigning pastors to the churches and thus controlling the bread and butter of these workers. "We do not have anything like that in the Baptist church," he said, "because nobody can call a pastor for a Baptist church but God, and sometimes the church will not let God do it."

The reform element in the Methodist churches should not be trying to escape from all authority, and Baptists should not glory in the fact that they are so disorganized as not to have any supervision. If the Negro churches are to be united that they may function more efficiently in the uplift of the people they must have a program, and to carry out a program requires direction and supervision. In the united church of tomorrow the bishops and elders as now constituted may not have any function, but some sort of church administration will be necessary. Such supervision as will be required, however, must not be superimposed as it is at present. It must be provided for according to the will of the people rather than in keeping with that of the politicians who are now running the church. The compensation allowed for services thus rendered must be determined by the people.

The main trouble with the Negro churches today is that the small number of Methodist congregations are overtaxed to support a large number of politicians who must live as such by extortion, while the large numbers of Baptists are failing to do their duty because of being divided and kept apart by unprincipled and ignorant ministers who are holding the people by weekly narcotic injections to use them as a means to an end. If the churches were united to eliminate this waste and corruption they could be properly directed and supervised at one-fifth of the present cost. Negro communities would then have something to invest in providing for the community welfare in business, health and education.

It is not to the point to say that the other leaders in the community must win the people to their way of thinking and doing instead of complaining about the domination of the ministers. Our people have not but so much capital which can be invested since most of what they make must be spent for a living; and if they are so misled as to waste practically all of this in the functional and sectarian duplication of churches and religious administrations there will be nothing left for other movements of importance. Investigation shows that this is the present plight of the Negro. What are you going to do about it?

### LEADER URGES CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE RACES

Best Interests of Both Demanded, Says Dr. Henry Hugh Proctor

Athens, Ga., Aug. 26:—"The future of the American Negro lies under the guidance of his own leaders in co-operation with the better element of the white Americans on the bedrock principles of the Bible, the Constitution and the Flag," declared Rev. Henry Hugh Proctor, of Brooklyn, N. Y., in an address at the Community center here Friday night.

Dr. Proctor, who is pastor of the Nazarene Congregational church, Brooklyn, spoke on "Co-operation Between Races." He declared that co-operation

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## RAMBLING THOUGHTS

By Carolyn Dungee

How often do we manage to commit our "white sins," evade certain customs and domineer our subordinates, hiding behind our social status, or some other thin excuse or veil. Do not misunderstand me to mean that we acquire a certain position or social status in order to do these things, but then, we do do them more frequently under these circumstances than we probably would if we were mere "nobodys" or had less authority or thinner excuses.

The youth fails to touch his female companion's arm when crossing the street, or to walk on the sidewalk when escorting her on the sidewalk, or get a chair when she enters a sitting group. His excuse is "the double standard"—women want to have the same privileges to smoke, wear boyish bobs, drink and do all the other things men do, therefore the men are under no obligation to extend them the courtesies due their sex." This is no valid excuse. One wrong does not warrant another; a gentleman will be a gentleman always, under all circumstances and to every one, whether she be a flapper, "old fogey," or what not.

The college student refuses to accept certain jobs—jobs that can not be called "positions"—jobs that bring one "wages" rather than a "salary," because he is "above" such work. "Why," he asks, "should he receive an education if he isn't going to better his social standing by so doing?" He's above the uneducated man and should not stoop to certain labors. No one advocates being satisfied with the lower things in life, but neither does one advocate suffering because one can't find the particular thing one feels is "just the thing for one of my calibre."

The parent trains his son to attend Sunday School and remain for church, while he himself sits comfortably on his porch and reads the comic strip. In response to the child's innocent inquiry, "Why daddy doesn't go to church, yet makes me go," the father informs him in heated terms that he must go because his father said so, and he must not question his elders. Such a reply does not satisfy the father's conscience or sense of justice and fairness, but the son must obey because father says so, and the father can answer as he pleases because his son can't argue or reason with him. That father may claim to be training his son the way that he should go, so that when he is grown he will not depart from it, but he needs to realize that he must train his child the way he should go and go that way himself!

The preacher realizes that his success depends to some extent on his amiability among his parishioners, so despite his displeasures and disagreeableness at home, he always manages to wear that pious smile and extend that cordial greeting to a parishioner or acquaintance, even if one of them gives him the same displeasure which angered him at home. Yet at home, he unrelentingly gives vent to his pent up, unpleasant disposition. His amiableness is not bestowed so abundantly on the ones at home, but even after a family storm, he succeeds in immediately summoning forth the said smile on the visitor.

People of common intelligence realize that a preacher is as human as anyone else,

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## SABBATH SCHOOL CONVENTION OF CAPE FEAR PRESBYTERY

By Miss Ailey Mae Young

The 23rd annual session of the Sabbath School Convention of District No. 1, Cape Fear Presbytery, met at Timothy Darling church, Oxford, N. C., Friday morning, July 31st, 1931.

After a stirring song and praise service, delegates, superintendents and ministers from the various Sabbath schools were enrolled. The welcome address was given by Mr. Thomas Bullock, of Oxford. He gave a very warm and cordial welcome to the city homes and everything else which Oxford afforded, to make the stay a pleasant one.

The response was given by Miss Bertha Dunston, of Louisburg. Miss Dunston stated that to show our appreciation of the warm welcome required responsive attitude by our service and co-operation.

Then followed the annual address by the President, Rev. H. T. McFadden, of Louisburg. He spoke on "The Undiscovered Things of Life," urging each delegate to return to his field and find something new to present to the Sabbath school, something new to keep the Sabbath school full of life. Next came the instruction to delegates and appointing of various committees.

### Friday Afternoon

The afternoon song service was conducted by the Oxford Tuxis Club, under the direction of Mrs. W. G. Anderson. The topic for discussion was "The High School Student in the Sunday School." Dr. J. A. Savage, of Albion Academy, led the discussion, after which other members of the Convention joined heartily in the discussion. Some of the main points were:

1. Influence others to accept Christ and join the church.
2. Help purchase supplies.
3. Increase attendance.
4. Give High School students responsible places.

Many others expressed themselves very freely on this topic.

### Friday Night

This session consisted of a demonstration of the Vacation Bible School and an address by Dr. E. E. Toney, of Oxford, N. C. The demonstration was in charge of Rev. W. G. Anderson, of Oxford. First in order the processional was played by Mrs. Norman, of Mary Potter School. At this time Rev. Anderson gave the origin and purpose of the Vacation School, followed by singing: "Onward, Christian Soldiers." The demonstrations were as follows:

1. Opening Period, Rev. W. G. Anderson, Oxford.
2. Junior Group, Bible Period, Miss Ailey M. Young, Wake Forest.
3. Beginners' Memory Period, Miss Cornelia Green, Oxford.
4. Intermediates' Memory Period, Miss Lillian Ancrum, Raleigh.
5. Group Play Period, Miss Madie White, Louisburg.

This work seemed very helpful and suggestive to the members of the Convention.

Dr. Toney in his address told the Convention that the work of the Sabbath School is to build up a Christian personality. All selfishness must be discarded and a spirit of love cultivated. Examples of unselfishness were given in the life of Saul, also David Livingstone. As an example of love Jesus teaches us to love even our enemies. In his conclusion he urged the delegates to return to their fields and develop such personalities as will enable them to live useful and helpful lives.

### Saturday Morning

After a brief song service the following business was transacted:

1. Report of Sunday schools.
2. Report of Synodical delegates.
3. Report of Treasurer.
4. Election of officers.

Miss Cornelia Green, of Oxford, was elected delegate to the School of Methods which meets at Albion Academy.

At this time Mr. George R. Marsh, Sunday School Missionary, made a few remarks. He spoke mainly of the three types of Vacation Church Schools, working to make our Sunday schools more interesting, and suggested the organization of the Junior School of Methods in our district.

### Saturday Afternoon

On Saturday afternoon members of the Convention assembled on the campus of Mary Potter School for a period of amusement and recreation. Refreshments were served and an enjoyable afternoon was spent by all.

### Sunday Morning

A Model Sunday School was conducted at 10 o'clock by Supt. E. E. Toney and Mr. Geo. Marsh.

The morning service began at 11 o'clock. The music which was very soul-stirring and appropriate was rendered by the local church choir.

The annual sermon was preached by Rev. J. W. Smith, of Raleigh. The sermon was taken from Luke 16:9, the subject being "Learning From the Children of this World." His main points were:

1. Set up Standards of Humanity.
2. Failure comes from being unjust and unfaithful.
3. Place sufficient energy and wisdom behind anything we wish to accomplish.
4. The purpose of the church is to get men and women to worship God, but certain attractions must be placed therein.

The unjust steward was able to meet the requirements because he stuck to his purpose. Rev. Smith was at his best. He held the interest of his hearers throughout the entire discourse.

### Sunday Afternoon

The song service was in charge of Miss Lillian Ancrum, of Raleigh. The topic for discussion was "Standard Forms of Sunday School Worship," led by Prof. A. L. Young, Wake Forest. His main points were:

1. Adapt a practical form to the Sunday school.
2. Consider ability of co-workers to outline suitable and workers to outline suitable form. Others made further remarks and suggestions on the topic.

The next phase of the meeting was a short program rendered by members of the Convention and local talent.

1. Music, Sunday School delegates.
2. Prayer, Rev. J. W. Smith, Raleigh.
3. Music, Sunday school delegates.
4. Reading, People Will Talk, Miss Bertha Dunston, Louisburg.
5. Solo, My Task, Miss Scott, Oxford.
6. Dunbar Reading, Temptation, Miss Ailey Mae Young, Wake Forest.
7. Recitation, Miss Cornelia Green, Oxford.
8. Music, Sunday School delegates.
9. Dunbar Reading, In The Morning, Miss Julia Crump, Raleigh.
10. Pageant, Beauty of the Earth, local talent.

Following this an inspirational address was given by Prof. J. H. Carney, Franklinton. His address was short and pointed. Mr. Carney spoke of "America's Greatest Need." He said that America is calling for men who are true, strong, faithful, patriotic and who show a willingness to work.

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