

Africo-American Presbyterian

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

VOL. LVI.

CHARLOTTE, N. C., THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 1935.

NO. 15.

MAN POWER—THE LAYMEN IN THE CHURCH

Prof. Thos. A. Long, Ph. D.,
Elder Seventh Street Church, Charlotte.

(From The Catawba Semi-Annual Review)

Social relationship has to do with group life and the results of this relationship make the basis primarily of group behavior. It is this that gives concern to our workaday life. We do not live alone and can not. This living together makes a social bond.

Now this living together must have in it the element of control. Mankind in this situation, through the process of integration, has built up a social scheme by which group life may be secure in its guidance and well being.

This necessitates leadership. Group life would disintegrate without leadership. Out of the development of social behavior, we have an organization which carries with it responsibility, and this responsibility implies leadership. Leadership here may be termed officialship.

The minister or pastor is the official head of the focal church organization. Provision has been made by the higher courts of the church as to how its affairs are to be conducted and interests maintained and protected.

So there must be offices and there must be men to fill them. These in cooperation with the pastor should assure the well being of its membership and a progressive spirit of Christian work.

What is involved in holding office, or what does holding office mean?

It is directing the activities of many individuals in significant particulars.

This requires intelligence. It often means pre-vision, or looking ahead.

It may mean either an intensive command of knowledge, or a wide mental range. In either case it gives a person a distinct advantage and serves as a necessary asset.

Character is a vital factor here, and its essence is sincerity and dependability.

There must also be balance and a sense of sympathetic control, a moving equilibrium, integrated and invincible.

Stating it negatively, holding office does not mean "posing," or simply filling space, and thereby creating in the church a static atmosphere. And further it does not mean a place to "boss" somebody or something.

It was mentioned above that an officer should be intelligent.

Such a one should know the church doctrine, its discipline, polity, policies, and have general culture to the extent of being able to fit in a progressive civic life and know the relation his church organization, along with himself, sustains to this and whatever else that may need competent consideration.

It is well to say, further, that there should be made provision for instruction and information as to the fundamentals of the church—its policies, government, church courts, official duties and the various relations of church activities. This refers to the membership in general; for the lack of this knowledge there is lethargy, conflict and retarded service.

In speaking of man power, the church has a claim on men for service; this means men with character and vision.

In Christian manhood there is no conflict between character and service, for service is one of the essentials of character.

Service is to the man of truth and purity, spending himself upon the just uses of life, the uplifting of life and the

making of men. We have the best grounds for regarding this as the supreme service, the real purpose of life.

When our Lord called his first disciples He did not promise them wealth or fame or to make them happier or better men; He simply offered to make them useful.

He said: "If you will come after me I will give you influence: you shall catch men."

This was a fine appeal to the unselfish capacities of human nature. Jesus got what He wanted. The men responded.

There is a great principle of character and service here.

In First John 2:14, we have this: "I have written unto you fathers, because ye have known him from the beginning."

"I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." St. John was addressing the men of the Church at Ephesus, encouraging them in their fellowship, fortitude and service.

The times demand man power in all the various undertakings of civic and social life.

In man's cooperative interests what a power has been delegated to him! In church life and in its forward look, the responsibility of its successful "carrying on" must come through ultimate conduct of all men of the church.

It has been said that if the great animals of the forest as the elephant and the rest, knew their strength, and had the realization of its control, the animal trainers would have a different proposition to reckon with in dealing with them.

Could not the same be said of the man power of the church if all the men, banded together, could be aroused to an enthusiastic sense of their real ability to do things? It would be an entirely different proposition, the way things would then move up and onward.

Many men disappoint us because we expect them to.

There is such a thing as a passive state, or "passing the buck," or as it goes in common parlance, "Let George do it." This has crept into the church from long tradition. We find by the same token, "let the women the church do it." And so the women through their missionary societies, circles, clubs, suppers and the like, have borne too much of the burden.

This is not fair to them. It is all right for them to share, but it is the duty of the men to go forward in this matter.

Put definite responsibility on definite men. In all work for men, the more we count upon them, the better results we shall secure from them.

The church must have a program calculated to create the interest and call forth the participation and real devotion of strong men. And it must be presented in a way which arrests the attention of men and commands their following. This program must appeal to the imagination in its enlarged dimensions, not glorified pedantry, but must concern itself with the awareness of burdened souls, the intimate touch of spiritual sympathy and material helpfulness as a divine obligation, with a sense of a changed psychology of men in a changing community of interests.

The present age of transition

from out-worn forms of thought, customs, organization and methods in general to new forms, although not in every particular case, clearly perceived, requires the leadership in church life to take cognizance of this fact and be prepared to meet the issue with candor and effectiveness.

The men of the church, we believe, will come together in fellowship meetings if the matter is properly set before them and followed up with patience, thoughtful planning and kindly solicitation.

We do not live to eat but we do eat to live.

The use of a little social psychology which, in other words, is simply "tact," or the fitting in process, will do the thing.

Get the men together at stated periods, have refreshments or a supper. This should not be elaborate and expensive. With this added factor ("eats") the Brotherhood will "live." It is around these festal boards that great undertakings are launched. There are Brotherhoods and Christian men's clubs, numbering each, 200, 500 and 1,000 members, having monthly meetings and a modest supper during the sitting. All of them are dynamic enterprises. They are not only taking the lead in their respective churches, but have assumed the financial responsibility of many charities, salaries of trained nurses in city pathological work, giving scholarships, doing mission work, home and foreign.

These, however, are in the white churches. It is reassuring to note the progress the Brotherhood organizations in some of our churches are making. This type of organization should have whole hearted encouragement. That was a most commendable gesture on the part of the Christian Men's Clubs, when the Brotherhoods of three Presbyterian churches in Charlotte, namely, Seventh Street, Biddleville and Brooklyn, had their annual union meeting and supper at Seventh Street church, early in February this year. There were nearly 150 men who sat around the festal board, as one man, in fellowship and good cheer. Here is where the social mind gets its impetus and the social will gets busy and brings things to pass.

The church activities here become vitalized and progress is the result. That church is a progressive one spiritually and materially where the men as a whole, are organized and are intelligently aroused, as men can be aroused, to do the big thing in making the church go forward.

WESTMINSTER CHURCH, SPARTANBURG, S. C.

Mr. Editor: You have not heard from us for quite a while, but we are still praying and working. Things have not always gone smoothly on this field. For years Westminster Presbyterian church here has been a storm center, culminating in the burning of the building a few years ago.

This church has been rebuilt and reorganized by the Presbytery of McClelland. Looking up the history of this church since it was moved to the present location, Rev. B. H. McFadden, the present minister, found that this church had never been dedicated to God. He claims that this might be why the history of Westminster was so unpleasant. He may be correct in that. The failure to dedicate to God that beautiful building may be the source of her lack of peace and harmony within.

At any rate Rev. McFadden proceeded to have the church dedicated. The fifth Sunday in March was the day for that occasion.

(Continued on page 4)

THE CULTURAL KINSHIP OF NEGRO AND JEW

By Dr. Kelly Miller

The Negro and the Jew are spiritually closely akin. The Negro takes to the Hebrew Scripture as a duck to water, to use a homely and familiar comparison. Noah and the Ark, Daniel in the Lion's Den, the Hebrew Children in the Fiery Furnace, Jonah and the Whale are absorbed and relished as folk stories as if they were an indigenous part of Negro folk lore. When the Negro first came in contact with the doctrines and preachments of the Old Testament, they satisfied his longings as nothing else could do. In the inner recesses of his soul he felt that:

"This is the way I long have sought, And mourned because I found it not."

In a recent release I pointed out how naturally a Negro could play the roles in "Green Pastures" without the semblance of anomaly or anachronism. The Bible is but the Hebrew soul turned wrong side out; the Spirituals are but the Negro soul wrong side out. These two bodies of spiritual literature, one expressed in poetic and the other in lyric form represent the quest of these soul-hungry races for God, to apply they might find him.

It required no great missionary effort to evangelize the Negro or to bring him within the fold of Christianity. When this Spiritual Cult was incidentally called to his attention, he greedily absorbed it as if remembering something which he had once known but forgotten. The Christian religion makes no similar appeal to any other non-white race. The American Indian is no nearer evangelization today than he was when Columbus discovered America. Although a constant stream of Christian endeavor has been brought to play upon him, it finds no ready response in an Indian nature. The Missionary movement throughout the world during the past four hundred years has made little or no appreciable headway outside the Aryan race, with the single and singular exception of the Negro in the Western world. Here the seed was sown in prepared soil and brought forth abundant fruit.

The Aryan race, of which the Teuton is the chief representative, adopted Christianity, but this borrowed religion has never conquered its tough Teutonic spirit. It is entirely logical that Adolf Hitler, the chief embodiment of the spirit of the Teuton, should chafe under the galling of this Semitic Spiritual Cult, but Ham is perfectly willing and satisfied to dwell in the spiritual tent of Shem.

Not only has the Negro borrowed the religion of the Old and New Testaments, but he has absorbed it and made it his own. He is today the fullest embodiment of the spirit of the Christian religion to be found among the varieties of the human family. In some respects he carries it to a higher degree of fulfillment than its originator, the Jew. Meekness, humility, patience, long-suffering, loving kindness, non-resentfulness, are the crowning graces of the Christian religion. This galaxy of graces shines to perfection in the Negro's nature. Ghandi in India, typifying the spirit of the Hindu race, represents the next best exemplification of the Christ spirit in the world today. Eliminating the excrescences of ignorance, poverty, vice and crime and degradation, which no religion can eliminate, the Negro is the best living representative of the Christ in the world today. When these excrescences shall have

been eliminated, when corruption shall have put on incorruption, when vice shall be clothed with virtue, when superficiality shall have given way to naturalness, the Christian graces shall shine forth in the Negro character brighter and brighter unto the Perfect Day.

Outside of the spiritual domain there is a close, sympathetic understanding and relationship between Jew and Negro in the broad field of culture. It is the Jew who has given the Negro opportunity to show forth his talent in music, dramatics, literature and art. It is not without significance that Dr. Ernest E. Just, the outstanding Negro scientist of his day and generation, has been given an opportunity to perfect and express his genius through the beneficence of that great Jew, Julius Rosenwald. The cultural development of the Negro centers about Harlem, under sponsorship and encouragement of members of the Jewish race. Is it not to be considered strange that Philadelphia, which until recently has contained more Negroes than New York City, who have been exposed to as good educational opportunities, developed no cultural leaders of the race? The same thing might be said of Washington, the Capital of the Nation which contains a larger number of Negroes of education, position and standing than can be found anywhere else in the world. Yet the Capital of the Nation has exhibited little or no leadership or developed talent in music, dancing, dramatics or other forms of artistic expression with which the Negro is undoubtedly endowed.

This discrepancy may be accounted for by the fact that the cultural life of these communities, such as it is, is under dominant Gentile control which had little interest in developing special Negro gifts and cultural capacities. But the Jew, who controls the theatres, concerts, amusements and largely the channels of literary publication of the Nation, has given the Negro his chance.

These two racial minorities in our national life have many points in common, not only as concerns the social and civil disabilities under which they both labor, but their cultural gifts and endowments and the likeness of spirit, which is not only kin but kind.

CHURCH WORK IN RACE RELATIONS DURING 1934.

New York, April.—A graphic description of the work of the churches on the problem of racial adjustment during 1934 is contained in "Stepping Forward in Race Relations," the 13th annual report of the Department of Race Relations, Federal Council of Churches, 105 East 22nd Street, New York City.

In the foreword the churches are challenged to a sense of deep responsibility in bringing a square deal to Negroes under the New Deal and in stepping forward rather than side-stepping the economic and civic issues of today.

In its work for economic justice the Department loaned part-time service of its Executive Secretary to the Joint Committee on National Recovery which under his chairmanship has made studies of the various phases of the recovery program and its effects upon Negroes, with proposals of non-segregation policies and prevention of discrimination.

In the field of agriculture the Department made pioneer studies of cotton-growing communities in Alabama and Ar-

kansas in the interest of sharecroppers and share-tenants with recommendations for remedial measures. The services of Agricultural Extension Agents were enlisted to acquaint Negro ministers through their conferences and conventions with information on benefits from the government available to Negro farmers. Informational bulletins on land ownership of Negro farmers have had wide circulation in rural sections of the South.

Interracial conferences held in several Western cities dealt with local community problems and suggested steps for follow-up constructive work. Those communities wrestling with economic problems have been supplied with discussion study outlines which have had wide use in local study group discussion.

In its anti-lynching campaign the Department has issued its annual Honor Roll of States free of lynching, and has promoted wide circulation of leaflets giving historical facts about the evil and what churches should do to bring about the passage of anti-lynching legislation.

The Scottsboro case is held up to the churches as one example of the need for church activity in re-moulding public opinion to bring justice to the Negro in this case and to pave the way for a sane and Christian procedure in civic justice rather than to allow communities to be torn in their feelings by racial propaganda agitators.

Race Relations Sunday has become a fixed annual observance of the churches with growing popularity and wider interracial participation in the churches, on the radio, and through State and local official channels.

The Church Women's Committee has undertaken intense work in Westchester, Northern and Southern New Jersey and adjoining areas with several types of interracial meetings held and educational projects conducted.

In a formulated objective for work within the congregations of the churches this Committee has made several suggestions for larger interracial participation in carrying out special observances such as World Day of Prayer, Race Relations Sunday, etc.; integration of Negroes in the activities of religious organizations by membership on boards and general participation in planning programs; the employment of Negroes in offices of religious organizations; the integration of Negroes in all of the work of local church federations and other interdenominational groups. Work has been done to arouse communities to the inadequacy of hospitalization for Negroes.

Attention has been given to problems of household employment as they affect the large number of Negro women in this field.

In its conclusion the report emphasizes that "the churches can not escape their responsibility for the interracial conditions which conflict with the ideals of Christian Brotherhood." The report may be secured from the Department of which Dr. George E. Haynes is Executive Secretary and Katherine Gardner, Associate Secretary.

NOTICE

To Pastors and Church Sessions:

I am now available for evangelistic services and Bible Lectures, and shall be pleased to serve city as well as rural churches and schools in any section of our great Church.

Address: REV. A. A. HECTOR, 314 West Clay Street, Richmond, Va.