

# African-American Presbyterian

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

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## A CONFERENCE THAT WAS DIFFERENT

By REV. L. B. WEST, D. D.

The first of three Presbyterian Young People's Regional Conferences was held at Grove City College, Grove City, Pa., June 20 to 25. These Conferences are under the auspices of the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. The directing geniuses are the Rev. Frank D. Getty, D. D., Director of Young People's Work, and the Rev. J. Maxwell Adams, Director of University Work.

The purpose of the Conferences is set forth as follows:

"To develop a better understanding of the Christian Religion and how it may be interpreted through the Young People's Program in the Presbyterian Church, and to consider the relationship of Presbyterian Youth to the United Christian Youth Movement and to the United Student Christian Movement.

"To consider the possible development of a national organization of Presbyterian students in colleges and universities.

"To consider ways and means for strengthening and expanding organizations for all Presbyterian young people in Presbyteries and Synods.

"To develop a larger group of informed leaders in Presbyterian areas and on college and university campuses.

"To secure the assistance of representative youth and adults in further development of the Presbyterian Program for Young People.

"To develop better and more extensive cooperation between young people and adult leaders."

The Conferences are open to delegates who must be at least nineteen years of age, and represent Presbyterian areas, or college and university units.

The attendance at the Grove City Conference was representative. There were 158 delegates from 17 States as follows: Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia. There were 16 seminar leaders. There were others who were connected with the Conference in an official capacity. The Conference was a big success. It surpassed the fondest dreams of those who planned it. The delegates were serious-minded. They were earnest seekers after truth. How to develop a better understanding of the Christian religion and interpret it through the Young People's Program in the Presbyterian Church and in daily living with other Christian groups and those outside the Church, received the most careful consideration from every one present. The intellectual as well as the spiritual note was dominant. There was an atmosphere of genuine Christian fellowship. If there were any obstacles or barriers they were brushed aside by the impact of a brotherly love which pervaded the hearts of the delegates.

King's weather prevailed throughout. The well-kept campus grounds, the profusion of shrubbery, the stately trees, and the attractive and spacious buildings all blended to lift the delegates to heights of inspiration. The vesper hours will linger long in the minds and hearts of the delegates. On the left side of the chapel there is a beautiful enclosed garden. It is an ideal spot for vespers. The call to vespers was made each evening by two trumpeters from the top of the science hall. The delegates approached this garden with reverence in quiet meditation. They sat on the grass facing the sun. The singing, the praying, the reading of the Scriptures, and the reciting of suitable poems, was all timed to close just as the sun was sinking. The effect was sublime, and the presence of God was felt.

Each morning at 8 o'clock the delegates assembled in the chapel to listen to an address by the Rev. J. Harry Cotton, Ph.D., pastor of the Broad Street Presbyterian church, Columbus, Ohio. Dr. Cotton spoke from the following subjects: The Christian Doctrine of God; The Christian Doctrine of Revelation; The Christian Doctrine of Man and The Christian Doctrine of Society. These addresses were very scholarly and illuminating.

Following the addresses the Conference was divided into eight groups. Two seminars of 90 minutes each were conducted. The first seminar gave the delegates an opportunity to "seek a masterful grasp of basic Christian convictions." The second seminar was "designed to work out the most effective methods by which the Church as a Christian community can express the great truths of our faith, through activities in the life of individuals and the world."

These seminars were highly interesting, and proved to be very helpful. The discussions were stimulating as well as revealing. They blazed a new trail for Christian youth to venture out in helping to solve the many world problems which surround us.

The leaders of the seminars were as follows: Rev. Ganse Little, Williamsport, Pa.; Rev. Monroe Everett, Philadelphia, Pa.; Rev. C. Marshall Muir, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Rev. Ray H. Harmelink, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Rev. Chas. Eugene Conover, Oxford, Ohio; Rev. Cameron Hall, Madison, Wisconsin; Rev. J. Maxwell Adams, Philadelphia, Pa.; Rev. H. L. McCrorey, Charlotte, N. C.; Dr. Charles J. Turk, Philadelphia, Pa.; Miss Rowenna Kessler, Columbus, Ohio; Miss Margaret Shannon, Athens, Ohio; Miss Esther Johnson, New York, N. Y.; Miss Ione Sikes, Philadelphia, Pa.; Rev. S. Franklin Mack, New York, N. Y.; Rev. Donald Carruthers, State College, Pa.; and Rev. L. B. West, Charlotte, N. C.

There were five colored delegates as follows: Mrs. Cecelia Jamison and Miss Castle Williams, Mr. I. P. Pogue, Mr. Chas. Kearns and Mr. Arthur Cooper. Mr. Cooper was selected as one of the six who will visit colleges to tell of the Conference.

The popular meetings, which were held in the big and beautiful college chapel, were very informing and inspiring. Monday night President Weir C. Ketter of the college extended a most gracious welcome to the Conference. Dr. Getty in a clear and comprehensive manner explained the meaning and significance of the Conference. The Rev. Cameron Hall of Madison, Wisconsin, delivered the main address of the evening from the subject, "A World Christian Community."

Tuesday evening's address was delivered by Dr. Chas. J. Turk, Director of the Development of Social Education and Action of the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. He depicted the evils of the day, and said the Church must study them and act. He contended that the Church must educate as well as worship.

One of the outstanding features of the Conference was its music. The Rev. W. F. Miller, minister of Music of the First Presbyterian church of Warren, Ohio, was the music director. Rev. Miller not only led the singing at the vespers and chapel services, but also in the dining room. Every afternoon from 5:15 o'clock to 5:45 he gave an organ recital in the chapel.

A musical program was rendered on Wednesday evening. After the program a reception was held in the parlor of the girls' dormitory. An enjoyable evening was spent. On Thursday evening, Miss

Ann Elizabeth Taylor, one of the Secretaries of Promotion of the Board of National Missions, made an address and showed a motion picture on City Life.

An impressive communion service was conducted on Friday night. There were appropriate musical selections. The communion meditation was given by the Rev. J. Maxwell Adams. The elements were distributed by several of the delegates selected for that purpose. Rev. Adams served the bread and Rev. Getty the cup. The service closed with the Commitment Hymn, "We Would Be Building."

The afternoons were given over to recreation, and committee meetings.

At the close of each day's work the delegates assembled in different groups in designated rooms for a season of prayer and fellowship. This was a rich experience for the delegates as well as the leaders. Many expressed themselves as having had their religious life quickened in this hour of devotion.

Meals were served in the dining room of the boys' dormitory. Good cheer and a real spirit of comradeship prevailed at each meal. The service was par excellence. The delegates were lavish in their praise, and as a token of their appreciation presented a bouquet of flowers to the kitchen and dining room force. Miss Ione Sikes made the presentation.

The delegates selected Miss Jane Williams and Mr. Bill Evans as their leaders. These leaders ably assisted Dr. Getty in guiding the Conference.

Others who helped to make the Conference a success were: Dr. C. C. McCracken, who saw to it that the delegates received their mail from their home folks; Miss William B. Lukens kept the office machinery running smoothly; Miss Marjorie J. Gibson supplied the delegates with books from the book store. The Rev. S. Franklin Mack, of the Board of Foreign Missions, was busy with his camera shooting motion pictures of the Conference.

As the closing hours drew near, expressions of the shortness of the duration of the Conference were heard on every hand, and there was an outburst of enthusiasm for another such Conference.

## IMPRESSIONS OF GANDHI AND INDIA

By Wm. H. Richardson

Raleigh—There is in Raleigh a young student who has met India's "little old man," whose name is known around the world, and whose father, a missionary in India, is well acquainted with Mahatma Gandhi, who works in sympathetic cooperation with all who are trying to bring about better conditions among the squirming masses of that hot, steaming much-divided land.

L. A. Alley, student at the University of Virginia, who was born in Maryland and whose father, the Rev. H. L. Alley, is a Virginian, held a conference with Dr. Carl V. Reynolds and others at the State Board of Health. He is studying sanitary engineering and hopes to be able to return to India and give the under-privileged rural people there the benefit of the knowledge he is gaining here in America.

"I don't recall the highest temperature I have experienced in India," he said, "but I do recall that during one 24-hour period the minimum was 102, and this occurred about 5 o'clock in the morning. However, it does turn a little cooler during the rainy season," he continued, "and at the place where I attended school, in the mountain region, it is impossible to hold sessions in winter, due to the extremely cold weather, so school goes on during the summer, instead. The place is a summer resort.

"Well-to-do citizens of India are able to leave the hot,

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## JAMES WELDON JOHNSON THE NEGROES' POET LAUREATE

By DR. KELLY MILLER

The tragic death of James Weldon Johnson has shocked the literary world. As a man of letters he took first rank among living Negro writers. His fame rests chiefly from the appraisal of white people who bought and read his books and accorded him respectable rank among contemporary writers. He is the only Negro who has ever received a definite assignment on the faculty of a great University as exponent and expositor of the literary genius of the Negro race, or enjoyed a lucrative income from the fruits of his pen. At the time of his death he was Professor of Creative Literature at Fisk University with the corresponding status at the University of New York. In this capacity he was frequently called upon to appear before faculties and student bodies of leading white Colleges and Universities of the South. The University of New York had just completed arrangement by which as an extension professor he was to deliver creditable lectures on Negro literature at several educational centers.

James Weldon Johnson was the foremost alumnus of Atlanta University. By nature and temperament he was conservative, cautious, and courteous. I can recall the time when he alone of his classmates remained loyal to faculty regulations against whose restrictions his classmates rebelled. In the reorganization of Atlanta University, the other alumni trustees opposed the merger on the ground that it was calculated to impair the old Atlanta spirit of race equality and human rights. He alone of his fellow alumni was selected as trustee of the New Atlanta University by the capitalistic interests which dominated the situation. Though always preserving his personal dignity and amor propre, he never gave offense to the white race. Even while leading the anti-lynching campaign he never called down on his head the wrath of Southern whites, like Walter White his more dynamic successor.

His National Negro Anthem, composed for a local Sunday occasion in Jacksonville, Florida, before he had come to metropolitan notice and national attention, reveals the true inwardness of his soul. It is pitched in the militant key but in plaintive and wailing tone as of a race which would sue rather than fight for its rights. The music is fitted to the words by his collaborator J. Rosamond Johnson, his brother by temperament and genius as well as blood. The fame of the Johnson brothers, James Weldon and J. Rosamond, will go down bracketed in history; and although James Weldon is exhibited as the frontispiece, yet their fame can no more be severed than that of Gilbert and Sullivan.

James Weldon Johnson was by nature a recluse and never deigned to "mix with crowds and keep his virtue."

He was accepted into service as Field Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Although he served in this capacity with intelligence, courage, tact, and resourcefulness, yet one was constantly impressed with the thought that he was impressed into a field of service for which he was not fitted by nature or inclination. Militancy and agitation engaged the energies of his head rather than of his heart. Unlike DuBois (of the earlier days) and Walter White, he never gave himself with full abandon and self-detachment to the struggle for the political and civil rights of his race. Indeed the years which he devoted to the leadership of this militant organization were but an interlude, and one might say a strange interlude between the

earlier and later stages of his career. We first discover him as a partner of Cole and Johnson and author of "Rag Music" then in vogue, typified by "Under the Bamboo Tree." In the declining years of his leisure, we find him a dignified professor of Creative Literature in two American Universities, one black and one white. Thus both ends of his career contrast with the middle.

James Weldon Johnson made a brief incursion into the field of politics. He first belonged to the New York "Literary Fellows," the metropolitan counterpart of the Boston cabal of college scions who were oath-bound to offset the industrial propaganda of Booker T. Washington. William Monroe Trotter, George Forbes and William H. Lewis were the leaders of this cabal. By shrewd political finesse the wizard of Tuskegee sought to wean Johnson and Lewis from their hostile alignment by offering them the allurements of office. Johnson was appointed to an important post in the Consular Service; he accepted the assignment and served efficiently until replaced by a democratic administration. He then entered the service of the N. A. A. C. P., which was anti-Washington in origin, spirit and objective. However, under the guiding hand of Joel E. Spingarn, this militant originator did not dramatize its hostility to the great industrial leader by violent controversy and vocal antagonism. It must be said for James Weldon Johnson that he was never Mr. Washington's bitter or violent opponent. There was no bitterness in his nature. It is this which made him so readily acceptable to the white race.

James Weldon Johnson was not a poet per se or par excellence like Paul Lawrence Dunbar. He might fairly be called a literary dilettante scribbling prose or verse as the mood or the occasion required. He wrote coon songs for minstrel shows, librettos for light opera, the Negro National Anthem or "God's Trombones," as the spirit moved him or opportunity presented itself. His "Ex-Colored Man," was not his own autobiography but that of Douglas Wetmore, his boon companion, who played the double racial role both simultaneously and at different times. "God's Trombones," usually regarded as his masterpiece, was but a translation in literary form of the pictorialization of the Hebrew Scripture, an art which he learned from his father who was a typical Baptist of the older evangelistic type. His poetic genius reaches its highest peak in "The White Witch Rides Tonight," in which he admonishes Harlemites of the danger pit of their besetting sin.

James Weldon Johnson's reputation as a poet and a literary man is secure in the keeping of the white race, for he uttered nothing base or offensive to their racial sensibility. He was the Negroes' ambassador of letters to the white race, honored and admired.

## DAILY VACATION SCHOOL AT GREER, S. C.

Daily Vacation Bible School was opened at Calvary Baptist church, May 30, by our Sunday school missionary, Rev. A. A. Thompson. This school was directed by Mrs. Madara A. Thompson and it was divided into four groups: Beginners, Miss Tessie L. Walker; Primary group, Miss Nelsie A. Thompson; Juniors, Mrs. Minnie J. Griffin; Intermediates, Rev. A. A. Thompson.

Bible stories, prayers, memory Bible verses, and books of the Bible were learned. "Hand Work for Vacation Church School Pupils" was studied. We are very grateful to Rev. E. L.

McAdams of Greenville, S. C., for the interesting habitry stories, and for directing music during our music period. The school was divided into the Reds and Blues. New outdoor and indoor games were learned and played. Much enthusiasm was shown by the teams. Each year seems to be better. Our enrollment was 52.

In this world there is much to do—much service to render and a great field in which to work. We, the teachers, offer our service to the missionary, realizing the real meaning of service and the needs of our community. Although we cannot go to distant fields, we can make our lives count by giving from our hearts of our substance to make possible the spread of the gospel here.

We are looking forward to a longer term next year.

N. A. THOMPSON.

## CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, AUGUSTA, GA.

By Miss Magnolia Wilson

Daily Vacation Bible school for Christ Presbyterian church was held in the Primary building of Haines Institute, for two weeks, beginning June 13. Class-room work was begun the first day with an enrollment of 95, which increased each morning until the total enrollment reached 153, with an average of 110 pupils.

Instruction was offered to pupils from 6 to 16 years of age. Many who were under six came with larger sisters or brothers, and many who were too large to take work assisted the teachers with the smaller children. Although four large class rooms were available, several classes were forced to meet on the outside. There were twelve teachers on hand to carry out the program, and classes were offered in Bible, health, current events, music, handicraft and story-telling.

On Thursday of the second week, a demonstration of the work was given before parents and friends, also an exhibit was held showing the work of the students in health and Bible posters, also various small articles made by the beginners and primary children, while the advanced girls made trinket boxes, pads, bowls, baskets and many other useful articles of clothes, pins, wire and paper. The advanced boys took as their project this year clay modeling.

Friday, June 24, brought the two weeks' period, which was all too short, to a close with a picnic three miles in the country. A large truck with several cars took about 100 children and adults. After a full day's romping with food in abundance, the climbing of hills and drinking spring water, everyone declared that Bible school was a decided success.

## MEN ARE INTERESTED IN KITCHEN CONTEST

(From N. C. Agricultural Extension Service).

Iredell County farm women are beginning to ask, "Is this kitchen improvement contest our project, or our husbands' project?"

Miss Camille Alexander, county home demonstration agent of the State College extension service, reported that "It's surprising to see how much interest the men are showing in the contest. Some of them have done more work in their wives' kitchens than in years before."

When the contest was started in the Spring, many of the men appeared to be indifferent, and some of the women had to do all the work by themselves. One woman, not to be daunted, got out a saw, hammer, some nails, and a few boards with which she made herself a kitchen cabinet, Miss Alexander stated.

But it's a different story now, she continued. As kitchens began to show the result of planning and well directed work, the men caught the spir-

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