



thesis  
5  
2010  
V.1

This is to certify that the  
dissertation entitled

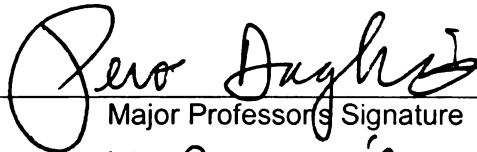
HERALDING SOUTH AFRICA'S REDEMPTION:  
EVANGELICALISM AND ETHIOPIANISM IN THE  
MISSIONARY PHILOSOPHY OF THE NATIONAL BAPTIST  
CONVENTION, USA, INC 1880-1930

presented by

Eric Michael Washington

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for the

Doctoral degree in History



Major Professor's Signature

16 August 2010

Date

*MSU is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer*

LIBRARY  
Michigan State  
University

**PLACE IN RETURN BOX** to remove this checkout from your record.  
**TO AVOID FINES** return on or before date due.  
**MAY BE RECALLED** with earlier due date if requested.

| <b>DATE DUE</b> | <b>DATE DUE</b> | <b>DATE DUE</b> |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 |                 |

HERALDING SOUTH AFRICA'S REDEMPTION: EVANGELICALISM AND  
ETHIOPIANISM IN THE MISSIONARY PHILOSOPHY OF THE NATIONAL  
BAPTIST CONVENTION, USA, INC. 1880-1930

Volume I

By

Eric Michael Washington

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILSOPHY

History

2010

## ABSTRACT

### HERALDING SOUTH AFRICA'S REDEMPTION: EVANGELICALISM AND ETHIOPIANISM IN THE MISSIONARY PHILOSOPHY OF THE NATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION, USA, INC 1880-1930

By

Eric Michael Washington

This dissertation analyzes the missionary philosophy of leaders within the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. from 1880-1930 encapsulating the first 50 years of its history. Special attention is focused upon African American and African missionaries in the South African field of operation of the Foreign Mission Board of the convention. This dissertation argues that African American Baptists envisioned its role in the redemption of South Africa in terms of an awareness of God's Providential Design that determined that Christian African Americans must be the ones to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to Africans as well as American civilization. This work analyzes editorials, essays, and letters from the South African field that appear in the official newspaper of the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention, the *Mission Herald*. Through this analysis it is found that both African American Baptists and African Baptists in the mission field believed that God's Providence dictated that African Americans must go to Africa to redeem Africans spiritually and materially.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this dissertation and the Ph.D. has been a long time coming. Owing to this I am grateful to a host of people. First, I give thanks to God Almighty for giving grace and strength throughout the entire process of graduate education. God has given the grace to persevere when the way seemed totally dark. Second, I thank my wife, Leslie, for all of her encouragement and tireless efforts to make sure I had everything needed to succeed in this endeavor. Leslie, you have been my right arm throughout the whole process, and you have my undying love and gratitude. Third, I acknowledge the support I have received from my colleagues in the History Department at Calvin College. Your cheers and well wishes I have been much appreciated. I would also like to extend a special thanks to Sarah Van Timmeren, one of our administrative assistants, who was always willing and able to assist me with nagging little formatting problems. More so, Sarah is a true colleague and friend. My gratitude is extended to the staff at the headquarters of the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention in Philadelphia who opened that facility's library to me, and a special thanks to Joan Duffy at the Yale Divinity School Library for wonderful assistance. Finally, I thank my parents, C. E. and Annette Washington for your encouragement and prayers throughout, my in-laws, Brian and Mary Rollins for your time and help, my siblings, Yvette and Wallace, and my two daughters, Kai and Dinah who have given me intangible encouragement.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| INTRODUCTION.....  | 1   |
| CHAPTER 1<br>FROM LOTT CAREY TO WILLIAM COLLEY: PRECURSOR AFRICAN<br>AMERICAN MISSIONARIES TO AFRICA AND MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS, CA.<br>1821-1879..... | 62  |
| CHAPTER 2<br>THE SHAPING OF NATIONAL BAPTIST THEOLOGY IN THE 19 <sup>TH</sup> CENTURY<br>AND IN THE EARLY 20 <sup>TH</sup> CENTURY.....              | 88  |
| CHAPTER 3<br>THE FORMALIZATION OF THE ETHIOPIAN REFRAIN.....   | 185 |
| CHAPTER 4<br>VOICES FROM THE SOUTH AFRICAN FIELD.....  | 255 |
| CHAPTER 5<br>EXPANDING ETHIOPIANISM AND SOUTH AFRICAN REDEMPTION.....  | 309 |
| CHAPTER 6<br>“I AM TRYING TO ESTABLISH A BIG SCHOOL HERE”.....   | 357 |
| CONCLUSION<br>HERALDING STILL, BUT THE VISION HAS CHANGED.....   | 440 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY.....  | 445 |

## Introduction: Putting the Missionary into Missionary Baptist History

Go into any American city with a significant African American population, and one will find a number of Missionary Baptist churches. Some of the names of these churches are a source of humor. African American comedians have drawn much laughter from jokes about the names of African American churches such as “Greater Second East St. Paul Regular Missionary Baptist Church.” Such humor exemplifies one of the historic methods of African American survival of terrible oppression in America as noted in Lawrence Levine’s important work, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*. Levine shares one story of an African American minister who rejected the biblical teaching on the existence of Hell. According to the joke the preacher substantiated this claim by saying: ““Oh, no my friends! The Lord would not repeat himself by making a place called Hell when we already have a place called Georgia.””<sup>1</sup> Even in religious tones, African Americans have always been able to express serious oppression through humor.

As a boy and teenager growing up in New Orleans, Louisiana, I was a member of one of those ubiquitous Missionary Baptist churches. I wondered what made my church a missionary Baptist church while others were just plain Baptist churches. Though my father was the pastor of my church, I was intent on figuring out this problem on my own. My tentative conclusion was that Missionary Baptist churches has Missionary Departments, or Missionary Societies that sought to evangelize lost souls in the neighborhood of the church, or made visits to prisons and nursing homes to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. My church, at least, began to do such in the late 1980s in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 299, 317.



aftermath of my father's harangues about our church being "stationary missionaries."<sup>2</sup>

My father taught us that all Christians are missionaries, and the mission field is wherever we were. After joining the Missionary Department, I thought I had a good working understanding of what a Missionary Baptist church was.

After graduating from college, I began the study of history and commenced to read much on the African American Baptist movement. In my reading, I received a pleasant shock to realize that African American Baptists had a long tradition of overseas missionary work, especially mission work in Africa. At this time I served a Missionary Baptist church as a minister, and I learned that my own National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. formed as a result of concerns for the sustaining and expansion of African missions work. So that was it. Though I had been a member of a small, Missionary Baptist church in New Orleans and continued to be a member of a Missionary Baptist church, I was part of an on-going, larger movement within the African American Baptist tradition.

Baptists, in general, and African American Baptists particularly take seriously their covenant commitment to God and their fellow church members. Most Baptists have a formal, written covenant that gives expression to their holy obligations as Christians. The Church Covenant used by many church of the National Baptist Convention, USA makes this statement, which is of importance here:

We engage therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the

---

<sup>2</sup> My father, Pastor C. E. Washington, was wont to state from the pulpit that he had never seen so many "stationary missionaries" in all of his life, and that we needed to take the "missionary" off of the name of the church's sign.

support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, and the relief of the poor, *and the spread of the gospel through all nations.*<sup>3</sup>

The italicized statement exemplifies the major focus that missionary work has among African American Baptists. It is of such a serious nature that individual church members vow before God and each other to support mission work financially. In 2002, one contemporary African American Baptist pastor made an eloquent statement regarding the import of financial support for mission work. Commenting on this section of the Church Covenant, Pastor William C. Turner, Jr. has remarked:

Blessing the world entails being faithful and evangelical. We are heralds of the good news that God has given salvation to the world. The power of sin has been broken, and God has inaugurated the first phase of the kingdom within the church. The church is the place where those seeking salvation from the raging storm of life are to be welcomed. It is an ark of safety, a tower of refuge, a land like Goshen that has been spared the plague that comes from the judgment of God. It is wonderful when those who already know the Lord come to cast their lot among us. But our first duty in ministry is to rescue the perishing who are around us.<sup>4</sup>

This statement helps to buttress the idea that African American Baptists are a missionary people historically and at present. These eloquent words by Turner also place *the missionary* squarely into Missionary Baptist.

African American Baptists fit neatly within the Christian tradition of evangelism and missions work. As Baptists have held to a high view of the Scriptures historically, it is no wonder that former Corresponding Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., Dr. William J. Harvey stated that the Bible itself is a “missionary book.”<sup>5</sup> For African American Baptists, the Scriptures define and motivate missions. The writers of the New Testament gospels all include the words of

---

<sup>3</sup> *Articles of Faith and Church Covenant* (Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, 2000), 13. Italics mine.

<sup>4</sup> William C. Turner, Jr., *A Journey Through the Church Covenant: Discipleship for African American Christians* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2002), 57-58.

<sup>5</sup> William J. Harvey III, Dollye W. Cunningham, and Bruce N. Alick, *The Missionary Worker's Manual* (Philadelphia, PA: Foreign Mission Board National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., 2002), 9.

Jesus Christ to his disciples commanding them to preach the gospel to all nations. The most famous and most quoted passage is found in the Gospel According to Matthew. It reads: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”<sup>6</sup> From its inception in first century Palestine, the Christian Church has carried this Great Commission to this very day as it is truly a universal church with members in every corner of the globe.

In the workings of what Christians call Providence, slave captives from Africa who had never heard of Jesus Christ and the gospel heard of both in the grips of chattel slavery. Prior to 1619, only a few Africans who resided along the West African coast had contact with Christianity through the work of Roman Catholic missionaries from Portugal. There is no discussion of the beginnings of African American Christianity outside of the context of slavery. When Africans came to the English colonies in 1619, they posed a serious problem to European Christians and the Church then planted in America. The 17<sup>th</sup> century witnessed debates within Puritan New England, Anglican Virginia, and Maryland regarding the baptism of slaves and their subsequent freedom. Did African slaves receiving baptism deserve their immediate emancipation? Colonists decided against such a practice, and Christian Africans remained slaves. In such a condition Africans received Jesus Christ as their Savior through the preaching and teaching of the gospel by Anglicans and Puritans during this time. These are the beginnings of the development of African American churches during the Age of Revolution. These churches, primarily Methodist and Baptist, would obey the same

---

<sup>6</sup> Matt. 28:19-20 King James Version.

commandment from Jesus Christ to “go ye therefore.” Baptists such as George Liele, Lott Carey, Nathaniel Paul, and William Colley all would go to preach the gospel to Africans and members of the African Diaspora.<sup>7</sup>

This dissertation places forth the argument that African American Baptists from the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. (NBC) were quite active in the African mission field beginning in 1883 (under the auspices of the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention founded in 1880 and is the precursor to the NBC) and that by 1930 had an expansive and impressive work in South Africa more so than any other field of its African work. As Baptists the leadership and missionaries of the Foreign Mission Board of the NBC acted in accordance with the biblical mandate to make disciples of every nation indicating a high view of biblical authority consistent with historic Evangelicalism. As African Americans the Board and the Parent Body of the convention framed its mission to all of Africa, South Africa included, within Ethiopianism, a uniquely constructed African American theology that held to a belief that God had ordained that West and West-Central Africans be captured and enslaved in America in order to hear and believe the gospel and carry it back to Africa with the attendant markers of American civilization. African South African missionaries employed and supported by the Board embraced the same civilizationist ideas embedded in African American Ethiopianism and viewed the gospel in terms of both spiritual redemption and social and

---

<sup>7</sup> According to the *London Baptist Confession of 1689*, Providence is God’s “infinite power and wisdom” that upholds, directs, disposes, and governs “all creatures and things.” By this definition nothing occurs in the universe by chance, but by God’s determination and guidance. See *The London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, Chapter 5. Nathaniel Paul who was the first pastor of the African Baptist Church in Boston, and also filled the pulpit during the early days of Abyssinian Baptist Church of New York City became a missionary to Haiti during the late 1820s. On Thomas Paul’s missionary work in Haiti see Alfred Lane Pugh, *Pioneer Preachers in Paradise: The Legacies of George Liele, Prince Williams, and Thomas Paul In Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Haiti* (St. Cloud, MN: Paradise Publishing, 2003), 127ff. On the spelling of George Liele, various spellings appear in the historical literature, but in his published letters Liele used the spelling used here in this work.

economic redemption, and they favored much financial and pastoral help from African Americans.

The importance of this topic is that it highlights how African American Baptists applied Ethiopianism coupled with a firm commitment to historic Baptist belief to the African mission field. This takes seriously African American Baptist leaders during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as deliberate thinkers regarding Christian mission and racial uplift. African American historians have noted that this period in African American history is one of the lowest. Radical Reconstruction had failed to create a true racially egalitarian society, lynching reached its height, and racial segregation became legal owing to the Supreme Court's decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896. In this period, African American Protestants including Baptists espoused Ethiopianist sentiment that supported a renewed interest in emigration to Africa and African missions. Ethiopianism demanded that African American Baptists would become "evangelical" regarding uplifting their African brethren in the midst of European imperialism and colonialism. At the same time, this topic reveals that African American Baptists had an optimistic (possibly overly optimistic) view of their own rise in American society believing they were well-equipped to transport their philosophy and method of racial uplift to Africa, especially South Africa. Part of the explanation of such a phenomenon must take into consideration African American Baptist reading of God's Providence and their faith in God's overall redemptive plan for humankind.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> See David Henry Anthony, III, *Max Yergan: Race Man, Internationalist, and Cold War* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 7-8. In the first chapter of this biography of an African American Baptist who served as a missionary to India and South Africa for the YMCA, Anthony offers a good example of how grassroots such Ethiopian and uplift sentiments were. Anthony states that Yergan's slave-born grandfather during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century impressed upon his son the need for African American Christians to aid in Africa's uplift.

The rest of this introduction will serve to describe the dissertation chapter by chapter, to discuss the importance of this work, review the small body of historical literature on National Baptist African missions, and offer a sketch history of American Baptists and African American Baptists up to 1820. Descriptions of each chapter will serve to allow the reader to have a firm understanding of what follows in this work and how each chapter connects to the overall argument. Within the historiographical section a brief analysis of a couple of important works on African American Protestant missions to Africa will appear to give further context to the impetus of this dissertation.

Chapter One, “From Lott Carey to William Colley: Precursor African American Missionaries to Africa and Missionary Movements, ca. 1821-1879,” serves as a sketch of African American Baptist missionary activity from Lott Carey’s mission to Liberia in 1821 to 1879 when African American Baptists in the US Southeast explored the possibility of forming a national convention of African Americans for the expressed purpose of sending and supporting missionaries to Africa. This chapter is the context to the period of 1880 to 1930 that this dissertation is interested in. It establishes important considerations. First, it emphasizes that African American Baptists believed that God had given them a special place in the redemption of Africans. Providence had made it clear that the enslavement of Africans in America, and their embracing of Protestant Christianity meant salvation for Africa. Second, it establishes that African missionary endeavor was at the heart of African American Baptist efforts toward unification and consolidation beginning in 1840 with the formation of the American Missionary Baptist Convention.

Chapter Two, “The Shaping of National Baptist Theology in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century,” forms the theological context of this work. It is a theological overview of the various streams that flowed into what was National Baptist theology and identity during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this chapter, it argues that National Baptists had a clear Baptist identity that was consistent with other American Baptists. This chapter refers to this Baptist identity in terms of Evangelicalism. Baptists were (and are) Evangelicals in the sense that they trace back their core beliefs to Reformed Protestant teaching that emerged during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Baptists held doctrines such as justification by faith alone that holds that sinners are justified (acquitted from the penalty of sin) by the grace of God alone through their faith alone in the person and work of Jesus Christ. In addition to this teaching, Evangelicals also hold to the belief that Holy Scripture is the sufficient, authoritative, and infallible rule of faith and practice. A number of Protestants groups hold to these teachings including Reformed churches, Lutheran churches, Anglicans, and Presbyterians; therefore African American Baptists historically have found themselves within this stream of Christianity.

This chapter also argues that National Baptists understood their mission at home and abroad in racialist terms articulated within the framework of Ethiopianism. In its 19<sup>th</sup> century African American context Ethiopianism is a theology that holds that it was God’s Providential Design that Africans enslaved in America after receiving Christ and their physical freedom would return to Africa to preach the gospel in the fulfillment of Psalm 68:31, which reads: “Princes shall come out of Egypt: Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.” The ultimate goal for Ethiopians was the “redemption” of Africa

through the means of Christian civilization.<sup>9</sup> Anthony labels this belief “racial salvation,” which is quite an apt description of this enterprise.<sup>10</sup> African-American clergymen held to a philosophy/theology of uplift and were accommodationists, according to Wheeler.<sup>11</sup> Accommodation included the acceptance of American civilization as the norm. According to Wheeler, “They accepted prevailing American standards of moral and ethical behavior, adopted the American political and economic system.”<sup>12</sup> For Wheeler, this meant that they were also visionaries--they saw African American potential as living as “equals rather than subordinates” in American society.<sup>13</sup> African American Baptist leaders fit well within this assessment by Wheeler. Owing to this, African American Baptist leaders and missionaries generally speaking believed in the backwardness of certain features of African cultures; this emerges through the letters from South African written by African American Baptist missionaries. Because of this, African American Baptists shared similar beliefs as their white counterparts in the African mission field.

Though the sources of Ethiopianism are less varied (most the work and writings of Alexander Crummell and Edward Blyden), the sources they developed into a lucid Baptist identity among African American Baptist leadership run the gamut from catechisms used by slave masters and teachers during the Slave Era to the use and singing of Evangelical hymns by Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley. Though leaders also drew from the works of Calvinistic Southern Baptists such as James P. Boyce, they also readily accepted Landmark teaching prevalent in the South but made popular by James Pendleton

---

<sup>9</sup> See George M. Frederickson, *Black Liberation: A Comparative History of Black Ideologies in the United States and South Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 61, 68.

<sup>10</sup> Anthony, *Max Yergan*, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Edward L. Wheeler, *Uplifting the Race: The Black Minister in the New South 1865-1902* (Lanham, NY: University Press of America, 1986), 1.

<sup>12</sup> Wheeler, *Uplifting the Race*, 1.

<sup>13</sup> Wheeler, *Uplifting the Race*, 1.



during the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This teaching taught that the true and historical Church of Christ is a Baptist church, not by name but by doctrine and practice.

Chapter Three, “The Formalization of the Ethiopian Refrain: The Birth of African American Baptist Foreign Mission Enterprise in Africa, 1880-1921,” develops the history of the early activities of the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention (BFMC) founded in 1880 and the work of the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention founded in 1895 under Lewis G. Jordan who served as Corresponding secretary from 1896 to 1921. Jordan is a luminary figure in the history the Foreign Mission Board and in the history of the NBC-USA overall. In this chapter, there will be the analysis of Jordan’s many articles and editorials in the *Mission Herald*, the organ of the Foreign Mission Board. The *Herald* is Jordan’s creation to serve as the medium to inform National Baptists of the activities of the Board. Jordan expanded this goal of the *Herald* as he crafted it to be his personal pulpit to exhort the readership into giving more money to support and send missionaries to all the fields where the Board had a presence, but the emphasis was on the development of its African fields. Because there are no extant documents and letters by Jordan, the *Herald* serves as the major primary source for this chapter and the following ones. In the key secondary sources on the Foreign Mission Board (as this introduction discusses below), the writers base their work on the contents of the *Herald*. What is different in this chapter (and in subsequent chapters) is that it analyzes Jordan’s writings revealing his staunch Baptist Evangelicalism and his Ethiopianism in motivating his readers to support the Board. These editorials on the pages of the *Herald* are nuggets of gold as they offer such a rare opportunity to read and interpret the writing of an African American Baptist leader during this period outside of

sermons or other printed media. Jordan is revealed as pastoral yet faithful to his calling. There will be more discussion of the significance of the *Mission Herald* as a primary source below in this introduction.

Chapter Four “Voices from the South African Field: Echoes of Evangelicalism and Ethiopianism during the Jordan Era,” analyzes letters from the South African field in order to support the argument that African and African American missionaries in the field believed that African American Christian civilization was the remedy for African unbelief and what they perceived to be as African backwardness. This is a new utilization of the contents of *Herald* as well for the issues of this publication possess the letters from the South African field. As context, the chapter highlights the beginning of the Missionary century in South Africa commencing in 1800 with a brief survey of the advent of Christian missions throughout southern Africa with an emphasis on the mission work of the Baptist Union of South Africa, the Ethiopian movement in South Africa, and the advent of African American missionaries with the presence of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the 1880s. In 1800, missionaries from the London Missionary Society (LMS) arrived at the Cape. Missionaries from the LMS and other societies established stations throughout southern Africa among various African kingdoms and states. Most conversions among Africans during the 19<sup>th</sup> century came as a result of the ministries of African evangelists. It was rather late in the century that Baptists in South Africa began efforts to evangelize among Africans; in fact, these missionary endeavors began just before African American Baptists began their work in South Africa.

It was in 1894 that the very first African American Baptist arrived at the Cape to commence missionary work to Africans there. This Baptist was Rev. R. A. Jackson who

hailed from Mississippi, and traveled to South Africa under the auspices of the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention and he eventually received support from the Foreign Mission Board after the founding of the NBC-USA. In South Africa, Jackson founded Shiloh Baptist Church and had quite a following; Jackson reported a membership of over 400 persons. Jackson's work spread outward from the Cape as a result of the conversion of migrant laborers, who carried the gospel back to their respective homes. Also an American Roman Catholic, who resided in South Africa, J. I. Buchanan believed the gospel as preached by Jackson. Buchanan received believer's baptism, and would also serve as a Baptist missionary working for the Foreign Mission Board. He established a station at Middeldrift in the Cape as well. This is a summary of the initial work performed by National Baptists in South Africa. Drawing from letters from the field, this chapter will analyze and highlight how missionaries perceived their work in South Africa, and even how African workers did the same.

Chapter Five's, "Expanding Ethiopianism and South African Redemption during the East Administration, 1921-1930," central focus is on the James East era (that began in 1921) up to 1930. It assesses and evaluates how East built upon the Jordan foundation, and examines editorials and articles by leaders in the Foreign Mission Board motivating the convention to support mission work. This chapter is the first attempt to cast East's theology and missionary philosophy, and it serves, in part, as an intellectual biography of East. During this period, East redoubled the effort of the Board to raise more money for missionary funding while maintaining the traditional framework of the work, which was to preserve Baptist principles and working toward developing African ecclesiastical self-sufficiency. As noted other leaders wrote articles during this period. Among the notables

are Walter Brooks who was the pastor of Nineteenth Street Baptist Church of Washington, D. C. who was a great supporter of the mission work in South Africa. Other than this, he is also one of the early historians of African American Baptists. The other notable writer is William F. Graham who was the Treasurer of the Foreign Mission Board for a time during East's tenure, and he was the pastor of Holy Trinity Baptist Church in Philadelphia. Both men wrote articles encouraging the readership of the *Herald* based upon strident Ethiopian appeals and Evangelicalism.

The final chapter, Chapter Six, "I am trying to Establish a Big School Here: Expanding the Ethiopian Vision in South Africa During the East Era to 1930," is an analysis of letters from the South African field revealing that African missionary workers and agents took on a larger role and share of the enduring work in South Africa from 1921 to 1930. It is evident from letters and reports coming from South Africa that mission churches and leaders readily embraced the opportunity to develop viable churches, schools, and an entire denomination to help "uplift" their own people. Part of the reason why Africans take on a larger share of the work is because the Union of South Africa succeeded in flushing out African American missionaries from working directly with Africans during this period. There is no official reason why this was so, but East assumed that the government feared that African American presence would lead to greater African political consciousness especially in light of South Ethiopianism and the Nyasaland Rising of 1915 led by a Baptist pastor, John Chilembwe. This chapter also manifests that the work in South Africa expanded as churches grew in membership and mission stations operated growing day schools, and the Board began to support more churches during East's term in office.

The Conclusion, "Heralding Still, But the Vision Has Changed," re-iterates the thesis of the work that leaders in the Foreign Mission Board and missionaries in the South African field perceived that their mission was both to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and mediate forms of racial uplift, particularly through building schools that would center on a curriculum of Industrial Education like Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. There is also a discussion on filling in more gaps in the history of African American Baptist missionary work in South Africa as well as urging scholars to take African American Baptist theology seriously in their studies. This conclusion also gives an honest assessment of the success of National Baptist missions work in South Africa in response to J. M. Chirenje's sweeping conclusion that African American Baptists missions work amounted to very little.<sup>14</sup>

Why such a dissertation? There are a number of reasons that this work is viable. First, the study of African American religion has emphasized the cultural aspect rather than the theological aspect. Granted, the study of how African slave captives shaped American Christianity through adapting under the lash of slavery is an important phenomenon in American Religious history. One must remember, however, that the Christian gospel appeals to the mind and heart of all nations of people; it is universal in its appeal and application. Christianity is also a set of doctrines needing to be comprehended, trusted, and lived out in daily grind of life. All of this engages the human mind as well as the heart. Theology is arguably more important than how a group of people made their culture fit within the rubric of Christianity. Though culture is a key consideration in studying religion, it fails to identify a Christian as a Baptist. Baptist

---

<sup>14</sup> Chirenje makes such a statement in his *Ethiopianism and Afro-Americans in Southern Africa, 1883-1916* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1987). More discussion of Chirenje's assertion follows in this introduction.

identity centers on adherence to a set of distinct doctrines. This work, in part, focuses upon the theology of African American Baptists specifically during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century and how it influenced their missionary philosophy. This work focuses upon the intellectual history of National Baptists as it pertained to their theological bases for engaging in missionary work throughout Africa in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

A second reason why this work is important is because most African American Christians are Baptists, and they are members of one of the four National Baptist conventions (NBC-USA, National Baptist Convention of America, Progressive National Baptist Convention, and the National Missionary Baptist Convention). The NBC-USA boasts of a membership over between 8-8.5 million. This is a sizeable portion of the African American Christian community, and this convention has wielded much power historically and still functions as a strong institution pressing for a more just and equitable society especially for African Americans. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, National Baptists have been integral to the social and political concerns of African Americans. Joseph H. Jackson, who led the NBC-USA from 1953-1982, emphasized a more conservative yet vital social activism. More progressive men like Gardner C. Taylor, Martin Luther King, Sr., and Martin Luther King, Jr. broke away from the older convention to form the Progressive National Baptist Convention in 1961 desiring a more engaged convention socially. Without question, National Baptists have been a significant part of African American life during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Just by this factor alone, the study of National Baptist activity of any stripe is a noteworthy study as Baptists represent a significant portion of the African American population.

One particular feature of National Baptist contribution has been overlooked by American Christian and religious scholarship at large---its contribution to American foreign missions. David Killingray notes that “African Americans constituted a small but visually significant element in the modern Protestant missionary movement.”<sup>15</sup> In a recent work, Campbell asserts that “American churches played a central role in evangelizing” Africa, and that “enthusiasm for African missions work was especially pronounced in black churches.”<sup>16</sup> He makes special mention of the founding of the NBC stating that its founding was “to coordinate mission activity among black Baptists.”<sup>17</sup> This makes their work in Africa during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century that much more significant. Their contribution to foreign missions emerges within the context of African American nationalism and a renewed interest in African American emigration. In his description of African American nationalism, Edwin Redkey states that it “stressed a glorious past in Africa and a suffering past in America.”<sup>18</sup> Accepting this partial description of African American nationalism, Ethiopianism can be considered nationalist. Redkey also mentions that the political and social difficulties African Americans faced during this period prompted a resurgence of African emigration in which missionary activity fits within.<sup>19</sup>

Beyond the immediate context of the founding of the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention and the National Baptist Convention, this work focusing on African

---

<sup>15</sup> David Killingray, “The Black Atlantic Missionary Movement and Africa, 1780s-1920s,” *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 33 (Feb 2003), 4, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1581633>, (accessed April 4, 2010).

<sup>16</sup> James T. Campbell, *Middle Passages: African American Journeys to Africa, 1787-2005* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), 142.

<sup>17</sup> Campbell, *Middle Passages*, 142.

<sup>18</sup> Edwin Redkey, *Black Exodus: Black Nationalist and Back-to-Africa Movements, 1890-1910* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969), 14. Killingray also states that the missionary movement must be seen within the context of Back-to-Africa movements. See Killingray, “The Black Atlantic,” 6.

<sup>19</sup> Redkey, *Black Exodus*, 6-12.

American Baptists and Foreign Missions is important because Joseph H. Jackson president of the NBC-USA from the 1950s to 1980 served as secretary of the Foreign Mission Board during the 1940s. William H. Harvey who led the Board for most of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was quite successful in keeping National Baptist missionary presence throughout Africa, the Caribbean, and Europe. For this study, two men led the Board with successful results in South Africa. Lewis Jordan was a great churchman and denominational giant, and he was also a man with Pan-African consciousness and a race man. He established National Baptist missionary work in South Africa. Jordan's successor, James East, served as a missionary in South Africa under Jordan, and made further strides to keep the Board's work in South Africa on solid ground despite economic hardships in American and in South Africa and the racism of the South African government.

A third aspect of the importance of this dissertation is that scholarship has been preoccupied with writing on the African Methodist Episcopal Church's presence in South Africa. This preoccupation is a result of Bishop Henry M. Turner's tour of Southern Africa in 1898 and the record of that tour; this tour is inextricably linked with the dynamism and provocative nature of Turner's personality and sentiment. There is no African American Baptist who matched Turner's bravado. In addition, the AME did expand its denomination into South Africa owing to South African Ethiopianism, which began as an independent movement in which African Christians, who were Wesleyan Methodists, severed their ties with the European-led mission church in the 1890s. As good Methodists, these leaders desired to affiliate with an African American Methodist Church. There is no denying the great importance of this phenomenon. Without the



fanfare, African American Baptists built a rather impressive missionary network that spread to every province in South Africa by the early 1920s. National Baptist missionary effort also resulted in the founding of African Baptist associations that eventually grew into the National Baptist Convention of South Africa. They also built a critical social network that provided college education for African men and women. Some of those educated at National Baptist schools such as Benedict and Virginia Union returned to South Africa to become leaders on the mission field such as Rev. E. B. P. Koti.

Responses to two historical works in particular form the impetus of this dissertation. While attempting to find a suitable topic centered in South Africa and treating the relationship between Protestantism and African nationalism, I re-read J. M. Chirenje's *Ethiopianism and Afro-Americans in Southern Africa, 1883-1916*. Published in 1987, this volume offers a rare look of church relations between Africans in Southern Africa and Africa-Americans during this time frame. Chirenje's major goal and purpose in the text is to identify and analyze the interesting relationship between African churchmen involved in the Ethiopian movement, which in the South African context was a separatist church movement. African ministers and churches separated from European mission churches during the 1890s owing to racist practices on the part of European missionary superintendents.

Though the title of the book reads as if the scope will be encompassing of all African American missionary groups operating in Southern Africa during this period, Chirenje highlights the relationship between the African Methodist Episcopal Church and African Methodists and Wesleyans. In introducing the book, Chirenje made a statement that I believed then as well as now was short-sighted and presumptive. In mentioning the

initial African American Baptist missionary to South Africa, R. A. Jackson, who arrived in the Cape in 1894, he states: “Despite its earlier initiative to evangelize, the Baptist group does not seem to have been as effective as the AME church was.”<sup>20</sup> This statement contradicted what I had read in histories on National Baptist history. It was time to investigate.

The second work that gave me a thrust in venturing to write this dissertation is James Campbell’s *Song of Zion*.<sup>21</sup> This volume offered me a type of framework for understanding comparative history specifically about African American and African Christians during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Campbell gives his audience both a history of the AME Church and the Ethiopian movement in South Africa, and then he studies the confluence of these two histories on the soil of South Africa examining how each would inform the other’s future endeavors. Campbell labels this “a comparative exercise.”<sup>22</sup> He also states that the “premise” of his work is that African Americans and Africans had a “reciprocal” affect on each other’s identity. This premise has some interest for this dissertation as it is interested in how both African American Baptists viewed both their mission to Africa and how Africans received this mission and African American missionaries in their midst at given times. The dissertation that follows is a modified application of this “comparative exercise” between African American and African Christians, but within the Baptist tradition of Christianity. This work is also less interested in the reciprocal shaping of identities and more concerned with understanding

---

<sup>20</sup> Chirenje, *Ethiopianism*, 4.

<sup>21</sup> James T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

<sup>22</sup> Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, xii.

how both groups comprehended the workings of Providence as it pertained to African uplift and their involvement in these providential workings.

In reading Campbell's volume, an interesting theme runs through the narrative: Providence. He understands (whether he is a Christian or non-Christian) that the historical actors he wrote about took God's Providence seriously; therefore, as a historian he wrote of Providence seriously. In chapter one, Campbell addresses Daniel Coker's attention to Providence. Coker's observance of Providence informed his own Ethiopianism and motivated his decision to immigrate to West Africa as a missionary in February 1820. What one can draw from Campbell's espousal of God's Providence in shaping African American Methodist interest in Africa is that Providence is the key element in the development of African American Ethiopianism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This point contributes to the intellectual framework of this work.<sup>23</sup>

In one of the more popular general histories of Baptists written in the last twenty-five years, the history of National Baptists is tucked away neatly in the catch-all chapter entitled, "The Larger Baptist Family." The history of the National Baptist Convention USA, representing some 8.5 million African Americans, lies next to the history of Asian Baptists, Latino Baptists, and Primitive Baptists all groups with relatively small numbers among Baptists. In introducing this section of the chapter, Leon McBeth, the writer, states: "Black believers make up a major part of the Baptist family in the United States, reporting about ten million members by 1982."<sup>24</sup> What follows is essentially a sketch

---

<sup>23</sup> Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, 12, 69. Campbell (see 66) also makes the connection between Providence and Ethiopianism in referring to African American sentiment regarding Colonization. He indicates that Phyllis Wheatley's endorsement of Colonization had a degree of Ethiopianism. Definitely, Absalom Jones' "Thanksgiving Sermon" joined Providence and Ethiopianism as did Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*.

<sup>24</sup> H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist History* (Nashville, TN: Boardman Press, 1987), 776.

history of thirteen pages. Though this treatment of National Baptist history is better than previous general histories of American Baptists, it still relegates African Americans to the sidelines of American history.<sup>25</sup>

Though African American Baptists have received little treatment in general American Baptist history, the case is different in the historiography of the Black Church. Going back to Carter G. Woodson's landmark publication *The History of the Negro Church* African American Baptists and their churches have figured prominently in histories of the Black Church.<sup>26</sup> In every chapter, Woodson provides rich detail of the history of African American Baptists within the history of the Black Church.

What is surprising is that there is a relative few volumes on the history of African American Baptists and the National Baptist Convention, USA. This poses a major challenge to historians of this denomination since there is little to draw from regarding secondary sources, and few debates to enter into. While this is an understandable challenge, it is also a great opportunity for historians to interpret this history from varied angles and cast new light on this important topic in American Church history and African American history. By reading pertinent works on African American Baptists from slavery into the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there are clear themes and markers that are present in this body of scholarship and writing. Even though three of the four major National Baptist conventions date their beginnings in the year 1880, the historiography commences in earnest with the influx of African Americans joining Baptist churches in

---

<sup>25</sup> See Robert Torbet, *A History of the Baptists* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2000). The current printing in 2000 is the fifteenth; the original publication was in 1950. This volume remains a standard in Baptist historiography. Torbet connects African American Baptist history to the phenomena of Baptist missions during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, 353-355.

<sup>26</sup> See Carter G. Woodson, *History of the Negro Church* (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, 1921).

the South during the late stages of the First Great Awakening that began in New England in the 1730s, but drifted into the Upper and Lower Southern colonies after 1750. With New Light/Separate Baptist evangelists and church planters migrating from the North and preaching the simple gospel of grace and faith, African American slaves and free persons alike received this good news. Also Baptist slave owners began to house small plantation missions where New Light white ministers and African American ministers would preach. As a result converted African American slaves formed their own churches.

This was the case in Silver Bluff, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia. In Virginia, African American converts worshipped with whites, but very soon organized separate Baptist churches owing to their swelling numbers. For the writers and scholars of African American Baptist history, this phenomenon during the Age of Revolution is the starting point for National Baptist history. From plantation missions and small independent churches in the South, and then seceded congregations of African American Baptists in the North during the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the National Baptist movement grinded on as Northerners founded district associations and regional and state conventions and Southerners did the same following the Civil War. With an emphasis on home and foreign mission work as well as racial uplift, African American Baptists achieved unity in 1895 with the founding of the National Baptist Convention of the United States of America. This is a brief summary of the chronology that emanates from the historiography.

One niche to carve, or one lacuna to fill in the historiography is the history African American missions to Africa. At first glance, the historiography, both American Baptist and African American Baptist, seems to place great emphasis on this theme.

Torbet, for example, gives African American Baptist missions an entire section within his discussion of the early Baptist mission movement. He even states that George Liele, a former slave preacher in Georgia and South Carolina, was the first Baptist missionary as he left the colonies during the American Revolutionary War and established the first Baptist church in Jamaica. This was some fifteen years prior to William Carey's mission to India. Torbet also notes that the mission of Lott Carey, who under the auspices of both the General Baptist Convention and the American Colonization Society, left for Liberia in January 1821. To his credit, Torbet asserts that "the missionary motive was strong in the development of denominational unity among the colored Baptists."<sup>27</sup> In this assertion, the evidence supports this statement. After commenting on the missionary work of Liele and Carey, Torbet ends with a brief discussion of William W. Colley's efforts in organizing the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention in 1880; Colley had been a missionary working for the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention from which he resigned in 1879.

At this point in this introductory chapter, attention will be granted to the very small body of work specifically on the history of National Baptist foreign mission, which is the focus of this work. There are only three major works written all by ministers, but two of the three by ministers are legitimate scholars. The oldest of these works is by C. C. Adams and Marshall Talley entitled *Negro Baptists and Foreign Missions* published by the Foreign Mission Board of the NBC-USA, Inc. in 1944.<sup>28</sup> This is a factual little volume on the history of the Foreign Mission Board. Adams served as foreign missions secretary during the 1940s, and had access to all of the pertinent records and primary

---

<sup>27</sup> Torbet, *History*, 354.

<sup>28</sup> C. C. Adams and Marshall A. Talley, *Negro Baptists and Foreign Missions* (Philadelphia, PA: Foreign Missions Board of the NBC USA, Inc., 1944).

sources. The audience of this book, however, was the individual churches of the NBC and their missionary societies. The book, by no means, is academic. The writers begin with a discussion on the “meaning of missions,” and then they present brief historical snapshots of National Baptist missionary forerunners such as George Liele and Lott Carey. The writers pinpoint W. W. Colley’s enterprise in 1879 as the immediate precipitating activity that prompted the founding of the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention in 1880. As the writer progress to the National Baptist Convention period, they offer little of significance on the work done by Lewis Jordan and James East.

In 1953, E. A. Freeman published his *Epoch of Negro Baptists and the Foreign Mission Board*.<sup>29</sup> This work is a revision of Freeman’s doctoral dissertation undertaken at Central Baptist Seminary in Kansas City, Kansas. At the time of the publication, Freeman was the pastor of a National Baptist church in Kansas City, Kansas. This book is a thematic history of National Baptist foreign mission work emphasizing its beginnings under the auspices of the BFMC in 1880 and moving forward into the present (ca. 1950). The relative strength of this work is that it is the first true scholarly attempt at chronicling and analyzing this aspect of National Baptist history. One other strength of this book is the soundness of the general thesis, which is that foreign mission interest was part and parcel with the interest of the whole convention during its early stages.<sup>30</sup> What is also helpful in this work is that Freeman pointed future historians and scholars of this particular segment of National Baptist work to the core primary sources, which are the annual reports given by the Foreign Mission secretary and the *Mission Herald*.

---

<sup>29</sup> E. A. Freeman, *Epoch of Negro Baptists and the Foreign Mission Board* (New York: Arno Press, 1980).

<sup>30</sup> Freeman, *Epoch*, 2.

After the publication of Freeman's work on the history of Foreign Missions within the NBC in the 1950s, it was in 1989 that another work on this history appeared. Written by William J. Harvey who was the sitting Corresponding Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, this is a comprehensive history of both the Foreign Mission Board and African American Baptist missions dating from the Age of Revolution.<sup>31</sup> Harvey's major thrust in this book is to identify to his audience that African missions have been a most important part of African American Baptist history as well as the motor energizing the African American Baptist cooperative movement during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He states as such in his introduction: "The first major organized endeavor of Black Baptists in America was directed toward sending the Gospel to Africa."<sup>32</sup> In this statement is the implication that African American Baptists operated within a theological framework that believed in God's Providential Design that caused their slavery for the purpose of spreading the gospel in Africa. A further assumption is that African American Christians uphold the major burden of preaching Jesus Christ to Africans. Harvey buttresses this point by quoting L. K. Williams, who served as president of the NBC during the 1920s: "The work of saving Africa is largely the task of American Negroes. Others have gone there with gunpowder, rum, firearms and propaganda to exploit the Africans, but we must go there carrying the open Bible and the uplifted Christ."<sup>33</sup> In summary, Harvey's framework consists in the belief that Christianity is a missionary faith, and that African American Baptists have the responsibility to Christ to spread the

---

<sup>31</sup> William J. Harvey, *Bridges of Faith Across the Seas: The Story of the Foreign Mission Board National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.* (Philadelphia, PA: Foreign Mission Board National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., 1989).

<sup>32</sup> Harvey, *Bridges*, 1.

<sup>33</sup> Harvey, *Bridges*, 2.



Gospel to their own kith and kin on the African continent owing to their unique history in America and in the African Diaspora.

In terms of the structure of the work, Harvey follows the traditional thematic outline of National Baptist history. He begins with the founding of plantation churches in the Lower Colonies with an emphasis on George Liele's ministry and his subsequent missionary work in Jamaica. From there, he focuses upon Lott Carey's career as a missionary and colonist to West Africa. For Harvey and other writers of National Baptist history, Liele and Carey are pioneers of African American Christian missionary interest in African peoples whether in the Caribbean or Africa. Finally, as part of the context of the founding of the BFMC in 1880, Harvey writes of the experiences of African American missionaries employed by the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1840s through the 1870s including William W. Colley who is considered the father of the BFMC.<sup>34</sup>

In agreement with the historiography also, Harvey pinpoints the link between the Cooperative Movement commencing in the 1830s and the national movement that flowered in the 1890s blossoming into the National Baptist Convention in 1895. Harvey's argument is that the goal to evangelize on the continent of Africa energized the Cooperative Movement during this period. He writes: "The primary goal of the conventions of the Black Baptists was spreading the gospel in Africa because it was the land of their forebears and therefore excited a special interest among those of the Diaspora."<sup>35</sup> The organization of regional conventions beginning in 1840 with the

---

<sup>34</sup> See Harvey, *Bridges*, Chapter 1.

<sup>35</sup> Harvey, *Bridges*, 21.

founding of the American Baptist Missionary Convention by African Americans Baptists along the Eastern seaboard led directly to the founding of the BFMC in 1880.

Following this general historical context, Harvey's focus becomes narrowly on the work of the Foreign Mission Board following the inauguration of the NBC. To analyze and highlight key features of the Board's activities, Harvey organizes this history according to the tenure of each corresponding secretary beginning with Lewis Jordan's twenty five years as secretary to his own tenure up to 1886. By organizing the majority of the work as such, the reader is able to gauge the success and expansion of the Board's work as each succeeding secretary built upon his predecessor's work. For the purposes of this present work, Harvey makes it clear that Lewis Jordan's role as the first secretary was that of a foundation builder while his immediate successor, James East, helped to bring a more systematic giving scheme to the churches to ensure a good supply of money for the work of the Board. What Harvey's work lacks, however, is the voice from the missionaries out in the field and Africans, who received the gospel from the mouths of National Baptist missionaries. The perspective of this work is quite limited to activities and pronouncements of the secretaries.

The last work featured in this chapter is Sandy D. Martin's *Black Baptists and African Missions* also published in 1989.<sup>36</sup> Unlike Harvey's work that is more for the consumption of lay people in the NBC-USA, Martin's work is thoroughly academic as it is a revision of his dissertation completed in 1981 at Columbia University.<sup>37</sup> The book also incorporates previous published work by Martin that appeared elsewhere prior to

---

<sup>36</sup> Sandy D. Martin, *Black Baptists and African Missions: The Origins of a Movement 1880-1915* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998).

<sup>37</sup> Sandy D. Martin, "The Growth of Christian Missionary Interest in West Africa among Southeastern **Black** Baptists, 1880-1915 (Unpublished Dissertation, Columbia University, 1981).

1989.<sup>38</sup> As a work exclusively on African American Baptist foreign missions, it surpasses the two other works by far as it places Baptist motivation for African missions as well as Baptist sentiments towards Africa and Africans within the general conception of African American Protestants, namely African Methodists. Regarding his thesis, Martin's is comprehensive yet clear:

[T]hat black Christians in general and black Baptists in particular actively engaged in an effort to evangelize African during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; that they understood redemption or salvation of non-Christian Africans in material or temporal as well as spiritual terms; that this enterprise demonstrated their sense of racial identity with all peoples of African descent---a proto-pan-Africanism, if you will; and that this missionary quest on behalf of the ancestral homeland contributed to the development of and conflicts among black Baptist denominations.<sup>39</sup>

In developing and supporting this thesis, Martin utilizes key primary sources such as minutes of the different state conventions and regional conventions as well as the national conventions that were in existence in the 1880s.

Even though Martin's thesis is rather large, he presents a sub-thesis that is more critical to his entire presentation regarding the African American Baptist movement toward organizing a national convention dedicated to African missions. He argues that African American Baptists in the Southeast, but particularly Virginia were the ones who pressed and prodded for an African American national convention. Martin brings this argument even further to argue that the BFMC was basically an extension of the foreign mission enterprise of the Virginia Baptist State Convention as the major leaders of the BFMC were the leaders of the Virginia convention. To support this argument, Martin states that William W. Colley of Virginia was the most influential person sparking

---

<sup>38</sup> See Martin, "The Baptist Foreign Mission Convention, 1880-1894." *Baptist History and Heritage* 16:4 (October 1981): 13-25; "Black Baptists, foreign missions, and African colonization, 1814-1882," in *Black Americans and the Missionary Movement*, ed. Sylvia Jacobs (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982).

<sup>39</sup> Martin, *Black Baptists*, 1.

missionary interest in 1879. Also he notes that the Virginia Baptist State Convention sent out Solomon Cosby in 1878 as its missionary to Nigeria. What this point leads to is a questioning of African American Baptist national unity in 1880 at the time of the organization of the BFMC.

Even with a slightly nuanced argument, Martin's work still falls into line with earlier work regarding African American Baptist missionary philosophy. The sources Martin utilizes reveal that African American Baptists held strongly to their understanding of their unique place within American Protestantism as the primary carriers of the gospel to Africa; God, in his Providence, directed them through the crucible of slavery to be later freed to carry out the Great Commission in Africa.<sup>40</sup> Martin comprehends that this formed the bedrock of African American Baptist missionary philosophy along with great concerns for the material well-being of Africans encountered on the mission field.

With this small historiography, there is much room for expansion and clarification of the key themes of National Baptist history in general and the history of National Baptist foreign missions. First, there is a need to expand upon African American Baptist theology to help clarify African American Baptist missionary philosophy. Too often, what African American Baptists believed about their faith is overlooked by scholars; but the leadership of African American Baptists were clear concerning the content of the Christian faith and the Baptist expression of it. Second, there must be the incorporation of African responses to African American missionaries. Did they view them differently than European missionaries? Did they hold to similar beliefs regarding racial uplift? These are questions this dissertation is concerned with, and attempts to offer more well-rounded and extensive use of the primary source material used by previous scholars.

---

<sup>40</sup> See Martin, *Black Baptists*, 1-2, 45.

Before moving to a short historical sketch of American and African American Baptist history to 1820, an explanation for the use of a limited parcel of primary sources is needed. The title of this work highlights the word “herald” because the major primary sources used to inform this work is the publication of the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention, the *Mission Herald*. The Board first published this organ in 1897 to serve to as a medium of information about missions work. During the first decade of the 1900s, the *Herald* included editorials by the Corresponding Secretary (at that time Lewis Jordan) that attempted to clarify the goals of the Board and also to motivate the actions of National Baptists pertinent to the flourishing of the Board’s work. Another important feature of this publication was the printing of letters from the mission field. The readers in America could read month by month the progress of the overall mission work of the convention by missionaries in the various fields of operation.

In reading the small body of historiography on National Baptist African missions, the one constant primary source referred to by the writers was the *Mission Herald*. The writers used the *Herald* to gather information; they failed to use it in a critical sense. Since in the aim and purpose of this dissertation there is concern with the theology of National Baptist leaders in undergirding African missions the *Herald* has proven invaluable. In addition, no repository exists housing the original letters from the South African mission field, or any mission field of the Foreign Mission Board. Judging from the historiography, the original letters are no longer extant. Again, the *Herald* is the primary source to locate letters from the field. With this, this primary source has its limitations. First, the letters from the South African field fail to offer historians with a great deal of context. The missionaries, evangelists, pastors, and other workers who wrote

those letters sent them with the intention of reporting what occurred on their various stations. Second, the African missionaries also needed more support from the Foreign Mission Board; therefore, they focused on needs and also the number of baptisms into church membership and the number of students enrolled in the schools. They had to demonstrate to their audience that their stations were viable, and would utilize funds wisely. With these two considerations regarding the limitation of this source, the focus on the South African field is narrow and it fails to engage much of the events taking place in South Africa during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. All of this explains why the *Herald* has such use as the chief primary source of this work, and this is why it is prominent in the title of this work.

Noted Baptist historian, William H. Brackney summarized the Baptist experience during the colonial period by stating that “the Baptists were a small, scattered, and persecuted group.”<sup>41</sup> A brief sketch of general Baptist history during this time period will reveal the accuracy of this statement. During this period, Africans and African Americans embraced this expression of Christianity. Unlike their white counterparts, these people of color had the added disadvantage of being chattel, the movable property of other men and women. This phenomenon alone makes the story of African American Baptists a unique one and one that needs a higher profile in the history of the Christian Church in America. What is interesting about the history of African American Baptists during this period is that many African American converts to Christianity who found their places in Baptist churches also found their way to freedom. Men like George Liele, David George, Andrew Bryan, and Lott Carey began their lives in the shackles of slavery both

---

<sup>41</sup> William H. Brackney, ed., *Baptist Life and Thought: A Source Book*. Revised edition (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1998), 95.

physically and spiritually, but through the gospel of Jesus Christ they found full liberation. The following historical sketch reveals that African American slave captives and manumitted slaves who embraced the Baptist expression of Christianity were *truly* Baptists. This overview also establishes the foundation of African American Baptist mission work since African American Baptist missionaries will emerge from independent African American Baptist churches founded during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Early African American Baptist history (from ca. 1650-1820), like Early African American history (from 1619-1820), is unique. The study of African American Baptist history can never divorce itself from a solid knowledge of American Baptist history; the study of the former is part of the latter. With that stated, African American Baptist history during this period has its own set of issues that makes it stand on its own. One cannot write of African American Baptist history without writing about slavery and its affect on slave conversion and the establishment of plantation churches. The entire context of slavery helps to explain the beginnings of African American Baptist churches in the North owing to the experience of racism and segregation in the Church of Jesus Christ. Also the historian must consider the degree of racial consciousness that motivated the first African American Baptists to found churches in the Caribbean, Canada, and in West Africa during this period. All of these issues, to re-iterate, make African American Baptist history unique.

What historians of the African American Baptist movement have sought to achieve in general has been a better understanding of the trends shaping what became a self-conscious movement of African Americans who organized and governed Baptist

churches. Owing to this, the story begins during the Age of Revolution in America. This is certainly an irony of American history: while British-Americans voiced their discontent with the lack of representation in the British Parliament and other concerns of republicanism, African American slave captives and former slaves heard the liberating good news of Jesus Christ that set them free in an ultimate sense. Based upon their good confession and at the good graces of some white ministers and plantation owners, they began to organize independent churches in the Southern colonies and eventually in Northern states during this period. Before detailing African American Baptist history, its colonial, American Baptist context must be established. African American Baptist history during the colonial period into the antebellum period emerges directly from the colonial American Baptist movement. Because of such, African American Baptists inherited and embraced a robust “Evangelical” Calvinism, which was the dominant theology undergirding Baptist doctrine during this time; African American Baptists, with a sense of race consciousness, also embraced the missionary spirit of Evangelical Calvinism. African American Baptists during this time frame were “Black Calvinists,” as they received the teaching of the Great Awakening and sought to spread the gospel to their African and African American brethren at home and abroad.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> By “Evangelical” Calvinism, I refer to Calvinism that has a missionary purpose and orientation unlike “Hyper-Calvinism,” which attempted to dissuade Christians from preaching the gospel generally. It held to the non-biblical doctrine that God will call his elect even without the free offer of the gospel to all. In reality, Calvinism proper is biblical and does hold to the preaching of the gospel to all with the understanding that God’s elect will heed the call. Regarding “Black Calvinism,” historian John Saillant notes that African American slaves and freemen such as Lemuel Haynes, Jupiter Hammon, John Marrant, and Phyllis Wheatley “accepted a Calvinist form of Christianity.” These people of African descent saw in Calvinism a theology that explained God’s purpose in the enslavement and the freedom of Africans and African Americans. Part of this providential design was clearly seen to bring Africans theretofore lost in traditional religions back in African into the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ so that they could return to Africa to preach the gospel. For a good overview of “Black Calvinism,” see John Saillant, *Black Puritan, Black Republican: The Life and Thought of Lemuel Haynes 1753-1833* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 4. For a fresh theological treatment of the history of African American Christian theology through the words of representative African American Christians, see Thabiti Anyabwile, *The Decline of African*



Baptists in America like their English counterparts emerged from within the ranks of the Puritans. The English Puritan movement dates from the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century as members within the newly founded Church of England (Anglican Church) began to press for Reforms along the same lines of reform in Switzerland and other places on the European continent. For instance, Puritans desired the Church of England to move from Episcopal polity to congregational polity, they urged for the removal of pictures, statues, and other types of adornments from church buildings, and they wanted a complete reformation of worship including the centrality of biblical preaching and congregational singing of psalms. At the time of the English colonization of the Eastern Atlantic seaboard, the Puritan movement was well established though Anglicans persecuted Puritans.<sup>43</sup>

The story is well integrated into American history regarding the courageous Roger Williams who founded the colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in 1636 after standing against some of the teachings of the Congregational Church in Massachusetts Bay Colony. The significance of Williams in Baptist history is critical. African American Baptist pastor and historian LeRoy Fitts states, “The tremendous influence of Roger Williams in the birth of Baptists in America is a matter of great significance to the subsequent development of the sociopolitical thought among black Baptists.”<sup>44</sup> Shortly after founding the colony, Williams became a Baptist and helped to

---

*American Theology: From Biblical Faith to Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2007). Anyabwile asserts that during Colonial America African American Christians emerged out of a Reformed (or Calvinistic) understanding of the Christian faith, and it was over time that African American Christians retreated from this context. See, 20.

<sup>43</sup> Every secondary source on American Baptist history concurs on this point that Baptists emerged from Puritanism. See, for example, Winthrop Still Hudson, *Baptist Convictions* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1963); Everett Goodwin, *Down By the Riverside: A Brief History of Baptist Faith* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press), 13.

<sup>44</sup> Fitts, *History*, 22.

found the first Baptist church in America. Along with founding the first Baptist church in America, Williams also was the first political leader in the British North American colonies to offer religious freedom to colonists. This social and political tenet has also been part and parcel with Baptist social and political doctrine. Williams had company though in helping to establish Baptist churches in Colonial America. A sketch history of Baptist beginnings in Colonial America is what follows. This history will trace Baptist beginnings from New England to the Middle Colonies and even to South Carolina in the seventeenth century.<sup>45</sup>

With the advent of the First Great Awakening Baptist preachers began to preach more fervently and attract large numbers. There is consensus among historians of the African American Church in general, and the African American Baptist tradition in particular that the First Great Awakening was “the dawn of a new day” for African-born and African American slave captives and free persons of colors regarding their entrance into Protestant churches. Raboteau and Campbell, for example, hold that the Great Awakening in the 1740s fostered the growth of African American converts to Christianity, especially in the South. Not discounting that this era was one that witnessed the first period of African American conversion, Gomez adds to this by stating that some slave masters freed their slaves owing to their adherence to Revolutionary principles. He concludes that both antislavery preaching and the revivals attracted African Americans to Christianity.<sup>46</sup> Fry and Wood accurately describe that African Americans were active in their own religious transformations, and that the First Great Awakening was a period of transformation within European-American Protestantism. African Americans were

---

<sup>45</sup> Fitts, *History*, 22.

<sup>46</sup> Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 251-252.

squarely in this pivotal moment in American Christian history.<sup>47</sup> Gomez makes a similar point by stating that African converts could respond to preaching in their own way that meant that they responded according to their cultural personality.<sup>48</sup> Out of this context, it is no surprise that African American converts during joined Methodist and Baptist churches in large numbers. Luther Jackson argues that Baptists and Methodists preached a type of equality of all in the face of God, and this spiritual egalitarianism drew African Americans into their ranks.<sup>49</sup> In New England, where the movement began, Jonathan Edwards reported that “many of the poor negroes” have experienced a great change “wrought upon” them by the preaching of the gospel and the Holy Spirit. In 1740, when the movement launched, there was a discernible African American presence at revival meetings. Chief revival preachers like Whitefield and Tennent noted the presence of African Americans within the crowds that came to hear this preaching. Whitefield reported that on one occasion in Philadelphia, “near fifty negroes came to give me thanks for what God had done to their souls.” This was in 1740. Tennent, in a letter to Whitefield, stated that the preaching in Charlestown, Massachusetts greatly affected the Africans/African Americans present.<sup>50</sup>

It was during the 18<sup>th</sup> century that African Americans began to join Baptist churches in fairly large numbers, especially in the South. Lawrence Neale Jones states

---

<sup>47</sup> Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), xii.

<sup>48</sup> Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, 252.

<sup>49</sup> Luther P. Jackson, “The Religious Development of the Negro in Virginia From 1760-1860,” *Journal of Negro History* 16, no. 2 (April 1931), 172.

<sup>50</sup> See Jonathan Edwards, *Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England* in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*. Volume 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), 375; Albert Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The “Invisible Institution” in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1978), 128-129; Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, 4. See also chapter 2, “The Dawning of the New Day,” in Woodson, *Negro Church*. Prior to the First Great Awakening in the South, the Anglican Church had made modest progress evangelizing among the slave population in Virginia and the Carolinas. According to Woodson, African Americans in the South joined the Methodists and Baptists owing to their simplicity of preaching and ritual.

that the “spontaneity and informality of worship” in Baptist churches was a point of attraction to African Americans.<sup>51</sup> There is evidence of African Americans being members of Baptist churches in New England before the 18<sup>th</sup> century, however. According to former Baptist pastor, William Banks, a slave by the name of Jack is considered to be the first African Baptist. He received baptism into the Baptist church in Providence, Rhode Island in 1652. In 1685, an unknown African woman received baptism in a church in Connecticut. In the same year, an African American woman named Peggy Arnold was a member of the Newport Seventh-Day Baptist Church in Rhode Island. Into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, theologian and African American church historian, Henry Mitchell, in agreement with Banks, states that in 1743, a slave named Quassey was a member of the Baptist church in Newton, Rhode Island. Mitchell adds that in 1762 that First Baptist in Providence, Rhode Island baptized eighteen Africans into its membership. In 1771, First Baptist Church in Boston began to admit Africans into the church. In 1772, Robert Stevens and eighteen other African Americans held membership at First Baptist Church of Providence, Rhode Island. In the same year, First Baptist Church of Boston began to receive African American members. Moving South to South Carolina by 1796, First Baptist Church of Charleston, South Carolina had 248 members with the majority African-American slaves. According to Mc Beth, First Baptist of Charleston was the leading church in South Carolina. Under the ministry of Richard Furman, who began his long pastorate in 1787, First Baptist became the leading Baptist church in the entire South. There were African/African American Baptists dating from early in the Colonial history of the United States; this should be no surprise as people of African descent figure

---

<sup>51</sup> Lawrence Neale Jones, *African Americans and the Christian Churches 1619-1860* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2007), 128.

within the entire fabric of American history. What is a little more intriguing is that these African and African American Baptists received baptism in both New England Baptist churches and Baptist churches in the South based upon a clear testimony of their conversion to Christ. In addition, as mentioned above, all of these churches were Calvinistic; therefore, the first generation of African American Baptists was at least by association if not by true conviction, Calvinist also.<sup>52</sup>

As Baptists in general moved south, they encountered different attitudes regarding African American membership and slave evangelization. Late in the century, some Kentucky Baptists asked questions regarding the propriety of African Americans (slave or free) holding a seat in the Kentucky Baptist Association. The association responded in favor of African Americans holding a seat in associational business meetings provided they have been sent by their home churches. In 1795, the Lick Creek Church in Kentucky split over the issue of slavery, and the Rolling Fork Church also endured turmoil regarding slavery.<sup>53</sup>

Even though there was some ambivalence on the part of white Baptists in the South on the legitimacy of holding slaves as a Christian prerogative, Woodson argues that Baptists gained African American membership owing to their anti-slavery sentiments, but he states that they failed to have a great concerted effort owing to their decentralized church polity. Surprisingly, in slave-holding Virginia there arose a group of Calvinistic Baptists calling themselves “Emancipating Baptists,” or “Anti-Slavery

---

<sup>52</sup> Fitts, *History*, 24-25; Mc Beth, *Heritage*, 217, 220; Henry Mitchell, *Black Church Beginings: The Long-Hidden Realities of the First Years* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 27; William L. Banks, *A History of Black Baptists* (West Conshohocken, PA: Infinity Publishing.com, 2005), 10. Regarding Calvinism, to re-iterate, this is a point that recent African American theologians have made.

<sup>53</sup> Fitts, *History*, 24-25.

Baptists,” who, like many of their Methodist counterparts, refused to admit slave-holders into their fellowships and sought to preach against slavery.<sup>54</sup>

By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, African Americans began to organize and lead their own churches. According to Woodson, religious freedom in America is inextricably linked with the carving of space for and by African Americans in Evangelical churches. He also believes that the Revolutionary sentiment was conducive to the rise of African American independent churches. Woodson asserts that this type of spirit is readily noticed in the rise of African American Baptist churches in the South during this period. It is worthy to note that this particular phenomenon was the result of expediency and not of divisiveness. According to Fitts, the African American independent church movement among Baptists began as a result of the plantation missions primarily. Before the advent of independent churches, African American men preached on their plantations with their masters’ permission. During this period, slave codes prohibited African American slaves from organizing their own churches. It was the practice of slaves to worship in the white churches at times designated by the plantation owners.<sup>55</sup>

These African American preachers were able to lead other African American Christians in informal gatherings. They and other worshipers would escape to wooded areas or secluded cabins for preaching and prayer services. Fitts states that these informal meetings were precursors to the formal establishment of independent churches late in the century. The number of African American preachers who preached on plantations and who led informal meetings is lost to the historical record. According to providence, slave masters saw the gift these men possessed and ignored the slave codes that disallowed

---

<sup>54</sup> Woodson, *History*, 29, 31-33.

<sup>55</sup> Woodson, *History*, 40-41; Fitts, *History*, 24, 31.

slaves from preaching publicly. White Baptist churches allowed these men to exercise their gifts, and eventually these churches had to let their slave and free African American congregants form their own churches.<sup>56</sup>

Discernible African American Baptist churches have been in existence since the end of the Revolutionary period in American history. In writing of the beginning of African American Baptist congregations, the late pastor/historian Walter Brooks notes: “The freedom and local democracy of the Baptist Church enabled the Negroes to participate in the affairs thereof much earlier than they were so indulged in the other denominations.”<sup>57</sup> This is an interesting statement that highlights polity. Church polity refers to how a church governs itself whether it is congregational, rule by bishops, or by a council of elders. This issue of polity is often overlooked by historians because it seems so bland and uninteresting. Studying polity differences is indispensable in understanding why African American Baptist churches emerge prior to African American Methodist churches. According to Carol George, Richard Allen first approached his presiding elder in Philadelphia about organizing a separate African American Methodist society in 1786, but the elder rejected this proposal. Such could never occur within Baptist circles owing to the Baptist belief in the autonomy and independence of a local church.<sup>58</sup>

Brooks points out the relatively good relations between whites and African Americans during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and even during the pre-Civil War era within Baptist church circles. Jordan, in concurrence, implies that there have been independent African American Baptist churches since this time. Brooks, Woodson, and Jordan date the

---

<sup>56</sup> Fitts, *History*, 32.

<sup>57</sup> Walter H. Brooks, “Evolution of the Negro Baptist Church.” *Journal of Negro History* 7. No.1 (January 1922) 11-22.

<sup>58</sup> Carol V. R. George, *Segregated Sabbaths: Richard Allen and the Rise of Independent Black Church, 1760-1840* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 51.

beginning of the African American Baptist independent movement in the 1770s while Fitts dates the beginning of the independent church movement in the 1780s. Regardless of the decade that African American Baptists began to organize their own churches, it must be emphasized that these were the first independent African American churches of any denomination. Though Richard Allen led a group of African American Methodists from St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia in 1787, the African Methodist Episcopal Church organized formally in 1816.<sup>59</sup>

The historians agree that one man had his hand in pushing the African American Baptist movement forth. This man was George Liele. Historians have highlighted the life and ministry of George Liele, who is arguably the most significant African American Baptist minister of the Revolutionary Era. Owing to the great significance of George Liele, it is important to offer a summary of Liele's life and ministry. Woodson, Jordan and more recent writers have re-told Liele's interesting and inspiring story. Liele, according to Jordan, was "the first American Baptist foreign missionary, preceding William Carey, the renowned European missionary, by at least fifteen years."<sup>60</sup> Former Baptist pastor Alfred Lane Pugh writes that Liele was the first African American to connect the "gospel thread of Christianity" to the West Indies. Liele is also recognized by Woodson and other writers as a "pioneer" preacher among African American Baptists.<sup>61</sup>

Liele was born ca. 1750 in Virginia, but moved with his master Henry Sharpe to Burke County, South Carolina just a few years before the outbreak of the Revolutionary

---

<sup>59</sup> Brooks, "Evolution of the Negro Baptist Church," 15-16; Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 6; Fitts, *History*, 33.

<sup>60</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 6.

<sup>61</sup> Both Woodson and Jordan title their chapters on the early African American ministers, "Pioneer Preachers." See Woodson, *History*, 40ff; Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 6ff; Pugh, *Preachers in Paradise*, 3.



War possibly in 1772. According to Pugh, Sharpe taught some of his slaves to read and write, which was illegal. One of the slaves he taught to read and write was George Liele. Sharp was a deacon in the Baptist Church in Burke County, which Matthew Moore led. As Liele attended worship services with his master, the preaching of Matthew Moore struck him and he experienced conversion. Sobel dates Liele's conversion sometime in 1773. Both Pugh and Sobel write that Moore was a revivalist preacher in the same vein as a Whitefield and a Wesley. Moore preached the necessity of the new birth, and he held to the Baptist distinctive of a regenerated church membership; therefore, if one desired to join the Buckhead Creek Baptist Church he/she needed to give testimony of his/her conversion. After his conversion and his testimony, Liele received membership in the church through believer's baptism in 1774 according to Sobel. Soon after becoming a Christian, Liele showed that he had a gift for preaching the gospel; the church gave Liele allowance to preach on the plantations along the Savannah River and occasionally he preached to the members of his own church. Sharp demonstrated his own degree of Christian enlightenment by emancipating Liele in order to preach full-time. A few weeks following giving Liele his freedom, Sharp died; and Sharp's children planned to re-enslave Liele and actually imprisoned him owing to his British sympathies or owing to their love of money. These are the two possible reasons Jordan places forward.<sup>62</sup>

Upon learning of the plan, Liele hastened to borrow \$700 from a British colonel named Kirkland in order to flee the country with his family. Realizing that he would have a better chance at living a life free of American prejudice and the possibility of re-

---

<sup>62</sup> Walter Brooks, *The Silver Bluff Church: A History of Negro Baptist Churches in America* (Washington DC: Press of R. L. Pendleton, 1910) , 10-11, Documenting the American South, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/brooks/brooks.html> (accessed March 22, 2010) ; Woodson, *History*, 43-45; Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 6-7; Pugh, *Preachers in Paradise*, 3-5, 7; Sobel, *Traebelin' On*, 104-105.

enslavement he decided to re-settle in the English colony of Jamaica. The ship on which Liele and his family would travel across the Caribbean was in harbor for a few weeks, and during this time Liele went to Savannah and baptized some African American converts he had preached to during his days as a plantation preacher in Georgia. Liele baptized these converts in the Savannah River among who were Andrew Bryan and others who would become the founding members of First African Baptist Church in Savannah.<sup>63</sup>

When Liele left America, he went to Jamaica as the indentured servant of Colonel Kirkland. According to Jordan, when Liele arrived on the island the sad spiritual condition of blacks in Kingston deeply moved him. As a result, Liele began to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ at the race tracks. Later, he rented a room and organized a Baptist church of four people. The church grew enormously. In less than eight years, Liele baptized 500 people. In 1789, he built a chapel amid persecution. During this time, he spent time in prison and went on trial for preaching “sedition.” From 1805 to 1814, a law forbidding preaching to slaves was carried out. Finally, in 1814 English Baptists sent missionaries to Jamaica at the behest of Liele.<sup>64</sup>

Jordan includes a personal letter Liele wrote to Dr. Rippon, who was one of the leaders of the Baptist Missionary Society in London. Liele wrote the letter in 1791; he organized the church in Kingston in 1784. The letter contains a brief description of Liele and the work of ministry he undertook in Jamaica. He is honest to state that his occupation is that of farmer; therefore, he was a part-time pastor. He mentions that most of the church members are slaves, and have very little money to support the church. This

---

<sup>63</sup> Woodson, *History*, 43-45; Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 7.

<sup>64</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 7.

is the main problem Liele relates to Dr. Rippon. The church needs funds to complete the “meeting house.” What all of this demonstrates is that African American Baptists even during the Revolutionary Era had a keen interest in spreading the gospel and the Baptist tradition outside of America to other persons of African descent.<sup>65</sup>

With this emergent movement among African American Baptists joining churches and preaching the gospel, two important questions remain: what did these African American Baptists believe? Was their doctrine different from their white counterparts? During the middle and late 18<sup>th</sup> century, African American Baptist doctrine mirrored that of white Baptists. N. H. Pius, one of the leading National Baptists at the inception of the convention, writes this intriguing statement about African American Baptist beginnings:

Interesting and strange appears the record of the rise and progress of Negro Baptists in America. Interesting, because it is a record of the struggles of a people who had their rise amidst fiery trials and afflictions as slaves, and strange because they have made their progress as a separate part of the general Baptist family, and yet believe and practice all that it believes and practices.<sup>66</sup>

This was nothing unique to Baptists as seceding Methodists during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century clung to Methodist doctrine wholeheartedly.

The dominant theology of Baptists in Colonial and Revolutionary America was Calvinism. There exists no extant manuscripts of slave preaching at this time; but evidence rests on the fact that white Baptists nurtured slave preachers in their churches, licensed them to preach, and that white Baptist pastors ordained African American pastors. All of this strongly indicates that African American Baptist ministers learned and

---

<sup>65</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 8-9.

<sup>66</sup> Pius, *An Outline of Baptist History* (Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1911), 51, *Documenting the American South*, <http://www.docsouth.unc.edu/church/pius/pius.html> (accessed March 22, 2010).

preached the tenets of Calvinist theology. The content of African American Baptist theology has been overlooked during this period by historians.<sup>67</sup>

During the colonial period of American history, Calvinism predominated among the Baptists. The first Baptist church founded in North America was a Particular Baptist church. From 1639 to 1790, there were six different Baptist groups in America: Particular, General, General Six Principle, Seventh Day, New Light, and Free Will. These groups together numbered 67, 475. From that number, 57, 306 were Particular Baptists. One reason for the large number of Particular Baptists is that by 1790 most General and New Light Baptists merged into Particular Baptist churches. This phenomenon occurred because of the evangelical and organizational skill of the Philadelphia Association, the leading Baptist association of the day. To a lesser extent, the Charleston Association also exerted influence over Baptist churches.<sup>68</sup>

Both of these associations adopted the Second London Confession of 1677. By adopting this confession, these two associations committed themselves to Calvinist orthodoxy. During this time, many General Baptist churches were re-organized as a result of the influence of the Philadelphia Association. General Baptist and Particular Baptist distinction was barely noticeable at times. Since General Baptist theology (Arminianism) was weak on the local level, Particular Baptist preachers helped to convert Arminian pastors to Calvinism. This type of intra-sect proselytizing greatly helped the Baptist movement to gain momentum into the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> Pius, *Outline*, 52.

<sup>68</sup> W. Wiley Richards, *Winds of Doctrine: The Origin and Development of Southern Baptist Theology* (New York, 1991), 9-11. Particular Baptists believed in "particular redemption," which asserts that Christ's death on the cross was for the elect of God only.

<sup>69</sup> Richards, *Winds of Doctrine*, 12.

It was during the 18<sup>th</sup> century revivals already mentioned above that Baptists began to plant new churches and these churches organized associations. Two men in particular emerged from this movement and began to preach and evangelize in the Lower colonies, namely Shubal Stearns and Daniel Marshall. Stearns was a Congregationalist from Connecticut who believed the gospel and converted under the preaching of Whitefield. Daniel Marshall joined a Particular Baptist church after moving from Connecticut to North Carolina after a brief sojourn in Virginia. According to Abraham Marshall, the son of Daniel Marshall, the elder Marshall became a Baptist after careful examination of New Testament scripture. To attest that Daniel Marshall was an avowed Calvinist, the church he established near Augusta, Georgia in 1792, the Kiokee Baptist Church, became the “mother church of Calvinism in Georgia.” It was from this theological context that African American Baptists emerged and formed their own independent congregations. Baptist theology was synonymous with Calvinism especially in the South. As will be detailed below, Abraham Marshall, the son of Daniel Marshall, in particular, had a direct hand in helping to establish one of the first African American Baptist churches.<sup>70</sup>

According to Jordan, the first African American Baptist church began in Aiken Country, South Carolina before 1776; this is the Silver Bluff Baptist Church. There is a lack of consensus regarding the founding date of Silver Bluff Baptist Church. Former slave turned Baptist elder David George has left us a first-hand account of the founding of this church, but like many testimonies of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by former slaves there are some vague details. George’s account offers no dates; therefore, secondary sources are needed to corroborate some of the events mentioned such as the British attack on

---

<sup>70</sup> Richards, *Winds of Doctrine*, 13, 17.

Savannah during the Revolutionary War. Drawing from George's account, Silver Bluff Church began as a plantation mission ca. 1774. According to Harvey, church records indicate the year 1750 as the founding date. This is highly improbable since George was born ca. 1743 in Virginia and remained there as a slave until he was nineteen years old. George was one of the charter members. Though it is possible that a seven year old could have been a member of a Baptist church then, it is highly unlikely and it contradicts George's account of his own age in his narrative.<sup>71</sup>

The scholarly works, however, support that the church came into existence between 1773 and 1775; George's account upholds this. He mentions further that Liele preached there on at least two occasions both subsequent to his own conversion experience. According to Sobel, it was through Wait Palmer's preaching, a New Light Baptist preacher that George received saving knowledge. Fitts and Harvey, in contradiction, state that Liele's preaching produced George's conversion. This is a rather difficult problem, but judging from Liele's preaching ministry to various plantations along the Savannah River it seems likely that George would have heard Liele's sermons previously to hearing Palmer. George clearly indicates that he heard Palmer after his conversion. Shortly after George's conversion, he heard Liele preach and informed him of his conversion to Christ.

The church began by Wait Palmer, who George calls "Brother Palmer" heard the testimony of eight slaves on the plantation of George Galphin, and baptized them on the

---

<sup>71</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 21-22; David George, *An Account of the Life of Mr. David George, from Sierra Leone in Africa; Given by Himself in a Conversation with Brother Rippon of London, and Brother Pearce of Birmingham* (1793), in "Face Zion Forward" *First Writers of the Black Atlantic, 1785-1798* eds. Joanna Brooks and John Saillant (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002), 180-189; Harvey, *Bridges*, 13-14; Jones, *African Americans and the Christian Churches*, 128-129. Jones holds to the primacy of the Silver Bluff Church.

profession of their faith. Though George credits Palmer with founding the Silver Bluff Church, Pugh states it was both Liele and Palmer who founded the church. In addition to this, Harvey asserts that Liele was the first pastor of the Silver Bluff Church. In order to clarify this, Liele was only a licensed preacher at this time and was unqualified to administer the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Palmer, according to George, was a pastor of a church and this is why he baptized George, his wife, Jesse Peters, and five other slaves. Since Liele had preached there before he would have been interested in the organization of persons he had preached to and probably helped to bring to the Christian faith. This would have made him the first pastor. Soon after George's baptism and at the behest of the church and Palmer, George became the elder of the congregation. He remained as the pastor of the church until the time that the British captured the city of Savannah in 1778.<sup>72</sup>

Following spending a month in jail in Georgia and a short stay in Charleston, George and his family immigrated to Nova Scotia, Canada where he founded an African Baptist Church in the city of Shelburne and left there to become colonists in Sierra Leone, where he founded a Baptist Church in Freetown in 1792. Though George and his family fled America, Silver Bluff continued to meet in Georgia. According to Fitts, Jesse Peters (also known as Jesse Galphin) was the second pastor of the church when it was formally constituted in 1781.<sup>73</sup>

Another historic African American Baptist church founded during this period is the aforementioned First African Baptist Church of Savannah. According to Charles Elmore who has written the most recent history of this church, this church is now known

---

<sup>72</sup> George, *Account*, 180-181; Pugh, *Preachers in Paradise*, 12 and Harvey, *Bridges*, 13.

<sup>73</sup> Fitts, *History*, 33, 38; Sobel, *Trabelin' On*, 105-106.

as First Bryan Baptist Church, or "Old Bryan," even though there is a church in Savannah that still bears the name "First African Baptist." This story of how this came to be is beyond the scope of this work. Elmore clearly links the founding of this church in 1788 with the Silver Bluff Baptist Church. Both of these churches began as plantation missions, and it was the ministry of George Liele that produced the first Christians who formed this church. According to Jordan and Fitts the year 1778 is founding year of this venerable old church. Andrew Bryan formally organized and constituted on January 20, 1788. Bryan was the slave of Jonathan Bryan, who encouraged him to preach on the plantation. Later, Bryan allowed his slaves led by Andrew to build a meeting place on his property in Yamacraw. Washington states that Jonathan Bryan was a New Light Presbyterian. Two white Baptists helped in constituting First African and in formally ordaining Andrew Bryan. These men were Rev. Thomas Burton and Rev. Abraham Marshall, and both of these men were Separate Baptists. Washington adds that Jesse Galphin helped Andrew Bryan and his fellow African Baptists form a connection with the Separate Baptists. After experiencing initial growth and success, the church disbanded owing to the British occupation of Savannah. The church re-organized with the help of Abraham Marshall. First African suffered from white interference in a negative after its founding. Its independence was limited and members of the church suffered persecution such as imprisonment and floggings. Andrew Bryan and Sampson Bryan twice received floggings, and about 50 members received whippings from whites as well. Fitts states, "With few exceptions, members of Bryan's entire congregation were persecuted for their faith and practices." Savannah officials charged the entire congregation with plotting an insurrection and imprisoned. They lost their building ca.



1790, but the church received exoneration of these unfounded charges in the Inferior Court of Chatham County. In the aftermath of this trying incident, Jonathan Bryan allowed the church to have another meeting place in his home, or barn. Also in 1790 First African joined the Georgia Baptist Association becoming the first African American church to do so. It remained the only African American church in the association for years. Even when the Association divided into two districts, First African remained a member. By 1800, First African had 800 members, and it founded two other churches: Second Baptist in 1802, and Ogeechee Baptist in 1805.<sup>74</sup>

Though the first independent African Baptist churches began as plantation missions along the South Carolina-Georgia border, other independent African Baptist churches sprouted in Virginia. The independent church movement in Virginia occurred simultaneously with the movement further south in South Carolina and Georgia. Washington notes something special about the formation of the African Baptist churches in Virginia. He states that the free African American population had a greater influence on the formation of these churches than in Georgia. The simple reason for this, according to Washington, was that there were more free African Americans in Virginia than in Georgia during this period. The pattern of organization, however, was similar as African American converts began to meet together and then form themselves into congregations with the support of white Baptist associations. Like the lack of consensus regarding the founding date of Silver Bluff Church, there exists the same lack of consensus regarding the founding dates of these nascent African Baptist churches in Virginia. According to Woodson, the first African Baptist church founded in Virginia was the Harrison Street

---

<sup>74</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 22; Fitts, *History*, 33, 36-38; Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship*, 10-11; Sobel, *Trabelin' On*, 107; Charles Elmore, *First Bryan 1788-2001: The Oldest Continuous Black Baptist Church in America* (Savannah, GA: First Bryan Baptist Church, 2002), 1-2.

Church in Petersburg, Virginia in 1776. According to Washington, free African Americans and slaves founded the Harrison Street Church ca. 1788. Woodson also notes that the second African Baptist church founded in Virginia was in Williamsburg in 1785. Washington, however, states that Rev. Govan Pamphlet, a free African American minister, organized the African Baptist Church at Williamsburg in 1781, but the church had met informally since 1776. In 1791 (or by this year), the church became a member of the predominately white Dover Baptist Association. Fitts states that there were two churches founded in Petersburg; in addition to Harrison Street there was Gilfield Baptist Church. Washington offers more detail on the founding of Gilfield Baptist Church; he states that in 1788 African Americans founded this church “as a racially mixed congregation.” When the congregation moved to Petersburg by 1809, the African American portion of the church separated and formed the Sandy Beach Baptist Church that became a member of the Portsmouth Association in 1810. Another church founded in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century in Virginia worth mentioning is the First Baptist Church of Richmond. At its founding, it was a bi-racial church consisting of African Americans (mostly slaves) and whites. The importance of this church, however, is that it would become an all African American church in 1841 with a membership of over 1,700. Another important feature of this church will be discussed below regarding the life and ministry of Lott Carey.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> Woodson, *History*, 85; Fitts, *History*, 45; Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship*, 14-15; Luther P. Jackson, “The Religious Development of the Negro,” 189-190; Jones, *African Americans and the Christian Churches*, 133-133. Jackson and Jones concur with Washington regarding the date of the first African Baptist church in Virginia founded by Govan Pamphlet. Pamphlet’s first name is also given as Gowan. Jackson also gives the church at Williamsburg priority as he states the Gilfield and Harrison Street organized after 1781.

An interesting side note regarding African American Baptists in Virginia during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century is the ministry of African American men in bi-racial or predominately white Baptist churches. Raboteau states that there is evidence from 1766 that African American men preached during New Light Baptist meetings. This evidence is from Brunswick, Virginia. In 1792, the bi-racial Baptist Church in Portsmouth, Virginia called an African American man named Josiah Bishop to preach for them after their pastor resigned. This is the same Josiah Bishop who would become the pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York City in 1809. This same church at Portsmouth purchased the freedom of a slave named Simon in order for him to preach full-time. William Lemon, another African American man, served as the minister at a white Baptist church in Gloucester County, Virginia at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>76</sup>

Moving west from the vast state of Virginia, African Americans organized their first Baptist church in the state of Kentucky in 1790 according to Fitts. A slave named Old Captain, or Brother Captain began this work. Brother Captain was the slave of Lewis Craig, who was actually one of the Baptist pioneer preachers in Virginia and suffered persecution owing to his Baptist beliefs. Craig sent Brother Captain to Kentucky to grow a crop in 1780, but the crop suffered destruction and Captain had to return to Virginia. In 1790, Captain returned to Kentucky in Lexington and from his cabin began to preach the gospel to fellow African Americans for a period of seven years. The founding of this church was similar to others founded in the slave South during this period. This church could possibly qualify as a plantation church, but it definitely began as a “cabin church” by a slave who loved Christ, the gospel of Christ, and his own people.<sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 134.

<sup>77</sup> Fitts, *History*, 50-51.

At the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there were a few independent African American Baptist churches. All of them came into being first by the great revival that began in earnest in the 1730s and that trickled southward by New Light Baptist preachers. These preachers held to the belief that God was no respecter of persons to a degree, and preached the gospel to Africans/African Americans both slave and free. Through the good graces of Christian slave masters, African American men preached to their own people and received help in founding churches. Men like George Liele and David George preached the gospel and organized churches in other countries, which established a pattern in African American Baptist history. When viewing the founding of these pioneer churches and the ministry of pioneer preachers, it is clear to see the moorings of National Baptists, who are also Missionary Baptists.

The first independent African American churches began in the South where slavery had sunk its roots in its rich soil. What is interesting about that phenomenon is that white Baptists, all of whom had been affected positively by the First Great Awakening, helped these churches to establish themselves. The first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the first independent African American Baptist churches begun in the North. Unlike the churches of the South, these Northern African American Baptist churches started in similar fashion as their African Methodist counterparts that became quasi independent during the 1790s. Woodson argues that after the Revolutionary War period whites and their prejudice against African Americans helped to cause the rise of the independent church movement.<sup>78</sup>

In 1805, free African American Baptists in Boston founded First African Baptist Church in the Beacon Hill section of the city. As this was the first African American

---

<sup>78</sup> Woodson, *History*, 71.

church of any denomination founded in New England, the roots of its founding are in the discrimination experienced in an overwhelmingly white region of the country. Historians James and Lois Horton substantiate this claim by stating: "The black church arose in Boston partly as a response to the discrimination faced by blacks in white churches and partly in response to the needs for self-expression which originated in the culture and experience of the black community."<sup>79</sup>

In general, the white leadership of Baptist churches relegated their African American members to sitting in the galleries. According to Pugh, the leadership of these churches forbade African American members from singing, or even speaking during the worship services. Unwilling to undergo this type of treatment in the house of the Lord, African American Baptist Bostonians began to meet in private homes. Those who decided to release themselves from the white churches to worship privately were "a few," or "a handful."<sup>80</sup> According to Horton and Horton, these private worship meetings were "nondenominational" representing a number of Protestant denominations.<sup>81</sup>

The future leader of the group of African American Baptists who would found African Baptist Church was Thomas Paul who arrived in Boston in 1789 at the tender age of 16 newly converted and baptized in his native New Hampshire. Upon his arrival, he joined the nondenominational private group. Owing to Paul's giftedness as an exhorter, he emerged as the leader of this group. In 1798, the group now led by Paul began to meet in a schoolhouse on the West End of Boston for their worship on the Lord's Day. Finally

---

<sup>79</sup> James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *Black Bostonians: Family Life and Community Struggle in the Antebellum North* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1979), 39.

<sup>80</sup> Horton and Horton, *Black Bostonians*, 40.

<sup>81</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 22; Horton and Horton, *Black Bostonians*, 40; Fitts, *History*, 46; Pugh, *Preachers in Paradise*, 127; Jane Lampman, "Pioneering Church Marches On," October 19, 2005-<http://www.csmmonitor.com/2005/1019/p13s01-lire.html>; <http://www.pbcboston.org/history.htm> (accessed July 20, 2007).

they organized First African with the blessing and approval of First Baptist and Second Baptist. In December 1806, Paul received ordination to become the pastor of this church.<sup>82</sup>

In 1808, African American Baptists in New York City founded the Abyssinian Baptist Church. The main cause for the founding of this church was the prejudicial treatment received by African American members at First Baptist Church. According to Woodson, the African American members had approached the main body of the church as early as 1807 requesting to be dismissed in order to form an independent African church as the Methodists and Episcopalians had done. It was when Pastor Thomas Paul of First African in Boston came to New York in order to give a series of lectures that First Baptist was satisfied with the formation of an independent African church under the condition that Paul would be the organizing pastor. Paul remained in New York City as an interim pastor of Abyssinian from June 1808 to September 1808, and he experienced a good and successful ministry. Fitts adds more detail to the founding of the church. He asserts that Ethiopian traders actually helped to found the church, and this is why the founders named it “Abyssinian.” This assertion has no primary source evidence. Fitts states, “According to tradition, these ‘Abyssinians’ attended the First Baptist Church of New York where they were promptly ushered into the slave loft.” It is highly unlikely that this occurred for at least two reasons. First, it is only a tradition, which the present church upholds; there are no names of these Ethiopian traders, and there is no evidence that the Kingdom of Ethiopia at the time had a vast trading network into the Western hemisphere. Second, Ethiopians were (and still are predominately) Orthodox Christians

---

<sup>82</sup> Horton and Horton, *Black Bostonians*, 40; Pugh, *Preachers in Paradise*, 127. African Baptist would become a charter church of the Boston Baptist Association founded in 1812.

not Protestants. It is hardly the case that Ethiopian traders would travel to New York City and worship at a predominately white Baptist church. After members of Abyssinian purchased a building and began to worship, the church became constituted formally on July 5, 1809 under the pastorate of Josiah Bishop.<sup>83</sup>

Following Paul's interim term as pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church, he returned to the African Baptist Church in Boston to experience a fruitful ministry. In March 1823, he became a missionary to the Republic of Haiti through the Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Society. Though he remained in Haiti for six months achieving very little success, he still represents the mind of many African American Baptists during this period who desired to carry the gospel to people of African descent.<sup>84</sup>

The founding of First African Baptist Church in Philadelphia occurred because some of the African American members of First Baptist Church "for some time felt that it would be more congenial for them to worship separately..." According to Woodson, these members received letters of dismissal from First Baptist Church on May 14, 1809. There were thirteen members dismissed in this fashion. In the very next month, these thirteen African American Baptists founded First African Baptist Church. Woodson remarks on the probable trouble that prompted the African American members of First Baptist to leave. He states the once strongly anti-slavery First Baptist weakened on this issue after the Revolutionary War. He notes that the church had a succession of Southern pastors that aided in this attenuation of the anti-slavery sentiment. Woodson also notes that there was an emergent tide of prejudice against African Americans in Philadelphia

---

<sup>83</sup> Woodson, *History*, 88-90; Fitts, *History*, 46; Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship*, 20.

<sup>84</sup> Woodson, *History*, 90-91; Pugh, *Preachers in Paradise*, 132-133, 149-150. Paul's lack of success had much to do with his inability to speak either French or Haitian Creole; this hampered his communication seriously. Also Paul became ill during this stay and had to return to Massachusetts.

owing to the migration of free men from the South. According to Fitts, the problem was exacerbated because mixed with the migration of free men were fugitive slaves from Virginia; in fact, Fitts states that fugitives had joined First Baptist Church. In an interesting turn, it was a free African American man from the South, Georgia in particular that helped to organize First African. This man was Henry Cunningham who was once a preacher in First African of Savannah, and was the pastor of Second African in Savannah. According to Washington, Cunningham was in Philadelphia to ask for financial help from the Philadelphia Baptist Association. Cunningham served as the pastor of African Baptist until his death in 1811, and the church was without a full-time pastor until 1832. During this period, the church experienced little growth and endured a split that gave rise to Second African Baptist Church in 1816. From the outset of First African's existence, it was a member of the Philadelphia Baptist Association; and Second African became a member along with two other African Baptist churches founded later.<sup>85</sup>

As mentioned above, Baptists were quite numerous in Philadelphia and its surrounding area even into New Jersey. It was in New Jersey that two more independent African Baptist churches formed beginning in 1812. Fitts offers a summary of the founding of these churches without the detail noticed in the organization of the churches in the larger East coast cities like Boston and New York. African Baptist churches began in Trenton and Salem, respectively. There can only be conjecture regarding the circumstances surrounding the founding of these two churches. It would be safe to

---

<sup>85</sup> Woodson, *History*, 86-87; Fitts, *History*, 47-48; Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship*, 21. See also Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community 1720-1840* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 201. Nash notes that Blockely African Baptist and Union African Baptist founded in 1827 and 1832 respectively joined the Philadelphia Baptist Association.



assume that African Americans withdrew from their former predominately white churches owing to prejudice and other racist actions.<sup>86</sup>

During the Early Republic period of American history, there were two other types of churches African Americans held membership in. One was the African American church with a white pastor. Such a church was First Colored in Richmond, Virginia. The other type was a Baptist church with a “Colored Branch.” Functionally and practically, the colored branch was independent with African Americans electing their own officers and received and disciplined their own members under the nominal oversight of the white branch. Such churches were First Baptist in Montgomery, Alabama, and churches in Natchez and Jackson, Mississippi and Charleston, South Carolina.<sup>87</sup>

Early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, racially integrated Baptist churches in the South placed limitations on the activity of slave members. This is evident from a report in 1802 from the Dover Baptist Association in Virginia. The report addressed a problem within the association regarding the practice of some churches that allowed slave men who were rightful members of the church to vote in church business meetings. The report reflected a conventional opinion regarding African American inferiority. Fitts asserts such thinking on the part of this association contradicted Baptist principles.<sup>88</sup>

In 1809, a majority African American Baptist church in Virginia experienced violence at the hands of whites. These belligerent whites displayed utter disrespect for African American Christians as they whipped an African American minister, a Reverend Moses, for preaching in a service. The church’s association placed a ban in effect

---

<sup>86</sup> Fitts, *History*, 49-50. Fitts offers no documentation on the founding of the first two African Baptist churches in New Jersey. Other historians fail to include the founding of these churches in their histories.

<sup>87</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 22.

<sup>88</sup> Fitts, *History*, 25.

prohibiting any African American man, whether slave or free, from preaching. This prohibition carried the threat of ex-communication from the association. According to Fitts, such actions reveal that the institution of slavery in the South placed whites under great stress. To clarify this statement, Fitts intimates that during this period, Southern whites were fearful of African Americans both slave and free meeting in an independent churches.<sup>89</sup>

Though white Southerners feared African Americans in assembly at church during this period, there was a unique church founded in the French colony of Louisiana in 1805 by a free man of color named Joseph Willis originally from South Carolina, who migrated west to Mississippi and then to Louisiana. According to Fitts, Willis' personal migration west from the East is owed to the Western growth of Protestantism in America during the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The best information existing on Willis and his pioneering work is found in William Hicks' brief history of African American Baptists in Louisiana originally published in 1914. Hicks draws heavily from a history of Louisiana Baptists by Paxton. Hicks states, quoting from Paxton, that Willis was the first person to bring Baptist teaching into Louisiana. At the time, the colony of Louisiana was a Roman Catholic colony and had no toleration of Protestantism. Willis arrived in Louisiana in November 1804 at Vermillion, which is about 40 miles southwest of Baton Rouge; it was there he began to preach.<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>89</sup> Fitts, *History*, 26.

<sup>90</sup> William Hicks, *History of Louisiana Negro Baptists from 1804 to 1914* (Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board), Documenting the American South, <http://www.dosouth.unc.edu/church/hicks/hicks.html> (accessed March 23, 2010), 17; See also Joseph H. Jackson, *Story of Activism: The History of the National Baptist Convention, U. S. A., Inc.* (Nashville, TN: Townsend Press, 1980), 10; Fitts, *History*, 48-49.

Again from drawing from Paxton, Hicks writes that Willis' preaching placed him in a dangerous position for two reasons: first, he was African American; and second, he was a Baptist. Willis' preaching had good effect as many believed the gospel and became Christians. These were the first Baptists in Louisiana, and Willis formed the converts into a Baptist church, which, of course, was the first Baptist church in the colony. Though Willis was a licensed preacher, he was un-ordained. Because of his lack of ordination, he was unable to baptize the new Christians or serve them the Lord's Supper. He returned to Mississippi to seek ordination from his home church, but there was no pastor there. He took a letter from his home church and went to affiliate with a church with a pastor to obtain ordination, but the other church refused because he was an African American. Finally, he had to appeal to the Mississippi Association for ordination in 1811 at the behest of his followers back in Louisiana. The Mississippi Association granted him ordination in 1812 possibly in November of that year, and the association formally recognized the Calvary Baptist Church of Bayou Chicot (St. Landry Parish) on November 13, 1812. Besides being the first Baptist church in Louisiana, Brooks indicates that this church was unique in that it was a bi-racial congregation. Willis would initiate other seminal Baptist work in Louisiana ministering in Rapides Parish helping to found other church, and by organizing the first Baptist association in the Pelican State in 1818, which he served as its first moderator. Again, the special quality of this association was that it consisted of white churches. In Louisiana, the father of Baptist work was an African American man from South Carolina known as "Father Willis."<sup>91</sup>

Stress associated with slavery seemingly lessened as Baptists spread west. There was a Baptist work among slaves in Missouri as early as 1818 in St. Louis. In 1822, a

---

<sup>91</sup> Hicks, *Louisiana Negro Baptists*, 18-19; Brooks, "The Evolution of Negro Baptist Church," 13.

separate African American church organized under white pastoral supervision. J. M. Peck was the Baptist missionary who gave pastoral oversight to the fledgling church; Peck was a missionary of the Home Mission Board of Triennial Convention that organized in 1814. This church was in the habit of purchasing the freedom of slaves. The Reverend John Berry Meacham, a free man of color was the pastor of the African American Baptist church in St. Louis at this time. He was the son of a Baptist slave preacher back in Virginia, and the church purchased his freedom.<sup>92</sup>

This sketch of the early history of African American Baptist churches serves as both the context and the foundation for African American Baptist mission work to Africa. At this period, African American Baptists both slave and free took seriously their call to spread the gospel as indicated in the growth of churches. This period also indicates that they were identifiably Baptist and willing to remain so.

As the introduction to this work has been placed forward, what follows is the specific history of African American Baptist foreign mission work in Africa and South Africa demonstrating how an oppressed group of people endowed with the power of their faith endured slavery, segregation, and disfranchisement to build a viable ecclesiastical institution never forgetting their ancestral homeland. Critical in understanding this entire movement is African American Baptists peering and reading the movement of God's Providence in benchmarks of progress made by African Americans in American society. Without African American Baptist reliance on reading Providential signs and markers there would be no Ethiopianism, and arguably no African missionary movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

---

<sup>92</sup> Fitts, *History*, 26.

Chapter One: From Lott Carey to William Colley: Precursor African American Missionaries to Africa and Missionary Movements, ca. 1821-1879

Though David George became the first Baptist of African descent to found a Baptist church in Africa, his remarkable story of escaping slavery as a Black Loyalist during the American Revolution, ministering and founding a Baptist church in Nova Scotia, and then becoming a missionary colonist in Sierra Leone has failed to be considered a true watershed moment in the history of National Baptist missionary work in Africa. Lott Carey's missionary endeavor to Liberia in 1821 is the benchmark and the contextual starting point for the history of National Baptist African missions. Support for this assertion is found in the late 1920 issues of the *Mission Herald* that announced the upcoming observance of the Centennial of Carey's journey to Liberia. The Foreign Mission Board decided to dedicate the January 1921 *Herald* to Carey's mission by re-printing letters from Carey, and an excerpt from his "Farewell" sermon he delivered in Richmond before embarking aboard a ship headed to West Africa. Then Corresponding Secretary Lewis Jordan wrote an editorial entitled "One Hundred Years Ago---And Now."<sup>1</sup> In it, Jordan compares the state of Baptist missions to Africa in Carey's day to what it was at the beginning of 1921; he also mentions the progress African Americans have made from 1821 when the vast majority of African Americans were slaves and now they own "twenty-five million acres of land" and run scores of colleges and schools. With this stated, Jordan peered back into the genesis of African American missions to

---

<sup>1</sup> "One Hundred Years Ago--And Now," *Mission Herald*, January 1921. The article is technically anonymous, but Jordan wrote these various articles and editorials in the *Herald* during his tenure unless specifically noted by the listing of another writer.

Africa with the hope that National Baptists would continue to flourish and build upon the foundation laid by Carey.<sup>2</sup>

From Carey's missionary work in Liberia, African American Baptists continued to keep Africa missions in focus as the American Baptist Missionary Convention founded in 1840 sent missionaries to West Africa during its existence. As the century moved on, a few African American Baptist State Conventions founded immediately after the Civil War sent missionaries to West Africa as well. In 1879, African American Baptists in Virginia recognized the need to consolidate the effort to send missionaries to Africa, and they sent out one of their own, William Colley, formerly a missionary working for the Southern Baptist Convention, to gauge the interest of African American Baptists regarding forming a national convention dedicated solely to African missions. The focus of this chapter is on these small movements that eventually led to the founding of the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention in 1880. This history reveals that African American Baptists fighting against slavery and second class citizenship at home continued to realize the importance of their place in God's plan of the redemption of Africa. If Africa is to be saved, African Americans must be those forging ahead.

The most renowned of African American Baptist missionaries during the Early Republic period was Lott Carey. As early as 1837, the pastor of Second Baptist Church of Richmond, Virginia, James Braxton Taylor published a brief biography of Carey. The purpose for Taylor's biography was to use Carey's extraordinary story to encourage other African American men to enter the African mission field. Without a doubt, Carey is recognized as the father of American missions to Africa. Taylor, as did other Evangelicals during this time, believed that African Americans should be the primary

---

<sup>2</sup> "One Hundred Years Ago—And Now."

people traveling to Africa to spread the gospel and to aid in the uplift of Africa. For Taylor, the preaching of the gospel in Africa with the bringing of Western civilization were twin ways in which “civilized nations” could atone for the “degradation and misery” they have brought to Africa. Taylor saw the clear intent of providence in having African Americans as primary agents of this endeavor of evangelism and atonement. He writes: “Though white men may and ought to enter this field, yet the indication of Providence, thus far, have been in favor of making our colored brethren the chief instruments of this labor of love.”<sup>3</sup>

Into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, African American church historians began to write of Carey’s life and career. Eminent African American Baptist pastor and professor, Miles Mark Fisher wrote an essay published in 1922 detailing Carey’s ministry, Jordan includes a brief chronology of Carey’s life and ministry in his history of African American Baptists, which is taken from Taylor’s biography, and Leroy Fitts wrote a short book on Carey during the 1980s but republished in the 1990s. What follows regarding Carey’s life and his motivation for missions draws from these sources and an article published in 1970 by William Poe.<sup>4</sup>

According to the historiography on Carey, Carey was born a slave in the county of Charles City in Virginia ca. 1780 on the estate of William A. Christian. His father was a Baptist, and his mother was seemingly a Christian though she was no member of a

---

<sup>3</sup> James Braxton Taylor, *Biography of Elder Lott Cary, Late Missionary to Africa* (Baltimore, MD: Armstrong and Berry, 1837). Reprinted in *The African Preachers* (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1998), 9-10

<sup>4</sup> Taylor, *Biography*; Miles Mark Fisher, “Lott Cary, the Colonizing Missionary,” *Journal of Negro History* 7 (October 1922): 380-418; Jordan, *Negro Baptist*; William A. Poe. “Lott Carey: Man of Purchased Freedom.” *Church History*. Vol. 39. No. 1 (March 1970): 49-61, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3163213>. (Accessed June 19, 2009); Leroy Fitts, *The Lott Carey Legacy of African American Missions* (Baltimore, MD: Gateway Press, 1994). Other African American Baptist writers have written on Lott Carey, but in summary fashion. See Harvey, *Bridges*, 15-17.

church. Jordan states that nothing much is known of Carey's childhood. He does report that Carey moved to Richmond in 1804, and there he worked at a tobacco warehouse. It is fairly obvious that Carey's master, William Christian, hired him as this warehouse. At this time, he was still unconverted and was a drunkard and one who used profane language. This Carey's life for three years, and then his life changed. Attending worship sometime in 1807 at First Baptist Church of Richmond, Carey heard a sermon by Rev. John Courtney from the gospel of John on Jesus and Nicodemus. Through this sermon on the necessity of the new birth, Carey knew now his terrible, sinful condition; this led to his spiritual conversion and he became a Christian. Carey received baptism in 1807 by Rev. Courtney, and he became a member of First Baptist Church.<sup>5</sup>

After receiving baptism and holding membership in the First Baptist Church of Richmond, Carey had an intense desire to learn how to read after hearing the sermon that led to his conviction of sin and conversion to Jesus Christ. Carey yearned to read the passage for himself; because of this, he purchased a Bible and commenced to learn to read by first reading John 3, and with the help of his fellow warehouse workers he later learned to write. Fitts states, "It is significant that Carey's literary education began in his young adult life concomitant with his conversion experience." Carey's quest for learning actually accords with other slave testimonies of their learning to read through the Church; the aforementioned George Liele and David George became literate through Christian teaching. Around this time as well, Carey began to preach gospel to other African Americans both slave and free in Richmond and its environs. After giving evidence of his spiritual gift, Carey was soon licensed to preach by First Baptist Church. In the aftermath

---

<sup>5</sup> Taylor, *Biography*, 11-12; Fisher, "Lott Cary," 381-382; Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 12; Poe, "Lott Carey," 49-50; Fitts, *Lott Carey*, 3-5.



of his licensure, Carey spent the Lord's Day (Sunday) preaching on plantations surrounding Richmond. Carey would preach as far South as Norfolk and in Lynchburg in the East as Lynchburg. As a licensed Baptist preacher, Carey increased his desire to improve his mind by reading; he continued to improve his mind even using his spare time at the warehouse reading.<sup>6</sup>

During this time as well, Carey became more useful at the warehouse and he began to accumulate money; he received promotions on the job and his boss gave him extra money and extra tobacco for him to sell. Owing to his thrift and industry, Carey purchased his freedom and that of his two children for \$850 in 1813. As a freeman, Carey received a regular salary that increased from time to time. At the time of his manumission, Carey was undoubtedly a widower, but he married again in 1815 and became an able provider for his family.<sup>7</sup>

As Carey continued to be a devoted, Christian family man, he continued to be useful in the Church. Because of Carey's preaching and influence in the African American community in Richmond, he also was "instrumental in awakening among his Colored brethren in the city of Richmond a lively interest on behalf of the spiritual condition of Africa." According to Fisher, William Crane, a deacon at First Baptist Church, was the major organizer of a night school for free African Americans housed in the meeting house of the African Baptist Church of Richmond. Through his night school, Crane engaged his students, including Carey and Colin Teague, about African missions. Teague, who was also a freeman, was a fellow preacher in First Baptist Church and was a

---

<sup>6</sup> Taylor, *Biography*, 13-14; Fisher, "Lott Cary," 382, 384; Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 12; Fitts, *Lott Carey*, 13-14.

<sup>7</sup> Taylor, *Biography*, 15; Fisher, "Lott Cary," 383; Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 13; Fitts, *Lott Carey*, 15.

close friend of Carey's who would also leave for West Africa in January 1821. Crane was successful in igniting a fire within Carey and Teague's bosoms.<sup>8</sup>

Deacon Crane's encouragement of his pupils Carey and Teague to take an interest in African missions occurred at a time that American Baptists began to organize to engage in foreign missions work. American Baptist interest in foreign missions came by the influence of English Baptists and the mission work of William Carey in India, who began his work there in 1795. According to Jacobs, the missionary zeal of English Baptists owed itself to the Evangelical Revival of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> The English Particular Baptists had organized the Baptist Missionary Society three years prior in London. William Straughton, pastor of First Baptist Church in Philadelphia, was knowledgeable of the activities of the English Particular Baptists; he was English, and he had been present at the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society. Baptists in America were noticeably excited about Carey's mission; they gave their financial support to the endeavor as well as prayed for the success of the mission; and they read Carey's letters from the mission field. English Baptist missionaries en route to India stayed in America, and spoke in Baptist churches. When American Congregationalists founded the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1810, Baptists gave their money again.<sup>10</sup>

The impetus for American Baptists to organize for foreign missions resulted from a rather remarkable turn within Congregationalist ranks. American Board missionaries

---

<sup>8</sup> Taylor, *Biography*, 15-16; Fisher, "Lott Cary," 384-385; Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 13; Poe, "Lott Carey," 50; Fitts, *Lott Carey*, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Sylvia M. Jacobs, "The Historical Role of Afro-Americans in American Missionary Efforts in Africa," in *Black Americans and the Missionary Movement* ed. Sylvia Jacobs (Westwood, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), 5. Jacobs also agrees that American Baptist mission movement emerged from the English effort, 7.

<sup>10</sup> Torbet, *History*, 248-249; Mc Beth, *Heritage*, 343, 345.

Adoniram Judson and Luther Rice became convinced of baptism by immersion during their journey to India in 1813. Judson and Rice decided to resign their posts with the American Board believing it would be disingenuous for them to receive support from a Congregationalist organization; they determined to seek support from American Baptists. Judson and his wife went off to Burma, and Rice returned to America to solicit funds from the Baptists. When Baptists in Boston caught wind of this surprising news, they founded a local missionary society before Rice even returned to the United States.<sup>11</sup>

It was through the Boston Baptists and Luther Rice that American Baptists organized nationally. At the behest of the leaders of the Boston Baptist community, Rice traveled through the Mid-Atlantic and the South to gauge the level of interest Baptists had in supporting foreign missions. Rice and Boston Baptists found the interest great; and it was Rice's idea that all of the Baptist Associations send delegates to a meeting to organize the interest in foreign missions. At a meeting in May 1814 in Philadelphia, American Baptists organized the General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States for Foreign Missions, which was also known as the General Convention, or the Triennial Convention. The convention elected Richard Furman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Charleston, as the president. Imbued by this new missionary zeal among Baptists, Crane began to influence African Americans toward the prospect of African missions.<sup>12</sup>

Along with an awakening among Baptists to engage in foreign missions, the Colonization movement had organized formally at the end of 1816 after decades of interest and even endeavors. According to Franklin, colonization sentiments date back to

---

<sup>11</sup> Torbet, *History*, 249; Mc Beth, *Heritage*, 345.

<sup>12</sup> Torbet, *History*, 249-250; Mc Beth, *Heritage*, 346.

1714, but the idea of transporting free Africans back to Africa failed to die as Samuel Hopkins and Ezra Stiles, two Protestant ministers, during the Age of Revolution were interested in sending Christian Africans back to Africa to colonize and evangelize Africans. According to Poe, supporters of colonization believed that free African American Christians “would be a means of spreading Christianity and civilization” to Africa.<sup>13</sup> Sanneh states that within the Colonization movement was an Evangelical and Civilizationist purpose that motivated the actions of former slaves throughout the British Atlantic World. For example, Great Britain founded Sierra Leone as a Christian colony in 1787.<sup>14</sup>

The plans that Stiles and Hopkins had for sending Christian Africans back to their homeland failed owing to the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War according to Sanneh.<sup>15</sup> After the war, Hopkins made efforts to see his plan come to fruition. He had help from the English Quaker William Thornton, who had inherited slaves in the West Indies rather unexpectedly. He wanted to emancipate these slaves but in a way that he could gain some profit; therefore, he planned to form a colony where the slaves could work collectively to pay for their freedom. Hopkins’ goal to found a Christian colony for Africans appealed to Thornton who could wed this with a colony that would encourage the virtues of thrift and industry in West Africa.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*. Eighth Edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 187-188. See also Peter Duignan and L. H. Gann, *The United States and Africa: A History* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 81-82; and Lamin Sanneh, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 90. Sanneh mentions Ezra Stiles specifically also as an American interested in colonization as well as the African American founded African Union of Newport, Rhode Island that was founded in 1780.

<sup>14</sup> Lamin Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of Modern West Africa* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 6.

<sup>15</sup> Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad*, 185.

<sup>16</sup> Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad*, 185-186.

Though the Quaker Thornton was quite impressed with Hopkins' scheme, it aroused interest among some within the free African American community in New England. One free African American was Paul Cuffee who was an entrepreneur who owned ships, and in 1815 thirty-eight free African Americans sailed to West Africa on one of his ships. He worked with interested white Americans who would be the founding members of the American Colonization Society including Bushrod Washington and Robert Finley. Finley from New Jersey believed that free African Americans could progress much better in Africa rather than in the United States as slavery and color prejudice had hampered the development of their virtues. According to Redkey, the American Colonization Society existed "to put free blacks where they could best use their civilized talents for the benefit of themselves and Africa."<sup>17</sup> The increasing number of free African Americans at this time gave rise to such thoughts as there were 250,000 free African Americans in 1820; whereas there were only 60,000 in 1790.<sup>18</sup>

With the 1816 founding of the American Colonization Society to facilitate African American repatriation, it followed the formal colonization of Sierra Leone by Great Britain in 1787. Just as Americans like Stiles and Hopkins viewed colonization as a means to spread the gospel to West Africans so did the British. According to Sanneh, the period from 1787 to 1893 was a period "that created a hospitable environment for the diffusion of Christianity" and it was an "era of promise."<sup>19</sup> Among the free African community in Britain, there were staunch supporters of colonization most renowned were

---

<sup>17</sup> Redkey, *Black Exodus*, 18.

<sup>18</sup> Franklin and Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 188; Duignan and Gann, *United States and Africa*, 82. There is a discrepancy in the year that Cuffee transported the thirty-eight persons. Franklin lists 1815, but Duignan and Gann list 1816 that corresponds directly with the founding of the American Colonization Society. See Poe, "Lott Carey," 49; Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad*, 190-191.

<sup>19</sup> Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, 53.

Cugoano and Oludah Equiano. Cugoano, a vociferous opponent of both the African slave trade and slavery, desired to return to West Africa as a missionary; and his writings inspired African Americans to follow suit according to Sanneh.<sup>20</sup> As mentioned in the introduction in the previous chapter David George and other Black Loyalists from Nova Scotia immigrated to Sierra Leone in 1792.

It is within this context that American Baptist interest in foreign missions and the subsequent organization for foreign missions that Carey along with Crane and Teague founded the Richmond African Baptist Missionary Society in 1815 emanates from.<sup>21</sup> Crane in his night school informed his students of the spiritual condition of Africa; and this was enough to motivate Carey and others. Owing to the social situation in Virginia that precluded African Americans from outwardly leading organizations in civil society, Crane had to assume the offices of president and corresponding secretary of the new missionary society. What is remarkable is that these former slaves and current slaves sacrificed for the cause of sending the gospel to Africa. This society contributed \$100 to \$150 per year to African missions for several years after its founding. One other aspect of the founding of the Richmond African Baptist Missionary Society is that it was the first one established by African Americans, and its organization was through a racially integrated church.<sup>22</sup>

As mentioned above, the Triennial Convention came into existence to support foreign missions, but the first missionary it supported was in Burma. It was through the Richmond African Baptist Missionary Society that the Triennial Convention came to

---

<sup>20</sup> Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, 55-56.

<sup>21</sup> Poe makes this assertion as well. See Poe, "Lott Carey," 51.

<sup>22</sup> Taylor, *Biography*, 15-16; Fisher, "Lott Cary," 384-385; Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 13; Fitts, *History*, 45; Fitts, *Lott Carey*, 8.

have an interest in African missions. At its meeting in Philadelphia in 1817, the Triennial Convention heard a report from William Crane, the corresponding secretary of the Richmond African Baptist Missionary Society, urging it to form a board for African missions. The leaders of the convention viewed the wishes of the Richmond society as a providential leading to interest itself in African missions, and they believed that free African American Baptists should go back to Africa to preach the gospel. Because of these factors, the Triennial Convention established a board to facilitate missions work in Africa, which made the convention the first American Christian denomination to sponsor foreign missions work in Africa. One more dynamic this decision produced: a vital connection between African American Baptists in Richmond and throughout Virginia and white, Northern Baptists. This connection will lend itself to controversy during the earlier years of the National Baptist Convention.<sup>23</sup>

The formation of the Richmond African Baptist Missionary Society sparked more African American interest in African missions. African American Baptists in Philadelphia and in Petersburg, Virginia formed their own respective missionary societies. African American Baptists in North Carolina and Georgia contributed money to the cause of African missions in 1816 and in 1817. It is apparent that African American Baptists, whether they were slave or free, believed in the necessity of sending the gospel to Africa to shine its light among their African brethren.<sup>24</sup>

Now that African American Baptists in Richmond broke ground in founding a missionary society specifically to provide the gospel to Africans the next question was: who will go? White Baptists held that it would be much better for free African Americans

---

<sup>23</sup> Fisher, "Lott Cary," 385-386; Fitts, *Lott Carey*, 8-9.

<sup>24</sup> Fisher, "Lott Cary," 386.

to serve as missionaries in Africa. William Crane believed this as well. According to Fisher, it was Crane's idea to have Carey seek to become a missionary through the Triennial Convention and an agent through the American Colonization Society. Carey, too, had a strong desire to travel to Africa and preach and found a colony even though Carey had achieved material prosperity and a solid reputation in Richmond among African Americans and whites. According to Taylor, a man asked Carey how could he even consider leaving such a prosperous and comfortable life in Richmond to preach the gospel in Africa; Carey responded in this manner: "I am an African, and in this country, however meritorious my conduct, and respectable my character, I cannot receive the credit due to either. I wish to go to a country where I shall be estimated by my merits, and not by my complexion; and I feel bound to labor for my suffering race." Judging from this statement, it appears that Carey was a race man, who wanted a better life for himself and his family. He sought to escape from the racism that pervaded Virginia, where a free man of color could never experience true civil and social equality. Fisher, however, relates that Crane embellished upon Carey's sentiments; he argues that Carey may have never expressed such sentiments. Fisher bases this argument on a piece of evidence that reveals Carey speaking to Crane about going to Africa for himself and to preach the gospel. Jordan and Fitts include the above quote in their writings, and both view it as Carey making a vivid statement on being racially conscious as well as being a good Christian. The majority view from the historiography on Carey is that he did articulate a keen sense of his own African ethnicity, and he believed the gospel of Jesus Christ would be the only remedy to lift up his people on the African continent.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Taylor, *Biography*, 17; Fisher, "Lott Cary," 389; Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 14; Fitts, *Lott Carey*, 9-10.



Other than Crane's encouragement and Carey's own compulsion, Taylor and Jordan state that the triggering effect for Carey with Collin Teague to immigrate to Africa in 1821 was their reading of the journal of Mills and Burgess, who explored the West coast of Africa for the American Colonization Society. This journal appeared in 1819; and in this journal there were published letters from repatriated Africans residing in Sierra Leone inviting African Americans to join them. Since this evidence exists, it does support the argument that Carey possessed a certain degree of race consciousness.<sup>26</sup>

A letter from William Crane to O. B. Brown, a member of the board of managers of the American Colonization Society and a board member of the Triennial Convention, was the means by which Carey and Teague became affiliated with both bodies. Jordan includes a letter from the letter. The letter is dated March 28, 1819. Basically, the letter informs Brown that Carey and Teague desire to know how to go about becoming missionaries to West Africa. From the letter, Crane mentions some things of interest especially about Carey. At this time, Carey owned a house just "below Richmond." He was the chief manager of laborers at the tobacco warehouse. He was also in charge of "receiving, marking, and shipping tobacco," and received a nice salary of \$700 per year. Carey, according to Crane, was about forty years old. Crane also indicates in the letter that they wanted to be affiliated with the Colonization Society, and they wanted to go to Sierra Leone. Crane also states that both of these men want to spread the gospel to their African brethren, and they want to live in a place "where their color will be no disparagement to their usefulness." After receipt of this letter the Colonization Society received Carey and Teague as emigrants of the Colonization Society, and the Triennial

---

<sup>26</sup> Taylor, *Biography*, 17-18; Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 14.

Convention commissioned them as missionaries. They left for Africa in January of 1821.<sup>27</sup>

After being received by the Triennial Convention and the American Colonization Society, Carey and Teague spent all of 1820 studying in preparation for their ministries. Before leaving for the mission field, First Baptist Church ordained them into the gospel ministry. Fisher is keen to assert that though Carey and Teague had sponsorship from the former organizations, they were very much missionaries of the Richmond African Baptist Missionary Society. The major reason he argues this is because the Richmond Society contributed the most money in support of these two men and their families. Fisher reports that the Richmond society gave \$483.25 to the Triennial Convention toward the cause of African missions since 1817. Fitts states that when Carey and his party left for Africa in January 1821 the Richmond society gave \$700 for the mission while the Triennial Convention gave \$200, and \$100 worth of books. Before the party embarked upon their journey, Carey gave a stirring farewell sermon at First Baptist in Richmond, and the party organized themselves into a church as well. They left from Norfolk en route to Sierra Leone on January 23, 1821. The formal movement toward African missions by African Americans had begun.<sup>28</sup>

During the 1830s, the Cooperative Movement commenced among African American Baptists in the East and Midwest. It is within this context that the American Baptist Missionary Convention came into existence. The Cooperative Movement denotes

---

<sup>27</sup> Taylor, *Biography*, 18-21; Fisher, "Lott Cary," 387-388; Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 14-16; Fitts, *Lott Carey*, 11-12.

<sup>28</sup> Taylor, *Biography*, 23-24; Fisher, "Lott Cary," 390-392; Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 16-18; Poe, "Lott Carey," 50-51; Fitts, *Lott Carey*, 14. Though Carey was a commissioned colonist of the American Colonization Society, Sanneh sees Carey as a missionary, not a colonist. See Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad*, 212.

the activities and efforts of African American Baptist churches forging local and regional associations and conventions. This movement lasted until the founding of the National Baptist Convention in 1895. What characterizes this movement is African American Baptist initiative and social consciousness as associations in Ohio, Illinois, and in Michigan were all anti-slavery, but they also had missionary zeal as they focused on planting local churches in their respective areas. Only the American Baptist Missionary Convention (ABMC) sent missionaries to West Africa during the early period, and eventually state conventions in Virginia, North and South Carolina would send missionaries to West Africa. As the first African American Baptist associations grounded themselves throughout the Midwest, progressive-minded African American Baptist leaders in the East organized for missions with an abolitionist bend. The churches in the East were members of predominately white Baptist Associations; therefore, their intent was to organize on a regional basis, and not a local one. This occurrence of 1840 is clearly the first clear link to the founding of the National Baptist Convention of 1895.<sup>29</sup>

African American Baptist churches from the eastern seaboard organized the ABMC in 1840. This convention was the first regional convention founded by African American Baptists, but its founding was rather humble. At its organization in New York City, only three churches were members: Abyssinian Baptist in New York, Zion Baptist also of New York, and Union Baptist in Philadelphia. Later there would be member churches from Washington, D.C. to Boston, though Jackson states that there were churches in the Midwest that also became members of this convention. Washington

---

<sup>29</sup> See Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship*, 38-39. Washington asserts that the founding of the ABMC along with other regional conventions founded in the 1860s led directly to the formation of the National Baptist Convention. Once African American Baptists organized themselves regionally, the momentum carried through the antebellum period and into subsequent periods of American history.

substantiates Jackson's statement commenting that the Western churches gave their consent to the organization of the convention at the behest of Rev. John Berry Meachum of St. Louis. Reverend Sampson White, then pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church was the first moderator of the convention. Later in the 1850s, this convention would take a strong stand repudiating the practice of American slavery and it excluded slave-owning ministers from its membership. Also in the 1850s, in 1858 specifically, Moderator Sampson White and other key leaders of the convention encouraged the member churches to withdraw from their white controlled associations owing to prejudice.<sup>30</sup>

According to Washington, the impetus for the formation of the ABMC was two-fold: the lack of attention on African missions by the Triennial Convention and the lack of strength toward abolitionism on the part of white Baptists. The convention committed itself to African missions primarily, but it was concerned with "domestic" concerns such as planting churches, caring for ministers' widows, and temperance. Reverend Jeremiah Asher though an abolitionist was also concerned about creating what Washington calls "a black Christian civilization in Africa." He believed that the gospel preached in Africa to Africans would remedy the slave trade and slavery itself.<sup>31</sup>

The constitution of the ABMC reveals a strong emphasis on missions work following in the footsteps of the American Baptist Home Missions Society of the Triennial Convention. According to Article 2 of the Constitution of the ABMC:

---

<sup>30</sup> Fitts, *History*, 67; Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship*, 39, 41; Bobby J. Lovett, *A Black Man's Dream: The Story of R. H. Boyd, the First One Hundred Years* (Nashville, TN: Mega Corporation, 1993), 6. See also Jackson, *A Story of Activism*, 25, 27. It is interesting that an African American Baptist convention would have to make a statement barring slave-owning ministers from having membership. There are two intertwined reasons for this: first, the membership of the convention was open to whites from the South; and second, in the wake of the split among Baptists in 1845 owing to slavery the leaders of the ABMC believed it needed to make its position clear thereby siding with the Northern Baptists.

<sup>31</sup> Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship*, 39-41.

It shall be the object of this convention to propagate the gospel of Christ, and to advance the interests of his kingdom, by supplying vacant churches when requested; by sending ministers into destitute regions within our reach; and by planting and building up churches, whenever a favorable opportunity offers. This convention shall in no case interfere with the internal regulation of the churches or associations.<sup>32</sup>

Such a design on the part of the convention demonstrates at least two concerns: first, it was unconvinced that the ABHMS had put forth enough energy to plant African American Baptist churches; and second, the object of the convention reveals the need for African American Baptists to organize their own work for their people. Though this became the case with the founding of the convention, the leaders still maintained fraternal relations with the leading men of the Triennial Convention.

The ABMC was also concerned with foreign missions work as well, especially work in West Africa. Fitts offers this interesting statement regarding ABMC priorities: “To be sure, the foreign mission motif was the dominant reason for the organization of the American Baptist Missionary Convention.”<sup>33</sup> With this interest, it can be understood that the ABMC attempted to enlarge the African missions work first begun with the Richmond African Baptist Missionary Society in 1815 that the Triennial Convention helped to facilitate. It is obvious that Africa never became a priority for the Triennial Convention as these Northern African Americans believed that they needed to launch their own missions work there. According to the report from the secretary of the ABMC in 1859, the convention sponsored foreign mission work in West Africa, specifically in Sierra Leone. According to this report, the missionary in West Africa was busy preaching the gospel “to the untutored heathen, in order to prepare the way of civilization.” In this same report, the secretary recognizes the difficulties encountered in reaching the goal of

---

<sup>32</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 31.

<sup>33</sup> Fitts, *History*, 67.

the Convention, which was to build a chapel and establish a mission in Sierra Leone. Clearly, the major goal of the Convention was to preach the gospel and bring civilization to West Africans.<sup>34</sup>

The same report also gives a summary of the work of another missionary. The Convention sponsored a missionary at Waterloo, West Africa (there is no detail regarding where in West Africa this was). This missionary returned to the United States for a respite, and he visited churches of the Convention. The secretary also states in the report that the missionary's goal was to persuade the Convention's board to defray the cost of building a chapel in Waterloo. The missionary reported that there were 35 African converts through his ministry, and he proposed to organize them into a church upon his return. The Board did raise \$450. The Board also decided to ordain Brother Barnett (the returning missionary) owing to the poor health of Pastor J. J. Brown back in Sierra Leone. Brown was the only ordained Baptist minister in Sierra Leone according to this report.<sup>35</sup>

The report adds more information on Missionary Barnett as he returned to his mission post. When Barnett returned to Sierra Leone, he found Waterloo ravished by smallpox. He also found that the Southern Baptists had entered the very same field and began to pay one Bro. Weeks, another African American Baptist missionary. Barnett had left Weeks in charge of the work during the former's return to the United States. From this same report, Brown seems also to be a Southern Baptist missionary.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 53. Jordan re-prints detailed reports from this convention, and what follows is from his re-printing; Fitts, *History*, 67.

<sup>35</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 53-54.

<sup>36</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 45-55.

Undaunted, Barnett then went off to Bullom Shores to begin another mission station. According to the report, this place was across the river from the capital, Freetown into the hinterland. The Board decided to allow the Convention to decide on whether or not to build a station and to ask the churches of the Convention to fund it.<sup>37</sup>

The report also summarizes a letter from Barnett dated 18 June. In the letter, Barnett stated that there may still be hope for a mission in the region near Waterloo. He visited Waterloo spending seven days there (Brown accompanied him). While there, Barnett baptized six converts. He also visited a small town near Waterloo, Benguma, and preached the gospel there. Barnett noted that the people there are desirous for the gospel. It is also reported in Barnett's letter that the people in Benguma would like to have a chapel there, and they offered him a piece of suitable land. The report ends with a strong appeal to the Convention to aid Barnett in the building of a chapel in either Benguma or Bullam Shore.<sup>38</sup>

From this entire report, there is indication that this Convention had a strong desire to have a missionary presence in West Africa. There is a passage toward the end of the report that is worthy to reproduce here:

Now dear Brethren, we submit this whole matter to your careful and prayerful consideration. We wish you to look at it in the light of eternity, and with reference to the judgment, when the assembled heathen of Africa, in the language of Sierra Leone, in a plea for the spread of the gospel among the heathen of Africa, said "Now if we refuse to tell them of a Savior's love, they will then say to us, 'Now you been seen us going to hell, and never told us.'" <sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 55.

<sup>38</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 55.

<sup>39</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 58.

This passage exemplifies the attitude of some in the Convention regarding its primary mission to spread the gospel among Africans on the West Coast of Africa during the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

As the Civil War ended and freedom came to approximately four million slaves, a new era of church planting and denomination-building emerged for African Americans especially in the South. During the 1860s, African American Baptists throughout the South founded independent churches and commenced to organize district associations and state conventions. Montgomery states, “Of all the ways the former slaves displayed their newly acquired freedom, leaving the white-controlled churches and forming their own religious organizations was perhaps the easiest and most gratifying.”<sup>40</sup> This “exodus,” as described by E. L. Thomas, consisted of churches that had been separate branches of white churches, or under white supervision seizing their opportunity to achieve ecclesiastical freedom.<sup>41</sup> Hine, Hine, and Harrold write that “In the years after slavery, the church again became the most important institution among African Americans other than the family.”<sup>42</sup> From the numerous district associations founded in the 1860s and 1870s came state conventions. It is within a few important state conventions that the missionary spirit of African American Baptists remained alive. The missionary endeavors of these few conventions are the link between Lott Carey’s enterprise in the 1820s and the founding of the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention in 1880.

---

<sup>40</sup> William E. Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African-American Church in the South 1865-1900* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 55.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas, *National Baptist Convention*, xiii. Hine, Hine, and Harrold also view the organization of independent churches as a keen example of African Americans exercising their freedom. See Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *The African-American Odyssey*. Combined Volume (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000), 257.

<sup>42</sup> Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *The African-American Odyssey*, 263.



According to Martin, the formation of the BFMC in 1880 has its foundation in the activity of Southern state conventions especially those in the Southeast such as South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia. The organization of these state conventions was a result of the increased numbers of African American Baptists during Reconstruction. John Hope Franklin stated that there were 500,000 African American Baptist by 1870.<sup>43</sup> In 1878, South Carolina African American Baptists decided to increase their interest in African missions through their new state convention, the Baptist Educational, Missionary, and Sunday-School Convention of South Carolina. According to Martin, the convention demonstrated great interest in Africa because of a lack of interest in African missions by their fellow white Baptists, especially the Southern Baptist Convention. Another reason for this strong interest centered on the perceived kinship between African Americans and Africans. Owing to these factors and this interest, the convention sent its own missionary to West Africa in 1879, Harrison Bouey. In the same year, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina sent its own missionary to Africa---James O. Hayes, who ventured to Liberia. Martin fails to mention that Bouey's mission coincided with a renewed interest in African emigration in South Carolina. According to Montgomery, Bouey was also a part of emigration scheme sponsored by African American South Carolinians. It is clear that Hayes was a missionary rather than an emigrant. With Bouey's departure, there is the connection between emigration and African missions once more.<sup>44</sup> Martin asserts that the Virginians were the most active and the most important African American Baptists who made African missions a priority. According to the constitutions of the Virginia Baptist State Convention the spread of Christianity in Africa

---

<sup>43</sup> Franklin and Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 258.

<sup>44</sup> Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree*, 197-198.

was second in importance in its overall aims. Armed with this conviction, the Virginia Convention sent Solomon Cosby to Nigeria as its missionary in 1878.<sup>45</sup>

Martin's assertion finds indirect support from other African American Baptist historians and writers, who hold that William W. Colley, a Virginian, was the driving person toward the founding of both the BFMC and the National Baptist Convention. Thomas goes as far to state that Colley's work "create[d] the nucleus for our beginning."<sup>46</sup> William W. Colley served as a missionary to West Africa representing the white Southern Baptist Convention.<sup>47</sup> Colley was a Virginian born on February 12, 1847 in Prince Edward County. According to Jackson, there was some question regarding Colley's racial classification. People concluded that he was African American because of his connection to the causes of African Americans and Africans, religiously speaking. Jackson further reports that Colley's wife stated her husband was of Scottish and American Indian descent, but for some reason he assumed for himself an African American identity. In 1875, Colley began his four year tenure as a missionary under the auspices of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Colley assisted a white missionary from Mississippi, named W. J. David; they worked together among the Yoruba in Nigeria. While there Colley became upset over the treatment of Africans by white missionaries. He became convinced that there needed to be more

---

<sup>45</sup> Martin, *Black Baptists*, 45-46, 48-49; Thomas, *National Baptist Convention*, 2.

<sup>46</sup> Thomas, *National Baptist Convention*, 1.

<sup>47</sup> According to Eddie Stepp, the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention commissioned African American missions from its founding in the 1840s. See Eddie Stepp, "Interpreting a Forgotten Mission: African American Missionaries of the Southern Baptist Convention in Liberia, West Africa 1846-1860." Unpublished Dissertation, Baylor University, 1999.

African American missionaries in the African field, and this would remedy racist treatment of Africans.<sup>48</sup>

Returning to Virginia with these sentiments, Colley met with the leaders of the Virginia state convention and with African American Baptist leaders from Washington, D.C. Jackson places moderate significance to Colley's meeting the Virginians, and rightly recognizes that the Virginians had been the leaders of African American mission interest in Africa going back to the formation of the Richmond African Missionary Baptist Society in 1815, and the work and legacy of Lott Carey. Freeman states that the Virginia Baptists "employed" Colley to stir interest for foreign missions among African American Baptists. Martin, however, takes this argument further. According to Martin, it was collaboration between Colley and the Virginians that prompted Colley's tour of the Southern states primarily to survey the interest of forming a national missionary convention. Martin states that "it was quite obvious that the BFMC to a great extent represents an outgrowth of the Virginia Baptist State Convention."<sup>49</sup> Martin supports this argument by stating that since it was the Virginia's conventions goal to "evangelize and" uplift "their racial kin" it realized that great amounts of funds were necessary, which it was unable to raise itself.<sup>50</sup> The need of a convention of churches would solve the financial concern. Because of this, Colley embarked on his most momentous tour. In addition to what Martin asserts regarding the Virginians' motivations, other historians have remarked on Colley's personal motivations. Jordan states that the personal motivation of Colley was "a never failing faith in God and a desire to be of greater

---

<sup>48</sup> Freeman, *Epoch*, 69-70; Jackson, *A Story of Activism*, 33; Martin, *Black Baptists*, 49. See also Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 99-100; Harvey, *Bridges*, 22-23; Fitts, *History*, 114; Martin, *Black Baptists*, 49-50; Thomas, *National Baptist Convention*, 1-2.

<sup>49</sup> Martin, *Black Baptists*, 53. See also Martin, "Black Foreign Mission Convention," 13-16.

<sup>50</sup> Martin, *Black Baptists*, 53.

service to the Master.”<sup>51</sup> He also explained that Colley had a great desire to revive “the Colored Baptists to a greater love for God and Africa.”<sup>52</sup>

It is clear that the major motivation for this campaign was two-fold: first, African Americans needed to direct their own course regarding sending their own missionaries to Africa; and second, African Americans were the only ones with a unique qualification (their blackness) to be missionaries in Africa in order to eradicate racism on the mission field. Secondly in Martin’s estimation, African American Baptist leaders in Virginia believed that this was their opportunity to seize in order to lead in forging a new national convention to enlarge their own desires regarding African missions.<sup>53</sup>

One thing Martin ignores is that African American Baptists in their organization of the Baptist Foreign Mission Board fit within the African American nationalism of the times. Montgomery argues this, and offers strong support that there can be no solid understanding of African American Baptist organization without considering how it falls within nationalism. Regarding 19<sup>th</sup> century African American nationalism, Montgomery states that it “typically manifested itself either in a break away from the control of external authority or in efforts to unify people who shared a common culture but were disunited politically and economically.”<sup>54</sup> The organization of the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention fits within this description of nationalism.

Martin also ignored the coincidence between interest in African missions and emigration. A climate of disappointment also pervaded among African American

---

<sup>51</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 99.

<sup>52</sup> Jackson, *A Story of Activism*, 32-33; Freeman, *Epoch*, 70; Martin, *Black Baptist*, 53-54. Even within the ranks of the Virginia Baptists, the Richmond African Baptist Missionary Society was most influential in sending Colley on his tour. See also Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 100.

<sup>53</sup> Martin, *Black Baptists*, 49-50.

<sup>54</sup> Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree*, 224.

following the end of Reconstruction in 1877. Many African Americans disappointed with the degree of African American progress turned their gaze to Africa as they did early in the century.<sup>55</sup> Though this was the case, Williams asserts that the African missionary movement was more important than Back to Africa concerns. He supports this by detailing the mission organization by both Methodists and Baptists during the post-Reconstruction period to 1900.<sup>56</sup>

Colley's tour and engagements with Southern African American Baptist leaders was successful, and there was strong interest in forming a new national missionary convention. According to Freeman, Colley impressed upon the brethren their Ethiopian responsibility to share the gospel with their African kin. These leaders heeded Colley's appeals. In May 1880, Colley gave a positive report of his travels to the Virginia convention, and it gave support to Colley to initiate the formation of the new convention.<sup>57</sup> Colley planned a meeting to be held in November of 1880 in Montgomery, Alabama for all African American Baptists interested in forming the new convention. As African American Baptists in the Southeast anticipated this meeting in Montgomery, their efforts at unity through African missions was of utmost importance historically. Freeman understood this in commenting that: "It must be clearly understood that the idea of foreign missions gave rise to the convention and that the Foreign Mission Board is the oldest organization of the Convention."<sup>58</sup> From the early period of antebellum days to post-Reconstruction America, African American Baptists maintained a vital interest in

---

<sup>55</sup> Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree*, 194-196.

<sup>56</sup> Walter L. Williams, *Black Americans and the Evangelization of Africa 1877-1900* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), xiv, 65-72.

<sup>57</sup> Martin, "Baptist Foreign Mission Convention," 15.

<sup>58</sup> Freeman, *Epoch*, 2.

carrying the gospel to Africa, West Africa solely. This indicates that generations of African Americans in slavery and in freedom never forgot their homeland. It also reveals that the Virginia Baptists who formed the Richmond African Baptist Missionary Society continued its emphasis on African missions, and that informed Colley's mission. Was it merely notions of kinship that motivated African American Baptists and African American Protestants in general to have active missionary engagement in Africa? Were African American Baptists just as committed as their white counterparts to teach the gospel to all nations? The next chapter responds to these questions by examining the theological underpinnings of African American Baptists in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Chapter Two: The Shaping of National Baptist Theology in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in early 20<sup>th</sup> century

“Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus going on before. Christ the royal Master, leads against the foe; forward to the battle. See, His banners go.”<sup>1</sup> This is the first line of a popular Protestant hymn written by Sabine Baring-Gould, an Anglican curate and minister, in 1864. According to Baring-Gould, he wrote this hymn for a Sunday school procession for Pentecost in 1864; as of such, it was originally a children’s hymn. This was a period of surging mission interest in Africa and Asia by Americans and Europeans, and it could easily be interpreted as a call to Christian missionaries to take the gospel to the far corners of the earth being assured of their success because of Christ’s promise that the “gates of hell” will never prevail against his Church. The tone of the hymn is obviously militaristic, but in a spiritual sense. In other lines of the hymn, there are clear references to the spiritual warfare Christians are to engage in found in the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. According to Bert Polman, the popularity of the hymn lies in part owing to the musical setting of the hymn, which is “St. Gertrude.” Arthur S. Sullivan composed the tune, and it dates from 1872; the tune causes one to begin marching almost involuntarily. All in all, it is a hymn that encourages the faithful to press on despite difficulties knowing Jesus Christ has assured that his Church will persevere. It would become a type of theme hymn for missionaries as they progressed to extend the Kingdom of Christ throughout world. It would also become a

---

<sup>1</sup> See Faith Cook, *Our Hymn Writers and Their Hymns* (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2005), 378. This is hymn is also #423 in the *National Baptist Hymn Book*. 4th ed. (Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1905), 306-307.

hymn that “echoed” the steady march of British colonialism throughout the world, according to Christian biographer and writer Faith Cook.<sup>2</sup>

This particular hymn that could have multiple interpretations and could encourage missionary work and colonialism, and written by a “high church” Anglican during the middle of the Victorian Age typifies the interesting dynamic of African American Baptist identity during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century into the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1905, the National Baptist Publishing Board published a pocket-sized hymnal that included “Onward, Christian Soldiers.” In 1915 a split occurred within the National Baptist Convention that centered on the ownership of the National Baptist Publishing Board, and in the wake of the split the newly founded National Baptist Convention of America established a partnership with the National Baptist Publishing Board owned by the Boyd family. Because of this, the NBC-USA, Inc. had to found a new publishing interest called the Sunday School Publishing Board (SSPB). In 1921, the SSPB published its first hymnal called *Gospel Pearls*. Included in this hymnal was the hymn “Onward, Christian Soldiers.” The SSPB eventually published a full hymnal entitled the *Baptist Standard Hymnal*; it also contains the hymn “Onward, Christian Soldiers.” As a hymn, “Onward, Christian Soldiers” has endured in print in three successive hymnals published by the National Baptist Convention of the United States of America, Inc. during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is both a National Baptist standard hymn and a Baptist standard hymn. The endurance of this hymn points to the fact that African American Baptists viewed themselves as part of the Baptist family even in the hymns that they sung in worship. At

---

<sup>2</sup> Cook, *Our Hymn Writers*, 381. According to Cook, this hymn was a favorite of Winston Churchill. For information on the writing of the hymn, see Emily R. Brink and Bert Polman, eds., *Psalter Hymnal Handbook* (Grand Rapids, MI: CRC Publications, 1998), 694-695.



the same time, African American Baptists embraced a unique vision for their work to carry the gospel to Africa in order to redeem the continent of their ancestry. They believed strongly that God's Providence dictated to them their role in Africa's redemption as a people redeemed from the shackles of sin and chattel slavery.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter serves as the theological and doctrinal context for the analysis of the specific motivations articulated by National Baptist leaders in general and leaders of the Foreign Mission Board. As alluded to in the paragraph above, African American Baptists were Baptists. This means they expressed the Christian faith as Baptists, they upheld the Baptist distinctions, and they believed, in most cases, that the Baptist tradition carried forth New Testament principles since the founding of the Church of Jesus Christ. As African Americans, they also had a keen sense of what they believed was God's plan for them and for Africa. Though orthodox Baptists, African American Baptists were watchers of Providence; they believed that God had placed them in a peculiar station to be special agents of his plan of redemption for the African continent. African American Baptists' embracing of this unique theological nuance consolidated them with the broader African American Protestant ethos during this period.

This chapter is broken into three distinct sections that highlight the differing sources that shaped National Baptist theology in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as the Foreign Mission Board sent out its first generation of missionaries to Africa, and supported R. A. Jackson in South Africa. The first section specifies the influence of broader Baptist theology into the 19<sup>th</sup> century and how it affected African American Baptists who were slaves. Following this section, attention focuses on key leaders among African American

---

<sup>3</sup> See hymn #35, *Gospel Pearls* (Nashville, TN: Sunday School Publishing Board, 1921); Brink and Polman, eds., *Psalter Hymnal Handbook*, 81.

Baptists and their expression of Christianity and their Baptist faith. This section will reveal that African American Baptists were dyed in the wool Evangelicals. The last section will spotlight the development of Ethiopianism dating back to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century with the writings of Oladuah Equiano, and underscoring the intellectual contributions of the Episcopalian Alexander Crummell and the Presbyterian Edward Blyden.

One major source of Baptist theology is the body of Baptist confessions adopted and written by Baptists in America during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is worth noting that there arose no African American Baptist pastor or theologian who was a prolific writer of theology during this period. During Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction, there did emerge a small class of well-educated African American Baptist pastors who did write, but the body of that literature is tiny compared to what their white Baptist counterparts produced. At the same time, African American Baptists taught and preached the distinctive Baptist doctrines along with Protestant orthodoxy. At the time that the National Baptist Convention came into existence in 1895, it adopted an already extant document as its “Articles of Faith.” This strongly indicates that African American Baptists were in line with the majority of Baptists in America.<sup>4</sup>

Rev. John Cobb, a contemporary African American Baptist expositor, writes this regarding National Baptists and their relationship to Calvinism: “Our peculiarities as Baptists stem from our belief in the Reformed doctrine of faith, or what is commonly referred to as Calvinism.” Commenting on the same relationship, W. Bishop Johnson, the first president of the National Baptist Education Convention during the 1880s and was a

---

<sup>4</sup> The National Baptist Convention adopted the *New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* as its “Articles of Faith” in 1895; it suggested that these articles be adopted by every Baptist church upon its constituting.

leader within the early National Baptist Convention, stated that: “Colored Baptists are Calvinistic [sic] in doctrine.” Wheeler labels African American Baptists during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as Calvinists also with a bit of modification regarding the understanding of human will. Though in this day African American Baptists in general have lost sight of their Calvinistic foundations, the historical record clearly points to one.<sup>5</sup>

According to William Lumpkin, the first Calvinistic Baptists in America, residing in New England, refused to write confessions of faith. He calls this a “non-confessional tradition.” Lumpkin reasons that the lack of a confessional tradition in New England among Baptists was because Baptist churches consisted of both Arminians and Calvinists. Those Baptists that settled in the Middle colonies, however, did write confessions. Lumpkin attributes this to their closer relationship with English Baptists. Owing to this, confessional writing became popular during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>6</sup>

It was during the late 17<sup>th</sup> century that Baptists began to proliferate in the Middle Colonies such as New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. In 1688, the Pennepack Baptist Church organized in what is now Philadelphia, PA. Elias Keach, son of Benjamin Keach a prominent English Baptist pastor, was the first pastor of the Pennepack Church. Keach ministered to other Baptists in the immediate area in Pennsylvania and in New Jersey, all of whom held membership at the Pennepack Church. As Baptists outside of Philadelphia and in New Jersey formed their own independent congregations, Keach encouraged “connectionalism” among the churches. Eventually, seven churches in this

---

<sup>5</sup> See Rev. John Cobb, *Baptist Training Union Series: Baptists and Christian Doctrine*. Series Three (Nashville, TN: Sunday School Publishing Board, 2003), 51. W. Bishop Johnson’s quote appears in Pius, *Outline*, 80; Wheeler, *Uplifting the Race*, 9. Wheeler makes references that some African American Baptist pastors taught that the human will could choose Christ; thereby, their Calvinism was somewhat modified. This may be the case, but it an incorrect assumption that Calvinists believe that the human will has no function in salvation. Calvinists believe that through spiritual regeneration that human heart changed so that it does receive the gospel of Jesus Christ.

<sup>6</sup> William Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1959), 347.

region formed the Philadelphia Baptist Association in 1707. This was the first Baptist association in America. According to Lumpkin, the Philadelphia Association “became the pattern for numerous other Calvinistic Baptist associations.”<sup>7</sup>

The significance here of the Philadelphia Baptist Association is its adoption of the *Philadelphia Baptist Confession of Faith* in 1742. This confession is partially the product of Benjamin and Elias Keach. After serving the Pennepack Church in Philadelphia, Elias Keach returned to London in 1692, and in 1697 with his father published a confession of faith that was the same as the London Baptist Confession of 1689 with the addition of two articles. These two articles are: “On the Singing of Psalms,” and “On the Laying on of Hands.” Benjamin Keach was a pioneer in both of these practices among English Baptists. The Philadelphia Association used this confession as early as 1712 to resolve a doctrinal dispute in the church at Middletown, New Jersey. In 1724, the Philadelphia Association proposed to adopt the *London Confession*’s chapter on the Sabbath. Finally, the Association adopted Keach’s confession in 1742 at its annual meeting in September.<sup>8</sup>

Like their non-confessional writing brethren in New England, Baptists in the Middle Colonies were Calvinists. During this period in colonial history, the vast majority of Baptists were unashamedly Puritan Calvinists. The *Philadelphia Confession of Faith* falls within the great Puritan-Presbyterian-Congregationalist English and American tradition. The *London Baptist Confession of 1689*, which the *Philadelphia Confession* is based upon comes from the *Savoy Declaration* that English Independents wrote. The *Savoy Declaration* is based upon the *Westminster Confession of Faith* written by English

---

<sup>7</sup> Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 348.

<sup>8</sup> Lumpkin, *Baptist Confession*, 349. See *Philadelphia Baptist Confession*. The confession has been republished in various publications including Edward Hiscox and Everett Goodwin, *New Hiscox Guide to Baptist Churches* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1995).

Puritan Presbyterians after the English Civil War in the 1640s. After the Philadelphia Association adopted its confession, other associations adopted it: the Ketchikan Association of Virginia (1766); Warren Association of Rhode Island (1767); Charleston Association (1767); Elkhorn Association of Kentucky (1785); and the Holston Association of Tennessee (1788). At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, American Baptists from the Middle States to the Southern States and to the Western States held to the tenets of Calvinism.<sup>9</sup>

From these associations, the Charleston Baptist Association became instrumental in Colonial America and into Antebellum America. The Charleston Association was the first Baptist association in the Southern colonies. When the churches of this association desired to adopt a confession of faith, it looked north to Philadelphia. It adopted the *Philadelphia Confession of Faith*; thereby, making this confession the most prominent among colonial Baptists. In 1813, the association added the *Baptist Catechism* to its confession.<sup>10</sup>

The Kehukee Association that consisted of churches from Virginia and North Carolina was one of the earliest Regular Baptist associations; it formed in 1769 as a result of churches planted by the Philadelphia Association and the Charleston Association.<sup>11</sup> Some churches that formed the Kehukee Association had been Arminian Baptist churches, but fell in line with Calvinism through Calvinist preachers like Joseph Gano, Vanhorn, and Miller. Rather than adopting the *Philadelphia Confession*, the Kehukee

---

<sup>9</sup> To compare these three English Calvinistic confessions, see *Westminster Confession of Faith, Historical Documents of Congregationalism*, and *London Baptist Confession of 1689*. For the chronology of associations adopting the *Philadelphia Confession*, see Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 352.

<sup>10</sup> Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 352.

<sup>11</sup> The term Regular Baptist referred to churches and associations that adhered to the *Philadelphia Baptist Confession* and who were non-revivalistic.

Association drafted its own confession, which is arguably the first confession written by an American Baptist association. Leading ministers of the association wrote the confession in 1777, and the confession reflects clearly the Calvinism that the majority of Baptists clung to during this period.<sup>12</sup>

The Sandy Creek Association was another Baptist association formed in the South. It was a Separate Baptist association that had roots in New England during the Great Awakening. The two major figures that helped to found this association were Shubal Stearns and Daniel Marshall. Both men were from New England and moved to the South in 1754. During the Great Awakening, New Light Congregationalists split from the Old Light Congregationalists. The New Lights emphasized conversion before baptism, and they eventually became Baptists owing to the Baptist teaching that held the same position. Stearns and Marshall began ministering in Northern Virginia, where some Baptists had affiliation with the Philadelphia Association. The men then moved to North Carolina in Sandy Creek, and there they established the Sandy Creek Baptist Church. This church became the center of tremendous Baptist growth as it planted 42 churches in the next seventeen years. In 1758, Stearns founded the Sandy Creek Baptist Association; in 1816 it drafted a confession of faith that has distinct Calvinistic articles.<sup>13</sup>

Though Baptists in the South continued to uphold orthodox Calvinist doctrine, others in the North and West began to subscribe to a more moderately Calvinist confession, namely the *New Hampshire Declaration of Faith*. Edward Hiscox has given a good historical overview of the production of this declaration of faith. According to Hiscox, this declaration had its genesis in the New Hampshire Baptist State Convention

---

<sup>12</sup> Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 353-354.

<sup>13</sup> Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 357-358. Articles three and four are distinctly Calvinistic, see 358.

in 1830. It was the pleasure of the convention to draft a confession that all churches in the state could agree with. The convention approved a draft of the confession in 1833. The reason why this declaration has had such wide appeal is because one of the writers, Rev. J. N. Brown, published a revised version of the declaration in 1853 in his the *Baptist Church Manual*. In concluding his overview of the history of the writing and publication of this declaration, Hiscox remarks: “No other creed form has attained to anything like its general circulation among American Baptists.”<sup>14</sup>

According to Hiscox, Baptists were orthodox, evangelical, and Calvinistic. In his *Principles and Practices*, Hiscox includes a revision of the *New Hampshire Declaration*. The declaration’s orthodoxy is found in its article, “The True God,” which affirms the doctrine of the Trinity. The other articles are Evangelical, Calvinistic, and uniquely Baptist. Detail about these articles will be discussed later in this chapter.<sup>15</sup>

Related to confessions are the works of prominent Baptist theologians. There were no writing Baptist theologians in America during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but a few came to the fore during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Among them were noted Southern Baptists James P. Boyce and John L. Dagg. Northern Baptists like A. H. Strong were also influential theologians. All of these men would have influenced educated African American Baptists, especially during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Boyce was born in Charleston, South Carolina on January 11, 1827 into a wealthy family. Boyce received a good education attending Charleston College, Brown University in Rhode Island, and Princeton Seminary in New Jersey. Boyce’s conversion occurred during a spring break from Brown while he sat under the ministry of Richard Furman,

---

<sup>14</sup> Edward T. Hiscox, *Principles and Practices for Baptist Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1980), 538, 541-542.

<sup>15</sup> Hiscox, *Principles and Practices*, 19.

pastor of First Baptist Church of Charleston. Previously, Boyce's mother underwent conversion through the preaching of Basil Manly, Sr., a prominent Baptist minister. Owing to this, Boyce's mother became a Baptist.<sup>16</sup>

After graduating from Princeton in 1851, Boyce accepted the call to pastor the First Baptist Church of Columbia, South Carolina. He labored there until 1855, and then received an appointment of professor of Systematic Theology at Furman College. While at Furman, Boyce laid out three principles in a speech that formed the outline for Southern Seminary that he helped to found in 1859. The third principle was to have an "Abstract of Principles" to guide professors in their teaching and to guard against error.<sup>17</sup>

Boyce founded Southern Seminary in 1859 along with John A. Broadus, Basil Manly, Jr., and William Williams. Boyce was a committed and an unashamed Calvinist being "reared in a Calvinistic atmosphere." He received further grounding in Calvinism at Princeton. In 1858, in anticipation of the founding of the seminary, Boyce authored the *Abstract of Principles*. These articles of faith are orthodox, evangelical, and strongly Calvinistic.<sup>18</sup>

Another major means of shaping Baptist identity and theology during the 19<sup>th</sup> century were various catechisms. The use of catechisms dates from the period of the Early Church, where church leaders had a concern about apostasy leaking into the Church causing heresy. These church leaders used catechisms to ensure that a catechumen had a good knowledge of the faith, and that he/she was a genuine convert to Christianity. This period of catechizing took place prior to receiving baptism. Later, after the

---

<sup>16</sup> See Ernest Resinger and Fred Malone, "Introduction to the 1977 Edition," in James P. Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2006), iv. According to Ernest Resinger and Fred Malone, the writers of the introduction, Boyce's mother had been a Presbyterian.

<sup>17</sup> E. Resinger and F. Malone, "Introduction", v-vii.

<sup>18</sup> E. Resinger and F. Malone, "Introduction," xii. See also Appendix 2-*The Abstract of Principles* (1858).



Christianization of the Roman Empire and, according to Nettles, the progress of infant baptism, catechetical instruction shifted from a pre-baptismal instruction to preparation for confirmation. Charlemagne decreed that all baptized children should know the Apostle's Creed and the Lord's Prayer in the least. Nettles calls the Reformation "the Golden Age" of catechisms because both Luther and Calvin insisted on the need of catechisms to instruct the faithful and their children. Of the Reformed Protestant catechisms the most popular and enduring are the *Heidelberg Catechism* written in 1562 and the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* written in 1645-1647.<sup>19</sup>

According to Nettles, Hercules Collins used the Heidelberg as the basis of his catechism written in 1680. Collins was a Particular Baptist pastor in London during the 17<sup>th</sup> century; he succeeded John Spilbury. Collins' work is entitled the *Orthodox Catechism*, and according to Nettles, he used the Heidelberg as the basis of his catechism to show, in part, the agreement between Particular Baptist theology in England and the theology of Continental Reformed churches. Interestingly enough, this would be the same reason why Particular Baptists would choose to use the *Westminster Confession of Faith* as the basis for the *London Baptist Confession of 1689*.<sup>20</sup>

The *Shorter Catechism* has also had influence on the writing of Baptist catechisms. The *Shorter Catechism* influenced Keach's catechism and Spurgeon's catechism. Keach's catechism, in turn, influenced the writing of catechisms by leaders in the Philadelphia Baptist Association and the Charleston Baptist Association, which were

---

<sup>19</sup> Tom J. Nettles, *Teaching Truth, Training Hearts: the study of catechism in Baptist Life* (Amityville, NY: Calvary Press Publishing, 1998), 16-17.

<sup>20</sup> Nettles, *Teaching Truth*, 18.

two of the leading Baptist Associations in both Colonial America and post-Revolutionary America.<sup>21</sup>

The writing of catechisms by the Philadelphia and Charleston Associations notwithstanding, Baptists began to write catechisms since their inception during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Both General and Particular Baptists produced them. Particular Baptists used confessions of faith and catechisms as guards against apostasy. American Baptists, whether in the North or the South, perpetuated the tradition of using catechisms to instruct the children of the faithful and others such as slaves. It is interesting that slave-holding Baptists in the South employed catechisms to instruct their slaves owing to other principles of catechetical instruction outlined by Nettles. Nettles writes that there are at least four general principles regarding the use of catechisms:

1. The use of multiple catechisms for different age levels;
2. The importance of memorization;
3. The acquisition of “heart knowledge” was the aim of catechetical instruction;
4. The necessity of “cognitive understanding.”

For much of the ante-bellum period, Southern states enacted strict laws forbidding slave education. It is a paradox that in Southern Baptist slave-holding circles there was a movement to catechize slaves in the Christian faith, which meant that slaves would receive a modicum of education.<sup>22</sup>

From the Revolutionary period onward, Southern slave-holders began to defend their practice of holding Africans in slavery. Christian slave-holders, Baptists,

---

<sup>21</sup> Nettles, *Teaching Truth*, 19.

<sup>22</sup> Nettles, *Teaching Truth*, 19-23.

Methodists, and Presbyterians alike, argued that slavery offered a great opportunity for them to teach their slaves the faith. Southerners linked this aspect of the slavery apologetic to their attempt to introduce the “benighted” Africans to Western civilization. Southern Baptists such as John L. Dagg embraced the Providential Design argument that held that it was God’s will that Africans be brought to America and enslaved, and that it was God’s will for free Africans to return to Africa to preach the gospel to Africans on the continent.<sup>23</sup> In thinking through this argument, Southern Baptists in general failed to note that it was God’s will to free African American slaves as well. This is the logical conclusion of the Providential Design argument.

Before the Civil War, Southern Baptist ministers put forward good efforts to catechize slaves. One such minister was the aforementioned James Petigru Boyce, who catechized slaves during his tenure as pastor at First Baptist Church in Columbia, South Carolina. Robert Ryland who served as pastor of First African Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia was another minister who toiled catechizing slaves during the antebellum period. In fact, Ryland wrote a catechism in 1848 entitled, “A Scripture Catechism for the Instruction of Children and Servants.” This catechism was Calvinistic, comprehensive, and fully treating Christian doctrine and practice; this catechism was by no means watered-down in its doctrinal content.<sup>24</sup>

Nettles includes excerpts from one catechism written by a Southern Baptist minister for the instruction of slaves. In 1857, the Southern Baptist Publication Society approached E. T. Winkler, then the 31-year old pastor of First Baptist Church in Charleston, South Carolina, to write a catechism for the instruction of the vast slave

---

<sup>23</sup> Nettles, *Teaching Truth*, 127.

<sup>24</sup> Nettles, *Teaching Truth*, 131-132.

population of the South. According to Nettles, Winkler's catechism was no defense of the slave system, and it failed to over-emphasize the duty of slaves to masters. For example, Winkler's teaching on the Fifth Commandment focused primarily on the relationship between parents and children. Regarding slaves and masters, Winkler simply instructed slaves to honor their masters and for masters to care for their slaves.<sup>25</sup>

The excerpt from Winkler's catechism is topical and systematic. For example, Lesson 1 is on God, Lesson 10 is on the Trinity, Lesson 12 is on the Fall of Man, and Lesson 23 is on the doctrine of justification. These lessons among the others signify that Winkler desired to teach slaves the content of the faith without focusing on their oppressed condition as chattel slaves. Each lesson includes a bible verse, which may have been for memorization; and Winkler wrote the catechism questions and answers succinctly and concisely that made for easy memorization and retention. Before the questions and answers, Winkler gave brief expositions of the topic to introduce and frame the catechism questions and answers. After each series of questions and answers, Winkler attached a hymn to reinforce the lesson through singing. The content of the catechism is wholly evangelical; it teaches slaves the way of salvation, which is by repenting from one's sins and placing faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Winkler's catechism, which was the official Southern Baptist catechism specifically for slaves (though the title of the catechism makes it known that it was for "colored" people, possibly for free African Americans too), is quite comparable to other Baptist catechisms used to instruct children.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Nettles, *Teaching Truth*, 132-133.

<sup>26</sup> Nettles, *Teaching Truth*, 140.

Though Southern Protestant ministers often upheld the slavery status quo, the catechisms included in Nettles' work demonstrates that some Baptist ministers took seriously their understanding that slavery could serve as a type of school of evangelization for African Americans. Contemporary scholars can criticize these men for failing to take the next logical step in pronouncing slavery as antithetical to the gospel of Jesus Christ. These scholars would be correct in their criticism. The point here is that some Southern Baptists taught slaves sound Baptist doctrine that carried into the next period of African American history.

As African Americans emerged from slavery and independent Baptist churches began to flourish, the educated (even if informally educated) among African American Baptist leaders commenced to preach and write from a clear theological framework. For the most part, these Baptist leaders during Reconstruction operated from the Calvinistic framework they learned and had been taught during slavery. Placed alongside Evangelical Calvinism was Landmarkism; this doctrinal nuance helped to define National Baptist theology well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Paul Harvey labels Landmarkism a "more theologically developed form of Protestant primitivism."<sup>27</sup> Landmarkism developed among Baptists mainly in the South during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and it maintains that the only New Testament church is the local church. It also maintains that Baptists are true New Testament Christians tracing their beliefs all the way back to John the Baptist, who initiated believer's baptism. Harvey notes further that this theology developed more as an anti-denominational theology and response to the establishment of a strong Southern

---

<sup>27</sup> Paul Harvey, *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities Among Southern Baptists 1865-1925* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 8.

Baptist Convention.<sup>28</sup> Though this may have been the case among whites, it fails to account for its popularity among African Americans. According to Wilson Fallin, Landmarkism deals with “the nature of the true church.” Fallin also mentions that Landmarkism’s spread to African American Baptists is owed to James M. Pendleton, who helped to found Crozer Seminary in PA though he was a Southerner who was also pro-Union. Northern African American Baptist ministers who studied at Crozer and other Northern Baptist schools received this doctrine gladly.<sup>29</sup>

Those African American Baptist pastors who were unable to study in the North had access to Landmarkism through Southern Baptist pastors and the writings of Pendleton. Pendleton wrote and published two major works that have endured, the *Baptist Church Manual* and *Christian Doctrines*. In the *Baptist Church Manual*, Pendleton devotes the first chapter to the subject of the church. In it, Pendleton makes the point that the major use of the word “church” in the New Testament refers to local churches. Based upon this observation, Pendleton offers this definition of a church:

A church is a congregation of Christ’s baptized disciples, acknowledging him as their Head, relying on his atoning sacrifice for justification before God, and depending on the Holy Spirit for sanctification, united in the belief of the gospel, agreeing to maintain its ordinances and obey its precepts, meeting together for worship, and cooperating for the extension of Christ’s kingdom in the world.<sup>30</sup>

This is one of the more comprehensive definitions of the church one will find in a Baptist manual. Probably recognizing this, Pendleton offers an abridgment of the above definition: “A church is a congregation of Christ’s baptized disciples, united in the belief of what he has said, and covenanting to do what he has commanded.”<sup>31</sup> This is a pithy

---

<sup>28</sup> Harvey, *Redeeming the South*, 7-8.

<sup>29</sup> Fallin, *Uplifting the People*, 100-101.

<sup>30</sup> James M. Pendleton, *Baptist Church Manual* (Nashville, TN: Boardman, 1966), 7.

<sup>31</sup> Pendleton, *Manual*, 7.

definition conducive for his readers to memorize. Other than writing a nice, short definition of a church, it is important to note that Pendleton unashamedly takes a Baptist perspective of what a church is even though he never states his position is uniquely Baptist. This is part and parcel of Landmarkism; Landmarkist Baptists believe that their position is the only biblical position, and all other views of the nature of the church are deficient.

Though Pendleton upheld Landmarkism, he maintained a Calvinistic belief on the doctrines of grace, especially regarding divine election. He makes this evident in his chapter VII, “The Purposes of God” in *Christian Doctrines*. Quoting from an unnamed source, Pendleton asserts that election is God’s choice of certain persons out of the masses of people to be his own people. From the general definition of election, Pendleton points out that election is personal and not based on the foreseen faith of the one who believes in Jesus Christ and his gospel. Regarding the extent of the atonement of Christ, Pendleton agrees with Andrew Fuller, an English Baptist of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, who argued that Christ’s death was for all sinners without distinction. This means that Christ’s death was for all classes of sinners, but not for all sinners indiscriminately. Again, on these all important doctrines Pendleton was solidly Evangelical and Calvinist.<sup>32</sup>

Because a few prominent African American Baptists received their education at Northern Baptist seminaries, Landmarkism became a mark of National Baptist theology. The most prominent of National Baptists was an ardent Landmarkist; this was the first president of the NBC-USA, Rev. Elias Camp Morris. According R. M. Caver’s

---

<sup>32</sup> See Pendleton, *Christian Doctrines: A Compendium of Theology* (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1957), 105-108; 241-245. Judson Press originally published this work in 1878.

“Biographical Sketch” of Morris that originally appeared in *Preachers’ Magazine*, he writes that Morris was born in Murray County, Georgia on May 7, 1855; he and his parents were slaves until after the Union Army defeated the Confederates in Georgia in May 1864. Morris and his family then moved to Dalton, Georgia after he and his people receive their freedom from slavery, and he received “a common school education.” After his conversion to the Christian faith, Morris entered the gospel ministry in 1874, and moved to Helena, Arkansas. Caver describes him as an organizer who “has organized educational, missionary, and literary publishing interests.” Testament to Caver’s description of Morris’ organization prowess is the founding of Arkansas Baptist College in 1884. Beginning in 1879, Morris served as pastor of Centennial Baptist Church in Helena.<sup>33</sup>

As the first president of the NBC-USA, Morris had the greatest of all platforms to influence the NBC-USA vision and policy, but he also used this platform to affect National Baptist theology. From his addresses and sermons, it is clear that Morris was a Landmark Baptist. In 1898, Morris delivered a sermon entitled, “Infallible Proofs of the Perpetuity of Baptist Principles” before the convention. This is a sermon arguing for the Landmarkist position without reservation. Since this is an official convention sermon, it is representative of the stand of National Baptists in general. Morris clearly lays out the Landmarkist thesis at the beginning of the sermon: “I do not fear the criticism that may follow after I tell you that the history of the Baptists covers all the time from the days of John the Baptist until now...”<sup>34</sup> Not to give a statement that may be misconstrued, Morris clarifies that John the Baptist was a prophet in the church of Jesus Christ, not its founder.

---

<sup>33</sup> R. M. Caver, “Biographical Sketch,” in E. C. Morris, *Sermons, Addresses, and Reminiscences and Important Correspondence* (New York: Arno Press, 1980), 174-175.

<sup>34</sup> Morris, “Infallible Proofs for the Perpetuity of Baptist Principles,” 24.



According to the Scriptures, God is the founder of his church and he wields the authority over the Church.<sup>35</sup>

Anticipating objections to this bold thesis, Morris emphasizes the importance he gives to John the Baptist's ministry. For Morris, John's significance rests upon his ministry of the word and sacrament; in John's case the word is the preaching of repentance, and the sacrament is, of course, baptism. This clarification brought to the attention of an audience of Baptists would cause everyone to take a sigh of relief as well as draw its attention. Once again, after making this point Morris states that Christ has authority in the Church, not John. Just earlier, he makes the point that the Church is under God the Father's authority; but this is no double-talk. Morris is comfortable in claiming that Christ has authority in the Church because Christ and the Father are one according to the Scriptures.<sup>36</sup>

Moving away from establishing the biblical support for Landmarkism, Morris shifts his attention to the historical support. Consistent with orthodox Landmarkism, Morris held that Baptist history can be traced straight to New Testament times. He alludes to the "baptism of blood," which refers to the persecution suffered by Baptists from the times of Jesus and the apostles to others of the present day. Suffering is the key theme in Morris' historical discussion. He states that Baptists throughout history have suffered owing to the lack of religious freedom exercised in both State and Church. Though Morris is clear to remark that everyone who suffered for the faith in history never

---

<sup>35</sup> Morris, "Infallible Proofs," 24.

<sup>36</sup> Morris, "Infallible Proofs," 25-26.

called themselves “Baptists,” he states that they were Baptists by conviction. This is the classic Landmark argument of the “trail of blood.”<sup>37</sup>

Two years later Morris delivered a sermon at the 1900 Annual Session of the NBC-USA titled, “Origins of the Baptists.” This sermon is much more forceful than the previous one, and is longer. Morris argues for the succession of Baptists and Baptist principles from the times of Christ based on John 1:2, which reads: “The same was in the beginning with God.” In the argument, Morris posits: “that Baptists have their origin in Christ, who himself antedates the formation of the world, and that the beginning of their work in the world was made manifest with the advent of Christ and the choosing of the first disciples.”<sup>38</sup> To support this bold claim, Morris must provide evidence for a succession of Baptist principles.

Morris’ first line of defense is to prove that Baptists represent the coming kingdom prophesied by the prophet Daniel recorded in the book of Daniel 2:44, which reads: “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” Taken together with his previous point, Morris holds that Baptists are the representatives of the true or pure Church of Christ. What makes Baptist churches pure in this context? Since Baptists are part of the prophesied kingdom, they must be under the authority of the King, Jesus Christ. Morris holds that Baptists take the Great Commission seriously, and this indicates that they operate subject to the commands of the King. What is operative here for Morris is that Baptists are the only group of Christians that makes no additions to

---

<sup>37</sup> Morris, “Infallible Proofs,” 26-28.

<sup>38</sup> Morris, “Origins of the Baptists,” in *Sermons*, 49.

this commandment; they teach and preach only what Christ commanded his church to teach and preach, and that is to make disciples and baptize them after they become disciples.<sup>39</sup>

As this argument progressed on the point that Baptists abide by the strict commands of Christ neither adding, nor taking away from them, there is a hint of anti-creedalism evident. Morris argues that since Christ is the founder of the Church any creed that has a human founder lacks divine approval and appointment. This point is implicitly critical of just about every other Christian tradition including Protestant ones such as those that emerged during the period of the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century such as Lutheranism and Presbyterianism since Luther stands behind Lutheranism, and Calvin stands behind Presbyterianism. Morris' point supports one Landmark principle, or credo: "No creed but the Bible."<sup>40</sup>

Just as Pendleton was both a Landmark Baptist and a Calvinist, Morris demonstrates the same connection in this particular sermon. Morris quotes a Calvinist theologian, who asserted the existence of the covenant of grace in which Christ serves as the representative of the elect of God whom God has elected according to his foreknowledge. This is clear Calvinist language for only Calvinists understand God's decree to save elect sinners as executed through the covenant of grace. The Calvinist understanding here is that the Triune God planned from all eternity to save a people from sin, and Christ would come into the world with the mission to save them and them only.

---

<sup>39</sup> Morris, "Origins," 49. In this particular section of the sermon, Morris quotes a portion of Matthew's account of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:20).

<sup>40</sup> Morris, "Origins," 50.

In this section of the sermon, Morris indicates that he is a historic Calvinist as well as a Landmark Baptist.<sup>41</sup>

Following this excursion into Calvinism, Morris begins to investigate the beginning of the kingdom of God, which for him embraced Baptist principles. In traditional Landmark fashion, Morris argues that John the Baptist is the beginning of this kingdom that exclaims Baptist principles. This is the same position he placed forward in the earlier sermon; for Morris, John the Baptist's ministry is the beginning because of his preaching of the word of God and the sacrament of Baptism. While stating this, Morris, again, emphasized that Christ is the head of the Church and he has given the Church its doctrines; these doctrines are the ones held by Baptists such as salvation by grace alone, justification by faith alone, believer's baptism, the perseverance of the saints, and only two church ordinances--baptism and Lord's Supper. These doctrines have been explained by the apostles of Christ, according to Morris. By stating this, Morris implies the Baptist principle of Scripture alone for these doctrines are found only on the pages of the Holy Scriptures. In ending this section of the sermon, Morris claims that Christ and the apostles were Baptists based on the definition of a Baptist, which, according to Morris, is one who believes in baptism by immersion.<sup>42</sup>

Moving away from the connection between Christ and the apostles and Baptist doctrine, Morris addresses church government and polity. Quoting from another unknown writer/theologian, Morris unearths the assertion that early churches were independent churches and only consulted with other churches. This assertion has the point to quiet the arguments coming from Roman Catholics and Anglicans who hold to

---

<sup>41</sup> Morris, "Origins," 50.

<sup>42</sup> Morris, "Origins," 50-52.

the Episcopal system of church government where bishops rule the church (in the case of the Roman Catholic Church, the Pope is the supreme head of the Church on earth as bishops rule under him). It also seeks to counter arguments from Presbyterian and Reformed churches that claim that biblical church government consists in the plurality of elders in the local church that connect with other churches through presbyteries or classes and a General Assembly or Synod. The major point Morris makes in this portion of this sermon is that New Testament churches were independent, and related to other independent churches voluntarily when difficulties regarding doctrine and practice would arise. Connected with church independence is also church polity, or government. Morris quotes from the same writer to argue against the Episcopal form of church government specifically. The unnamed writer states that the bishop was the leader of only one congregation according to New Testament, and by implication this discredits the argument for Episcopal government claiming that the latter has no biblical warrant.<sup>43</sup>

As Morris ends this sermon, he emerges more as a sectarian. By arguing that the “Baptist” principles survived through history even amidst persecution by Roman Catholics, he strongly intimates that Baptists are the one true Church countering the Roman Catholic argument. Since he has already argued that Baptists trace their history back to the beginning of the New Testament period, he has implied that Baptists pre-date Roman Catholics. He quotes from a source, the *History of Religious Denominations of the World* that insists that the Waldensians and Anabaptists held to Baptist principles and

---

<sup>43</sup> Morris, “Origins,” 52. To offer a bit more clarification on this point, Roman Catholics and Anglicans in particular hold that the Episcopal system of church government is biblical being of apostolic origin. Catholics, for example, hold that Peter was the first Bishop of Rome thereby making this the most important of all bishoprics. This is why the Pope is simultaneously the Bishop of Rome. Anglo-Catholics reject this argument, but do hold that the apostles instituted Episcopal government holding that the NT office of bishop designated the oversight of the office holder over a group of churches in a given region, or diocese.

were victims of persecution. As he ends this sermon, Morris indirectly conveys the idea that Baptists are the elect of God as he quotes from Ephesians 1 in connection with the origin of Baptists.<sup>44</sup>

Though Morris would be seen as the leader of the NBC-USA during this period of its infancy, another key leader helped to shape its early theology. This would be Lewis G. Jordan, who would become the second Corresponding Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board as well as the first historian of the convention (as noted in the introduction). In his *Negro Baptist History*, Jordan presents Baptists within Church history within a Landmark framework. This is evident as he begins this chapter by plainly remarking that each Christian denomination is distinct. He states, “A Baptist Christian is quite different from a Methodist Christian; and the Methodist Christian is different from the Presbyterian; a Disciple Christian differs from either of them, and again a real Christian in the Episcopal or Lutheran Church differs from them all.”<sup>45</sup> Though Jordan recognizes that Methodists, Presbyterians, and other Protestant Evangelicals are part of the Body of Christ, he notes marks of distinction. At the same time, he fails to uphold the teaching that all denominations are created equal. Jordan firmly believes that the principles of Baptist churches are correct, and that Baptists must defend and teach these truths.<sup>46</sup>

From this strong beginning, Jordan writes of the growth of Baptist churches in America. Jordan offers platitudes to Baptist churches for their strictness regarding membership requirements, and he attributed this to the growth of Baptist churches in America. According to Jordan the primary attribute of the growth of Baptist churches is:

---

<sup>44</sup> Morris, “Origins,” 52-54. Ephesians 1 is one of the major passages of Scripture that teaches that the Church, as the people of God, is an elect people predestined to be so by the eternal plan of God.

<sup>45</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 1.

<sup>46</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 1.

“The absolute supremacy of Christ in His Church.”<sup>47</sup> This is a provocative statement. Obviously, other denominations argue the same regarding their churches; but this statement draws attention to what Jordan perceives as the dominant attitude of Baptists during his day and the century before. Baptists were a people strictly and wholly under the Lordship of Christ, e.g. in the government of the church, the ordinances of the church, and the terms of church membership.<sup>48</sup>

It is interesting that Jordan claims that since Baptist churches are different from any other church Baptist historians must employ a different methodology. Baptist history, according to Jordan, must depart from a different point. Though he acknowledges that the name Baptist is a relatively modern term, the principles held by Baptists are ancient. With that, Jordan asserts that Baptist historians must trace the history of Baptist churches through those groups that held to Baptist principles. The principles, according to Jordan, are standing for the word of God and for the ways of God found in the word. The proper starting point for the Baptists, then, is the history of Christ’s ministry on earth. This differs slightly from Morris’ argument, but it is the same in essence. Jordan concludes this particular point by stating that the principles of the Church since Christ are Baptist principles.<sup>49</sup>

Jordan, then, answers the question: what is a Baptist in history? For Jordan, a Baptist in history is one “Who held to the supreme authority of the Bible and discarded the idea of infant baptism; who contended for a spiritual church membership and for the baptism of believer’s only, for the absolute freedom of conscience, and therefore for

---

<sup>47</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 2.

<sup>48</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 2.

<sup>49</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 2-3.

entire freedom from the control of the civil government in religious matters.”<sup>50</sup> This answer enables Jordan, and other Baptist historians to search for true Baptists throughout history; but it poses nearly an impossible task for the Baptist historian in search of such true Baptists because from the second century onward there was no group of Christians who held to every of the above quoted points. Nevertheless, Jordan manages to trace the sufferings of so called Baptist groups from the Middle Ages to the Reformation period. Like Morris, Jordan focuses upon the legendary “trail of blood.”<sup>51</sup>

During the post-Reconstruction period into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, African American Baptists readily accepted the Landmark teaching. Why? Such a teaching offered African American Baptists a sense of credibility that they may have lacked as a group owing to the times in which America still deemed them as an underclass. Coming out of slavery, African Americans needed to grasp onto any semblance of respectability; and accepting a theology and a view of Christian history that placed them in the true Church among the very elect of God afforded such respectability and dignity even. Another reason why African Americans received Landmark principles is that it gave them another connection with the broader American Baptist movement as both Northern and Southern Baptists accepted this teaching. One more reason that African Americans had for accepting Landmark teaching is that it served as further motivation to engage in mission activity. Knowing that they were members of the pure Church instituted by Christ, gave African American Baptists confidence as their conventions and associations sent men and women to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in Africa. By planting the true Church of Christ on

---

<sup>50</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 3.

<sup>51</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 4.



the “dark continent” was nothing insignificant for a people struggling under Jim Crow segregation and institutional racism.

As African American Baptists began to form their own churches, associations, and state conventions in the South after the Civil War, there was also a push for publishing their own Sunday school literature. Though leading men such as Reverend William J. Simmons of Kentucky pressed for African American Baptists to publish their own literature, the most prominent leader who endeavored to found an African American Baptist publishing house was Reverend Richard Henry (R. H.) Boyd. Boyd is described by his biographer as a “race man,” which meant that he worked for the uplift and good for African Americans. Boyd typified African American Baptist ministers and leaders who sought a place of their own within Baptist denominationalism during the 1890s. Boyd and others tired of the paternalism of white Northern Baptist and the segregation of their Southern homeland. With the founding of the National Baptist Convention in 1895, Boyd and others took the initiative to urge for an independent African American Baptist publishing house to serve the unique needs of their own churches. Though clearly one to advance African Americans, this initiative also highlights how race failed to encroach upon Baptist doctrine. The National Baptist Publishing Board began in 1896 through the efforts of R. H. Boyd who was the new corresponding secretary of the Home Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention. The material published by the National Baptist Publishing Board in the early twentieth century maintained those historic Baptist distinctions.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> Bobby Lovett, Boyd’s main biographer and the unofficial historian of the Boyd family publishing enterprise called R. H. Boyd a “race man” in the sense that Boyd worked for African American Baptists to stand on their own without succumbing to white paternalism. See Lovett, *A Black Man’s Dream*, 1.

Like other men who would become key leaders in the National Baptist Convention, Boyd was born into slavery and rose from its depths. Boyd was born in Noxubee County, Mississippi in March 1843. He and his family lived and worked on the Gray family's plantations in Mississippi and Louisiana before remaining in Texas beginning in 1859. Boyd (known as Dick Gray) accompanied his master and his master's sons onto the battlefields of the South during the Civil War. Master Gray obviously impressed Boyd into this accompaniment as there were many men who were slaves that followed their masters to the war involuntarily.<sup>53</sup>

Before leaving with his master and sons, Boyd's mother, Indiana Gray, professed faith in Christ sometime shortly before 1860 and joined a Baptist church. Lovett implies that through his mother's conversion and membership in a local Baptist church, the young Boyd became influenced toward the Baptist tradition. Interestingly enough, in 1861 Boyd's mother would marry one Sam Dickson, a Baptist deacon.<sup>54</sup>

After Emancipation, a few watershed events occurred in Boyd's life. After Emancipation, Boyd remained in Texas living in east-central Texas in the area known as the "black belt" and then he settled around San Antonio near Mexico. Around the age of twenty-two, Boyd began to teach himself to read with the aid of the Blue Back Speller and a white girl. In December 1869, Boyd professed faith in Christ and received baptism at Hopewell Baptist Church in Navasota, Texas. During this time of new beginnings for Boyd, he changed his name to Richard Henry Boyd and he accepted his calling into the

---

<sup>53</sup> Lovett, *Black Man's Dream*, 17-18.

<sup>54</sup> Lovett, *Black Man's Dream*, 16-18.

gospel ministry. These changes in Boyd during this time would shape his life and the life of the National Baptist Convention as well as National Baptist identity and thought.<sup>55</sup>

Recognizing the need for a good education to be an effective gospel minister, Boyd determined at the age of 45 to acquire a degree from Bishop College in Dallas, Texas. Bishop was an American Baptist Home Mission Society college, and it served as a training ground for African American Baptist ministers and those men who aspired to enter the ministry. Owing to financial hardship, Boyd was unable to finish the required courses to obtain his degree from Bishop.<sup>56</sup>

Though such a stumbling block threatened to derail Boyd's success in the gospel ministry, Boyd managed to emerge as a leading figure among African American Baptists in Texas during the 1870s through the 1890s. Boyd became a church planter and a denominational organizer during this time period. He along with a white minister founded the Texas Negro Baptist Convention. Boyd also served as pastor of three of the churches he planted during this time. Again, with the aid of white Baptist ministers, Boyd organized Lincoln District Baptist Association at Navasota in 1875.<sup>57</sup>

During 1892-1893, a controversy brewed among African American Baptists in Texas regarding white, Northern Baptist control of the African American colleges in the state. Boyd was part of a faction against ABPS domination of Sunday school literature distributed to African American Baptist churches. At this time, Boyd was educational secretary of the Texas Negro Baptist Convention. According to Lovett, "Boyd continued to resent the paternalistic attitude that the northern white Baptist officials had displayed

---

<sup>55</sup> Lovett, *Black Man's Dream*, 20.

<sup>56</sup> Lovett, *Black Man's Dream*, 20-21.

<sup>57</sup> Lovett, *Black Man's Dream*, 21-22. The churches Boyd served as pastor during this period are Ninevah Baptist Church, Union Street Baptist Church, and Mount Zion Baptist Church.

toward the black Baptist officials.”<sup>58</sup> Because of this contention and resentment, Boyd and his group formed another convention of African American Baptist churches in Texas in 1893; this was the General Missionary Baptist Convention of Texas. After the founding of the new convention, Boyd became superintendent of missions (he tendered his resignation from the pastorate of Mount Zion in order to assume this position). This split between members of the “old convention” and Boyd would last until 1915 when the National Baptist Convention split over control of the National Baptist Publishing Board operated by Boyd.<sup>59</sup>

The root of the split in Texas, according to Lovett, was Boyd’s perception that the Northern white Baptists treated African American ministers poorly. The ABPS failed to publish literature written by African American ministers. The new convention Boyd and his fellows founded set out to carve a niche for “black independence.” At this time, such an endeavor and attitude on the part of African American leaders was part of the greater thrust of African American leaders to engage in projects and concerns meant to lift up the race.<sup>60</sup>

During Boyd’s time as education secretary of the Texas Negro Baptist Convention, he established a working relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention’s Sunday School Publishing Board located in Nashville. In the aftermath of the founding of the new convention, Boyd succeeded in procuring Southern Baptist Sunday school literature in order to distribute to African American Baptist churches that were members of the new convention in 1895. The Sunday School Publishing Board of the Southern Baptist Convention donated \$120 of literature for distribution. This was an

---

<sup>58</sup> Lovette, *Black Man’s Dream*, 22.

<sup>59</sup> Lovett, *Black Man’s Dream*, 22-23.

<sup>60</sup> Lovett, *Black Man’s Dream*, 23.

interesting and shrewd move. On the surface, it would seem that such a move by Boyd was counterproductive. Why would Boyd and the new convention use Southern Baptist material rather than material published by the more liberal Northern Baptists. As mentioned above, Boyd perceived that the Northern Baptists were paternalistic and were against African American Baptists “going it alone” in attempting to publish their own literature. On the other hand, Boyd had the assurance that the SBC were supportive of the long-term goals of African American Baptists in creating an independent publishing venture.<sup>61</sup>

In September 1895, Boyd and other Texans traveled to Atlanta to attend the first annual session of the NBC-USA. According to Lovett, Boyd’s contingent represented “separatists,” which refers to African American Baptists who favored the publication of their own Sunday school literature and who desired independence from the ABPS. There was another faction within the fledgling convention that desired to maintain a good relationship with white Northern Baptists and the ABPS.<sup>62</sup>

In the wake of attending the NBC-USA’s first annual session, Boyd’s group met in November 1895 and decided to press for a publishing house with the NBC-USA. They agreed that they would urge for this at next year’s annual session. At the time of the second annual session in September 1896 held at First Colored Baptist in St. Louis, Missouri, Boyd presented his resolution to begin a publishing board in the convention. He argued “that a people without a literature of their own can never have the respect of

---

<sup>61</sup> Lovett, *Black Man’s Dream*, 23-24. According to Lovett, the Sunday School Publishing Board of the Southern Baptist Convention was reluctant to establish a formal relationship with Boyd and the new convention in Texas. The reason for this was that the SBC had decided to allow the ABPS to continue its distribution of literature to African American Baptists in Texas. This would quell any type of competition between the two conventions. Also this was part of an agreement between the two conventions made at Fortress Monroe, Virginia in 1894. In addition, the SBC supported NBC-USA independence in the spirit of the times that demanded social segregation.

<sup>62</sup> Lovett, *Black Man’s Dream*, 25.

their contemporaries or achieve the recognition commensurate with their ability and capabilities.”<sup>63</sup>

The publishing venture eventually came under the aegis of the fledgling Home Mission Board after the parent body of the convention failed to agree with this proposal. Interestingly, Boyd had been elected recently to the office of corresponding secretary. At the first meeting of the Home Mission Board, Boyd suggested a “printing committee to prepare and publish a black series of Sunday school literature.”<sup>64</sup> The board concurred, and the process of establishing a publishing board began. Boyd’s great dream was now taking shape and coming into fruition.<sup>65</sup>

Boyd arrived in Nashville in November 1896, and there he immediately received help from Southern Baptists. He received help from Reverend James Frost, the director of the Baptist Sunday School Publishing Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in the form of free use of printing plates. Frost offered more support to Boyd by introducing him to printers in town. The donation of printing plate usage and Frost’s joining Boyd to help him establish relationships with Nashville printers all signified the type of support the SBC was eager to give to Boyd and African American Baptists regarding this publishing enterprise. According to Lovett, Frost was ready to help Boyd “because he earnestly supported the ideas of progress and success for the former slaves.”<sup>66</sup> This is what Boyd perceived back in the early days of the new Texas convention about Southern Baptists.

---

<sup>63</sup> Lovett, *Black Man’s Dream*, 28.

<sup>64</sup> Lovett, *Black Man’s Dream*, 29.

<sup>65</sup> Lovett, *Black Man’s Dream*, 29.

<sup>66</sup> Lovett, *Black Man’s Dream*, 32-33.

With this new venture, came a new name. In a meeting of the printing committee of the Home Mission Board, the members agreed that the publishing house should be called the “National Baptist Publishing Board.” This meeting occurred in November 1896. Following this small, but landmark meeting, Boyd agreed with his printer to print “ten thousand intermediate quarterlies, ten thousand primary quarterlies, and eighty thousand primary and intermediate leaflets.”<sup>67</sup>

In December 1896, Boyd and his tiny staff at the NBPB sent form letters to churches and Sunday schools introducing them to the NBPB. Lovett reproduced the letter. The letter appeals to “Negro” Baptists who want to do “something for themselves.” Boyd lays out the issue: independent African American Baptist churches, Sunday schools, etc. should have an independent Publishing House serving their publishing needs. Boyd makes a strong appeal to the spirit of African American self-progress: “Do you think the Negro capable of doing something for himself? Will you try to help? Will you help the young Negro to be a self-respecting man by putting the Periodicals of his father’s organization in his hands?” Not only was Boyd corresponding secretary of the Home Mission Board, but he was secretary-treasurer of the NBPB.<sup>68</sup>

Such a direct appeal by Boyd militated for his success in garnering support from African American Baptists. According to Lovett, Boyd proved able to gain African American Baptist support of his publishing effort because he emphasized the publication of “Baptist material for black by blacks.” This put Boyd at odds with the ABPS that had no confidence in African Americans publishing their own literature specifically for their own consumption. Even though Boyd’s emphasis produced disfavor with the powerful

---

<sup>67</sup> Lovett, *Black Man’s Dream*, 35, 38.

<sup>68</sup> Lovett, *Black Man’s Dream*, 41-42, 44.

ABPS, it continued to win over the SBC. Boyd became a favorite among Southern Baptists, and he even attended the SBC's annual sessions.<sup>69</sup>

One of Boyd's most urgent necessities was Sunday school material written by African American Baptists for African American Baptists. He accomplished this beginning in the third quarter of 1897. All of the materials sent out in the name of the NBPB had its stamp upon it: lesson cards and an African American editorial board contributed to the lesson quarterlies. Also the NBPB published both catechisms and song books. The NBPB began to publish books starting in 1899. It published a song book in 1901, and the *National Baptist Hymnal* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) in 1903. The NBPB published books by African American authors. According to Lovett, "The early books represented a virtual storehouse of history about early twentieth century black Baptists. At least the publications brought pride to a once depressed people."<sup>70</sup>

Why did Boyd believe it was of paramount importance for African American Baptists to write and publish their own Sunday school literature? Boyd realized that African Americans needed to publish their own religious literature because of white racism; he believed he had to meet a real need within the African American Baptist community. Boyd was quite distrustful of any material produced by whites because of the atmosphere of the day, which was rife with virulent forms of racism. Any material written by whites for African Americans had the potential of offending African American sensibilities. Because of this, the mission of the NBPB was to teach Baptist doctrine to

---

<sup>69</sup> Lovett, *Black Man's Dream*, 48-49.

<sup>70</sup> Lovett, *Black Man's Dream*, 50-51, 53.



A  
B  
C  
D  
E  
F  
G  
H  
I  
J  
K  
L  
M  
N  
O  
P  
Q  
R  
S  
T  
U  
V  
W  
X  
Y  
Z

African Americans, and to help children defend it. With this, Boyd published picture cards that depicted African Americans in a positive light with dignity.<sup>71</sup>

At the 1900 annual convention of the NBC-USA, the convention gave Boyd and the NBPB clearance to publish a hymnal; the NBPB published it in 1901. This was the first convention-sanctioned hymnal published by the NBC-USA. By 1902, the NBPB published 58 titles. These titles included works on African American history and race relations. These topics were of great importance to Boyd. He believed that whites needed education regarding African Americans; this would help to alleviate the race problem. Sutton E. Griggs, a prominent National Baptist pastor, became a favorite of Boyd's. Griggs radically opposed American racism. He began printing his work with the NBPB around this time.<sup>72</sup>

At the turn of the century during the first decade of the new century, Boyd began to publish small works that highlighted Baptist doctrine and practice. The most popular and extant of these works is *What Baptists Believe & Practice*. This little work is in the spirit of older and popular Baptist guides and manuals written by Hiscox and Pendleton. Boyd served as the editor of this work, and he wrote the introduction. In this introduction, Boyd cites the purpose of the booklet. The scriptural headings bring attention to the purpose of the booklet: to clarify what Baptists believe; and to exhort African American Baptists to practice Baptist doctrine.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> Lovett, *Black Man's Dream*, 54. One of my earliest memories of Sunday school at Historic Second Baptist Church in New Orleans was the depiction of African Americans in the Sunday school quarterlies and on the picture rolls. Second Baptist's Sunday School purchased its material from the National Baptist Publishing Board. The purpose during the early days of the NBPB was to give African American children positive images of African Americans. That was the same purpose during the 1970s as I was a Sunday school student using NBPB material.

<sup>72</sup> Lovett, *Black Man's Dream*, 61, 65-66.

<sup>73</sup> R. H. Boyd, *What Baptists Believe & Practice* (Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, n.d.), 3. Boyd cites two scriptural passages that serve to frame his introduction, namely Jude 3 and John 14:15.

Also in the introduction Boyd identifies National Baptists as part of the Protestant family, and within the confines of “regular” Baptists. He writes that there is “danger” that the core of Protestant beliefs will be lost on the coming generation owing to the onslaught of modernity. According to Boyd, the doctrines of Baptist churches are mostly common to Protestant orthodoxy. Within the larger stream of Protestants, churches that are part of the National Baptist Convention are what Boyd calls “regular Baptist churches.” More so than with other Protestants, National Baptist churches stand with their regular Baptist brethren regardless of race. Boyd assumes here that whether African Americans or other Baptists will largely believe the same things and practice the same things. He assumes that there is a Baptist consensus.<sup>74</sup>

Boyd also states that Baptists show precision and comprehensiveness regarding obedience to Christ. He writes that “Baptists draw no lines between essential and non-essential when they come to obey the commands of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” This book is especially for young converts so that they would be well-acquainted with Baptist doctrine and practice.<sup>75</sup>

Judging from Boyd’s simple chronology, the NBPB published this booklet in 1902. His work as corresponding secretary of the NBPB motivated him to publish a short and concise book on Baptist doctrine and practice. Boyd implies that there should be

---

The Jude passage reads: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” The John passage reads: “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Both passages inform Christians to defend the historic faith given to them by Christ, the prophets, and the apostles found only in the Holy Scriptures, and to obey the faith.

<sup>74</sup> Boyd, *What Baptists Believe*, 5.

<sup>75</sup> Boyd, *What Baptists Believe*, 5-6.

unity in both doctrine and practice among African American Baptists, especially those affiliated with the National Baptist Convention.<sup>76</sup>

There are two articles that detail what Baptists believe and practice regarding the two sacraments (ordinances) of the Church--baptism and Lord's Supper. Rev. J. T. Brown wrote the article on baptism, and Rev. E. M. Brawley wrote the article on the Lord's Supper. Nothing is known regarding Brown, but E. M. Brawley was a leading African American Baptist of his day. According to William Simmons, Brawley was born in March 1851 in Charleston, SC, and he received his education at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania and graduated in 1875. Brawley was the first African American student at this Baptist school. As will be discussed below, Brawley believed that educated African American Baptist pastors needed to write on doctrinal issues. In this his article, he practices what he preaches.<sup>77</sup>

Boyd includes the *New Hampshire Declaration* of 1853 as the "Articles of Faith" of National Baptist churches. He states that these articles "should be adopted by Baptist churches at the time of organization." There is absolutely no change to these articles. This indicates that National Baptists had no problems with Baptist doctrine as articulated by other American Baptists. It is obvious that Boyd and other National Baptists believed in doctrinal purity and unity. Their problem, however, was with societal practices white Baptists brought into the church such as racism and paternalism.<sup>78</sup>

The covenant Boyd includes is similar to the one included in Brown's *Baptist Church Manual* and Pendleton's book of the same title. It also differs from Hiscox's

---

<sup>76</sup> Boyd, *What Baptists Believe*, 6.

<sup>77</sup> Boyd, *What Baptists Believe*, 6. Boyd lists the writers of the articles. William J. Simmons, *Men of Mark: Eminent, Progress and Rising* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company Inc., 1970), 645-646.

<sup>78</sup> Boyd, *What Baptists Believes*, 10.

covenant. The covenant and articles of faith demonstrate that National Baptists were regular Baptist churches that held to the same doctrines as Northern Baptists and Southern Baptists. Even though the “Articles of Faith” are less comprehensive, and more summary statements than the chapters and articles contained in the London and Philadelphia Confessions, the former articles profess essentially the same doctrines. With this stated, National Baptists, as W. Bishop Johnson states, held to a Calvinistic set of doctrines; yet these doctrines are historically Evangelical Protestant. This buttresses Boyd’s assertion in the introduction of this booklet that National Baptists held to Protestant beliefs.<sup>79</sup>

Boyd includes two insightful articles in this booklet as mentioned above. The first is by Rev. J. Brown and it is called “Christian Baptism.” Brown, in this essay, strongly asserts that baptism of believers by immersion is Christian baptism and the only baptism found in the Scriptures. Brown writes first of the continuance of Baptists in defending believer’s baptism and baptism by immersion. Brown states that they do so for two reasons: to teach the youth; and to convert paedobaptists. He calls baptism “the fundamental doctrine of our denomination.”<sup>80</sup> Brown further claims that Baptists teach this doctrine out of obedience to the commandment of Christ who authorized baptism. He believes that correctness regarding this doctrine is essential; this is no insignificant issue of the Christian faith.<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> For the text of the covenant, see Boyd, *What Baptists Believe*, 8-10. Before 1925, Southern Baptist churches held to the *New Hampshire Declaration* primarily though some did hold to the *Abstract of Principles*. In 1925, the SBC published its own confession of faith, *The Baptist Faith and Message*, which is based on the *New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* and compatible with it.

<sup>80</sup> J. Brown, “Christian Baptism,” in Boyd, *What Baptists Believe*, 18.

<sup>81</sup> J. Brown, “Christian Baptism,” 18-19. The term “paedobaptists” refer to Christian churches that practice infant baptism such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, and Presbyterian, Methodists, and Congregationalists.

From this general introduction, Brown writes of the proper definition of the word “baptize.” He holds to the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, which argues that the Holy Spirit of God inspired every word that the biblical writers penned. Armed with this position, Brown seeks to use Scripture itself and Scripture alone to define the word “baptize” authoritatively. Brown claims that the Bible defines baptize (according to the Greek) as “to dip, to immerse, to immerse in water.” He also refers to Biblical scholars and past theologians to support this definition. After beginning with the biblical definition of “baptize,” Brown stands on history as well by asserting that for the first 250 years of the New Testament Church immersion was the only form of baptism practiced.<sup>82</sup>

Following giving his readers a sound biblical definition with historical support, Brown writes of the design of baptism. He maintains that baptism’s design is “to teach, pictorially, the death, burial and resurrection of the Savior and the believer’s relation thereto.”<sup>83</sup> Because of this design, Brown claims that immersion is the only mode suited to portray such.

Brown continues his discussion of the design of baptism stating that “[b]aptism is a public inaugural act by which the candidate openly declares his allegiance to his new found King and Master.”<sup>84</sup> A candidate must do this in the same fashion as Jesus did, according to Brown. Here he makes an emotional appeal regarding a person’s refusal to receive baptism. Brown passionately asserts: “If he refuses, then he is found recreant in the first public duty imposed upon him by his king. What does a king think of a subject

---

<sup>82</sup> Brown, “Christian Baptism,” 19-23.

<sup>83</sup> Brown, “Christian Baptism,” 23-24.

<sup>84</sup> Brown, “Christian Baptism,” 24.

who comes to him personally professing the greatest love and loyalty, but upon being ordered to perform his first public act of allegiance refuses to do it?"<sup>85</sup>

Following his treatment on the design of baptism complete with a passionate and emotional appeal to his readers, Brown discusses the topic of the subjects of baptism. He admits that the answer to the question of who are the proper subjects of baptism is the one that separates Baptists from the rest of Christians. Brown states with a high degree of certainty: "The New Testament teaches that only intelligent and penitent believers are the subjects of baptism." For Brown, this belief connects with the propositions of the gospel, which demand adherence by "intelligent, sentient creatures of the earth." This categorically excludes infants, according to Brown.<sup>86</sup>

Brown then returned to the mode of baptism. In this new section on the mode, Brown casts blame on the Roman Catholic Church for changing the mode from immersion to sprinkling and/or pouring. He keenly mentions that Rome believes it has the power to change the ordinances of Christ clearly stated in the Scriptures. Brown states further that all Paedobaptist churches have accepted Rome's change in the mode of baptism without question. He lays out an important Baptist principle: Baptists believe that they have no authority to change laws established by Christ in his word. This principle is often referred to as the "regulative principle," or the scriptural law of worship. In brief, this principle teaches that God alone has the right to regulate how he is to be worshipped, and how to order his church in terms of its government and its

---

<sup>85</sup> Brown, "Christian Baptism," 24.

<sup>86</sup> Brown, "Christian Baptism," 24-25. This is arguably the Baptist's strongest argument against infant baptism. He/she assumes no one can be a Christian without faith in the gospel, and that admittance into the Christian Church is through baptism, then only conscious believers can be baptized and members of the Church.

ordinances. Human innovations regardless of how ingenious or clever are unnecessary intrusions upon God's sovereign right to rule and govern his church.<sup>87</sup>

One final aspect of Brown's articulation of the National Baptist understanding of baptism is the issue of "alien baptism." In Baptist parlance, "alien baptism," or "alien immersion," refers to baptisms that occur outside of a Baptist church. There were differences among Baptists at the time of this writing on whether or not Baptist churches should admit professing Christians into their churches who received baptism in a Methodist church, a Lutheran church, etc. Brown believes that professing Christians coming from outside of Baptist circles must be re-baptized. For Brown, this practice ensures that Baptist churches remain as pure as possible. His understanding is that since Baptists have very clear and distinct notions regarding baptism no one should be a member of a Baptist church without such understanding. For a Baptist, one must be already "born again" before baptism. Other churches reject this practice and belief. Such a conviction by National Baptists placed its identity regarding baptism more on the sectarian side rather than within the larger Protestant doctrine of baptism.<sup>88</sup>

As mentioned above, the eminent Edward McKnight Brawley wrote the article on the Lord's Supper. In this article, Brawley offers the basic teaching on the ordinance; he draws from the Scriptures, but he also utilizes contemporary theological works from Baptist theologians such as Augustus Strong who was the president of Crozer Seminary, which was the preeminent Baptist seminary in the North. This indicates that Brawley was quite familiar with outstanding work by Baptists, and he interacts with these works as a Baptist pastor and theologian. The article is quite scholarly reflecting the sharpness and

---

<sup>87</sup> Brown, "Christian Baptism," 26.

<sup>88</sup> Brown, "Christian Baptism," 27.



clarity of Brawley's mind; it contains no ethnic flavor, or bias as it is simply a Baptist essay.<sup>89</sup>

In the first section of the article, Brawley frames his work within a definition of the Lord's Supper offered by A. A. Strong in his *Systematic Theology and the Holy Scriptures*. Brawley analyzes the definition, and gives three summarizing points. From there, he analyzes the representative biblical texts on the Lord's Supper to inform Baptist belief and practice on this ordinance as well as to support Strong's definition.<sup>90</sup>

In section two, Brawley discusses the proper name of the ordinance. He analyzes the various names used to describe this ordinance such as the Eucharist, Communion, and the Lord's Supper. In his analysis of these different terms, Brawley uses the Scriptures to discount the use of "Eucharist" primarily because the term is unbiblical. Brawley settles on the use of the "Lord's Supper" because of its biblical use and accuracy. He writes, "Baptists have nothing to lose and everything to gain by standing close to the Scriptures, and avoiding everything that savors of tradition."<sup>91</sup> Such a statement stands upon the Baptist view of sola scriptura, and it exhibits a bit of anti-Roman Catholicism from Brawley.<sup>92</sup>

In section three, Brawley investigates the then current views of the Lord's Supper lamenting the mixing of views held by different Christian traditions. He writes, "The duties and amenities of social life, whereby people belonging to denominations of widely different views are daily thrown together in pleasant intercourse, cause a general mixing

---

<sup>89</sup> E. M. Brawley, "The Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," in Boyd, *What Baptists Believe and Practice*.

<sup>90</sup> Brawley, "Lord's Supper," 30ff.

<sup>91</sup> Brawley, "Lord's Supper," 38.

<sup>92</sup> Brawley, "Lord's Supper," 38.

of religious views.”<sup>93</sup> Within the context of this criticism, Brawley indirectly claims that Baptists are Calvinistic in reference to the doctrines of grace. Again, he writes, “And so, many Baptists who associate with Methodists are practically Armenian [sic] on the great doctrines of grace.”<sup>94</sup> Though Brawley never states that Baptists, even National Baptists are Calvinistic, the immediate previous statement assumes that National Baptists are Calvinistic regarding those doctrines of grace. This assumption is revealed owing to Brawley’s contrastive statement regarding Methodists and Arminians, and Baptists. The opposite of Arminianism regarding the doctrines of grace is Calvinism.<sup>95</sup>

Brawley offers a summary of the four prominent views on the Lord’s Supper, which are Transubstantiation held by Roman Catholics, Consubstantiation taught by Lutherans, Spiritualism adhered to by Reformed Christians and Anglicans, and the Memorialism maintained by Baptists. In summarizing these different positions and arguing for the correctness of the Baptist view, Brawley’s tone is quite Anti-Sacramental. He claims that since Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Reformed Protestants believe that in the Lord’s Supper the partakers receive grace by eating the bread and drinking the wine they have turned the Supper into a sacrament. According to Brawley, the Baptist view, which he traces back to Ulrich Zwingli the Swiss Reformer of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, fails to be a sacrament because the partaking of the elements are merely reminders of the death of Christ. On this position, Brawley states, “The emblems though mere bread and wine, while not at all vehicles of grace, are nevertheless powerful reminders of what Jesus did to deliver us from the bondage and penalty of sin.”<sup>96</sup> Besides a commemorative meal that

---

<sup>93</sup> Brawley, “Lord’s Supper,” 38.

<sup>94</sup> Brawley, “Lord’s Supper,” 39.

<sup>95</sup> Brawley, “Lord’s Supper,” 39.

<sup>96</sup> Brawley, “Lord’s Supper,” 46.

Brawley holds the Lord's Supper to be, he also states that it reflects the union between the partaker and Christ, and the future return of Christ and "future blessedness of believers in the presence of Christ at the marriage supper of the Lamb."<sup>97</sup>

The position that Brawley argues for in this article, which he claims is the Baptist position is in agreement with influential contemporary Baptists of that day. Both Pendleton and Hiscox argue for the Memorial position in their widely read (and still extant) Baptist church manuals. Though this position became the majority opinion among Baptists by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is at variance with the position held by the writers of the *Philadelphia Baptist Confession* of 1742. The confession upholds the Spiritualist position in Chapter 32, article 7. The fact that the *New Hampshire Declaration of Faith*, which Brawley, Pendleton, and Hiscox all confessed uses the phrase "commemorate" in describing the bread and wine used in the Lord's Supper held sway in the new position by Baptists.<sup>98</sup>

In this little booklet, Boyd managed to publish a Baptist manual for National Baptists that is both didactic and pastoral. Both Brown and Brawley wrote their respective articles from a pastoral position; they desired that those who would read their

---

<sup>97</sup> Brawley, "Lord's Supper," 48.

<sup>98</sup> See Pendleton, *Baptist Church Manual*, 88; Hiscox, *Principles and Practices*, 135-136. In both of these manuals, the writers include the *New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* as the articles of faith believed by Baptists. Hiscox slightly modifies the articles as they appeared in 1833. The article in question with the word "commemorate" is article 14, and the operative portion reads, "and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church by the sacred use of bread and wine are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ." Compare this statement with Chapter 32, article 7 of the *Philadelphia Confession of Faith*: "Worthy receivers outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this ordinance do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually receive, and feed upon Christ crucified and all the benefits of His death: the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally, or carnally, but spiritually present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses." The original writers of this statement in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647) sought to hold the middle ground between the Lutherans, who believed in the real physical presence of Jesus Christ with the elements of the Supper and the Zwinglians who believed in the mere commemorative purpose of the bread and wine. The Spiritualist view is the view held by John Calvin during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and Reformed Christians elsewhere throughout history.

essays confess and practice the contents therein. What this booklet does as well is that it demonstrates that National Baptists were in lock step with other American Baptists in faith and practice. In addition, National Baptist scholars/theologians maintained a loose or moderate Calvinism. It also evinces that African American Baptist pastors had the intellectual acumen to write on important Christian doctrines on par with their white counterparts and interacting with significant theological works.

As mentioned above, Southern Baptists wrote a plethora of catechisms during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially during the ante-bellum period in order to bring African American slaves to a true faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. National Baptists viewed that writing catechisms was an important means of teaching the faith, and R. H. Boyd wrote and published a Sunday school catechism for children. Though the catechism has no original date for its publication, it had to be written and published prior to Boyd's death in 1922. More than likely, the National Baptist Publishing Board published this catechism prior to the 1915 split as the board published the vast amounts of historical and doctrinal literature before the split. Though the catechism has sketches of African American children and African American biblical characters, the doctrine is plainly Evangelical, Baptist, and moderately Calvinistic.<sup>99</sup>

In typical Regular Baptist fashion, Boyd grounds all of the teaching provided in this catechism in the sufficiency of the Scriptures, which he holds to being inspired by the Holy Spirit. All of Boyd's teaching on the nature of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, creation, salvation, and the church is firmly rooted in biblical teaching. Nothing in the catechism is based on human tradition or invention. Its purpose was to educate Sunday school children

---

<sup>99</sup> R. H. Boyd, *Baptist Sunday School Catechism* (Nashville, TN: R. H. Boyd Publishing Corporation, Reprinted 2000).

in the fundamentals of the Christian faith from a decidedly Baptist perspective, which, as mentioned above, was something of great interest to Boyd. According to Lovett, “Boyd...wanted to teach children the true Baptist doctrine as well as to instruct them to defend their faith.”<sup>100</sup> By reading the catechism, Boyd’s purpose shines forth clearly.

The catechism is rather extensive covering every pertinent aspect of the Christian faith. Boyd demonstrates how committed he was in teaching children (and others) Protestant orthodoxy as well as Baptist doctrine. The catechism’s teaching on the Bible, God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Trinity is all orthodox in the Protestant sense of Christian orthodoxy. For example, Boyd tackles the issue of theological epistemology: “How then do we know that God exists?” The answer is: “We know that God exists by seeing the things that He created, and from our own senses of right and wrong and by what the Bible tell us of Him.”<sup>101</sup> In simple language conducive for memorization, Boyd manages to teach the knowledge of God through what theologians call natural revelation and special revelation. Natural revelation refers to knowledge gained through God’s creation, and special revelation is knowledge of God acquired through the Scriptures. According to Protestant theologians, it is only by special revelation that human beings realize that they are sinners in need of God’s grace through the giving of his son, Jesus Christ.

Though Boyd clearly teaches the biblical and orthodox doctrine of the person of Jesus Christ regarding his deity, virgin birth, death, resurrection, and ascension, his teaching on the atonement of Jesus is inconsistent and reveals a lack of commitment to traditional Calvinism. Boyd devotes an entire chapter in the catechism to the atonement

---

<sup>100</sup> Bobby L. Lovett, *How it Came to Be: The Boyd Family’s Contribution to African American Religious Publishing From the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Nashville, TN: Mega Publishing Corporation, 2007), 42.

<sup>101</sup> Boyd, *Catechism*, 7.

signifying its importance to the Christian faith. On the atonement, Boyd teaches “that Christ died and rose again to save His people,” and that Christ “came to give His life as a ransom for many.”<sup>102</sup> Both of these statements reflect lucid biblical statements on the extent of Christ’s death, which indicates that Christ died for a specific people. These statements also identify that Christ’s work was for his people, which is the doctrine of substitutionary atonement (as well as the doctrine of particular redemption). As Boyd develops this theme further, he holds to a different teaching. Boyd believes that Christ’s death was for all people indiscriminately; this is a universalistic teaching on Christ’s atonement. This doctrine goes against Calvinism, and it is counter to the doctrine of the atonement expressed in the *Philadelphia Confession*. Leaving a more in depth analysis of this inconsistency to another discussion, Boyd’s teaching here reflected General Baptist views rather than Regular Baptist views.<sup>103</sup>

Regarding the doctrines of grace, with the exception of election that Boyd fails to address, Boyd is solidly Evangelical. He teaches that sinners are justified only by placing faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone. Boyd teaches the necessity of regeneration, repentance, the living of a holy and sanctified life, and the perseverance of all saints. All of these occur, according to Boyd, by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the chapter on the Holy Spirit, Boyd teaches on the work of the Holy Spirit at present. He

---

<sup>102</sup> Boyd, *Catechism*, 20.

<sup>103</sup> Boyd, *Catechism*, 20. As discussed previously, the *Philadelphia Confession* is wholly Calvinistic and it provides a clear statement on the nature and extent of the atonement. In Chapter VIII, “Of Christ the Mediator,” article 5 states: “The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, which He through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of God, procured reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him.” What this statement teaches is that Christ offered himself though death to the Father to satisfy his justice and to save only those chosen by him and given to Christ. In other words, Christ died only for the elect of God. Boyd’s confusion rests upon the fact that he uses biblical language pointing to Christ’s death for the elect while at the same time teaching that Christ died for all people regardless if they would come to faith.

raises the question: “Does the Holy Spirit assist men in becoming Christians?” The answer is: “Yes; the Holy Spirit gives them new hearts, helps them to turn from sin and to trust in Christ.”<sup>104</sup> This answer upholds standard Evangelical teaching that salvation is wholly of God; it is a Trinitarian work as God elected to save a people, Christ died for those people, and the Spirit applies the work of Christ to those elected. It also assumes the utter helplessness of human beings as they are totally unable to save themselves; they need the Spirit of God to give them “new hearts.”<sup>105</sup>

The final chapters of the catechism are on the church, and it is firmly Baptist. Boyd asks: “What is a Christian Church?” The answer is: “A congregation of baptized believers in Christ associated together by special covenant.”<sup>106</sup> Judging from the definition provided in the “Articles of Faith” on what is a gospel church, Boyd draws heavily from it. In this definition, Boyd leaves no room for a dual definition of the church as many Protestants defined it at that time. Protestants argued that the Church is Catholic or universal in that it included all true believers throughout the world; these true believers can be found in visible or local churches governed by the laws of Christ. Calvinistic Baptists held to this view as well, but by the time of Boyd’s writing Landmark views held sway over the majority of Baptists, especially African American Baptists. According to Landmark teaching, the church is primarily local. Other aspects of Baptist views on the church emerge such as the headship of Christ over local churches, the autonomy of local

---

<sup>104</sup> Boyd, *Catechism*, 18.

<sup>105</sup> Boyd, *Catechism*, 18, 21-24. It is interesting that Boyd neglects to teach on the doctrine of election since he follows in general the Articles of Faith. Article IX, “God’s Purpose of Grace,” is the teaching on divine election.

<sup>106</sup> Boyd, *Catechism*, 24.

churches, only two offices of leadership (pastor and deacon) in local churches, the observance of only two ordinances including baptism by immersion of believers only.<sup>107</sup>

Inconsistency on the atonement of Christ notwithstanding, Boyd produced a solid catechism for National Baptist Sunday schools that would inculcate sound doctrine reflective of a Regular Baptist and Evangelical perspective. To re-iterate, this was part of Boyd's purpose for publishing Christian literature; he had a great concern for the education of young people. He not only desired that they receive an elementary education through the Sunday school, but he wanted to rear a generation of youth who would know what they believed as National Baptists.

Throughout the history of African American Christianity the unique style of singing has captured the imagination of scholars. It is part of the cultural heritage of African American Christians. Numerous slave songs and spirituals have been popularized by various singing groups including the Fisk Jubilee Singers that began performing in America and Europe during the 1870s to raise money for their financially beleaguered university. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, R. H. Boyd and the NBPB published a hymnal during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. What is surprising about this hymnal is that there are no slave songs or spirituals included. Surprising it may be; but when considered within the context it can be comprehended why this is the case. There are at least two reasons why there were no African American songs found in the *National*

---

<sup>107</sup> Boyd, *Catechism*, 24-26. The New Hampshire Declaration professes only the existence of local churches: "We believe the Scriptures teach that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel..." As noted in the text, this definition is quite similar to the one written by Boyd in the catechism. In slight contrast to this teaching the Philadelphia Confession in its teaching on the nature of the Church begins with its catholicity: "The catholic or universal Church, which, with respect to the internal work of the Spirit and truth of grace, may be called invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of Him of that filleth all in all." The writers of the confession go on to write of independence of local churches consisting of two classes of office-bearers (pastors and deacons) and the need to associate with other like-minded churches.



*Baptist Hymn Book* initially published in 1905. First, National Baptists desired to be viewed as part of the broader American Baptist family; and second, the hymns included would have been those sung by African American Baptists while still part of bi-racial Baptist churches in the South. To expand upon the first point, the *National Baptist Hymn Book* is very similar in format and in content to the *Baptist Hymnal* that the American Baptist Publication Society published in 1883, which African American Baptist churches in the North probably used. As discussed in a previous chapter, many African American Baptist pastors had affiliation with the American Baptist Publication Society and the American Baptist Home Mission Board. A summary of some key features of this hymnal reveals that the theological and doctrinal commitments by National Baptists during this period were the same as their white Baptist counterparts.<sup>108</sup>

In the “Preface” of the *National Baptist Hymn Book*, Boyd, the editor, states the purpose of this hymnal, which is “to aid the song service of the Lord’s house, and thereby make his praise more glorious.”<sup>109</sup> In what ways does a hymn book fulfill this aim? Drawing from what Boyd writes, there are at least three ways in which this aim is fulfilled: first, the songs are directly before the congregants; second, the songs can be learned more readily; and third, all of the worshippers can participate in the singing. All of this presupposes that probably the majority of National Baptist churches practiced congregational singing rather than employed choirs. Boyd also remarks that the hymns chosen were from a pool of thousands of hymns sung by past generations. This is interesting because it implies that the NBC-USA believed in the continued usefulness of

---

<sup>108</sup> On the Fisk Jubilee Singers, see Franklin and Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 297. Also see *Baptist Hymnal* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2004). The American Baptist Publication Society, the forerunner to the Judson Press, published this hymnal originally in 1883.

<sup>109</sup> Boyd, “Preface,” in *National Baptist Hymn-Book*, 3.

these old hymns; there was no need to write new ones. The editor also states that this collection or just a collection of hymns has been the desire of many National Baptists. Possibly, people had grown up singing these hymns without possessing them on paper. All of this explains why the NBC-USA called for the publication of its own hymnal besides the fact that the leadership wanted to publish material that their white counterparts had long since published. The publication of a hymnal would give the NBC-USA a degree of viability and prestige within the greater American Baptist family.<sup>110</sup>

In addition to a “Preface,” there is also a “Publisher’s Note” that gives insight into the context of this publication. The publisher, which is Boyd as well, notes that the NBPB began publishing hymns and music in 1897. In the wake of this phenomenon, pastors and churches within the NBC-USA called for a collection of hymns to use in their churches; he reports that this matter came to the convention in 1900. At the 1900 annual session, the Parent Body of the NBC-USA charged the NBPB with the task of publishing a hymnal “that would keep before the congregation in song the sound scriptural doctrine as taught and practiced by regular Baptist churches.”<sup>111</sup> Herein lies a partial, but important answer to the question why spirituals are absent from the hymnal. Spirituals are quite situational; they came about owing to the experience of African Americans under the lash of slavery. There is little if any “sound scriptural doctrine” from a Baptist perspective in the spirituals. It would be a wrong conclusion, however, to state that NBC pastors and leaders were ashamed of these spirituals; these men were proud of their heritage, but they reasoned that hymns that taught Baptist doctrine were appropriate for use in corporate

---

<sup>110</sup> See “Preface,” *National Baptist Hymn Book*, 3.

<sup>111</sup> “Publisher’s Note,” *National Baptist Hymn Book*, 4.

worship.<sup>112</sup> This statement by the NBC leadership also indicates how seriously it took the biblical command found in Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom: teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Obedience to this command helps to buttress the NBC’s desire for a hymnal inclusive of hymns that taught sound doctrine.

Since the hymns included in the hymn book were from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Boyd took it upon himself to respond to questions regarding the exclusion of new hymns. He writes, “The Publishing Board has not attempted to publish or send forth this book as a new collection of songs, but felt that in attempting to respond to this call precludes the attempt of offering any new songs whatever, but to select from among the old the ones dear to the people’s heart.”<sup>113</sup> This remark indicates that African American Baptists even ones that had been Baptists in slavery grew up singing these older hymns. Those African American Baptists in the North would have sung these as well as. This hymnal was truly representative of the major experience of all National Baptists in worship song.

Since during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries there were no African American Baptist hymn writers of any note, the *National Baptist Hymn Book* consists of hymns written solely by white Americans and Europeans. The hymnal includes standard hymns written by Charles Wesley, the 18<sup>th</sup> century English Methodist, such as “Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing” and “A Charge to Keep I Have.”<sup>114</sup> There are standard hymns written by John Newton such as “Amazing Grace,” and “Come, my soul thy suit prepare.”<sup>115</sup> The

---

<sup>112</sup> See “Publisher’s Note,” 4.

<sup>113</sup> See “Publisher’s Note,” 4.

<sup>114</sup> For these two hymns see hymn # 192 and hymn # 89.

<sup>115</sup> These two of Newton’s hymns are # 364 and # 400.

significance of the inclusion of hymns by these two great English hymn writers is that they were part of the great Evangelical Revival of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which was the time that thousands of African Americans came to Christ through the gospel as noted earlier.

Out of the hundreds of hymn writers and the 622 hymns that comprise this hymnal there is one hymn writer that has special prominence--Isaac Watts (1674-1748). Out of the 622 hymns in the hymnal there are 136 hymns and psalm paraphrases by Watts. Watts was the son of a dissenting minister in Southampton, London within the Church of England, who rejected England's law that demanded all ministers to use the *Book of Common Prayer* and the established liturgy of the Church. Watts, a dissenter himself, received his higher education at the Stoke Newington Academy founded by dissenting ministers. When Isaac Watts burst onto the scene during the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, metrical psalm-singing was the mode of congregational singing in England. Owing to Watts, the psalm-singing tradition began to wane and hymnody began to blossom. Watts' innovation is owed to his disappointment with the quality of the psalms in the Sternhold-Hopkins version of the psalms. According to Emily Brink, Watts' "father challenged him to provide better texts."<sup>116</sup> At the time of this challenge, Watts was a teenager; he then commenced to write new versifications of psalms and his own hymns before his twentieth birthday. Rev. Isaac Watts, Sr. allowed the use of these hymns and psalms in his church, the Above Bar Independent Church. Brink also states, "The quality of his poetry ensured a place for hymnody in England, and Watts later became known as the father of English hymnody."<sup>117</sup> The two most significant books of hymns published by Watts were his *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1707) and *The Psalms of*

---

<sup>116</sup> Emily Brink, "English Metrical Psalmody," in *Psalter Hymnal Handbook*, 46.

<sup>117</sup> Emily Brink, "English Metrical Psalmody," 46.

*David Imitated* (1719). Though many in England and America responded negatively to the publication of these hymns, Watts became the foremost “pioneer” of English hymnody, and the continued use of these hymns testifies to their high quality. Judging from the large amount of Watts’ psalms and hymns in the first National Baptist hymnal indicates that his impact on American hymnody and hymn-singing was considerable and enduring. In fact, well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century African American Baptists still “lined-out” what they call “Dr. Watts’” hymns.<sup>118</sup>

More than any other set of hymns in the *National Baptist Hymn Book*, Watts’ psalms and hymns met the purpose of the NBC leaders in calling for a hymnal. As mentioned above, NBC pastors wanted hymns that taught sound doctrine. Watts’ work is full of the Holy Scriptures, especially the book of Psalms. For example Hymn #2, “From all that Dwell below the skies,” is Watts’ sparkling versification of Psalm 117. Also Hymn #9, “Before Jehovah’s awful throne,” is Watts’ version of Psalm 100. There are other psalm versifications and paraphrases by Watts included in the hymnal. Watts also wrote hymns based on other biblical texts comprising this hymnal such as Hymn #140, “Not to condemn the sons of men” based on John 3:17 and Hymn #166, “Like sheep we went astray” based on Isaiah 53:6. When National Baptists sung these hymns they truly sung the Bible, and obeyed the Apostle Paul’s command in Colossians 3:16.

In keeping with the theme of African American Baptists holding firmly to Baptist doctrine and practice, a landmark publication appeared in 1890 published by the American Baptist Publication Society, namely *The Negro Baptist Pulpit*. This groundbreaking publication was an effort by the Northern Baptists to demonstrate their

---

<sup>118</sup> Other information regarding Watts is from Cook, *Our Hymn Writers and their Hymns*, 40, 43-45, 56, 58, 65.

support of the cadre of African American Baptist leaders who desired to maintain fraternal and cooperative ties with the Northern Baptists. The ABPS knew that many African American Baptist pastors during the 1880s were eager to write Sunday school literature and other doctrinal work. Even though African American Baptists at this time began to build their own associations and conventions, many remained complacent regarding the production of their own literature. The ABPS had provided literature since Reconstruction, and the ABHMB had employed African American Baptists as missionaries and colporteurs; for those African American Baptists who desired to keep the ties between their white Baptist brethren it was a matter of gratitude and loyalty. For the purposes of this chapter, the focus will be on the overall aim of the book articulated in the preface and articles concerning the doctrine of the Scriptures, the doctrines of grace, and distinct Baptist tenets.<sup>119</sup>

In the “Preface” E. M. Brawley explained the impetus of this book. He makes a general statement regarding African American Christians and denominationalism stating that African Americans are loyal to their denominations. For this work, he refers to African American Baptists. At the same time, Brawley reveals his belief in the sufficiency of Baptist doctrine. He states if there is any ignorance of the doctrines on the part of African American Baptists, it is because of ignorance and nothing regarding deficiency with the doctrines themselves.<sup>120</sup>

Implied by Brawley this book served to motivate broad based doctrinal familiarity among African American Baptist pastors. Brawley identifies the great need of the African

---

<sup>119</sup> E. M. Brawley, ed. *The Negro Baptist Pulpit: A Collection of Sermons and Papers by Colored Baptist Ministers* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971).

<sup>120</sup> E. M. Brawley, “Preface,” in *The Negro Baptist Pulpit* ed. E. M. Brawley (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 7.

American ministry as instruction in Baptist doctrine. African American Baptists need to know why they are Baptists; they need to know more than the Baptist doctrine of baptism. In a sense, this stern assertion is in accord with much of the mission of the ABHMS; but it also reflects what leaders like Brawley desired through the NBC. He contends that “our trained leaders must write.”<sup>121</sup> Of course, it is through writing that those ministers who lack training can be built up and be of better service to their churches.

The contributors to this volume received their training and education, according to Brawley, at noble Baptist schools such as Bucknell, Kalamazoo College, and Denison. These were (and still are predominately) white schools and all in the North; therefore, he assumed that these men had top-notch educations. Other than those who attended Ivy League schools these men were more of the better educated men among African Americans in general. In one sense, these men assumed leadership among African American Baptists owing to their education.<sup>122</sup>

As mentioned in the paragraphs above, this is an American Baptist work that features the doctrinal writings of African American ministers. With that stated, Brawley identifies the two purposes of the work: to offer brief expositions on different articles of the Confession of Faith held to by the majority of American Baptists, which was the *New Hampshire Declaration of Faith*; and to highlight the work of denominational societies operating among African American Baptists. The volume also highlights the work of the American Baptist Publication Society and the American Baptist Home Mission Society that Brawley exclaims had done great work on behalf of the denomination. The work by

---

<sup>121</sup> Brawley, “Preface,” 7.

<sup>122</sup> Brawley, “Preface,” 8.

these various African American Baptists demonstrates their deep knowledge of Baptist faith and practice on par with any other of their American Baptist counterparts.<sup>123</sup>

Noted in the discussion of Boyd's *What Baptists Believe and Practice* was that there would be more stated on those "Articles of Faith" printed in that booklet. This is the primary task in analyzing the *Negro Baptist Pulpit*. One thing to note: two articles are absent--Article IX--"God's Purpose of Grace" and Article XVI--"Civil Government." These are curious omissions for at least two reasons. First, the former article deals with the eternal purpose of God as it pertains to the salvation of sinners; this is a critical portion of Baptist doctrine as well as Evangelical teaching. The reason this article is missing is arguably because it centers on the doctrine of election. The beginning of the article reads: "We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners."<sup>124</sup> This statement confesses that the salvation of any sinner depends upon God's election of that particular sinner. This was a standard Baptist doctrine--why did the editors elect (no pun intended) to omit it? Possibly, it is because the editor and publisher believed the doctrine of election too complicated for the readership; or there may have been disagreement among the Baptists of the day regarding the entire thrust of the doctrine of election. To maintain harmony, the editor and publisher may have decided to omit exposition on this article. Second, regarding the neglect of the latter article the editor may have felt it too congenial to government and rejected by African Americans because of government sanctioned racial segregation and disfranchisement. This article reads: "We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; and that

---

<sup>123</sup> Brawley, "Preface," 8.

<sup>124</sup> See Brown, "Declaration of Faith," in *A Baptist Church Manual*, 16.



magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.”<sup>125</sup> There would some aspects of this article that could lead to some discomfort among the readership, but it does include the outlet for conscientious objection to unjust laws such as Jim Crow laws in the South.

Brawley frames this volume with an essay entitled, “Contending for the Faith.” This article captures the tone of the entire publication; it is an apologetic and it possesses a didactic tone. Quoting from Jude 3, which reads in part: “that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” Brawley exclaimed that contending for the faith “had been the inspiring battle-cry of Baptists all along the centuries, and with it they have conquered.”<sup>126</sup> In this provocative statement, Brawley reveals a Landmark understanding of Baptist faith; but he makes this position clear when he writes: “Our Baptist predecessors.”<sup>127</sup> Brawley implies that the apostles of Jesus Christ were Baptist predecessors.

What are the things that define “the faith” as Brawley articulates? He states: “On open Bible, with the right of private interpretation, immersion alone as baptism, freedom to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, separation of church and state, baptism of believer’s only, the spirituality of Christ’s kingdom, and the equality of believers.”<sup>128</sup> According to Brawley, contending means bringing what Baptists believe about the ordinance of baptism to Paedobaptists. In holding and asserting this point,

---

<sup>125</sup> See “Declaration of Faith,” in *A Baptist Church Manual*, 26.

<sup>126</sup> E. M. Brawley, “Contending for the Faith,” in *The Negro Baptist Pulpit* ed. E. M. Brawley (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 11.

<sup>127</sup> Brawley, “Contending for the Faith,” 11, 13.

<sup>128</sup> Brawley, “Contending for the Faith,” 13-14.

Brawley clarifies that Baptists were to be evangelists of sort within Christian circles seeking to correct what they perceived to be the error of baptizing infants.<sup>129</sup>

Brawley further defines “the faith” by claiming that it is “New Testament truth.” To clarify this point, Brawley lists some particular aspects of what he labels “New Testament truth:”

1. The integrity and sufficiency of God’s word (which he links with the doctrine of plenary and verbal inspiration).
2. A converted church membership.
3. Baptism by immersion alone.
4. Believer’s baptism
5. The Lord’s Supper for orderly baptized believers.<sup>130</sup>

Brawley concludes this brief introductory chapter by focusing on missions and evangelism. He states that contending for the faith includes missionary work both at home and abroad. It also means that Baptists should engage in personal evangelism informally through personal relationships. Brawley writes: “Mission work is the truest exponent of Christianity’s charter.”<sup>131</sup>

This publication offers a Reformed Protestant view of the doctrine of the Scriptures. Rufus L. Perry wrote this chapter on this critical doctrine, which serves to anchor all else doctrinal in this volume. As mentioned, Perry’s chapter is completely in line with Reformed Protestant orthodoxy regarding the Scriptures as he emphasizes their inspiration and their supreme authority. Perry uses the Scriptures themselves to argue for their divine inspiration; he defines inspiration as “the inbreathing of a divine and

---

<sup>129</sup> Brawley, “Contending for the Faith,” 16-17.

<sup>130</sup> See Brawley, “Contending for the Faith,” 18-23 for the list along with his exposition of each item.

<sup>131</sup> Brawley, “Contending for the Faith,” 24.

controlling influence."<sup>132</sup> One major point in this chapter is squarely Reformed Protestant: "No 'Thus saith the Lord,' no positive command found in the Holy Scriptures, can be set aside by earthly potentates, or ecclesiastical councils. No bishop, no priest, no pope, may annul or alter a single word."<sup>133</sup> This is a clear proclamation of the doctrine of sola scriptura with a tone of protest against the Roman Catholic Church and its position of holding church tradition and Holy Scriptures as co-equal authorities in the Church.

Another statement that amplifies the Protestant character of this essay describes the Scriptures as: "the only infallible rule of life in faith and practice; being 'profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.'"<sup>134</sup> With this belief, Perry asserts that Baptists base their doctrines and practices only on the Scriptures. Again, this assumes a profession in the Reformed Protestant doctrine of the scriptural law of worship, or the regulative principle of worship. Perry writes: "What are called distinctive tenets of Baptist churches do but attest the strict obedience of these churches to the commandments of God."<sup>135</sup> With this statement, Perry implies that Baptist churches were pure churches since they only abided by the word of God; herein lay a hint of Landmark teaching as well. This belief regarding biblical infallibility finds itself rooted in the Reformation itself as Martin Luther claimed only the word of God can never fail, but the word of Popes, and church councils can fail being only the words of men. Here Perry was in lock-step with Protestant Reformers like Luther and Calvin.

---

<sup>132</sup> Rufus L. Perry, "The Scriptures," in *The Negro Baptist Pulpit* ed. E. M. Brawley (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 29.

<sup>133</sup> Perry, "The Scriptures," 37.

<sup>134</sup> Perry, "The Scriptures," 38.

<sup>135</sup> Perry, "The Scriptures," 37.

R. B. Vandavel, pastor of First Baptist Church of Nashville, Tennessee and described by Simmons as a “self-made man” emphasizes the simplicity of the gospel and the simplicity of gospel preaching in the article “The Way of Salvation.”<sup>136</sup> Vandavel’s argument regarding the “proper view” of salvation and how sinners are saved is by showing God’s sovereignty over human being’s salvation, and the means of the atonement wrought by Jesus Christ. In supporting this thesis, Vandavel offers two main points:

- I. The gospel is founded on the depravity of human nature
- II. God’s plan of saving men is according to his eternal purposes.<sup>137</sup>

In addition to these two main headings, he offers one point of application that encouraged African American preachers to keep their gospel preaching simple and plain. To this end, Vandavel writes: “...so many of our ministers so frequently present Jesus in such a way as to lead to the belief that somehow the sinner has to earn his salvation by a process of mourning and prayers and tears.”<sup>138</sup>

Though the gospel is a gospel of grace, Vandavel begins this article by focusing on the depravity of man. Such an emphasis highlights the grace of God in salvation. Under this point, Vandavel offers two sub-points. According to the first sub-point, man is unable to save himself; and owing to his sinful condition he is incapable of rendering God perfect obedience. According to this statement, humanity is in a hopeless spiritual condition. Because of this, if any person is to receive salvation from his sins it must be by the sheer grace and mercy of God. This is the next sub-point of this heading. For

---

<sup>136</sup> Simmons, *Men of Mark*, 387. Simmons also notes that Vandavel was born into slavery in 1832 in Tennessee.

<sup>137</sup> Vandavel, “The Way of Salvation,” in *The Negro Baptist Pulpit* ed. E. M. Brawley (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 56, 58.

<sup>138</sup> Vandavel, “The Way of Salvation,” 56.

Vandavel, God decided to save people by grace to display his glory ultimately and primarily. Following this point, Vandavel rehearses the simple gospel imperatives: repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ. He also emphasizes the necessity of demonstrating one's possession of saving grace by doing good works. To illustrate this particular, Vandavel writes: "The care of poor saints, the support of the church, Christian education, missions at home and abroad, Bible work, and all such activities, should engage the hearts and hands of all who profess to have found Jesus Christ."<sup>139</sup> With this statement, Vandavel connects the essential relationship between faith and good works.<sup>140</sup>

After providing his readers with a clear and terse explanation of humanity's depravity and the grace of God, Vandavel's second point on God's eternal purposes in salvation is vague. Though he hints at God's sovereignty in the extending of saving grace, Vandavel fails to state clearly that humanity's salvation (the people who are actually saved) depends on God's gracious election of them from all eternity. Vandavel's lack of clarity on this subject is evident in this passage:

The purposes of God can never be discovered; they can be known only as revealed. Men are sometimes disturbed because they cannot know just why God does certain things; but a loving, child-like trust should lead us all to believe that God does all things well, and secures, as the result of his acts, his own greatest glory, and the salvation of all such as will believe.<sup>141</sup>

In the above quote, there is an implication that in the salvation of individual sinners God exhibits his sovereign grace and mercy. The specific statement that even implies this is in Vandavel's claim that God "secures" salvation for believing sinners. This statement also intimates that a sinner's salvation has nothing to do with his/her free will since it is God who "secures" salvation. Such an important point needs extra clarity. Nevertheless,

---

<sup>139</sup> Vandavel, "The Way of Salvation," 58.

<sup>140</sup> Vandavel, "The Way of Salvation," 56-58.

<sup>141</sup> Vandavel, "The Way of Salvation," 58.

Vandavel's emphasis in this article is solid in that he focuses attention on humanity's inability and God's sovereign grace in salvation.<sup>142</sup>

Another of those great doctrines of grace highlighted in the volume is the doctrine of regeneration; and this doctrine is found in the *New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* or "Articles of Faith" as Article VII titled, "Of Grace in Regeneration." Rev. E.K. Love, prominent pastor of the historic First African Baptist Church of Savannah, Georgia, wrote the article on this critical doctrine.<sup>143</sup> This article is more of a sermon, and probably was a sermon. In it, Love argues from the gospel of John 3:7, which reads: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again," the new birth is absolutely necessary if one is to enter the kingdom of heaven. He also argues "that the new birth, spiritual generation, must precede citizenship in the kingdom of our Lord."<sup>144</sup> To buttress his argument, Love presents three major points with a general point of application. The three points are: first, "The necessity of the new birth;" second, "The character of the new birth required;" and third, "By whom is this new birth effected?" His point of application is: "The effects of the change."<sup>145</sup>

In his first point, Love analyzes and discusses what lies at the root of the great need of regeneration. Love asserts that the total depravity of humanity is the cause of the absolute necessity of the new birth. By making this assertion, Love connects logically two of the most important doctrines of the Christian faith as understood by Protestants regarding salvation. The implication here is that without proper knowledge of humanity's

---

<sup>142</sup> Vandavel, "The Way of Salvation," 58.

<sup>143</sup> For a nice, mini-biography of Love, see Simmons, *Men of Mark*, 321-322.

<sup>144</sup> E. K. Love, "Regeneration," in *The Negro Baptist Pulpit* ed. E. M. Brawley (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 66.

<sup>145</sup> Love, "Regeneration," 66ff.

sinful condition there will lack understanding of what humanity's greatest need is; and spiritual life is its greatest need.<sup>146</sup>

In discussing human sin and its most salient need, Love speaks with his Baptist accent in the midst of his concurrence with Protestant orthodoxy on this doctrine. Love states, "Only regenerated persons should compose the church of Christ, for only such are called 'saints.'"<sup>147</sup> With this statement, Love clasps hands with the vast body of Baptist belief in its insistence that the Scriptures teach that only persons who have been regenerated can become members of the Church. This statement simultaneously lends itself to other Baptist tenets such as believer's baptism because only those regenerated are illegible to become a member of a Baptist church and only those regenerated are proper candidates for baptism. To support this implication, Love equates the Old Testament practice of circumcision that ushered a Hebrew boy into the covenant people of God with the New Testament ordinance of baptism that essentially marks one as a member of the New Covenant people of God. Again, this understanding of a regenerated church membership spills over into the Baptist teaching that only those who profess their faith in Jesus Christ are proper candidates for baptism. Love also contends that faith is the product of the new birth; therefore, with just one statement regarding the new birth's necessity Love links the doctrines of total depravity, the church, baptism, and faith, which demonstrates the logical connection among these biblical teachings.<sup>148</sup>

In the second point of this sermon, Love offers his definition of the new birth and basically tendered various descriptions of the new birth. Love's definition is: "The new birth is a change of heart, a change of disposition, a change of affection, a renewing of

---

<sup>146</sup> Love, "Regeneration," 66.

<sup>147</sup> Love, "Regeneration," 69.

<sup>148</sup> Love, "Regeneration," 69-70.

the mind, and a beginning of a new life."<sup>149</sup> This is a rather mainstream Protestant definition reflective of the definition found in the *New Hampshire Declaration*, which states that "regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind."<sup>150</sup> Such a definition argues that the experience of the new birth stands as the ground of the entire Christian life.

Following up on this definition of the new birth, Love gives multiple descriptions of the new birth offering more clarity. He states that one who is born again is born of the Spirit of God; it is alone the work of the Holy Spirit affecting the spirit of a person. The new birth is also the renewal of a person's mind, spirit, etc; it causes a general re-orientation in a person "to operate in another direction more pleasing, more righteous, more blessed, more lovely, and more divine."<sup>151</sup> Regeneration changes the heart and causes the sinner to live righteously.<sup>152</sup>

All of what Love writes in this sermon is in agreement with both Evangelical Protestantism and Baptist doctrine. He exhibits his solid understanding of this doctrine with clarity and precision. It is a testament to the type of sound biblical preaching the people at First African Baptist in Savannah received each Lord's Day.

Another great doctrine of grace included in this volume is repentance and faith commented on by Rev. G. W. Raiford, pastor of Bethesda Baptist Church, Georgetown, South Carolina. This article is more than likely another sermon and demonstrates that educated African American Baptist pastors tended to preach expository sermons on the fundamentals of the faith. In this sermon, Raiford holds that the importance of these two

---

<sup>149</sup> Love, "Regeneration," 70.

<sup>150</sup> See *New Hampshire Declaration of Faith*, Article VII.

<sup>151</sup> Love, "Regeneration," 71.

<sup>152</sup> Love, "Regeneration," 72-83.



doctrines is “second to none among the doctrines of Christianity.”<sup>153</sup> He believes this because of humanity’s sin and its great need of forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God as well as the good effects these occurrences have on human life. The biblical basis of the sermon is a portion of Mark 1:15: “repent ye, and believe the gospel.” The content and claims of this sermon are in concert with Article VIII of the *New Hampshire Declaration*, “Repentance and Faith.”<sup>154</sup>

At the outset, Raiford offers a general overview of the importance of the preaching of repentance by highlighting key passages from the New Testament. In particular, he cites three passages: Acts 20:21; Acts 2:38; and 2 Corinthians 7:10. These three passages teach the necessity of preaching repentance to non-Christians and the absolute need for persons to be repentant in order to receive salvation from Christ.<sup>155</sup>

The heart of the sermon deals with what repentance is; how does one know if he/she is repentant or experiencing true repentance? Raiford gives four responses:

1. A deep and genuine sense both of sin and God’s infinite love and righteousness;
2. Repentance must be attended both with sorrow and shame;
3. There must be a hatred of sin;
4. In true repentance there must be a fixed purpose to forsake our sin.<sup>156</sup>

Raiford is careful never to divorce repentance from faith, or vice versa. Faith with repentance is the means to receive salvation. In this emphasis, Raiford includes a Calvinistic bend: “If I should be asked why I am saved, the answer would be, because the Lord chose to save me; but if I should be asked why I know that I am save, it would be

---

<sup>153</sup> G. W. Raiford, “Repentance and Faith,” in *The Negro Baptist Pulpit*, ed. E. M. Brawley (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries, 1971), 81.

<sup>154</sup> Raiford, “Repentance and Faith,” 81.

<sup>155</sup> Raiford, “Repentance and Faith,” 81-82.

<sup>156</sup> Raiford, “Repentance and Faith,” 82ff.

because I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>157</sup> In this statement, Raiford connects Christ’s electing grace with faith. He claims that he is a Christian as a result of Christ’s choosing him particularly, and that faith is the fruit of election. Raiford implies that only the elect of God will believe the gospel. This is a definitive Calvinistic or Reformed Evangelical tenet.

In keeping with the doctrine of saving faith, Raiford argues that faith is a gift of God, something sinful human beings can never possess innately. Basing this assertion on the doctrine of total depravity, if anyone is to place faith in the gospel this faith must come from without because all human beings are dead in their sins rendering them totally incapable of exercising a spiritual grace such as faith. Faith that is a gift of God reaches out only to Christ; it trusts in the person and work of Jesus Christ on behalf of sinners. This is also a Reformed doctrine. Raiford writes, “Faith must unconditionally and unreservedly look to the Lord Jesus Christ; must trust him for his promises.”<sup>158</sup>

The next doctrine explained is the critical doctrine of justification. The great German Reformer Martin Luther exclaimed that the Church stands or falls on this doctrine. The Reformation slogan of sola fide (faith alone) arose from Luther’s stance on this doctrine. In this work, Rev. Andrew Stokes, pastor of First Colored Baptist Church, Clarksville, Tennessee proffers a sermon on this subject. In this rather short sermon, Stokes forwards only two points: first, what is justification; and second, the means of justification. This is a very easy and simple sermon to understand, but it deals with a

---

<sup>157</sup> Raiford, “Repentance and Faith,” 85.

<sup>158</sup> Raiford, “Repentance and Faith,” 85.

77

78

79

80

81

82

83

84

85

86

87

88

89

90

91

92

93

94

95

96

97

98

99

100

profound biblical doctrine. It, too, is basically an exposition of one of the Articles of Faith, namely Article V, "Justification."<sup>159</sup>

In the first point of the sermon, Stokes offers his definition of justification. He defines justification as God's declaration of a sinner as righteous as a result of his imputation of Christ's righteousness to him/her. Supporting this definition, Stokes gives a negative sub-point that no one can be justified by performing works of the law; the grounds for justification is Christ's work on the cross. The imputation of the righteousness of Christ to the sinner results in "peace between God and the sinner."<sup>160</sup>

In the second point of the sermon, Stokes refers to the means by which sinners are justified. Stokes proclaims that it is by faith; faith in Christ alone. Stokes equates saving faith with trust, wholehearted trust in Jesus Christ that clings to him as the one who satisfied the sinner's debt to God by dying on his/her behalf. A sinful human being lacks the desire and ability to believe in Christ alone for his/her salvation. In this doctrine of Christianity, Stokes and his fellow Baptists marched with other Reformed Protestants.<sup>161</sup>

The doctrine of justification has another side to it, sanctification. This is the next doctrine dealt with in this volume. This article on sanctification written by Rev. C. H. Parrish, professor of Greek at State University in Louisville, Kentucky is a treatment of Article X in the Articles of Faith. Basing his article on a portion of Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane recorded in John 17:17, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth," Parrish argues for the doctrine of progressive sanctification, which is the Reformed Protestant position. While arguing for this position, Parrish argues against the

---

<sup>159</sup> Andrew J. Stokes, "Justification," in *The Negro Baptist Pulpit* ed. E. M. Brawley (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries, 1971), 87ff.

<sup>160</sup> Stokes, "Justification," 88.

<sup>161</sup> Stokes, "Justification," 88-89.

Wesleyan-Holiness teaching of entire sanctification. Wesleyans contend that a Christian can reach a point in his/her Christian life in which he/she becomes wholly sanctified with the ability to love God wholly or perfectly. Here in this essay Parrish argues for a particular tenet of Baptists (along with other Reformed Protestants) against a teaching of another Evangelical group, the Wesleyan Methodists.<sup>162</sup>

Parrish defines sanctification as “a setting apart to a holy service, a progressive conformity to the image of Christ, a carrying on of what regeneration begins.”<sup>163</sup> This definition is nearly synonymous with that presented in Article X in the Articles of Faith, which states that sanctification “is a progressive work” and “that it is begun in regeneration.” From the Holy Scriptures and this definition, Parrish expounds according to three points:

- I. [D]evotedness of the believer to holy service;
- II. Progressive holiness in the believer’s character
- III. The means which the Spirit uses for our sanctification is the truth of God.<sup>164</sup>

Parrish views Jesus’ request in his prayer in the Garden as evidence of progressive sanctification, and the need of more consecration. According to Parrish, Jesus’ prayer has continual ramifications; Jesus initially directed this prayer to his disciples who were already believers. For Parrish, this begs the question: if these disciples were already believers why did Jesus pray for their sanctification if sanctification could be perfected in this life?<sup>165</sup>

---

<sup>162</sup> C. H. Parrish, “Sanctification,” in *The Negro Baptist Pulpit* ed. E. M. Brawley (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries, 1971), 91-92. On the Wesleyan teaching on entire sanctification, see Ted A. Campbell, *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 61-62.

<sup>163</sup> Parrish, “Sanctification,” 92.

<sup>164</sup> Parrish, “Sanctification,” 93ff.

<sup>165</sup> Parrish, “Sanctification,” 93.

Another important point made by Parrish is that regeneration is the cause of sanctification. Again, this point is found in Article X of the Declaration; but Parrish ventured further in amplifying this point. Though regenerate the Christian still has sin remaining within him/her, one must realize his sanctification through the process of mortifying sin. Because of remaining sin, sanctification is a constant battle against sin. Parrish writes: "There must be holy, spiritual emotions and affections permeating the heart, influencing the mind, and reaching the body, controlling all its appetites and powers."<sup>166</sup> In coming to this conclusion regarding the progressive nature of sanctification, Parrish draws from Dr. Boyce who also asserted that sanctification is progressive. This action suggests that Parrish drew from other Baptist scholars such as Boyce to build his argument. The significance of quoting Boyce centered on the knowledge that Boyce was both a Baptist and a Calvinist.<sup>167</sup>

Discussing the means of sanctification, Parrish draws directly from the biblical text. His claim is simply that the means of sanctification is the word of God, the word of truth. Parrish states, "The whole work both of consecration and cleansing, says Christ, must be accomplished by the word of truth."<sup>168</sup> This statement and argument is an application of the doctrine of the sufficiency of the Scriptures; no other source, but the word of God aids in the on-going work of sanctification.

A related doctrine to the doctrine of sanctification is the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, or as it is called in this collection, "Final Perseverance of the Saints." As Parrish and other Regular Baptists argued that sanctification is progressive, it stands to reason that Christians must persevere in saving faith and holy living. This is the

---

<sup>166</sup> Parrish, "Sanctification," 96.

<sup>167</sup> Parrish, "Sanctification," 97-98.

<sup>168</sup> Parrish, "Sanctification," 99.

concern of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. Regular Baptists share this doctrine with the rest of the Protestant and Reformed churches among Evangelicals while Methodists and some other Holiness groups reject this particular doctrine. In this volume, Rev. A. W. Puller, president of Curtis Memorial Seminary in Staunton, Virginia treats this doctrine and basically offers a commentary on Article X of the *New Hampshire Declaration*.<sup>169</sup>

Both Puller and the writer of the article of faith argue that in order for Christians to reach their goal of attaining of eternal life they must “strive.” The other part of the argument is that they are assured of reaching this goal even if they at times lack assurance. The overall thrust of this essay is on God’s preservation of his saints in addition to the saints’ perseverance. Puller contends that Christians persevere and possess security “because of God’s purpose and pledged power to keep them.”<sup>170</sup> He bases this also on God’s power to keep his saints as he pointed to historical examples of the perseveration of the Church amidst persecution; but most importantly Puller draws from the Holy Scriptures and reason to support this point.<sup>171</sup>

Puller bases his exposition on some individual clauses within the article of faith itself. Using Scripture to analyze and support the points, he offers the following as his exegetical headings: 1) only real believers persevere; 2) God’s “special Providence” is over them; and 3) God keeps them through faith. All three of these points represent an orthodox Protestant treatment of this doctrine.<sup>172</sup>

---

<sup>169</sup> A. W. Puller, “Final Perseverance of the Saints,” in *The Negro Baptist Pulpit* ed. E. M. Brawley (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971).

<sup>170</sup> Puller, “Final Perseverance of the Saints,” 105.

<sup>171</sup> Puller, “Final Perseverance of the Saints,” 105-107.

<sup>172</sup> Puller, “Final Perseverance of the Saints,” 107ff.

The last essay of this important and historic volume under consideration represents a distinct Baptist doctrine. Written by Richard De Baptiste, the essay on “A Gospel Church” captures the Baptist understanding of everything connected with the church: its founding, its polity, and its worship. There are separate essays/sermons on the ordinances of the baptism and Lord’s Supper, but since these doctrines have already been discussed in this chapter there is no need for redundancy. Like the other doctrinal essays and sermons, De Baptiste, pastor of Second Baptist Church of Galesburg, Illinois, uses an article from the Articles of Faith as part of his basis. In the *New Hampshire Declaration*, Article XIII is on “A Gospel Church.”<sup>173</sup>

In this essay, De Baptiste makes no comments regarding what he is asserting is a Baptist understanding of ecclesiology; rather, he presents what he believes the Scriptures teach on the Church and held that what they teach is the biblical doctrine. In Regular Baptist fashion of this day, De Baptiste argues that the churches founded in the New Testament by the apostles were local churches; these were visible churches with organization. He recognizes that in the New Testament the word translated into English as church sometimes refers to a group of believers in cities and regions as well as universally. Again, De Baptiste’s emphasis is in agreement with fellow Baptists like Pendleton and Hiscox on the primacy of the local church.<sup>174</sup>

As the essay progresses, all of the contentions are traditionally Baptist. Such points include that the visible church is composed of only those baptized upon their profession of faith in Jesus Christ; members of a visible church agree to uphold a

---

<sup>173</sup> R. De Baptiste, “A Gospel Church,” in *The Negro Baptist Pulpit* ed. E. M. Brawley (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971). For a short biography on De Baptiste, see William J. Simmons, *Men of Mark*, 229-233.

<sup>174</sup> De Baptiste, “A Gospel Church,” 117-119.



covenant voluntarily; and that there are only two ordinances to be observed by a local church, which are baptism and the Lord's Supper. All of these points, of course, De Baptiste base upon his study of the Scriptures while claiming the sufficiency and authority of the same representing the authority of Jesus Christ over his church.<sup>175</sup>

Among the other points, De Baptiste discusses the theme of worship in the church. He states that worship is commanded by God, and the implication is that worship is a mark of the church. Though he claims that there is no set ritual or liturgy in the New Testament for church worship, there are specific elements of worship such as "singing, praying, reading the Scriptures, exhortation, preaching, and the administration of the ordinances..."<sup>176</sup> Though the church is free to order its services according to the circumstances of a given local congregation, the intimation here is that for there to be true worship these elements must be performed.

The final point to discuss in this essay is on the government of the church. Again, in typical Regular Baptist fashion De Baptiste posits that the local church is a democracy regarding the election of its officers. Unlike in churches with an Episcopal polity, Baptist churches are free to elect their own leaders based upon their understanding of the biblical qualifications of church officers. In a Baptist church, there are only two recognized offices: pastor and deacon. The term bishop, though read in the New Testament, is synonymous with the term pastor according to De Baptiste. This assertion highlights the independence of a local church since bishops in the Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions have oversight of numerous churches and have the power to ordain and place

---

<sup>175</sup> De Baptiste, "A Gospel Church," 119-124.

<sup>176</sup> De Baptiste, "A Gospel Church," 124.

ministers in parishes. De Baptiste indicates that democracy in the local church is limited; Christ rules the church through his word found in the New Testament.<sup>177</sup>

The importance of this volume is significant in order to comprehend African American and National Baptist theological commitments during the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Though many of the contributors believed that African American Baptists should continue having good working relationship with Northern Baptists, all of them worked in the formation and development of the National Baptist Convention during this early stage of its history. The theology was the same as any other Baptist group, but the sociology dictated that these African American leaders work for the theological and ecclesiastical uplift of their own people. African American Baptist leaders saw no disconnection between Protestant orthodoxy and applying this orthodoxy to the societal, political, and economic struggles of African Americans during this period in history.

The final aspect of the shaping of National Baptist theology during this period is Ethiopianism, which various African American Baptist leaders articulated. In one sense, this was the overarching theology that gave impetus to the mission movement during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries among African American Baptists. As African Americans converted to Christianity and learned to read and interpret the Scriptures, they read Psalm 68:31: "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." African American Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, etc. read these words and believed that God would fulfill this clear prophecy regarding African peoples. In biblical language, "Ethiopia" represented more than the kingdom of Abyssinia, but it referred to all Africans according to African American theological understanding. It is simple to deduce that Africans in the Diaspora who received the light of the gospel of

---

<sup>177</sup> De Baptiste, "A Gospel Church," 127-128.

Jesus Christ reading this passage viewed themselves particularly as playing a vital role in the fulfillment of this prophecy. Though they endured the lash of slavery and still buckled under its residual effects, they maintained a strong belief in God's Providence that they would be helpers in the phenomenon of Africa "stretching forth" its hands to God. It is arguable that there are elements of Ethiopianism in the missions of Lott Carey and early missionaries sponsored by the American Missionary Baptist Convention. As embracing a robust Evangelicalism with a distinct Baptist flavor, the African American Baptist expression of Ethiopianism reflects the unique theological perspective of a people who longed for hope in a hopeless situation; they clung to hope by believing strongly in the Providence of God, who had included them in his gracious plan of the redemption of all nations, especially African nations. The late Pan-Africanist scholar St. Clair Drake adequately sums up the meaning of Ethiopianism among African Americans:

Black people under slavery turned to the Bible to "prove" that a black people, Ethiopians, were powerful and respected when white men in Europe were barbarians; Ethiopia came to symbolize all of Africa; and, throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the "redemption of Africa" became one important focus of meaningful activity for leaders among New World Negroes.<sup>178</sup>

The major Ethiopianist that had influence on African Americans was the African American Episcopalian Alexander Crummell whose clear ideas in his speeches and writings would find application in African American Baptist mission motivation and work. Other than Crummell, the West Indian Christian missionary Edward Blyden was also influential as he implored African Americans to join in this great move of God to bring the gospel to Africa during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Ethiopianist thought of these men filtered among African American Baptist leaders during this time as through missionary work they endeavored to "redeem" Africa. According to Fallin, African American Baptist

---

<sup>178</sup> St. Clair Drake, *The Redemption of Africa and Black Religion* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1991), 11.

leaders in Alabama held to Ethiopianism. For these leaders it was both liberationist and millenarian based on Revelation 20:17 in which the Apostle John writes of the vision of the damnation of the wicked ones. According to Fallin, “Millenial Ethiopianism, which flourished among many African American Christians around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, predicted a future golden age in which black people around the world would rise to a significant role in history.”<sup>179</sup> Ethiopianism also focused on God’s judgment on whites, which was a segment of this theology that carried out of slavery into the post-Reconstruction African American Christian community. Ethiopianism as articulated by African American Baptists and others was essentially optimistic, and this belief received veracity in witnessing the emergence of men like Booker T. Washington and R. H. Boyd as well as the creation of African American schools by and for themselves. With this stated, Ethiopianism contained elements of racial uplift.<sup>180</sup>

According to Black Atlantic historian David Northrup, the concept of Ethiopianism can be seen in the writings of Olaudah Equiano. If this is true, then it must be inherent within his abolitionism. Scholars of the African Diaspora, the Black Atlantic, and African and African American history all agree that Equiano’s narrative is essentially an abolitionist work. The context of Equiano’s writing points to such as he was involved in the overall Evangelical Social reform movement in Great Britain during this period that is commonly associated with the Evangelical movement within the Anglican Church and among Non-Conformists such as Baptists. In chapter 10 of his narrative, Equiano chronicles the events that led to his conversion to Evangelical Christianity. The place of this conversion within the narrative and Equiano’s life denotes that his conversion was

---

<sup>179</sup> Fallin, *Uplifting the People*, 99.

<sup>180</sup> Fallin, *Uplifting the People*, 99.

his springboard into the abolitionist movement. According to Equiano, his conversion experience follows an especially difficult time in his life as he failed to help one John Annis, who was quasi-free owing to the new law (the Somerset Case) in England that proclaimed that enslaved African living in England had the legal right to refuse to return to the West Indies. Annis' master forced his return to the West Indies where he died.<sup>181</sup>

Backing away from his own failure to help Annis, Equiano placed his conversion experience within the context of his voyage to the North Pole, where he nearly drowned. He also survived a harrowing experience being on the ship that got stuck in the ice off of Greenland, and he along with the rest of the crew had to pull the ship through broken ice.<sup>182</sup> Upon his return to London in September 1773, Equiano's mind turned toward God and his own eternal destiny. He states that his last voyage "caused" him "to reflect deeply on" his "eternal state, and to seek the Lord with full purpose of heart ere it was too late."<sup>183</sup> Owing to a near death experience, Equiano felt the urgency of securing a place in heaven by any means. He further explains that he "was determined to work out" his "own salvation, and in so doing procure a title to heaven."<sup>184</sup>

Equiano became what is called in contemporary parlance a "seeker." During his immediate return to London, he began to attend various Anglican churches, Quaker meetings, he studied Roman Catholicism, and even discussed Judaism all in an attempt to gain a heavenly home. His searching at this time, however, was futile since he found no satisfaction for his soul. He then determined to read just the four gospels "and whatever

---

<sup>181</sup> See David Northrup, ed., *Crosscurrents in the Black Atlantic 1770-1965: A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008); Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano: Written by Himself*. Edited by Robert J. Allison (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007).

<sup>182</sup> Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*, 165.

<sup>183</sup> Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*, 166.

<sup>184</sup> Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*, 166.

sect or party” he “found adhering thereto such” he “would join.”<sup>185</sup> Even with such a determination, Equiano admits to being a self-righteous man; he believed he could go to heaven by keeping the commandments, which he let his readers know that he kept eight out of the ten.<sup>186</sup>

After Equiano’s involvement and failure in the Annis affair, he admits that he was in a miserable condition owing to the conviction that weighed heavily upon him owing to sin. He states:

Suffering much by villains in the late cause [this would be the Annis affair], and being much concerned about the state of my soul, these things (but particularly the latter) brought me very low; so that I became a burden to myself and viewed all things around me as emptiness and vanity which could give no satisfaction to a troubled conscience.<sup>187</sup>

Such a testimony would resonate with his English and American audiences that consisted of Evangelicals favoring the suppression of the slave trade and the ultimate abolition of slavery. In masterful yet sincere fashion, Equiano establishes a dual connection to his misery: first, his native sinfulness, which all persons would be cognizant of; second, the tragedy and wickedness of slavery that rendered him powerless to help even one poor soul, namely John Annis, and the ability of one man, William Kirkpatrick, to circumvent the law.

Broken and in misery, Equiano details how he perceived the Lord God began to deal with his soul. Equiano writes in stark language how he longed to repent from his sinful ways, and how he prayed for such. In answer to his prayers, God led him to meet whom Equiano calls “an old sea-faring man.”<sup>188</sup> This old man was a Christian, and he

---

<sup>185</sup> Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*, 167.

<sup>186</sup> Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*, 167.

<sup>187</sup> Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*, 169.

<sup>188</sup> Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*, 170.

engaged Equiano in spiritual conversation. While in conversation with the old man, Equiano states that he met the acquaintance of a minister (a “dissenting minister,” according to Equiano), who came calling upon the old man. Learning that Equiano was a member of the Anglican Church (through baptism), the minister invited the former to a “love feast” at his chapel that evening. Through this “love feast” in which the primary feasting was on the goodness of God through Christ, the vibrant singing of hymns, and the heart-stirring testimonies of the saints, gladness pervaded Equiano’s heart. He also learned something valuable in that setting as well: he lacked the assurance of his own salvation.<sup>189</sup>

From this point in the narrative, Equiano took a short journey that led to his salvation. Following the love feast and having a fundamental misunderstanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Equiano learned that his own righteousness by keeping eight of Ten Commandments could never deliver him from his sins. A minister at Westminster Chapel explained to him that he needed to be “born again” and receive forgiveness of sin by placing his faith in Christ Jesus alone. This same minister explained to Equiano the purpose of the Law of God, and the need of grace in order to be saved. What Equiano heard and learned from this minister was the gospel understood in Evangelical Calvinistic terms.<sup>190</sup>

It was on 6 October 1774 that Equiano received his salvation. At this time, Equiano had left London on a voyage to Cadiz, Spain. Equiano’s testimony agreed with the Evangelical Calvinism of the day. This testimony states that God had chosen even Africans to eternal life in particular. Equiano states:

---

<sup>189</sup> Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*, 170-171.

<sup>190</sup> Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*, 172-173.

Now every leading providential circumstance that happened to me, from the day I was taken from my parents to that hour, was then in my view, as if it had but just then occurred. I was sensible of the invisible hand of God, which guided and protected me when in truth I knew it not: still the Lord pursued me although I slighted and disregarded it; this mercy melted me down. When I considered my poor wretched state I wept, seeing what a great debtor I was to sovereign free grace. Now the Ethiopian was willing to be saved by Jesus Christ, the sinner's only surety, and also to rely on none other person or thing for salvation.<sup>191</sup>

This section of Equiano's testimony highlights a few important aspects of the development of Ethiopianism. First, Ethiopianism emerged within Evangelical Calvinism, which emphasized the sovereign grace of God in the election of sinners, which relates to the biblical doctrine of election that states (according to Calvinists) that God has chosen a people from every tribe, nation, and tongue to be his own. Equiano's testimony marks clear evidence that God has chosen Africans (Ethiopians) to be included in his wonderful covenant of grace. Second, because it is certain that God had chosen Africans the gospel must be preached in Africa to Africans. Third, it was part of God's Providential Design to have Africans taken from their native lands, enslaved, and saved to demonstrate his election of them. This final aspect has bearing on Equiano's career as an abolitionist and colonizationist.

As Ethiopianism definitely has its roots among the free African Christian community in England, the concept would take shape among African American Christians during the early half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The most prominent articulator of Ethiopian ideals is Alexander Crummell. Crummell was born in New York City on 3 March 1819; his parents were free African Americans. Boston Crummell was a Christian convert before his capture in Africa and his subsequent enslavement. Charity Crummell was a free African American woman from her birth on Long Island; she was an

---

<sup>191</sup> Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*, 177.



Episcopalian. Because of his mother's membership in the Episcopal Church, young Alexander Crummell was a member also of the Episcopal Church. Eventually, Crummell would become a clergyman in the Episcopal Church despite having been refused entry in the church's seminary in New York owing to his race. After receiving private instruction in divinity studies, Crummell received ordination in 1844 by Bishop Lee of Delaware. Crummell then studied overseas in England at Cambridge graduating from there in 1853. From 1853-1872, Crummell served in Liberia as a missionary and an educator; during his sojourn there in West Africa he maintained his ties to American abolitionists as he made a few trips back to America. In 1879, he founded St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Washington, DC, and remained the pastor there until 1894. Throughout his long ministerial career, Crummell gave many sermons and address and wrote pieces concentrating on African American Christian mission to Africa.<sup>192</sup>

In 1853, Crummell gave an address entitled, "Hope for Africa," that highlighted the optimism inherent in Ethiopianism connected with an ardent Evangelicalism. In this address/sermon, Crummell argues: "in the merciful providence of God, the Negro race is fast approaching the day of complete evangelization..."<sup>193</sup> To support this argument, Crummell first analyzes what he terms "temporal providences." First, Crummell gives a brief overview of the condition of Africans/African-Americans at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to Crummell, there was "universal slavery, and the slave trade."

---

<sup>192</sup> Wilson J. Moses, "Introduction," in Alexander Crummell, *Destiny and Race: Selected Writings, 1840-1898*. Edited by Wilson J. Moses (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 3-4; see also Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *Alexander Crummell: A Study of Civilization and Discontent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 11ff, 34ff., and Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 62-64.

<sup>193</sup> Crummell, "Hope for Africa," 56. According to Moses, this was originally a sermon delivered before the Ladies' Negro Educational Society in Cambridge, England. See Moses, *Alexander Crummell*, 78.

This was the phenomenon in the Americas. He states that Africa itself suffered because of the ravages of the slave trade. He states:

If we turned to Africa herself, we would have seen the whole extent of that vast continent given to the spoiler, robbed of her children---the vast interior converted into a hunting-ground for capturing miserable and wretched human beings;---drenched on every side with fraternal blood;---and the long line of the coast, for thousands of miles, evidencing, at every point, how prolific was the slave trade, in woes and agonies and murders, by the bleached bones, or the bloody tracks of its countless victims!<sup>194</sup>

The kind, temporal Providence at the middle of the century, according to Crummell, was that Europeans and Americans had passed bills suppressing the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Also the British, the French, and the Danes had emancipated African/Afro-West Indian slaves. Regarding the slavery in the US, Crummell saw “some few signs of advancement,” which he believed was a portend that signaled the soon ending of slavery. According to Moses, Crummell viewed Providence in terms of progress; therefore, such a conception makes sense of the above statement.<sup>195</sup>

In Africa, Crummell lauded the existence of what was then called “legitimate trade” along the Atlantic Coast of Africa where slave trading once occurred. Crummell states:

Along this region [West Coast of Africa] ---including some of the richest and most productive portions of the African continent---legitimate trade has sprung up; and instead of a revolting commerce in the bodies and souls of men, and women, and even babes, we see industrious communities springing up, civilization introduced, and a trade commenced which already has swelled up, in exports along to Europe and America, to more than two million of pounds per annum.<sup>196</sup>

---

<sup>194</sup> Crummell, “Hope for Africa,” 56.

<sup>195</sup> Crummell, “Hope for Africa,” 57; Moses, *Golden Age*, 60. Moses states that the French historian Francois Guizot influenced Crummell’s conception of Providence.

<sup>196</sup> Crummell, “Hope for Africa,” 57-58.

Another note of progress Crummell points to was the existence of Sierra Leone, the Republic of Haiti, and Liberia. Sierra Leone, notes Crummell, was “the cradle of missions.”<sup>197</sup> For him, the existence of these places noted the extension of civilization to Africa and among African Americans. Crummell offers his plaudits to a movement on the island of Barbados of Christians seeking to colonize in West Africa under the aegis of the governor, the bishop, and other clergy on the island. The Archbishop of Canterbury also established a society for that purpose, according to Crummell.<sup>198</sup>

Crummell then contrasts missions work at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-century. He states that at the beginning of the century there was no Christian presence among Africans on the West Coast, and in the Americas African Americans (in both the United States and in the West Indies) “were in a state of heathenism.” White Americans and officials in the West Indies prevented the instruction of African Americans, and were unsure whether or not Africans/African-Americans were even capable of receiving spiritual instruction. At this time, there were numerous missions operating in West Africa, and the missionaries who preached the gospel among the nations in West Africa. With this had come “civilized and Christian institutions.” Crummell also notes that there were young African men who were prepared to receive “holy orders,” or ordination in the Anglican Church, or Episcopal Church. This implied that Crummell believed that a goal of Ethiopianism was to plant an indigenous African church within the overall Anglican Communion.<sup>199</sup>

In 1877, Crummell delivered a sermon on Thanksgiving at St. Luke’s Church in Washington, D.C. titled “The Destined Superiority of the Negro” that re-iterated the point

---

<sup>197</sup> Crummell, “Hope for Africa,” 58.

<sup>198</sup> Crummell, “Hope for Africa,” 58.

<sup>199</sup> Crummell, “Hope for Africa,” 58-59.

that at the heart of Ethiopianism is the hope that God will liberate Africa spiritually and economically through the civilizing effects of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Crummell also reveals his more radical application of Ethiopianism by believing that God would raise Africa from the doldrums and set it on the pinnacle among the continents and nations of people. The Scriptural passage is from Isaiah 61:7 (the text is incorrect; it reads Isaiah 41:7, though it has the right words from Isaiah 61:7), and this is, according to the subscript, “A Thanksgiving Discourse, 1877.” It is uncertain if this is a sermon from Thanksgiving Day, or merely on an occasion of Thanksgiving.<sup>200</sup>

Following a brief synopsis of the passage with its immediate meaning pertaining to God’s grace and mercy to his chosen people of the Old Covenant, Israel, Crummell wants to use this passage to reveal how God deals with nations (races) of people, and glean important lessons from the text as well. Drawing from what Crummell views as a principle of “divine government,” there are different ways that God deals with nations. First, according to Crummell, God corrects and destroys some. With keen insight Crummell states assertively that in one perspective of history, world history is “a history of national destructions.” Here he considers the fall of many nations and peoples both ancient and contemporary from Pompeii to American Indian nations. All of this, according to Crummell, was “a certain fact of Providence.” Crummell also fails to hesitate that it was God who caused these national destructions. He states “that when the sins of a people reach a state of hateful maturity, then God sends upon them sudden destruction.”<sup>201</sup> Crummell sees this through both sacred and secular history. These national destructions found their root in the fall of man, and the corresponding doctrine of

---

<sup>200</sup> Crummell, “The Destined Superiority of the Negro,” 194.

<sup>201</sup> Crummell, “The Destined Superiority of the Negro,” 195.

total depravity. For Crummell, the Aztecs were in a state of moral decay when Columbus arrived in the Americas in 1492. This is the course that depravity takes among a people. Further, Crummell found clear examples from the word of God such as God's judgments on Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, etc. to support his ideas at this point in his discourse.<sup>202</sup>

Two things are clear from this section in this discourse: first, Crummell held to an orthodox Protestant view of the authority of the Scriptures. As an Episcopalian, he upheld the teaching of the sufficiency of Scripture as it pertained to matters of salvation as articulated in Article VI of the *Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion* of the Anglican Church.<sup>203</sup> Crummell, however, went beyond the moderateness of this article to hold a more robust position on biblical authority; second, he held to the Protestant position of man's total depravity, or original sin. This doctrine, too, is stated in the *Thirty-Nine Articles* (Article IX). All of this reveals that Crummell was a conservative Protestant Episcopalian while maintaining specific racialist applications of Scripture. In his second point, Crummell underscored God's correction of some peoples while preserving them simultaneously. He cited Israel as an example of this during their "servile sojourn...in Egypt" for 400 hundred years.<sup>204</sup>

For Crummell, the mercy that God shows to some people and the destruction he caused for others rests upon the principle revealed in Psalm 18:25-26: "With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the forward thy will show thyself forward." Does Crummell here hint at (or to that matter the psalmist David) a principle

---

<sup>202</sup> Crummell, "The Destined Superiority of the Negro," 194-196.

<sup>203</sup> For the *Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion*, see *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*. 3rd ed. Edited by John H. Leith (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1982), 267, 269-270.

<sup>204</sup> Crummell, "The Destined Superiority of the Negro," 196-197.

teaching that God rewards those, or blesses those who prove themselves worthy? To clarify, and even to anticipate this rejoinder, Crummell states,

He does not see merit; and it is not because of desert that He bestows His blessings. But when the Almighty sees in a nation or people latent germs of virtues, he seizes upon and schools them by trial and discipline; so that by the processes of divers correctives, these virtues may bud and blossom into beautiful and healthful maturity.<sup>205</sup>

What is conspicuously missing from these remarks and what follows is an attribution to the grace of God for these virtues in individuals and in peoples. Crummell states that “obedience and faith, were without doubt, original though simple elements of Abraham’s character.”<sup>206</sup> Such a statement belies belief in original sin, which he articulates in the above sermon. From this statement centering on a biblical personality, Crummell speaks of the native virtues of nations of peoples such as the Greeks, Romans, Germans, and Saxons. Even though these peoples were pagan, they had virtues.<sup>207</sup>

This discourse turns more racialist, or even Social Darwinist, as he speaks of “characteristics common...to all strong races.” He also states that there were (historically and at present) some peoples more fit to receive the “purposes of grace and civilization.” This was his basic premise to explain why certain groups failed to receive Christianity in the early Church. The weak people, he argues, frittered away the gifts of God and thereby disqualified themselves from receiving mercy and grace.<sup>208</sup>

From here, Crummell turns to apply these principles to African Americans.<sup>209</sup> The question to insert at this point in the discourse is: do African Americans possess those seeds of virtues pleasing to the Almighty God? Or are African Americans destined to

---

<sup>205</sup> Crummell, “The Destined Superiority of the Negro,” 197.

<sup>206</sup> Crummell, “The Destined Superiority of the Negro,” 198.

<sup>207</sup> Crummell, “The Destined Superiority of the Negro,” 198.

<sup>208</sup> Crummell, “The Destined Superiority of the Negro,” 198-199.

<sup>209</sup> See Crummell, “The Destined Superiority of the Negro,” 199-205.

travel down the road of perdition and degradation? Crummell holds that no African people are “doomed.” He bases this on an interesting Social Darwinist reading of history. The argument is: many different people groups had been destroyed as a result of European conquest on the American continent and elsewhere, but people of African descent actually thrived in some cases. Basically, Crummell asserts that the trials that Africans and African Americans endured caused them to flourish. He was in some places “a superior man, to-day, to what he was three hundred years ago.”<sup>210</sup> Crummell states all of this before European imperialism and colonization would ravish and begin a process of African underdevelopment. It is sorrowfully correct that he states, “And while in other lands, as in cultivated India, the native has been subjected to a foreign yoke, the negro races of African still retain, for the most part, their original birthright.”<sup>211</sup>

Crummell notes that civilization had come along the West African coast through Christianity. He states,

For civilization, at numerous places, as well in the interior as on the coast, has displaced ancestral heathenism; and the standard of the Cross, uplifted on the banks of its great rivers, at large and important cities, and in the great seats of commercial activity, shows that the Heralds of the Cross have begun the conquest of the conquest for their glorious King.<sup>212</sup>

In this statement, Crummell connects the overall goal of Ethiopianism with what he perceives to be civilization. Bound up in the proclamation of the gospel by African Americans, West Africans would gladly receive civilization as they assume their rightful place with other peoples of the world.

Crummell next asserts that Africans had those common virtues that compose “strong races.” Even amidst the hard trials of the past--slavery and the slave trade--

---

<sup>210</sup> Crummell, “The Destined Superiority of the Negro,” 200.

<sup>211</sup> Crummell, “The Destined Superiority of the Negro,” 200.

<sup>212</sup> Crummell, “The Destined Superiority of the Negro,” 200-201.

Africans had been preserved, according to Crummell. The seeds of the virtues pleasing to God had been watered through these trials and hardships. Crummell states, "This history, then, does not signify retribution; does not forecast extinction. It is most plainly disciplinary and preparative. It is the education which comes from trial and endurance; for with it has been allied, more or less, the grand moral training of the religious tendencies of the race."<sup>213</sup> These, according to Crummell, were providential markers.<sup>214</sup>

The overall assessment of this piece is that Crummell attempts to Christianize Social Darwinism and to place it within the overall fabric of Ethiopianism. Though he states that Providence would cause future greatness and superiority of Africans, this same Providence would take into consideration native human virtue. Crummell basically misapplies Scripture to forward his own view of Ethiopianism. The venerable Episcopalian priest read into the Scriptures in order to advance his own sentiments of African uplift.

As mentioned above, African Americans believed that racial uplift was part of the entire Ethiopian theology. Race leaders like Booker T. Washington and his belief in racial dignity and civility were evidence that peoples of African descent were making strides toward redemption according to the Providence of God. Ethiopians were more than theorists; they were also practical, especially Crummell. This is witnessed in his address to the United States Congress in 1880 titled, "Industrial Education: How to Apply the Unclaimed Beauty." In this address, Crummell notes how African Americans were divorced from the intricate labor and professional classes of the nation. He states, "It is a

---

<sup>213</sup> Crummell, "The Destined Superiority of the Negro," 203.

<sup>214</sup> Crummell, "The Destined Superiority of the Negro," 204-205.



state of divorcement from the mercantile life of the country; from the scientific life of the land; from its literary life; and from its social life."<sup>215</sup>

Though African Americans at the time of this speech (1880) were in a low social "caste," Crummell was optimistic that they stay there no longer owing to the institutions of the country. For him, the institutions almost guaranteed a group such as African Americans the boost it needed to rise from the doldrums of society. One point of Crummell's optimism was that the country is democratic. He believes that every group in the country would latch on to the principles inherit in democracy, namely freedom and equality. The second is interesting. Crummell asserts that there is no way African Americans will leave the country. His perception on the issue of African repatriation at this point in African American history was correct.<sup>216</sup>

To solve the problem of African Americans on the bottom, Crummell believes that mere education and voting rights would never solve this predicament. There must be more since African Americans occupied the position of servants throughout the urban sectors of American society. Crummell believes that the solution to this problem lay in industrial education. He stated with much conviction that "It is evident then that the great problem of industrial life of the black race in this country is yet to be solved in some new way that has not yet been reached. It is to be solved by raising the whole plane of their life to a higher elevation. It is to be solved by stimulating the mechanical and industrial capacities of the race in this land."<sup>217</sup> This he knew in the face of witnessing a young man reading Greek and Latin, but working as a waiter in New York City in 1872.<sup>218</sup>

---

<sup>215</sup> Crummell, "Industrial Education," 206.

<sup>216</sup> Crummell, "Industrial Education," 206-207.

<sup>217</sup> Crummell, "Industrial Education," 208.

<sup>218</sup> Crummell, "Industrial Education," 207-208.

Crummell argues that it was time that African Americans needed to learn trades in order to acquire wealth, and then that would suit them to “send their sons to Yale or Harvard, and indulge in the luxury of classical learning...”<sup>219</sup> In this address, Crummell asks for the government to fund scholarship or opportunities for African Americans to learn a skilled trade; he in no way favored more money going to institutions of higher education for this purpose.<sup>220</sup>

It takes no great leap to state that Crummell’s thoughts and activities had a significant influence on African American Protestants during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, African American Baptist notwithstanding. As will be discussed and analyzed in the next few chapters below, African American Baptists in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century would frame their understanding of their African missionary enterprise in “Crummellian” terms---African American Christians had been ordained by God to raise Africa through the gospel and modes of American/Western civilization. Other than Crummell, another Christian of African descent cast his shadow on African American Christian thought regarding their overall place in God’s plan to redeem Africa.

The other major Ethiopianist that had an effect on African American Christians was Edward Blyden. Blyden was born on August 3, 1832 on the island of St. Thomas in the Danish West Indies. He and his family were members of the Dutch Reformed Church in St. Thomas. To pursue his divinity studies, Blyden moved to the United States in 1850 and witnessed the racial discrimination and the suffering of African Americans. He came into contact with Presbyterians involved in the American Colonization Society, and by

---

<sup>219</sup> Crummell, “Industrial Education,” 208.

<sup>220</sup> Crummell, “Industrial Education,” 208-209.

the end of the year 1850 Blyden was en route to Liberia.<sup>221</sup> A little less radical than Crummell, Blyden's Ethiopianism was just as optimistic and biblical. He definitely believed that the time was ripe during the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century for African American Christians to engage in missionary work in Africa. One speech published in Blyden's *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race* exemplifies this point. In the speech entitled "Ethiopia stretching out her hands unto God; or Africa's Service to the World," Blyden holds that the term Ethiopia presumably as it is in Holy Scripture means the whole continent of Africa. This, again, presumably he gathers from consensus bible scholarship in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Blyden writes, "It is pretty well established now, however, that by Ethiopia, is meant the continent of Africa, and by Ethiopians, the great race who inhabit the country."<sup>222</sup> Blyden quoting from *Smith's Bible Dictionary* and Herodotus asserts that Ethiopians as referred to in the Bible are black peoples. He further asserts that these Africans, whether from West Africa, or East Africa, had communication and contact with Asia. This contact went back to the days of Abraham and Moses even.<sup>223</sup>

Blyden also states that bible writers knew of Ethiopians as being black people. Blyden writes: "And when they spoke of the Ethiopians, they meant the ancestors of the black-skinned and wooly-haired people who, for two hundred and fifty years, have been known as labourers on the plantations of the South."<sup>224</sup> By making this connection, Blyden purposefully engenders a sense of holy pride in the hearts of his audience, which

---

<sup>221</sup> Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot, 1832-1912* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 3-6.

<sup>222</sup> Edward Blyden, "Ethiopia stretching out her hands to God; or Africa's Service to the World," in Edward Blyden, *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race* (Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1994), 130. This is a collection of essays and speeches by Blyden originally published in 1888.

<sup>223</sup> Blyden, "Ethiopia," 130-131.

<sup>224</sup> Blyden, "Ethiopia," 132.

was an African American audience. Blyden asserts that every ethnic group on the continent of Africa was “stretching out” its hands to God. From this, he states that all Africans even in their traditional and local religions recognize the existence of a “Supreme Being.” This is part of Blyden’s application of Psalm 68:31. He went on to identify the task of the Christian missionary: it was “to declare to them that Being whom they ignorantly worship.”<sup>225</sup> This is reminiscent of Paul’s words to the philosophers in Athens recorded in Acts 17.

Blyden also argues that Africans manifested their knowledge of God (what he calls “their belief in the common Fatherhood of a personal God”) through their treating of others with general kindness and with extending hospitality. What Blyden has in view here is that Africans were ready to hear the gospel since they already had faith in a High God and they expressed a type of love toward their neighbors. This was indicative of Ethiopia stretching forth its hand to God.<sup>226</sup>

From here Blyden focuses on the service Africa had rendered to the world as evidence that it had begun to stretch out its hand to God. Blyden holds that Africa was the “cradle of civilization,” and that it had contributed great things such as the Pyramids. More importantly, Blyden recites the history that Africa was a place of refuge for God’s people such as Abraham, Joseph, and the sons of Jacob. Also he refers to the Flight of the Holy Family recorded in the gospel of Matthew (2:13-15); in addition, he mentions Simon of Cyrene helping Jesus to bear his cross also recorded in Matthew’s gospel (27:32). These references point to Africa’s place within redemptive history, and Blyden

---

<sup>225</sup> Blyden, “Ethiopia,” 132.

<sup>226</sup> Blyden, “Ethiopia,” 134-135.

means to encourage his audience regarding Africa's place in the Providence of God and the history of the faith.<sup>227</sup>

Blyden then jumps to African slavery as a "service" to the world. African slave labor, according to Blyden, helped to build "modern civilization." In connection with what transpired in America as a result of Africa slave labor and the continued presence of people of African descent, Blyden writes: "The political history of the United States is the history of the Negro. The commercial and agricultural history of nearly the whole of America is the history of the Negro."<sup>228</sup> For Blyden, he believes that in God's Providence Africa was a servant; this was in accordance with the ethic of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Blyden notes, "The lot of Africa resembles also His who made Himself of no reputation, but took upon Himself the form of a servant..." Christian hearers and readers of this would notice that Blyden compares Africa with the Lord Jesus Christ as described by the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2:7: "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men..." Also Blyden reminds his audience of Jesus' teaching regarding servanthood. If one wants to be great, he must be servant of all (see Matthew 20:24-28). Blyden uses the life and ministry of Christ to highlight Africa's providential greatness, and another aspect of how he envisioned Africa fulfilling the prophecy in Psalm 68:31. Blyden expects a literal fulfillment of the prophecy. He notes the new learning of Africa, and the end of slavery. These were markers of the fulfillment of the prophecy. For him, the fulfillment was sudden, according to his reading of the verse and the word "soon." He actually connects the growing knowledge of Africa with the abolition of slavery. He states that more has

---

<sup>227</sup> Blyden, "Ethiopia," 135.

<sup>228</sup> Blyden, "Ethiopia," 137.

been known of Africa in the seventeen years after slavery than had ever been known in modern times.<sup>229</sup>

A second indicator that Africa was in the process of fulfilling the Psalm 68 prophecy is what Blyden terms “the restlessness” of African Americans. He writes,

There are thousands of Negroes, in comfortable circumstances here, who are yet yearning after the land of their fathers; who are anxious, not so much to be relieved from present pressure, as to obtain an expansive field for their energies; who feel the need not only of horizontal openings---free movement on the plane which they occupy---but a chance to rise above it---a vertical outlet.<sup>230</sup>

Blyden ties this “restlessness” and anxiety felt by African Americans with the spirit of ethnic nationalism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He envisions, basically, as the fulfillment of this prophecy a type of vibrant African nationalism unifying all of Africa similar to the building of nation-states in Europe. Blyden spoke to a white audience and he informed it of the importance of both the African field as a place of missions, but also the key place of African Americans as missionaries in the African field; he also pressed the need for African Americans to colonize in Africa. Blyden states, “In the Providence of God, it seems that this great and glorious work is reserved for the Negro.”<sup>231</sup>

Judging from these representative writings by Crummell and Blyden, it is clear that Ethiopianism was a purely African American theology. Within it there are elements of African American nationalism, civilizationism, and millennialism. This is a theology of hope as well as African American Christians viewed themselves within an optimistic providential plan of God to help lift up themselves from the dregs of American society, but also to lift up Africans on the continent of Africa. This is what Crummell believed

---

<sup>229</sup> Blyden, “Ethiopia,” 139-140.

<sup>230</sup> Blyden, “Ethiopia,” 140.

<sup>231</sup> Blyden, “Ethiopia,” 141-142. 144. The quote is found on p. 147. It is evident from this quote that Blyden was a firm believer in God’s Providential Design. See also Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, 29.

regarding missionary work. An African American missionary had the primary duty to preach the gospel to Africans, but his/her secondary goal was to civilize African.<sup>232</sup>

Within all of these positives is a hint of African American exceptionalism. African American Christians (Baptists among them) perceived that they were givers of something that Africans needed, and felt no desire to receive anything from Africans. Granted, sharing the gospel is noble; but Ethiopianism would lead to a modicum of African American paternalism toward Africans. All of these elements drove African American Baptists to engage in missionary activity in Africa during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As the National Baptist Convention formed in 1895 in Atlanta, Georgia, its theological identity was already firm and solid. In slavery and in freedom, several sources coalesced to shape National Baptist theological identity that exemplified W. E. B. Du Bois' idea of "double consciousness." African American slaves received catechetical instruction that was historically and traditionally Calvinistic Baptist, and they held to these beliefs, more or less into freedom. The fact that African American Baptist leaders who wrote on doctrinal themes did so with so much conviction and eloquence testifies to the high degree in which they embraced the faith of their masters, but also of their own fathers like George Liele and Andrew Bryan.

Though slaves sang songs that have become well-loved by African Americans and other groups of people, the first hymnals produced by African American Baptists were strictly Evangelical dipping into the deep reservoir of English and American hymnody. More popular than the slave songs became the "Dr. Watts" hymns in which African American worshippers would "line out" and appropriate to make them uniquely their's.

---

<sup>232</sup> Moses, *Golden Age*, 61.

Regardless of the style by which African American Baptists sung Evangelical hymns, the practice connected them with their Northern and Southern Baptist brethren.

It was as self-conscious Baptists and self-conscious persons of African descent that the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention sent missionaries to the African field. In the years to come, African American Baptists would retain this “double consciousness” and missionaries would attempt to apply concerns of racial uplift on the ground in Africa and even attempt to replicate uplift efforts such as building educational institutions mirrored after Tuskegee and others like it.

All of these details in this chapter support the argument that African American Baptists successfully amalgamated traditional Baptist belief with an ardent race consciousness without contradiction. In 1879, Walter Brooks, an African American Baptist pastor, assured white Baptists in Virginia that the new independent churches in the South were teaching Baptist orthodoxy. This was true as it pertained to those churches led by educated ministers.<sup>233</sup> This amalgamation demonstrates itself on the pages of the *Mission Herald* from the extant issues of the early 1900s to 1930. Men like Lewis Jordan, James East, Walter Brooks, and William Graham show how Baptist they were, but also that were unashamed Ethiopians. The influence of thinkers such as Crummell and Blyden are clearly evident in the writings of the National Baptist leaders in the *Herald*. Since both Crummell and Blyden were missionaries, their writings are even more important for the purposes of this dissertation. Unlike Moses who frames Crummell’s thought within a civilizationist sentiment, the emphasis in this chapter frames Crummell within his fundamental Christian thought that necessarily caused him to engage in issues of civilization once he arrived in Liberia; therefore, it focuses more

---

<sup>233</sup> Paul Harvey, *Redeeming the South*, 48.



narrowly on his missionary philosophy rather than Moses' broad concerns in writing a biography and his chapter in *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism*. In addition, the focus in this chapter on Crummell's thought views no disconnection between his biblical understanding and his understanding of national/ethnic progress; it is inclusive of his overall theology.<sup>234</sup> Such an inclusion characterizes African American Baptist theology: it was truly orthodox Baptist and truly African American and Ethiopian.

The educated leadership of the National Baptist Convention was generally Crummellian. It possessed a keen sense of God's Providential Design regarding the redemption of Africa. This belief informed their optimism concerning African American progress spiritually and materially, and their confidence that God had chosen them for the mission to redeem Africa. In addition, National Baptist writers and missionaries shared a similar position on African culture as Crummell, but without the Social Darwinistic view of cultural progressivism. Nevertheless, National Baptists did view themselves as agents of the gospel and civilization to "benighted" Africans.

---

<sup>234</sup> According to Saillant, quoting from Crummell, Crummell became interested in civilizing Africans shortly after his arrival to Liberia in 1853. See John Saillant, "Missions in Liberia and Race Relations in the United States, 1822- 1860," in *The Foreign Missionary Enterprise at Home*, eds. Daniel H. Bays and Grant Wacker (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 13. See also Moses, Chapter Three, in *Golden Age*, which he devotes to writing a brief intellectual biography of Crummell.

### Chapter Three: The Formalization of the Ethiopian Refrain: The Birth of African American Baptist Foreign Mission Enterprise in Africa, 1880-1921

Fifteen years after the figurative trumpet that set the African American slave captives free another landmark event occurred. African American Baptists who were numerically dominant among all African American Christians established an authentic national organization that focused on sending their own missionaries back to their Fatherland--Africa. All historians of African American Baptists date 1880 as the beginning of the National Baptist Convention USA; even the National Baptist Convention of America and the National Missionary Baptist Convention date their founding as the same year and the same event. Though 1865 is the African American Year of Jubilee, 1880 is a watershed year for African American Baptists.

This chapter operates on two levels. First, it is a chronicling of the history of Baptist Foreign Mission Convention of America from 1880 to 1895. Within this, the story is told from the perspective of the surviving minutes of the organization that Jordan published in his *Negro Baptist History*. The organization of two other National Baptist groups form part of this history as all three groups would unite in 1895 to form the National Baptist Convention of the United States of America with the old BFMC forming one board within the new convention (the Foreign Mission Board). After the founding of the NBC-USA, the focus of the chapter narrows to concentrate on intellectual moorings of the Foreign Mission Board found on the pages of the *Mission Herald*.

The greater part of this chapter will detail the Jordan Era of the Foreign Mission Board's history by focusing on Jordan's significant contribution to the board as well as

the entire convention. The chapter will also highlight his constant and consistent push for the Foreign Mission Board to remain a vital segment of the convention through his writings, especially those that appear as editorials in the *Mission Herald*. This chapter seeks to demonstrate that Jordan's theology of mission rested squarely on his commitment to his Baptist faith, but with a strong Ethiopian fervor. Jordan's editorials reveal a man who had a deep love for Africa, and believed unswervingly that God had willed for African American Protestants to take up the challenge in redeeming Africa by preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Though Jordan never mentions any influences upon his theology, it is evident that his theology is consistent with Crummell's and Blyden's. Jordan emerged as an Evangelical in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century sense of the term as well as an Ethiopian. Jordan employed this theology to drive National Baptists for 25 years to support African missions.

Historians and writers view the formation of the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention in 1880 as the beginning of the National Baptist Convention, USA. Freeman, for instance, asserts that it was because of foreign missions that the Convention came into being. He states: "It must be clearly understood that the idea of foreign missions gave rise to the convention and that the Foreign Mission Board is the oldest organization of the Convention."<sup>1</sup> Jordan states unequivocally that the birth of the National Baptist Convention was in Montgomery, Alabama; this is where the BFMC organized. Following Jordan, other writers of African American Baptist history concur. When Jordan began to research his history of the convention, he wrote to people present in Montgomery in 1880

---

<sup>1</sup> Freeman, *Epoch*, 2.

at the meeting. He received correspondence from two people present; therefore, Jordan established a direct relationship with the events of the founding of this convention.<sup>2</sup>

Jordan provides the minutes of the first meeting of the BFMC including its constitution. The preamble reads:

Whereas it becomes necessary and is our duty to extend our Christian influence to advance the kingdom of Christ, and as African Missions claims our most profound attention and feeling that we are most sacredly called to do work in this field and elsewhere abroad, therefore, we the representatives from the various churches, Sunday schools, and societies of the Baptist denomination in the United States, do solemnly organize ourselves in a Convention for the above named objects; we agree to the following Constitution.<sup>3</sup>

Article II of the Constitution stipulates the purpose of the convention: “The principal object of this CONVENTION shall be the diffusion of the GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST, on the Continent of AFRICA, and elsewhere abroad, that the Providence of God may direct.”<sup>4</sup> Article XII is interesting and reveals something regarding what these African American Baptists believed and held about Baptist identity: “All officers, boards, missionaries, and agents appointed by the Convention or Executive Board shall be members of some regular Baptist church in union with the churches composing this Convention.”<sup>5</sup> In a welcome statement, the Alabama delegation to the convention heralded the meeting as signaling the “dawn of a brighter day upon the great question of giving Africa the gospel of Christ.” According to Jackson, the purpose of the BFMC “was to support with money and personnel the mission work in Africa without begging

---

<sup>2</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 99. Jordan wrote to the following people: Drs. C. O. Booth, T. L. Jordan, H. W. Bowen, A. F. Owens, R. Spiller, J. M. Armstead, and Mrs. Sheppard. Dr. Booth passed away before he could respond. Two did respond as noted above in the text; they were Jordan and Bowen. According to Jordan, their responses were rather bland. See Freeman, *Epoch*, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 154-155.

<sup>4</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 155.

<sup>5</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 157.

white Baptists---North or South---to do for them what they could do for themselves.”<sup>6</sup>

Jackson also states that the formation of the BFMC came as a result of African Americans’ faith in God and Christ. He adds that they believed in God’s kind disposal of Providence toward them. Such was the spirit of the day for African American leaders in general, and Baptists in particular. This was a key plank in the platform of racial uplift.<sup>7</sup>

Though prominent African American Baptists from Virginia were key leaders of the BFMC, there were other “giants among Negro Baptists” among the leaders. One such was the first president, William McAlpine, described by Fallin as a “self-made” man. Among African American Baptists in Alabama, McAlpine was one of the two most influential, and arguably the most highly respected. Like his contemporary Colley, McAlpine was a Virginian by birth born in 1847 in Buckingham County near Farmersville; but unlike Colley, McAlpine was a slave by birth. According to a kind Providence, the McAlpine’s slave master sold him along with his mother and brother to Robert McAlpine, a Presbyterian minister in Coosa County, Alabama. Reverend McAlpine died in 1855, and in the division of slave property William McAlpine became the property of Reverend McAlpine’s son, a doctor, who resided in Talladega, Alabama. According to another kind Providence, the doctor’s wife, a Northerner, taught McAlpine as she taught her own children. William McAlpine came under the influence of Reverend John Jefferson Renfroe, a Baptist minister, who visited the McAlpine’s often. Renfroe was the pastor of both white and African American congregations. In 1864, McAlpine believed the gospel of Christ through Renfroe, and received believer’s baptism and

---

<sup>6</sup> J. H. Jackson, *Story of Activism*, 34.

<sup>7</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 154-158; J. H. Jackson, *Story of Activism*, 51.

became a member of the white Baptist church in Talledega where Renfroe was the pastor.<sup>8</sup>

Following the Civil War, McAlpine went to school at Talladega College, and he aspired to go into the ministry. From there, he became an organizer of African American Baptists in Alabama; he organized district associations and helped to organize the state convention in 1868. He was also instrumental in African American Baptists organizing Selma University. At the time of the BFMC's founding, McAlpine was hard at work raising funds for Selma making himself one of the foremost leaders of African American Baptists in Alabama. About McAlpine, Jackson remarks: "He had been among white people long enough not to have any fear of them. He knew that if Negroes were to gain anything in this country, they would have to rely upon their own resources."<sup>9</sup> It would be the privilege of this "self-made" Baptist pastor and administrator to lead the first national organization among African American Baptists.

During the period 1880 to 1883, the BFMC experienced slow but sure progress. As the BFMC began its operations, it established a board for the direction of foreign missions with Reverend Anthony Binga, Jr., chairman, and W. W. Colley, the Corresponding Secretary. It also wanted to expand its membership and financial base; because of this the convention expanded to the North and Mid-Atlantic, which also gave it more of a national scope. Even with this expansion, the Virginians were still the leaders of the convention. Each state convention organized foreign mission boards, and ministers in Louisiana and Mississippi had interest in missionary work. It was the board's intention to sponsor Solomon Cosby in West Africa, already a missionary of the Virginia State

---

<sup>8</sup> J. H. Jackson, *Story of Activism*, 48-49; Fallin, *Uplifting the People*, 104, 109-110.

<sup>9</sup> J. H. Jackson, *Story of Activism*, 49-50.

Baptist Convention; but Cosby died in 1881. During this early period of 1880-1883, the board of the BFMC co-sponsored James O. Hayes of North Carolina in the mission field. Hayes along with Lula Fleming had ventured to the African mission field following their graduation from Shaw University in Raleigh. Hayes was a missionary serving in Liberia, and Fleming was in the Congo Free State. To support these missionaries financially, African American Baptists in North Carolina founded the Hayes & Fleming Foreign Mission Society sometime during 1881-1882. It disbanded when the BFMC decided to sponsor Hayes. Sponsoring missionaries already in the African field failed to satisfy the desires of the convention. Martin states "it was an enterprise in which they felt that God had especially prepared them to be first-class leaders."<sup>10</sup> The convention was ready to send out its own missionaries.<sup>11</sup>

Jordan provides minutes from the annual sessions of 1881-1883 of the BFMC. The annual reports from the corresponding secretary William Colley allow insight into the struggles of this convention, but also its hopes and its commitment to redeeming Africa and Ethiopianism. At the annual session of 1881, Colley reports of the convention's activities from the previous year 1880, which was the first of its existence. Colley reminds the convention that they formed to preach the gospel to the world, but "especially" to Africa. There is an urgent tone in this section of the report. Colley states that 300,000,000 Africans "are today stretching forth their hands for the gospel."<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Martin, *Black Baptists*, 73.

<sup>11</sup> For a memorial of Solomon Crosby, see the minutes of the BFMC annual convention 1881 in Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 177; Martin, *Black Baptists*, 67, 73-75. On Hayes and Fleming and the founding of the Hayes & Fleming Foreign Mission Society see J. A. Whitted, *A History of the Negro Baptists of North Carolina* (Raleigh, NC: Presses of Edwards & Broughton Printing Co., 1908), Documenting the American South, <http://www.docsouth.unc.edu/church/whitted/whitted.html> (accessed March 23, 2010), Chapter IV- "Foreign Missions---The Hayes & Fleming Foreign Mission Society," 53ff. Whitted fails to give the date for the founding of this society.

<sup>12</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 184.

In light of what Colley determined was Africa stretching forth its hand to God in fulfillment of Psalm 68:31 he calls for swift action to carry the gospel to Africa. He requests that at least two missionaries be appointed to Africa in 1881. The BFMC already had responsibility for supporting J. O. Hayes with help from the North Carolina convention. Regardless, Colley urges the convention to appoint two more missionaries and they should receive training from him in Liberia. These potential missionaries had to be stalwart Christian men who had studied for the post. This section of Colley's report sets the tone for the immediate future, which is one of immediacy; Colley strongly desires the convention to move quickly in appointing missionaries so that the BFMC presence could be felt in West Africa.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to Colley's report, there is also a circular letter sent to various African American Baptist churches by the convention leadership. The purpose of the letter was to engender financial support nationally among "all regular Baptists." The letter has an Ethiopian tone. After it proclaims its primary purpose to spread the gospel in Africa, it states: "Because of peculiar relations existing between the Afro-Americans and the Africans in our Fatherland, we regard this work preeminently the work of the American Negro."<sup>14</sup> The letter also has a clear Evangelical tone. It notes the gospel is for all, and that Christ has died for all nations. The writers explain further that God uses people to save the lost, and the churches must provide missionaries.<sup>15</sup>

The next year, Colley gave his report and it focused more on the organization of missionary societies among African American Baptists. Colley reports that "[m]ore than

---

<sup>13</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 184, 186.

<sup>14</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 196, 200.

<sup>15</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 200.



154 missionary societies have been organized in the different states.”<sup>16</sup> For Colley, if each society would give only \$7 per year then there would be over \$1,000 raised for foreign mission. It is obvious that no new missionary had been appointed by the convention yet, but Colley was hopeful that the formation of all of these missionary societies would raise plenty of money to support potential missionaries.<sup>17</sup>

At the 1883 annual Colley gave his fourth annual address to the BFMC. The majority of the report focuses on Home Mission, but he indicates that the convention is near in sending some missionaries to Africa. This should have been received with great joy by the convention as after three years in existence the first missionaries appointed directly by the convention were ready to venture onto the West African mission field. Under his report on the work in Africa, Colley mentions that J. J. Coles and H. McKenney [sic] have been recommended by the Foreign Mission Board to leave for Liberia to study “as prospectus missionaries.” Also the Board recommended the appointment of J. H. Presley and his wife as missionaries to West Africa leaving December 1883.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the Presley’s and Coles’ and McKinney’s traveling to Liberia, Colley informs the convention of the recent situation with its missionary J. O. Hayes. Colley states the Board had withdrawn its support of Hayes January 1882 because Hayes indicated that he was about to work under another missionary agency. Hayes reconsidered his choice, and asked the Board for re-instatement, which the Board granted. With Hayes still a supported missionary by the BFMC and the Presley’s

---

<sup>16</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 215.

<sup>17</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 215-216.

<sup>18</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 243.

commissioned with Coles and McKinney future missionaries, the convention would have five persons in the African field.<sup>19</sup>

After initial sputtering, the period from 1883 to 1886 witnessed modest success with the convention. With only one missionary in the field, the convention did decide to send its own missionaries in 1883. In 1883 and 1884, the BFMC sent six missionaries to West Africa: J. H. Presley, Hattie Presley, W. W. Colley and his wife, J. J. Coles, and Henderson Mc Kinney. To give the high significance of the sending out of its first missionaries, Martin writes: "For the first time in American history, a separate and 'national,' black, Southern-based Christian organization had sponsored the placement of missionaries in African fields solely as missionaries, rather than as missionary-emigrants."<sup>20</sup> These missionaries established a mission station in West Africa at Grand Cape Mount shortly after their arrival on the shores of Africa. In 1886, the board commissioned four more missionaries to Africa, namely J. J. Diggs and wife, E. B. and Mattie Topp all from Mississippi. J. J. and Lucy Coles went to West Africa with them, but as returning missionaries. They left on 3 January 1887 from New York City and arrived in West Africa in early February.<sup>21</sup>

With the formation of a national African American Baptist convention focused on foreign mission work, other conventions desirous to be national in scope would organize. The leaders of these two conventions, the American National Baptist Convention and the American National Education Convention along with the leaders of the BFMC would form the core leadership of the National Baptist Convention of 1895. The new conventions would speed the pace toward union of all African American Baptists owing

---

<sup>19</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 245.

<sup>20</sup> Martin, *Black Baptists*, 76.

<sup>21</sup> Martin, *Black Baptists*, 76-77; Freeman, *Epoch*, 73-74.

to the overlap in leadership among the conventions and the overlap in the work already done by state conventions. The formation of the new national conventions also signified more of the spirit of the times among African American elites; they were intent on forging their own path without white paternalism even though African American Baptists welcomed financial help from whites.

Six years after the founding of the BFMC, prominent Louisville, Kentucky pastor W. J. Simmons helped to found the American National Baptist Convention in St. Louis, Missouri at First Baptist Church in August 1886. African American Baptist elites were the founders of this movement, and had the design to cooperate with white, Northern Baptists. Simmons, who won the initial presidential election of the convention, embodied the movement's impetus. Born into slavery in 1849 in South Carolina, the young Simmons escaped his bondage and settled in Philadelphia. In 1864, Simmons joined the Union Army, the Forty-First Division of the Colored Troops. Following the war, Simmons returned to the East and lived in Bordentown, New Jersey; there, he joined the white Baptist church and aspired to enter the gospel ministry. The church supported him by defraying the cost of education at Madison University and Howard University graduating in 1871 and 1873, respectively. In 1878, the church ordained Simmons into the gospel ministry, and he received a call to pastor the First Baptist Church of Lexington, Kentucky the following year. In 1880, Simmons became the president of the Normal and Theological Institute of Louisville. In Simmons, African American Baptists had a leader who was cognizant of the unique place of African Americans but he also knew the help African Americans needed still from kind hearted whites.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 102; J. H. Jackson, *Story of Activism*, 53, 56-57; Fitts, *History*, 76; Lovett, *Black Man's Dream*, 8.

Simmons made his call to African American Baptist pastors that included six guiding principles. Jackson has reproduced these principles:

1. To promote personal piety, sociability, and a better knowledge of each other;
2. To be able to have an understanding as the great ends to be reached by the denomination;
3. To encourage our literary men and women, and promote the interest of Baptist literature;
4. To discuss questions pertaining especially to the religious, educational, industrial, and social interests of our people;
5. To give an opportunity for the best thinkers and writers to be heard;
6. That, united, we may be more powerful for good and strengthen our pride in our denomination.

The leaders heeded this urgent and eloquent call, and met on August 26, 1886 in St.

Louis coming from twenty-six states and the District of Columbia to found the ANBC.

Henry Morehouse, secretary of the ABHMS, helped Simmons with the founding of the convention. According to Jackson, the leaders who ventured to St. Louis were politicized African Americans and former politicians from the South who were then basically disenfranchised. Simmons and other founders of the ANBC wrote Sunday school literature for the American Baptist Publishing Board (ABPB); because of this he had a great desire to find an outlet for African American Baptist writers, and he dreamed of African American Baptists having their own publishing house. This was also a reason for the founding of ANBC.<sup>23</sup>

As the ANBC embarked upon its mission, Simmons became interested in sponsoring foreign missions work. His stance regarding foreign missions, however, caused a bit of a strain between the ANBC and the BFMC. The source of the strain centered on Simmons' belief that his convention should cooperate with white Northern Baptists regarding foreign missions. More precisely, Simmons wanted to send foreign

---

<sup>23</sup> J. H. Jackson, *Story of Activism*, 54-58.

missionaries to the field through the American Baptist Missionary Union; this was the same decision the South Carolinians made in the 1870s. This was in disaccord with what the BFMC desired. Simmons' position was seemingly short-lived. According to Jordan, at its second annual meeting, the ANBC sent word to the BFMC through a committee to meet with it. The BFMC did decide to meet with ANBC. From this meeting, the BFMC decided to facilitate missions work for the ANBC. All in all, however, Fitts argues that the lack of unity among the different African American Baptist conventions "hampered" missions.<sup>24</sup>

The year 1893 witnessed the formation of another national Baptist convention along with a plan for further union among various groups. In 1893, the National Baptist Education Convention organized in Washington DC. This convention endeavored to train ministers for African American Baptist churches. W. Bishop Johnson was the leading man of this new convention. Jackson surmises that members of the BFMC founded this convention since, of course, the BFMC committed itself to African missions and neglected the training of ministers believing that it was beyond the scope of its operations. Another reason why it is most probable that members of the BFMC founded the Education Convention is because the former was in session in D.C. at the time of the formation of the latter. As of the founding of the new convention, there was evident overlap in the leadership of all three national conventions. For example, Rev. E. C. Morris and Rev. E. M. Brawley were officers in the BFMC and the ANBC. Because of the sheer sense of the matter, which Pius called "convenience and economy," the conventions agreed to hold their annual sessions in the same city. Also in the same year the BFMC proposed to form a "Tripartite Union" consisting of the New England

---

<sup>24</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 102-103; Fitts, *History*, 76-77; Lovett, *Black Man's Dream*, 8.

Convention and the African Foreign Mission Convention. This union never really amounted to much. Though the Education Convention began to train ministers, it did little to nothing during the next two years.<sup>25</sup>

During the 1890s, national unity among African American Baptists was an issue again. Some suggested that the Tripartite Union consolidate, but the effort fizzled. Leading ministers Sutton E. Griggs, A. W. Peques, and L. M. Luke proposed union in 1894 at the meeting of the Tripartite Union in Montgomery, Alabama. These are the men who “developed” the framework of the union that would birth the National Baptist Convention. The next year in Atlanta, Georgia on September 28, 1895 the committee met and reported. The Tripartite Union accepted the report, and the BFMC, ANBC, and the Education Convention formed the National Baptist Convention of the United States of America. At the time of the formation of the NBC, the BFMC was the “most outstanding of the lot,” according to Thomas. Thomas definitely makes this observation with a bit of sarcasm as the BFMC had only one missionary in Africa, Rev. R. A. Jackson who labored in South Africa. J. H. Jackson, however, differs with Thomas’ assessment. He states that the BFMC “had a strong program of missions.” Its success lay in the establishing of mission communities in Africa and it reported 300 plus African converts. Jackson asserts that the mission effort was primary in the merger of 1895: “The goals and the programs of the Convention remained unchanged as the Foreign Mission Convention became the basic organization upon which the merger of 1895 was based.”<sup>26</sup> Jackson’s assertions notwithstanding all three national conventions came to this meeting as struggling bodies. Judging from this state of affairs, African American Baptists faced a

---

<sup>25</sup> Pius, *Outline*, 69; Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 103; J. H. Jackson, *Story of Activism*, 58-60, 63; Fitts, *History*, 77.

<sup>26</sup> J. H. Jackson, *Story of Activism*, 61.

daunting challenge to make this national unity viable. Elias Camp Morris of Arkansas, pastor of Centennial Baptist Church in Helena, Arkansas, assumed the presidency of this fledgling convention. It would be his lot to steer this ship into more tranquil waters.<sup>27</sup>

Following the acceptance of the report, the National Baptist Convention took shape. Flowing from the three former conventions, the National Baptist Convention consisted of three boards: the Foreign Mission Board, the Home Mission Board, and the Educational Board. Commenting on the early history of the NBC, Thomas identifies that this was a period of great burden. According to Thomas, the burden for the convention consisted of educating African American Baptists, helping churches and planting churches, and to keep a strong missionary presence in Africa. The preservation of a strong missionary presence was primary, according to Thomas. To substantiate Thomas' claim, the Foreign Mission Board is the oldest of the boards of the convention demonstrating the view of the NBC's leadership of the most important aspect of this union and also in deference to the leaders of the BFMC who ventured out first in 1880 to start this movement toward unity.<sup>28</sup>

What began as local churches forging associations to spread the gospel and plant churches and to fight against slavery during the 1830s became a viable national union of foreign missions interests, home mission interests, and educational concerns. State conventions since the 1860s had embarked upon all of these interests and concerns, but the great concern was financial support. The formation of the National Baptist Convention was the solution to financial strain as it had a large yet shallow pool of

---

<sup>27</sup> J. H. Jackson, *Story of Activism*, 61; Fitts, *History*, 78-79; Harvey, *Bridges*, 29; Thomas, *History of the National Baptist Convention*, 5-6.

<sup>28</sup> Harvey, *Bridges*, 29-30; Thomas, *History of the National Baptist Convention*, 19. See also Pius, Chapter VIII, "The National Baptist Convention: Its Purpose and Work" in *Outline*.

money to draw from. What makes the existence of the National Baptist Convention so remarkable is that a people a generation removed from the virulence of chattel slavery and under the whip of Jim Crow managed to unite to do the bidding of their professed Lord and God, Jesus Christ. Standing at the center of this fledgling union in 1895 is the African American Baptist obligation to carry the gospel of Jesus Christ to their African brethren.

The 1890s was a challenging decade for African Americans. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century lynching was on the rise. It was a time that witnessed the worsening of race relations rather than opening better relations even on the eve of the Age of Progressivism. Over 1, 200 African Americans died as a result of lynching in 1898 and 1899. The formation of the NBC signified African American Christians' enduring hope with the expansion of African missions at the centerpiece.<sup>29</sup>

With the formation of the loosely centralized National Baptist Convention in September 1895, African American Baptists perched themselves on the precipice of achieving great things for God. Among these great things National Baptists desired to do was greater work in African missions. Fitts states that the beginning of the National Baptist Convention energized African American Baptists regarding missions to Africa. He writes that "More money and personnel were utilized in the development of the African missions, more in tune with the African ethos."<sup>30</sup> This would take time to develop, however. The dream had now come into fruition, but the real work was yet before them. How would three semi-independent boards function to forward the mission of one convention? What work among the three would be given higher priority? To re-

---

<sup>29</sup> Albert J. Raboteau, *A Fire in the Bones: Reflections on African-American Religious History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 37.

<sup>30</sup> Fitts, *History*, 116.



iterate, National Baptists understood that foreign missions would have top priority since it was the need for the consolidation of resources for the cause of African missions and the necessity of African American Baptists sending out their own missionaries to Africa that sparked the creation of the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention in 1880. As the early years of the convention passed by, the place of foreign missions received moderate to very little attention. To say the least, the Foreign Missions Board suffered during the first couple of years of the convention's existence. An unfortunate turn of events allowed for a reversal of this inauspicious beginning for the Foreign Mission Board. In 1897, Rev. L. M. Luke, the first corresponding secretary, died; and in his place Rev. Lewis G. Jordan received the appointment to hold this post. For the next 23 years, the Foreign Mission Board went from a moribund state to one of vitality serving the needs of thousands in Africa.

As the fortunes of the Foreign Mission Board improved during Jordan's tenure, the motivations for missionary activity in Africa remained steadfast. Jordan and other leaders believed that it was the providential duty and obligation of African American Baptists to be missionaries in Africa to help offer the light of the gospel to dispel the darkness of Africa. Often Jordan and other leaders tied future success and relevance to the convention's mission work in Africa with ardent involvement in carrying out this important aspect of God's Providential will. Involved in this notion, National Baptist missions concerned itself with African uplift in terms of providing industrial educational opportunities especially in South Africa. National Baptist motivation remained entrenched in 19<sup>th</sup> century Ethiopianism. Also National Baptists still believed that their mission was to carry out a clear and unambiguous commandment of the Lord Jesus

Christ. As the new century dawned, National Baptists held steady to their unique missionary philosophy.

After the euphoria waned after the landmark meeting of African American Baptists in Atlanta in September 1895, leaders of the infant National Baptist Convention had to begin working quickly on electing board members of the three boards of the convention. The leadership of the Foreign Mission Board consisted of Rev. John H. Franks, chairman of the Board, and Rev. L. M. Luke, corresponding secretary. Luke had been a leading officer with the BFMC in previous years serving as its field agent beginning in January 1892. Before the year 1895 came to a close, Secretary Luke passed away. Luke suffered a fatal illness while preaching on December 30, 1895 after holding this important position on the Board for only three months. This was quite a blow for the Board that the convention understood to be its most prominent since the roots of this board run deep to 1880 and the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention. Though the convention reeled in the wake of Luke's death, his successor proved to be more than adequate to fill his shoes and push the Foreign Mission Board to good success for the next 25 years. Luke's successor was Dr. Lewis Garnett Jordan, then pastor of Union Baptist Church of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania elected on February 13, 1896.<sup>31</sup>

The words from one of Jordan's successors as corresponding secretary of the Foreign Mission Board capture the significance of Jordan's leadership. William Harvey stated, "With the election of Rev. L. G. Jordan as the Corresponding Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, a new day dawned for Black Baptists and the missionary enterprise."<sup>32</sup> In viewing this time of the Foreign Mission Board's history, Harvey also

---

<sup>31</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 256; Harvey, *Bridges*, 30.

<sup>32</sup> Harvey, *Bridges*, 32.

remarks on the motivation of National Baptist missions as “sending the Christian message of spiritual, social and physical uplift to Africa.”<sup>33</sup> In this statement, Harvey calls attention to the dynamism of the Board’s intentions; and it clearly denotes that uplift is the key in every area of its endeavor though he gives spiritual uplift the prominence. Fitts also has glowing words for the Jordan legacy: “He proved to be the right leader to establish a more aggressive and effective missionary program in Africa.”<sup>34</sup> Fitts points to the initiative and energy Jordan brought to this post by stating that in the first sixteen years of Jordan’s tenure the Foreign Mission Board commissioned 26 missionaries overseas to Africa and South America.<sup>35</sup>

In 1895 African American Baptists still had a good interest in overseas missions work as Harvey notes. The problem, however, was that the convention had little money to support missionaries. Financial lack notwithstanding National Baptist leaders continued to persevere in the hope that God would provide the necessary money to support missionaries in the African field. With initial (and enduring) financial woes, the Foreign Mission Board at this time was unable to offer support to Rev. R. A. Jackson who with his family had traveled to South Africa in 1894; however, Jackson was able to support his family without the aid from the Board. This was a very inauspicious beginning for such a movement saturated with hope. Was Secretary Luke’s death a portent of things to come for the Board?<sup>36</sup>

With the election of Jordan as the new corresponding secretary new life flowed through the lifeless Board. According to Harvey, Jordan’s pastoral experience was his

---

<sup>33</sup> Harvey, *Bridges*, 31.

<sup>34</sup> Fitts, *History*, 117.

<sup>35</sup> Fitts, *History*, 117.

<sup>36</sup> Harvey, *Bridges*, 35.

strong suit; this is what attracted the Board to him. As mentioned above, Jordan was the pastor of Union Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania at the time of his election. Jordan was originally from an area near Meridian, Mississippi where slavery would be his lot during his childhood. After slavery ended, Jordan managed to obtain an elementary education, and he would attend Roger Williams University in Nashville eventually to help in his preparation for the gospel ministry. Before serving as pastor of Union Baptist in Philadelphia, he served as pastor in churches in Mississippi and Texas. Upon assuming the secretarial office in October 1896, Jordan had to resign his pastorate in order to move to Louisville, where the Board's headquarters of the Board were.<sup>37</sup>

The challenges facing Jordan were great and would test the mettle of any person. Writing about his initial task as the new corresponding secretary of the Board, Jordan states: "The new secretary entered upon the work burdened with many handicaps."<sup>38</sup> He had the enormous task of re-energizing African American Baptists on the need for foreign missions even though they had still conveyed a general interest in it. What was apparent at this time was that African American Baptists focused much of their attention on strengthening local churches. When Jordan arrived in Louisville, he found that the thirteen dollars left in the treasury by Luke had been spent by the Board in purchasing flyers announcing the election of the new secretary. There was a spark of hope financially though; Union Baptist Church sent with Jordan the grand total of eleven dollars to put toward the work of foreign missions. So Jordan had a near empty treasury with no visible prospects of sending out missionaries to Africa. Jordan also found that there were no records of the Board's immediate past as members of the former board of the BFMC

---

<sup>37</sup> Harvey, *Bridges*, 35, 36.

<sup>38</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 256.

never attended the last two meetings of the BFMC; therefore, they submitted no official recordings of the convention's activities. In addition, Jordan had to do this work in an atmosphere in America that was in no way hospitable and caring for the plight of African Americans. In 1896, the landmark case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* decided that "separate but equal" was the law of the land. The day was dark and dreary, but Jordan remained hopeful basing his hope on an Ethiopian-driven view of Providence and the fulfillment of prophecy. In a speech given in 1902 to African American Christian youth, Jordan articulated a very Ethiopian belief that African American missions would inaugurate a great new epoch in African history in which African nations would be Christianized and rule in the world.<sup>39</sup>

The first order of business for Jordan in order to re-invigorate African American Baptist interest in foreign missions was to begin a medium, or an organ to publish information on foreign missions. In March 1896, the inaugural issue of the *Afro-American Mission Herald* appeared. The first issue of this monthly newspaper called for African American Baptist churches, at least those that were members of the National Baptist Convention, to observe "African Missions Day" on March 29, 1896. This came by order of the Parent Body of the Convention to hold such a day. Eventually, this new publication would become the *Mission Herald*.<sup>40</sup>

Though the *Mission Herald* was in existence, Jordan realized that he needed to expose the churches and members of the convention more and more to foreign missions. By 1901, the *Herald* had a circulation of 8,000, and this helped to galvanize churches, associations, and state conventions to renew support for foreign missions. Jordan knew

---

<sup>39</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist*, 256; Freeman, *Epoch*, 118; Harvey, *Bridges*, 36-37; Fitts, *History*, 116.

<sup>40</sup> Harvey, *Bridges*, 37-38.

that more needed to occur in order to renew the foreign mission spirit among African American Baptists that was so high during the 1880s. First, Jordan made personal appeals to churches, associations, etc. Second, with the help of convention president, E. C. Morris, Jordan forged a partnership with the Missionary Union in 1900 in order to send missionaries out in the field potentially. Third, Jordan aided in the launching of the Women's Auxiliary of the National Baptist Convention. This auxiliary began in 1901 at the annual session of the convention held in Cincinnati with part of its purpose to raise funds for foreign missions. From 1901 onward, the Women's Auxiliary would play a pivotal role in keeping foreign missions before African American Baptists nationally. Very soon after its founding, the Women's Auxiliary raised money to build a Missions House in Malawi, where Emma Delaney was a missionary. This was located on the grounds of the Providence Industrial Mission at Chiradzulu, where John Chilembwe served as a minister.<sup>41</sup>

Beginning a board publication was quite important as news on foreign missions did serve to fill a well-needed hole in the knowledge of the rank-and-file in the convention, and helping to start the Women's Auxiliary was an incredible boon to the missions program. All of this, however, paled in comparison to having missionaries out in the African field. In addition to all of these beginnings, early in his term Jordan sent the first five missionaries into the field since the days of the old Baptist Foreign Mission Convention. Jordan also made sure to resume supporting R. A. Jackson and his wife laboring in South Africa.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Harvey, *Bridges*, 39-41.

<sup>42</sup> Fitts, *History*, 117.

Rev. R. A. Jackson, according to Fitts, is known as “the father of missions in South Africa among black Baptists.”<sup>43</sup> In the May 1930 edition of the *Mission Herald*, the editors re-published Jackson’s autobiography that originally appeared in 1913.<sup>44</sup> These are the only extant copies of Jackson’s autobiography, and the autobiography offers nice detail into the man and his work. Jackson was born on September 25, 1859 in Holly Springs, Mississippi; whether he was born into slavery, he fails to mention. He does write, however, that “an old African slave” at his birth proclaimed that Jackson would grow up and preach the gospel in Africa. Jackson’s mother, Henrietta Dancy, kept this “prophecy” in her heart; she never revealed this statement until after Jackson returned from his second missionary trip to South Africa. With this reported Jackson writes that he was thankful that his mother’s decision proved wise because he would have believed his work in Africa as missionary was of man, not of God.<sup>45</sup>

If Jackson was a slave-child, he yearned for something slave children yearned for: an education. This is what Jackson writes. Though he fails to indicate what time period, it is obvious that he recognized this desire after Emancipation. By this time, his mother married a man whom Jackson refers to as Mr. Boykin. Rather than allowing the young Jackson to go to school and receive an elementary education, Mr. Boykin demanded that the youngster work with him in the cotton fields.<sup>46</sup>

It is obvious that Jackson received an elementary education over time since he writes that he began his matriculation at Mississippi State Normal College at Holly

---

<sup>43</sup> At this point in Fitts’ narrative history, he begins to write of one African American Baptist missionary named “J. C. Jackson.” This is clear reference to the R. A. Jackson, who is also referred to as “J. A. Jackson.” See Fitts, *History*, 117.

<sup>44</sup> R. A. Jackson, “Autobiography,” *Mission Herald*, May 1930.

<sup>45</sup> Jackson, “Autobiography.”

<sup>46</sup> Jackson, “Autobiography.”

Springs in 1879 at the age of nineteen, or twenty. During his four year tenure at the college, Jackson began to teach as did so many African American college students at this time. First, he taught during the summer in Mississippi, and then upon graduating he left for neighboring Arkansas accepting a teaching position at Hot Springs. He remained a teacher for fourteen years in Arkansas in a number of counties. After his first year of teaching in Arkansas, Jackson married the former Emma H. Ratcliffe in September 1884.<sup>47</sup>

Following this sketch of his education and teaching career, Jackson informs his readers about his Christian testimony and his entrance into the gospel ministry. Jackson states that he knew he received a call from God to be a missionary to Africa at the age of fifteen; this was fifteen years before his actual conversion. He writes that he received this call into the mission field after hearing a sermon from Matthew 6:33, which reads: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things will be added unto you.” Jackson then states that he had to list the things that he wanted, and then give those things to the Lord. After he did this, he testifies that the Holy Spirit spoke to him in heart saying, “Go to Africa.” At the time, the young man knew nothing of Africa, but he believed in the legitimacy of the calling.<sup>48</sup>

As mentioned previously, Jackson’s conversion to the Christian faith occurred when he was 30 years of age a full fifteen years following his calling into the African mission field. Jackson states that after his conversion to Christ the renewal of his call to Africa happened as well. He received believer’s baptism on September 25, 1890, and embarked upon a missionary career forsaking his career as a school teacher. Before

---

<sup>47</sup> Jackson, “Autobiography.”

<sup>48</sup> Jackson, “Autobiography.”



becoming a missionary, Jackson became a licensed Baptist preacher through the Mt. Canaan Baptist Church in Gurdon, Arkansas, and he received ordination into the gospel ministry in 1892 through the Southwestern District Baptist Association in Arkansas. The next year, 1893, Jackson writes that he went to Washington, DC and received a commission to become an African missionary through the BFMC after an examination by leading BFMC men such as Richard DeBaptiste, L. M. Luke, and E. K. Love.<sup>49</sup> This particular account is missing from the secondary sources that feature Jackson.

As mentioned above, Jackson and his family ventured to Cape Town, South Africa in 1894. According to Jackson's autobiography, he and his family left in April of that year. At this point, there is a large inconsistency between Jackson's own account and the secondary sources. According to Harvey and Fitts, the Jackson's traveled totally independent of any missionary society or convention, and had no support. Jackson's autobiography calls into question the former point, but the latter point may have some validity. It may have been that the BFMC was unable to offer substantial financial support for the Jackson's. The Jackson's arrived in Cape Town in June 1894 after a long and arduous journey. Upon arrival, Jackson received permission to preach in the Cape Colony, and he states that he "began to preach from house to house." He had eight candidates for baptism rather quickly, and organized First Baptist Church in Cape Town on September 20, 1894. In November, he received a letter from the BFMC that it would support him as a missionary. This statement clears up some of the inconsistency found in the secondary literature regarding Jackson's support. It is apparent that the BFMC never supplied financial support from the start, but within a few months after Jackson settled in

---

<sup>49</sup> Jackson, "Autobiography."

Cape Town the support began and First Baptist of Cape Town was a mission church of the BFMC.

After the start of the church in Cape Town, many other mission stations sprang throughout South Africa begun by African American Baptists. According to Jackson, mission stations began in Port Elizabeth, King Williamstown, Queenstown, Middelrift, etc. Stations were in the Cape and spread eventually into the colony of Natal, and the two Afrikaner republics of the Orange Free State and Transvaal (South African Republic). Also according to Jackson, Rev. J. I. Buchannan, his protégé, organized 25 mission stations before his death. Jackson left South African in 1887, and returned for a second stint as a missionary in January 1898. Nothing more is stated about the activities of his second trip.<sup>50</sup>

Fitts offers some more detail regarding Jackson's ministry in Cape Town and the extent of his original mission. Drawing from Fitts, Jackson did seminal missionary work by an African American minister among migrant workers who worked on the docks in Cape Town. Those converted under his preaching brought the good news of Jesus Christ back to their home areas in the interior of Cape Colony. Fitts states that this was Jackson's "methodology" of planting churches; obviously, he desired that indigenous converts to begin their own churches. This is what occurred in a place called Middelrift in the Cape. One of Jackson's converts was a Roman Catholic, the aforementioned J. I. Buchannan. Following his conversion, Buchannan felt the call into the gospel ministry as a missionary right there in the Cape. He started a mission station at Middelrift, and had

---

<sup>50</sup> Jackson, "Autobiography."

great plans of beginning a school but he died in 1907 before those plans came into fruition. Those who succeeded him did attempt to begin the school.<sup>51</sup>

This story of R. A. Jackson's ministry in Cape Town and the subsequent sprouting of mission stations under the aegis of the BFMC and then the FMB of the NBC is the beginning of the African American Baptist presence among Africans in South Africa. In his autobiography, Jackson left us no explanation why he chose to travel to Cape Town to begin a church. Left to conjecture, it can be surmised that the leadership of the BFMC informed Jackson of the need of African American Baptist missionary work in South Africa since African American Baptists had concentrated on West Africa thus far. The only missionaries to this point commissioned and/or supported by the BFMC worked in West Africa. Regardless if Jackson or the BFMC leadership determined that South Africa would be the new field of mission work, it proved to be a quick success.

In his work on the history of the FMB, Freeman includes early reports from the FMB to the parent body of the convention. These reports are detailed in that they offer information on the financial health of the Board, and give summaries of the work in the field. For the purposes of this work, concern is for the work in the South African field. In 1897, the second year of his tenure, Secretary Jordan reported that the Board supported Jackson at Cape Town at the Belehorian Baptist Church there in the city. According to Jackson's autobiography, he founded First Baptist Church; possibly the church changed its name. According to the report, the church had 105 members of which eighteen had been baptized during the year; and there was a school. The report indicates that the church began in June 1894.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> Fitts, *History*, 117-118.

<sup>52</sup> Freeman, *Epoch*, 119.

In the same report, Jordan stated that the Flora Bella Mission at Queenstown in the Cape Colony had been founded in January 1897, and boasted a membership of twenty-four all baptized in that year. Rev. G. H. Thomas was the pastor.<sup>53</sup> The report also indicates that 1897 was the founding year of the Quanda Mission at Middelrift, Cape Colony. It had thirty members all baptized during the year, and the mission had a school.<sup>54</sup> From this report, 1897 was a banner year for the FMB in South Africa. The establishment of the stations in Middelrift by Buchannan and in Queenstown would serve to have lasting effects for the entire work in the country. For these would be key stations to spark further growth throughout the soon-to-be Union of South Africa.

The next report Freeman re-publishes is the 1901 report. In this report, Jordan indicates that the church at Cape Town was still vacant after Jackson resigned from the pastorate and missionary field in 1898. At Queenstown there was a glimmer of hope with the return of E. B. P. Koti to assume leadership. At Middelrift, all was “going forward” under the leadership of J. I. Buchannan.<sup>55</sup>

In the 1905 report, the secretary reported that there was trouble in South Africa regarding Ethiopianism. The South African government believed that African American missionaries were involved in Ethiopianism. The convention sent Rev. C. S. Morris to travel to South Africa and investigate the allegations. Morris found no such involvement.<sup>56</sup> This would begin an uneasy relationship between the South African government and African American missionaries as the level of paranoia among the Afrikaner leadership would only go higher in the years to come.

---

<sup>53</sup> Freeman, *Epoch*, 120.

<sup>54</sup> Freeman, *Epoch*, 120.

<sup>55</sup> Freeman, *Epoch*, 121.

<sup>56</sup> Freeman, *Epoch*, 124.

From August 1910 through September 1921 there is a wealth of editorials and reports from the pen of Lewis Jordan published in the *Mission Herald* that enables historians of the Foreign Mission Board to comprehend and interpret the main motivations of the secretary and the Board toward African mission work in general. These editorials reveal that Secretary Jordan was both a committed Evangelical Baptist and an Ethiopian, who can be labeled a Christian “race man” interested in the “redemption” and “uplift” of Africans. Also learned by exploiting this source is the continual lack of funds to support what had the potential of becoming a vibrant missionary enterprise in Africa as well as in other fields such as the West Indies and South America. Even without a great deal of financial support, National Baptists still had a more expansive missionary work in Africa than African Methodists. At the time of Dr. Jordan’s resignation in late 1921, the Board was on firm ground.

In the August-September issue of the *Mission Herald*, Jordan offers clear evidence of his Evangelicalism and Ethiopianism. In an editorial piece entitled, “Will Their Work Live?” Jordan, the editor, editorial offered an historical expose on the formation of the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention of 1880. Jordan writes: “One bright day in November, in 1880, just thirty years ago, three hundred of the Fathers, some of the noblest men who ever filled Baptist pulpits, assembled to pray for the lost in other lands and to devise plans for sending missionaries to preach the gospel to their benighted brethren in Africa.”<sup>57</sup> Jordan went on to state that what drove these leaders were the words of Jesus recorded in Mark 16:15-16, which is one of the Great Commission

---

<sup>57</sup> “Will Their Work Live?” *Mission Herald*, August-September 1910. For documentation precision, these editorials list no writer, but since Jordan was the editor it is assumed that he wrote all of these editorials.

passages. This indicates that these leaders had both a biblical, Christian motive for missions and a racial one.

Secretary Jordan wrote about the significance of Africa throughout Christian and Church history. He notes that “Africa shielded the infant Christ from the murderous hand of Herod.”<sup>58</sup> This incident is recorded in Matthew 2:13-14. Interestingly enough, Blyden made a similar point as mentioned in the previous chapter. Then he cited Simon of Cyrene, who helped to carry Jesus’ cross. This is recorded in Matthew 27:32. In summarizing these incidents during the life of Christ, the writer states, “For these favors, God blessed Africa.”<sup>59</sup> It is interesting to note how his audience received such a history lesson and application. For good Baptists would believe the biblical passage that God is no respecter of persons, but good African American Baptists would have some sense of pride welling up in his/her breast upon learning how God used Africa and Africans in executing his great plan of redemption. Such remarks strongly intimate that God still has a place for Africa and people of African descent in his redemptive plan.

How did God bless Africa? According to Jordan, God blessed the continent with numerous churches led by eminent men like Origen, Clement, Tertullian, Augustine, etc. over the 225 years after the resurrection of Christ. Based on this glorious history, Jordan stated that many people in 1910 believed that the “time was now ripe” for the evangelization of Africa. What Jordan implies is that African American Baptists needed to continue the work of evangelization of the continent left off centuries ago. By doing this, they would also help to secure a place of stability for their institution, and it would

---

<sup>58</sup> “Will Their Work Live?”

<sup>59</sup> “Will Their Work Live?”

also serve their belief that God has placed them in the prime spot for redeeming the continent.<sup>60</sup>

Jordan offers a history lesson on the African Church and Africans in order to impress upon his readers the urgency of this matter. Jordan indicated that the African Church waned as a judgment from God brought on by the Church's neglect of evangelization, and its selfishness; by 1025 AD the once thriving African Church had been reduced to nothing. Jordan picks up the story in 1620 with the first Africans arriving in the British American colonies (according to his reckoning), and then he catapulted to 1865 and the end of slavery without detail. There is an evident belief in Providential Design here as the writer notes: "He led us out with thousands of us Christians---a few ready for service at home, and here and there one ready for service in regions beyond."<sup>61</sup> All of this illustrates that Jordan possessed a strident race-consciousness, and a type Ethiopianism that viewed the interconnectedness between Africa and Africans and African Americans.

This editorial is a call to African American Baptists (National Baptists) to engage more and more in missionary work, especially in Africa. The obligation is both race loyalty and loyalty to Jesus Christ and his word. It is also a call for National Baptists to join with other missionary movements such as the Laymen's movement and the Word Missionary Conference. Since this piece came thirty years after the founding of the BFMC, the call indicates the lack of zeal for missions on the part of National Baptists.

---

<sup>60</sup> "Will Their Work Live?"

<sup>61</sup> "Will Their Work Live?"

Sadly, this would be a recurrent theme in the *Mission Herald* during Jordan's term of office.<sup>62</sup>

Also included in this issue is an open letter written by the Foreign Mission Board, arguably penned by Jordan entitled, "To the Pastors and Officers of Baptist Churches comprising the National Baptist Convention." It is an appeal to the above to support the foreign missions work of the convention by giving money. He appealed to them by making known the work of the missionaries; he reproduced a letter from the West African field indicating the progress made there. Jordan states, "We are sending this appeal to you in behalf of our work across the seas. Our missionaries are looking to the National Convention for relief. If they are sick, hungry and discouraged, they cheer up as they remember the National Convention meets in September and help will be sent them."<sup>63</sup> Judging from this pointed appeal, the dollars for mission work flowed little to the Board. This would be disconcerting for Jordan since he knew that it was for the work of Foreign Missions that the National Baptist Convention was in existence. He dated the beginning of the convention in November 1880, which is the month and year of the founding of the BFMC.

In the November 1910 issue, again Jordan, the editor, strongly urged his readers to give money for the cause of African mission. In the main editorial of this issue, Jordan argues that African American Baptist pastors had "distorted" the commands of Jesus Christ recorded in the Gospel of Mark. In the editorial titled "Distorted! Distorted!," Jordan appealed to African American Baptists to remain true to the whole Great Commission found in Mark 16:15-16. He states that Baptist pastors and evangelists

---

<sup>62</sup> "Will Their Work Live?"

<sup>63</sup> "To the Pastors and Officers of Baptist Churches comprising the National Baptist Convention," *Mission Herald*, August-September 1910.



proclaim part of verse 16, which reads “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” He states that African American Baptists can never forget what he called the “root” of the above command, which is in verse 15 “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”<sup>64</sup>

Jordan then states that “The going is an essential to obedience as being baptized.”<sup>65</sup> Following this, Jordan observes that the 1.5 million African American Baptists fail to give to missions. He then states, “If they must believe in the ‘Go ye’ and be baptized before they can join a Baptist Church, why should they be allowed to retain membership without obeying the first part of the verse?”<sup>66</sup> For Jordan, obeying what he called the “whole gospel” meant for Christians, in the case of African American Baptists, to give money in order to send missionaries to the field. This editorial is filled with strong biblical and Evangelical appeals to support African mission work.<sup>67</sup>

In the January 1911 publication of the *Herald*, appears Rev. G. D. Griffin’s, “My Plan to Aid in World-wide Missions.” This article is one that served to motivate all Christians to be missionaries, and obey the command of Christ in the Great Commission (he quoted from Mark’s record). Writing of the importance of disobeying this commandment, Griffin, a member of the Foreign Mission Board, writes, “To neglect this duty is the gravest and most vital omission of which it is possible for one to be guilty.”<sup>68</sup> Following this stringent comment, Griffin strikes the chord that every Christian was a missionary and it was the duty of every Christian to “help Him (Jesus Christ) to save

---

<sup>64</sup> “Distorted! Distorted!” *Mission Herald*, November 1910.

<sup>65</sup> “Distorted! Distorted!”

<sup>66</sup> “Distorted! Distorted!”

<sup>67</sup> “Distorted! Distorted!”

<sup>68</sup> Rev. G. D. Griffin, “My Plan to Aid in World-wide Missions,” *Mission Herald*, January 1911.

others.”<sup>69</sup> This is an interesting statement. According to Evangelical belief, Christ saves according to his sovereign will. Individual Christians make Christ known through the gospel, but they in no wise “help” Christ to save people. Giving Griffin the benefit of the doubt, he emphasized, possibly over-emphasized, the necessity of Christians to share the gospel in order for people to believe.

What did Griffin plan to do? First, pray. He suggests that Christians (African American Baptists) should pray “in order that he (Jesus Christ) may keep afresh in our hearts and minds the great duty we owe to our destitute brother at home and abroad, and make us able thru his grace to discharge that duty willingly and automatically.”<sup>70</sup> Second, follow the “promptings of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>71</sup> By this he called upon National Baptists to work to further the program of missions that the convention has committed to. Basically, he called for National Baptists to heed the appeals and calls emanating from the Foreign Mission Board. Third, keep in touch with the Home Mission Board. Fourth, read the *National Baptist Review*, the *Union*, the *Mission Herald*, and other National Baptist publications. Fifth, he called for the education of National Baptists encouraging them to read denominational literature so that they would know about missions. Sixth, preach some sermons on occasion on missionary work and the Christian’s part in it. Seventh, organize a missions study class. This is what Griffin planned to do in his own church. Eighth, collect money every time a missions sermon is preached. Ninth, create a Home Mission Society. Tenth, plan to organize a young people’s missionary prayer meeting

---

<sup>69</sup> Griffin, “My Plan.”

<sup>70</sup> Griffin, “My Plan.”

<sup>71</sup> Griffin, “My Plan.”

once per month.<sup>72</sup> This whole plan signifies Griffin's commitment to the denomination and the use of Evangelical means toward the end proposed in this article.

Secretary Jordan wrote a little article called, "Is Thirteen a Bad Luck Number?" In it he states that on 13 February 1896 he assumed the position (or office) of secretary of the Foreign Mission Board. He states that he had no experience in the work, and had no resources. The condition was so bleak that "without a pencil, book or missionary" he began his duties.<sup>73</sup> From those meager beginnings, Jordan writes that at this time there were 130 missionaries and "native workers" working in Africa, the West Indies, and South America. He reported that 11,000 new Christians have been baptized. The success, according to Jordan, was his faith in God and confidence in the gospel, and that National Baptists would ensure that the gospel would spread throughout the world.<sup>74</sup>

February 1911 marked the fifteenth anniversary of Secretary Jordan's tenure as the secretary of the Foreign Mission Board. Jordan used this occasion to press and prod his readers and the entire African American Baptist "Zion" to redouble their efforts to support the cause of African mission work. In an article entitled, "A Mistake, And it is Not Mine," Jordan rehearses some of the history of the Foreign Mission Board. He also shows a bit of remorse over the lack of support National Baptists had given to the missions work, especially for the support of the work in Africa. He writes,

For nearly an hour I have sat here and sobbed, so blinded by the flood of tears that roll down in spite of my efforts to keep them back, as I think of the needs of our workers over the seas, and my inability to supply them, all because a large majority of our Baptist Brotherhood is untouched by the last loving command of

---

<sup>72</sup> Griffin, "My Plan."

<sup>73</sup> "Is Thirteen a Bad Luck Number?" *Mission Herald*, January 1911.

<sup>74</sup> "Is Thirteen a Bad Luck Number?"

their Lord and Master, or any care for the brethren for whom they voted as missionaries to foreign fields.<sup>75</sup>

From this particular passage from the article, it is evident that Jordan was unafraid to appeal directly to the emotions of his readers in order for them to give sacrificially along with attempting to shame folk into giving.

In the next issue of the *Herald*, Jordan published an open letter to the entire convention. He published it under the heading “Resolutions” and it is an appeal to the early principles of the Foreign Mission Board during the BFMC days. In this short piece, Secretary Jordan reminds the readership, even the entire National Baptist Convention of a resolution decided upon by the BFMC back in 1892. Why did Jordan unearth this old set of resolutions? By doing so, Jordan reminds the whole convention of the continuity of principles from the old BFMC to the relatively new NBC-USA Foreign Mission Board. The key policies the previous generation of leaders forged were still relevant for a new generation.<sup>76</sup>

There is one particular resolution that Jordan stresses in this letter, and it deals with raising funds. In the first part of the resolution, Jordan reminds his readers that the Board of Managers had the authority to appoint a person who works at a Baptist school, academy, or seminary to help raise money twice per year at those venues for African missions. The second part of the resolution established a day for children to contribute, which was the fifth Sunday in August annually designated as African Mission Day. Jordan noted that in 1896 that the Parent Body of the Convention changed the day of African Mission Day from the fifth Sunday in August to Easter Sunday. He laments that the schools, universities, etc. have failed to uphold the resolution. Only some Texas

---

<sup>75</sup> “A Mistake, and It is Not Mine,” *Mission Herald*, February 1911.

<sup>76</sup> “Resolutions,” *Mission Herald*, March 1911.

Baptists and all Missouri Baptists had adhered to the resolution. Jordan states, “We are sorry to know some Texas and it seems all Missouri Baptist [sic], have taken the day for Africa.”<sup>77</sup> Jordan also remarks regarding the founding of the day, “It will be seen that the resolutions adopted in 1891 show the splendid interest the Fathers had in Africa’s redemption.”<sup>78</sup> This particular statement is important in at least two significant ways: first, it signifies to the present generation the zeal and fervor that the so called Fathers of the Foreign Mission Board had toward establishing an on-going presence in Africa; second, it also denotes that the goal of missionary work in Africa is still current, which is to redeem Africa both spiritually and in terms of civilization. One other aspect of this letter is that Jordan felt no need to be innovative. Regardless of different ways to raise money, the motivation remained constant: African American Baptists had a God-given mandate to redeem Africa.

In the same issue, the secretary wrote another appeal addressed to pastors; it is an open letter also. The tone of the letter is urgent as he states, “If there ever was a time when the Last Command of our Lord rang louder and clearer in the ears of His believers than now, we have no account of it.”<sup>79</sup> Here is a direct and clear Evangelical appeal to men who made it their business (in a holy sense) to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Again, in the letter, Jordan states that all of the Church undertook to spread the gospel throughout the world so that every person will hear the gospel in the present generation. This was to motivate churches and Sunday schools that were part of the National Baptist Convention to take part in the Easter rally. Even though the primary tool of motivation is an exhortation to these pastors to obey Jesus Christ’s commandment to preach the gospel

---

<sup>77</sup> “Resolutions.”

<sup>78</sup> “Resolutions.”

<sup>79</sup> “Open Letter,” *Mission Herald*, March 1911.

throughout the world, this is still a letter appealing for money to support the foreign fields so that people will be saved. Jordan states, “All materialistic things--houses and lands, clothes and books, will be consumed by the fire of the judgment, but the word of the Lord will abide forever.”<sup>80</sup>

It is difficult to understand if Jordan refers to materialistic things as what his immediate audience was pursuant of, or to material things needed on the African mission field. Judging from the general tone of the letter, this is a statement directed at the pastors. Basically, Jordan called for them to sacrifice things that they were wont to crave in order to obey a clear commandment from Christ. As Jordan closes this letter, the tone is more urgent and more frank. He makes an all-out personal appeal to the ministers. Jordan writes, “It is you and yours Jesus Christ would have saved. It is you and yours that must account to Him for not doing more for the conversion of this world.”<sup>81</sup>

From this open letter, it appears that Jordan and the convention believed that conversion of the whole world was possible. This was a bit different of what Baptists had believed historically. Baptists had been active in evangelizing in different parts of the world since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century as noted in a previous chapter, but it was under the belief that God had chosen a people for himself from every nation on the earth. The majority of Baptists being Calvinistic never held to the doctrine of the possibility of universal salvation. It appears that at this point National Baptists veered from Baptist orthodoxy. Possibly, Jordan and others in the leadership believed that it was their duty that every person would hear the gospel, not that everyone would believe the gospel. Such a belief was in line with millennialism that taught that Christ’s Second Coming would occur only

---

<sup>80</sup> “Open Letter.”

<sup>81</sup> “Open Letter.”

after the gospel had been preached world-wide. Regardless, of such a modification of historic Baptist belief Jordan and other leaders in the Foreign Mission Board believed that their primary mission was to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to African peoples.

Jordan continued to make urgent appeals to the convention as he wrote another editorial that calls for more financial support. In the May 1911 issue of the *Herald*, Dr. Jordan urges strongly based upon Ethiopian and Evangelical sentiments. At one point, he writes the following to motivate his readership:

We ask all of the faithful ones to pray the Lord that the spirit of Christ may consume the selfishness in the hearts of all believers among us and there ere long we will love our neighbors across the sea as we love ourselves. Let us remember that what Religion has done for us in lifting us from the position of chattels and slaves to the plain of respectable citizenship and Christianity, it will do the same for the millions of blind, naked, superstitious heathen peoples in all lands.<sup>82</sup>

Here Jordan links Christianity with citizenship and uplift; the gospel can lift a people from the bottom and raise them. This is a potent appeal since Jordan called to his readers' attention their condition just a couple of generations ago. If God through the gospel raised them from the dregs of society, certainly he would do the same for their African brethren.

It is evident that Jordan was a student of history for he used it as a tool to drive African American Baptist to action. He returned to this use of African Church history in June 1911 in an editorial. In a piece entitled, "Information in Reach of All," Jordan laments that African American Baptist papers give so little attention to the missionary movement. He also has some scathing remarks for African American pastors comparing them to the leadership of the North African Church from 225 AD to 1200 AD. The point Jordan makes is that these leaders have no place for missionary activity, and it may spell

---

<sup>82</sup> Editorial, *Mission Herald*, May 1911.

the demise of National Baptists as a distinct denominational group. It was obvious that in Church history local churches in Asia had become extinct for various reasons, but Jordan chose to highlight the extinction of the ancient North African church to appeal directly to racial sentiments.<sup>83</sup>

In the same issue Jordan used a biblical prod to call pastors and churches to give. In an editorial called “We Can Do it if We Will,” Jordan asserts that African American Baptists can raise money for different causes, but there had been a lack of commitment to the missions cause. He writes, “It is nothing to read of churches holding rallies and raising from \$800.00 to \$1800.00 on a given day. When our churches and pastors become New Testament, Missionary Baptists, they will hold similar rallies for the spreading of the Gospel everywhere.”<sup>84</sup> The above comment by Jordan implies that National Baptists had their priorities confused. For Jordan, the commandment of Christ is clear: preach the gospel to all nations. This means either send those to preach, or support those sent financially. Jordan had noticed obviously that National Baptists had allowed other concerns to overtake the major concern of the Church and of the convention--- evangelism. Though these churches were in existence and active according to Jordan they failed to be the quality of churches reflective of New Testament commandments.

Jordan continued to implore his readers by pointing to biblical actions, and pointed them to the actions of their Savior Jesus. In another brief editorial (this one is untitled), Jordan impresses upon his readers two occasions in which Jesus commended unselfish acts: one with the woman who poured the contents of the alabaster box on his feet, and the widow who gave all that she had into the Temple coffer. From here he

---

<sup>83</sup> “Information in Reach of All,” *Mission Herald*, June 1911.

<sup>84</sup> “We Can Do it if We Will,” *Mission Herald*, June 1911.



relates how he spoke to an unnamed pastor who in conversation stated that he would be able to receive a higher salary next year after the church pays off its debt. In reply, Jordan told him “about the salary of a pastor was not the chief thing to be figured on. The churches should be indoctrinated and instructed in not how well they can treat the pastor or how much they can give him as salary, but what they can do to advance the kingdom of God in the whole world.”<sup>85</sup> He reports that the pastor received the admonition in Christian love and pledged to do better regarding raising money for missions.<sup>86</sup>

Jordan exhorted his readers to give unselfishly. He connects giving to the cause of mission as a Christian good work that would be rewarded by the Lord Jesus. He states, “What would be more pleasing to him to receive us in the land of bliss after having made among the last acts of our lives, the possibility of everybody knowing about the same Saviour with whom we would live, beyond the interfacing waters of death.”<sup>87</sup> Here is a clear gospel inducement indicative of Jordan’s own personal piety, and his earnest expectations for more National Baptist pastors and church members.

In the same issue Jordan included an open letter “To the Churches, Pastors, Associations and Conventions Comprising the Constituency of the National Baptist Convention.” In this letter, Jordan mentions the importance of the upcoming meeting of the Convention in September (13 September to be exact) in Pittsburg. His emphasis is on the convention to seize the opportunity to better its efforts at increasing the work of African missions. He appeals to the emotions of his readers with an Ethiopian appeal. He states, “OUT yonder lies Africa ‘bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh’ with all of her

---

<sup>85</sup> Editorial, *Mission Herald*, August 1911.

<sup>86</sup> Editorial.

<sup>87</sup> Editorial.

shame and degradation, left to die from the sin of heathenism and the sharpened knife of Mahometism. She cries to us to do the Good Samaritan act and now will do it?"<sup>88</sup>

From here, Jordan appeals to the delegation to bring money for the cause because he believed this was the time that God was in the process of fulfilling his prophecy regarding Christ drawing the "heathen" out of their "heathenism."

This letter by Jordan appeals both to an Ethiopian sentiment and a type of millennial sentiment as well. It draws attention to the spiritual condition of his readers' homeland, and kinfolk even. It typifies how African American Baptists viewed Africa even during this time period; Africa still maintained a large spot in the overall African American imagination even if African American Baptists lacked the commitment to African missions work to give more money.

In the September 1911 issue of the *Herald*, Jordan wrote a small article called "Home Churches, Base of Supply-Your Pledge Helps Form it." In this brief writing, Jordan implores churches to make good on whatever they had pledged in support of foreign missions and missionaries. He argues that local churches form what he calls the "home base of supply." Jordan writes that there were 1,000 churches that should give \$600 per year as did Ebenezer Baptist Church in Pittsburg. This is a bold statement, but it should be noted that part of Jordan's duties as secretary of the Board was to travel around the country to visit churches. He was well acquainted with the churches of the convention, and had knowledge of their financial wherewithal. He further states that there

---

<sup>88</sup> "To the Churches, Pastors, Associations and Conventions Comprising the Constituency of the National Baptist Convention," *Mission Herald*, August 1911.

were 5,000 churches that had the ability to give \$100 per year. He laments that “at present only eighteen churches give as much as one hundred dollars a year.”<sup>89</sup>

Jordan culminates this short piece with an evangelical appeal regarding the aim of missions. He states that Christ wills to save all men through the Church, which also includes individual Christians. From this supposition, Jordan seems to believe that salvation is a partnership between God and Christ and the Church. He fails to believe in the total sovereignty of God in the realm of the salvation of humans. The perceived sentiment is that God has revealed his general desire to save every human being, but it is incumbent upon the Church to heed the call of the Great Commission. As been written thus far in these issues of the *Herald*, Jordan viewed financial support by churches and individuals as part of the obedience required regarding the commission.

In the October issue of the *Herald*, Jordan published a great portion of the Thirty-First Annual Report of the Foreign Mission Board. Dr. C. H. Parrish, chairman of Board; and Jordan gave the report in September 1911. The chairman mentions that the board is making the report through Secretary Jordan. Besides the need for money to pay the missionaries three months in advance and the criticism of those who fail to pay their pledges, the chairman reserved high accolades for Secretary Jordan. He states,

Dr. Jordan our intrepid secretary, has done better work this year than ever. His worth to the denomination increases as the years go by....Full of zeal and full of good work he life has so widely influenced and inspired the brethren until the whole denomination is about to see Africa as he sees it and to love the souls of her sons and daughters as he loves them.<sup>90</sup>

Then Dr. Parrish gave way to Dr. Jordan, who gave the report. Regarding South Africa, the letters from East, Murff, Koti, etc. comprise the report. He does state that the

---

<sup>89</sup> “Home Churches, Base of Supply-Your Pledge Helps Form it,” *Mission Herald*, September 1911.

<sup>90</sup> “Thirty-First Annual Report of the Foreign Mission Board,” *Mission Herald*, October 1911.

Foreign Mission Board came to an agreement with the board of the South African Baptist Union not to overlap each other's work and not ordaining "unworthy" men into the ministry. This demonstrates the Board's willingness to cooperate with other groups, especially a Baptist group. Not only this, it is a recognition of the Board's commitment to working with white Baptists even on foreign terrain.<sup>91</sup>

The report also indicates the meager condition of contributions from African American Baptist Associations and State Conventions, which were members of the Convention. (This particular section of the report appears in the November issue of the *Herald*). The problem Jordan discussed regarding District Associations centered on financial and personal integrity. The problem was that Associations would raise money, but the leaders of the Associations re-directed the money without the consent of the churches; the money never went to the Foreign Mission Board. He indicates that there was an association that had been giving \$70 to \$100 for Foreign Missions per year, but one year the leaders used the money to pay their way to the convention. The Foreign Mission Board found out, and called the association to answer; this resulted in the association no longer giving any money. Regarding State Conventions, only nine made sure that the organizations associated with them report money going to Foreign missions. There were 40 state conventions that were part of the national convention at this time; therefore, 34 made no contribution to Foreign Missions.<sup>92</sup> What is clear from this report was that Secretary Jordan witnessed a lack of commitment and love for the cause of missions. He also saw a degree of disobedience and love to the Savior. He states,

Until we are gripped by that spirit which prompted the loving heart of the blessed Saviour to say, "It is my meat and drink to do the will of Him that sent me," and

---

<sup>91</sup> "Thirty-First Annual Report."

<sup>92</sup> "Thirty-First Annual Report of the Foreign Mission Board," *Mission Herald*, November 1911.

until we are filled with love for the lost in non-Christian lands can we truthfully say, "I'll go where you want me to go and I'll do what you want me to do, dear Lord;" then and not until then will the men, women and means so needful to the enlargement of our work commensurate with our members, be thrust forth by Him who called us to the work.<sup>93</sup>

This is a strong appeal based on Christian and biblical precepts to motivate all of the convention, especially those on the local and state levels to give commensurate with their commitment to Christ and the world of lost sinners.

At the end of the report, Jordan makes some recommendations for the Convention including having field missionaries paid in advance quarterly; that three missionary conferences be held in this year; the power to create a commission made up of pastors and laymen to carry out these recommendations, for every organization to give money annually, and that the offering before the preaching in churches known as the Vann plan be reported on a monthly basis; to have a printing plant for the dissemination of information; to obtain money for a reasonable headquarters; pastors to support the Easter Rally held by Sunday Schools; that money be collected during the Watch Night services and every fifth Lord's Day.<sup>94</sup>

In addition to the publication of the Board's annual report, Jordan also includes an overview of the convention for his readership. In it, he states that the "features" on missions were above average, but he also admits that those who proved committed to foreign missions "fear that that cause is sorely neglected."<sup>95</sup> To substantiate this sentiment, Jordan reminds his audience that the national convention had its foundations in foreign missions. In reminding the people, Jordan writes: "The National Convention

---

<sup>93</sup> "Thirty-First Annual Report."

<sup>94</sup> "Thirty-First Annual Report." The Vann Plan is named after former president of the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention, S. N. Vann.

<sup>95</sup> "Untitled." *Mission Herald*, October 1911.

was born out of the prayers of our denominational fathers. These men heard the pleadings of millions in regions beyond, and organized to answer the plea."<sup>96</sup> In a sense, this brief article is a call to remembrance; Jordan desires that the convention remembers the reasons for its founding and re-commits to the cause of African missions. In light of this, Jordan reports that the Parent Body of the convention received all of the recommendations placed forward by the Board, and that it received \$1,800 in contributions from those who attended the convention. All in all 1911's convention was a good one for the Board.

As an addendum to a rather successful convention, Jordan added a short statement on the Missionary Mass Meeting held on the Sunday afternoon of the convention. He states that it was a success in which 6,000 people attended, and many felt, according to Jordan, that "they owed the African the gospel."<sup>97</sup> Judging from this short report, the aim of the meeting was on drumming support for mission work in Africa. It is surmised that heart-felt appeals for the great need of Africa and Africans had to have been sounded along with remarks on African American Baptists mission regarding Africa's redemption.

In another important note of the 1911 convention, Secretary Jordan wrote an editorial announcing that the Parent Body voted to move the headquarters of the Foreign Mission Board to Philadelphia. In reminiscing on the past sixteen years, Jordan comments that there were 60 churches in Africa. For this, he is grateful for this blessing from the Lord. At that moment, the presence of this number of churches in Africa pointed to a rather vibrant activity even in the midst of meager resources. This move was important for a couple of reasons: first, it enabled the secretary to have greater access to

---

<sup>96</sup> "Untitled."

<sup>97</sup> "Editorial," *Mission Herald*, October 1911.

travel overseas as New York City was the point of departure for overseas passenger ships; and second, it also allowed the larger Eastern churches to give greater support to the Board. Even at the time of this writing in 2010, the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. is still housed in Philadelphia.<sup>98</sup>

In early 1912 as the annual Easter Rally approached, Jordan struck a sour note regarding the lack of financial support given to foreign missions by Sunday schools. In his editorial entitled, “Why Some of Our Baptist Sunday Schools Cannot Help in Our Easter Rally Effort,” Jordan printed notices from Sunday schools in different states that notified the secretary of their inability to give to the Easter Rally in 1912. After every one of the notices printed, Jordan has a terse and even threatening reply. Folks in Louisiana, states one notice, were in the process of building a high school; the secretary replies, “Neglect the Great Commission and you will need no school. The business of every Baptist Church is to preach the Gospel to every creature.”<sup>99</sup> A church in Georgia excused itself from giving because its building was lost in a flood. Even in light of such a catastrophe, Jordan replies, “Look out you don’t lose your souls. A church of Jesus Christ is not a house, but baptized believers who believe the Gospel is good for the whole world.”<sup>100</sup> It is evident from this section the great importance Jordan placed on preaching the gospel as the primary purpose of a local Baptist church. He perceived this as a non-negotiable commandment, and that other concerns pale in significance. If anything was to be slighted, it must never be giving money for the cause of spreading the gospel to the nations.

---

<sup>98</sup> “Editorial,” *Mission Herald*, October 1911.

<sup>99</sup> “Why Some of Our Baptist Sunday Schools Cannot Help in Our Easter Rally Effort,” *Mission Herald*, March 1912.

<sup>100</sup> “Why Some of Our Baptist Sunday Schools.”

To buttress all of what Jordan has exhorted month after month, W. A. Credit, the president of the New England Baptist Convention, an African American regional convention, states that, "Foreign Missions should be the leading interest of our convention..."<sup>101</sup> In publishing this brief article, Jordan as the editor of the *Herald* aimed at two results: first, he re-emphasized the *raison d'être* of state conventions and the National Baptist Convention, which was the facilitation of the spread of the gospel to all nations, especially to African nations; and second, he re-asserted indirectly that the great purpose of the Church of Jesus Christ is to preach the gospel to all nations. The implication of both of these points is that Jordan perceives the convention as an extension of the Church, which primarily must preach the gospel.

In the August 1912 edition of the *Herald*, there is another strong editorial that attempted to stir the members of the National Baptist Convention to giving more money for the foreign mission enterprise. In the article, "Human Need: The Beckoning Finger of God to Service," Jordan makes an urgent appeal for "One Million Souls" to serve Christ. The editor uses the scripture 1 John 3:17 as his biblical exhortation: "But whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" In this appeal, Jordan makes a racialist appeal for young people to get involved in the missionary enterprise, possibly by entering into the African mission field. He states that if Africa is to be redeemed it will be as a result of African Americans, "through her own."<sup>102</sup>

There is a fervent Ethiopian element and appeal present in this editorial. In one section of the piece, Jordan exclaims, "When we realize how few of our young people are

---

<sup>101</sup> W. A. Credit, Untitled, *Mission Herald*, June 1912.

<sup>102</sup> "Human Need: The Beckoning Finger of God to Service," *Mission Herald*, August 1912.



interested in their own blood, their brothers and sisters, who are sitting in darkness with no chance of gaining light unless their own of America bring the light of the Gospel to them.”<sup>103</sup> This statement assumes a couple of things at least: first, it assumes that African Americans had a special duty to bring the gospel to Africans; second, it assumes that no other group of Americans had the right spirit to undertake such. These assumptions were at the heart of African American Ethiopianism.

Jordan equates love for God with Christian service, especially for young Christians to enter the mission field. He elicits military imagery: “Wanted to enlist in the army of the Lord, to carry the story of the Redeemer and His Saving grace to all parts of the earth.”<sup>104</sup> The tone of this statement is grave befitting the urgency of spreading the gospel to Africa during this time. It is almost a desperate call for a fresh crop of missionaries take up the mantle left by the older generation.

Also in this editorial appeal is the notion that all Christians are fit for this type of service; and that all Christians are missionaries. Jordan states, “You are under Marching Orders. You must not let the other races beat you to the goal and report their victory with Africa in darkness.”<sup>105</sup> He states also that millions of young people of other races entered the mission field to give the gospel to their people. Here is an inducement that Jordan believed would be a sure motivation for more young people to involve themselves in missionary work. It points to a general motivation African Americans used during this day: older African Americans implored the younger generation that it had to be better than its white counterpart in order to succeed in this world. This emerged from the

---

<sup>103</sup> “Human Need.”

<sup>104</sup> “Human Need”

<sup>105</sup> “Human Need.”

constant struggle of African Americans in a segregated society that relegated them to second class status.

In a very short editorial called, "Where is the Money?" Jordan asks a pointed question regarding money for foreign missions. The tone of the editorial is angry as it pertains to the meetings of 89 Baptist associations and conventions during the Spring and Summer and no money for foreign missions sent with the exception of nearly \$40 from Arkansas, where E. C. Morris led the association. The editor here appeals to Baptist identity. He writes: "Surely as Baptists they sang 'Go preach my gospel saith the Lord,' did and quoted often the last commandment of Jesus, in whose name they met: and did they not take money for Missions? Could Baptists meet and not give to preach the Gospel to all the world, as much as they pay stationary and ice water?"<sup>106</sup> Here Jordan emphasizes how Baptists believed traditionally that they should take the Great Commission seriously. He intimates that being Baptist was part and parcel with being missions-minded and missions-oriented. It is interesting that he quotes from an Isaac Watts hymn. As discussed in the previous chapter, African American Baptists loved the old "Dr. Watts' hymns;" therefore, this line from one of Watts' hymns would have been quite familiar to them. Obviously, Jordan believed that it would.<sup>107</sup>

To further motivate his readership, Jordan included a letter from E. C. Morris, president of the convention and moderator of the P. L. & M. Association in Arkansas stating that amidst hardships the members of the association raised over \$39 for foreign missions. This letter communicated to the entire convention that its leader and the district association he served made giving to foreign missions a priority no matter how difficult

---

<sup>106</sup> "Where is the Money?" *Mission Herald*, August 1912.

<sup>107</sup> This particular hymn is # 259 in the *National Baptist Hymn Book*.

the times were. There was no excuse for churches, Sunday schools, associations, and State Convention to do their part in contributing to the treasury of the Foreign Mission Board.<sup>108</sup>

As per usual, the October issue of the *Herald* includes the beginning and middle portions of the Annual Report of the Board to the national convention. In the 32<sup>nd</sup> annual report given in Houston, Texas, Jordan remarks clearly that Christian mission work was “the highest form of Christian benevolence.”<sup>109</sup> With this statement, Jordan reiterates that foreign missions stood as the convention’s primary concern because it was the Church’s primary concern. For Jordan, all other work the convention engaged itself in must be secondary, even though important, to the mission to spread the gospel to the corners of the globe with special emphasis to Africa. In addition to this statement, Jordan gives a broad survey history of missions work in Africa with an overview of the work within the past decade. This period had witnessed, according to Jordan, the “greatest progress of Christianity in Africa.”<sup>110</sup> Without any type of browbeating, Jordan gave a positive report to the convention while he encouraged greater participation by appealing to Christian ethics.<sup>111</sup>

Returning to an important issue in the life of the Foreign Mission Board, Jordan wrote about the move of the Board’s headquarters from Louisville to Philadelphia. In a brief article, Jordan offers the official explanation on why the move. Jordan states that he had to travel to New York to see off missionaries during the year; therefore, it would be better for the headquarters to be on the East coast. Though he made friends during his

---

<sup>108</sup> E. C. Morris, Letter, *Mission Herald*, August 1912.

<sup>109</sup> “Thirty-Second Annual Report of the Foreign Mission Board,” *Mission Herald*, October 1912.

<sup>110</sup> “Thirty-Second Annual Report.”

<sup>111</sup> “Thirty-Second Annual Report.”

sixteen years in Louisville, he has good pastors waiting in Philadelphia to assist in the work. Jordan announced that the dedication of the new building will be on December 12, 1912. The story on the dedication appeared in the January 1913 issue; it took place at Holy Trinity Baptist Church in Philadelphia, and many leading pastors in Philadelphia took part in the service.<sup>112</sup>

Published in the January 1913 issue of the *Herald* is a guest editorial by Florence Burnett of Nashville, Tennessee titled, “The Value of ‘Self-Denial’ Work as Shown by the Establishment of Schools in South Africa.” This particular work is both a testimony of her self-sacrificial giving and the good affects it has had, and a motivation to others to perform the same type of work. She states that her work of self-denial began in September 1899 after hearing J. I. Buchannan, who was on leave from South Africa. He stated that the best way to reach Africans was through education, the establishment of schools. Burnett and others began to give their money for the effort to establish the “Sunshine” school that opened in January 1900. More money came in to begin another school, which was the “Have faith in God” school commencing its operations in July 1906. Burnett hoped that all of this information would urge other African American Baptists to help in the redemption of South Africa. This is quite compelling evidence that points to the fact that African American Baptists equated African redemption with education. This education was Christian-based and independent from either the United States government or the South African government. Also this would be an opportunity

---

<sup>112</sup> “Thirty-Second Annual Report;” Untitled, *Mission Herald*, January 1913.

for African American Baptists to spread the ideals of self-help and uplift to South Africa so that their African brethren could do the same.<sup>113</sup>

Part of the success of the missionary endeavor was the leadership and interest on the local church level. Although this was something that different denominations needed, it was a phenomenon integral for Baptist churches owing to their congregational polity. In the May 1913 issue of the *Herald*, Jordan wrote “Great Educational Campaign through the Organization of Mission Study Classes and Missionary Institutes.” This article is a general call for local churches to develop mission study classes in order to train missionary leaders, and it was a speech given by Jordan at Union Baptist Church the previous month (April). Jordan states, “The greatest hindrance to the speedy evangelization of the world is the lack of intelligent, permanent, and vital Missionary interest in the home church.”<sup>114</sup> He believes that the sparking of interest among young and old would go a long way in order to help start a revival of “missionary enthusiasm” among National Baptists, and possibly all Baptists.<sup>115</sup>

In the summer of 1913, Jordan retreated a bit from emphasizing the great need of local churches organizing educational institutes to return to the familiar refrain of urging National Baptists to give more money to mission work. In the piece, “Repeating Ourselves,” Jordan states that it was the responsibility of every Baptist to contribute financially to the spread of the gospel. According to Jordan, this was the theme of the Board when Jordan came on as corresponding secretary back in 1896. Reminding his readership of the present condition of giving to the Board, Jordan admits that the

---

<sup>113</sup> Florence Burnett, “The Value of ‘Self-Denial’ Work As Shown By the Establishment of Schools in South Africa,” *Mission Herald*, January 1913.

<sup>114</sup> “Great Educational Campaign through the Organization of Mission Study Classes and Missionary Institutes,” *Mission Herald*, May 1913.

<sup>115</sup> “Great Educational Campaign.”

Virginians were zealous for foreign missions and a few other churches, but the majority of the convention was indifferent on this enterprise. Things were far from what Jordan would have liked but the Board had been able to support missionaries despite underfunding of the entire work. The work in South Africa was a case in point. In 1896 there were only fourteen people employed in mission work there; when he published this article there were over 10,000. All in all that was good progress in seventeen years, but Jordan knew the great potential of the convention. This was why he continued to keep its feet to the fire on the issue of monetary support.<sup>116</sup>

In “The Sin of Neglecting to Evangelize the World,” published in November 1913 Jordan wrote a scathing editorial highly critical to the convention’s lack of financing the Board’s missions. The assumptions in this article are his biblical understanding of the Great Commission; it is a command given to the whole Church along with individual Christians, according to Jordan. Once again, there is also a hint of millenarianism in it as well; to spread the gospel throughout the world will hasten Christ’s return. In these types of articles, Jordan’s theology has remained consistent.<sup>117</sup>

Regarding the sin committed by the National Convention Jordan lists eight points. First, it was open disobedience to Christ’s command. Second, it was “a terrible breach of trust.”<sup>118</sup> Third, it was disloyalty. Fourth, it was “cruel.” Fifth, it was “selfish.” Sixth, it was “ungrateful.” Seventh, it was avaricious. Eight, it was “to have the blood of souls upon us at last.”<sup>119</sup> Jordan combines a call for more financial help with a call to be faithful to the biblical commandment of Christ Jesus. In an interesting explanation of

---

<sup>116</sup> “Repeating Ourselves,” *Mission Herald*, July 1913.

<sup>117</sup> “The Sin of Neglecting to Evangelize the World,” *Mission Herald*, August 1913.

<sup>118</sup> “The Sin of Neglecting.”

<sup>119</sup> “The Sin of Neglecting.”

cruelty, Jordan writes: "Every Christian knows that the Gospel is [the] only thing that drives out the awful practices and overcomes the terrible conditions of heathenism, and to neglect sending them the Gospel is to be guilty of cruelty."<sup>120</sup> Even with the various appeals through Ethiopian language here in this article Jordan's plea is solidly Evangelical. In one sense, Jordan was unable to deal with what he labeled sin by using Ethiopianism as a tool. Jordan's pastoral experience emerged here like never before as he employed the straightforward entreaty of the urgency of the gospel and obedience to Christ to make his point.

Though in the previous article Jordan implored his readers through a pastoral message, he was still an Ethiopian as evinced in his article called, "A Race's Gratitude in Thank Offering" published in the August 1913 of the *Herald*. In this short piece, Jordan exhorts National Baptists to give one cent a year per year of freedom to Foreign Missions. This is in light of the Jubilee year since Emancipation, and in light of white Baptists pledging millions of dollars for missions. Jordan desired National Baptists to think of their own freedom that they all credit to the grace and mercy of God to buttress giving to mission work that would help in doing the same in Africa.<sup>121</sup>

Through this time, Dr. Jordan had done a remarkable job in building the Foreign Mission Board from the ground up. Such was known among people in the National Baptist Convention. Evidence of this appears in the November 1913 *Herald* as G. D. Griffin of Hertfort, North Carolina wrote "A Tribute to Rev. L. G. Jordan, D.D." When Griffin wrote the article, he had known Dr. Jordan for twelve years, and saw him as a persuasive and bold advocate for missions as well as a Christian man foremost. This

---

<sup>120</sup> "The Sin of Neglecting."

<sup>121</sup> "A Race's Gratitude in Thank Offering," *Mission Herald*, August 1913.

article is also an appeal to heed Jordan's exhortations. In one section, Griffin makes an especially strong call:

Now in view of his past accomplishments under God, in view of his unqualified interest in missions, in view of our duty to the great cause he advocates, should we not stand by and support him? Should we not respond to the appeals which he sends out from time to time? Should we not say with full intentions: Brother Jordan, you tell us what you need and we will furnish it, or report to God the reason why?<sup>122</sup>

Judging from this article, readers of the *Herald* such as Griffin felt the heartache of the secretary as issue after issue he poured himself out in pleas, prayers, and petitions for more money to come to support the cause of foreign missions. This article also indicates that readers knew of the relative lack of support given by the rank-and-file members of the convention. Not only is this a personal appeal as Griffin pointed to Jordan as a man and leader, but was also a challenge to National Baptists to give heed to Jordan's imploring to give money.

Another article by a member of the national convention appears in this issue that attempts to solicit interest and money for the Board. "Are You a Jonah," written by Florence Burnett uses the biblical story of the prophet Jonah to move people to action. Burnett reminded the readership that Jonah refused to preach repentance to the people of Ninevah. One could argue that Jonah's ethnic prejudice resulted in his reluctance to obey the Lord God and preach to the Ninevites. This particular article is a call to action, to rise from sleep and obey the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ to heed the call of billions of the unsaved in Africa needing redemption. She states, "Africa's millions are crying out to those who have been unfaithful to duty in the Master's service."<sup>123</sup> Here Burnett appeals with a clear biblical incentive, but also with an Ethiopian as she applies a biblical

---

<sup>122</sup> G. D. Griffin, "A Tribute to Rev. L. G. Jordan, D. D.," *Mission Herald*, November 1913.

<sup>123</sup> Florence Burnett, "Are you a Jonah," *Mission Herald*, November 1913.



narrative and prophecy to the National Baptists' endeavor to preach the gospel in Africa.<sup>124</sup>

The year 1914 brought about more of a sense of boldness from the Foreign Mission Board. In the February issue of the *Herald*, the Board publicized its "Foreign Mission Rally," which was Sunday, April 12, 1914. For this rally in 1914, the Board asked for \$15,000 from the entire convention. As noted above, the intent of the rally was to receive money from the affiliate Sunday schools of the convention. To excite interest among the Sunday schools, the Foreign Mission Board issued a prize of a round-trip ticket to the convention in September to the two Sunday schools giving the largest offering. To the third largest, that school would receive a set of missionary books.<sup>125</sup>

In two editorials written by Jordan in this issue he focuses upon both the Evangelical impetus for giving to the Board and the Board's unique position as sending African Americans out into the African mission field. In the first editorial, Jordan addresses the restrictions the Board placed on missionaries in the field responding to letters and receiving gifts and articles directly from individuals. At the end of the piece, the Jordan states:

The Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention calls upon our Pastors everywhere to urge their forces of Missionary workers to build their work upon the love of God more than they do upon the love of any of its workers. Conventions, Boards, Secretaries and Missionaries may live or die, but the charge to preach the Gospel to every creature must stand so long as there are lost men to be reconciled to God.<sup>126</sup>

In the other editorial, Jordan makes it known that no other Foreign Mission Board among the denominations allows African Americans the privilege to serve as missionaries. He

---

<sup>125</sup> Untitled, *Mission Herald*, February 1914.

<sup>126</sup> Editorial, *Mission Herald*, February 1914.

related a story of a young African American man who graduated from an NBC-USA school, who applied by letter to another denomination's mission board. The secretary saw him and informed him of the policy of his denomination. What is the reason for reporting this? Again, Jordan states, "We have cited these facts so that the Baptist Pastors, Churches and Associations may see where this disloyalty by some well-meaning friends at home and short sighted workers over the sea will carry us."<sup>127</sup>

In an untitled and anonymous article in this issue, the writer emphasizes one of the aims of the Foreign Mission Board. Besides planting churches and building mission stations, the writer indicates that one of the goals of the Board was to educate Africans. The primary reason for this was to prepare Africans for mission work so that they would return to their homelands to lead the work begun by the Board. This particular aim had a variety of support historically. First, this was part of the overall mission to civilize Africans; second, the redemption of Africa necessitated such; and third, it was part of Baptist tradition to allow churches to run themselves once qualified leadership was in place.<sup>128</sup>

As noted previously each February Jordan published a retrospective piece marking his anniversary as secretary of the Board. In 1914, Jordan celebrated eighteen years in his position. He gave his readers a brief history of his time as secretary; a summary follows:

- On Friday, February 13, 1896, he was called from Union Baptist Church in Philadelphia to become secretary.
- The convention had just come into being in September of 1895
- Late Secretary Luke had no time to plan, or do anything before he died on 31 December, 1895

---

<sup>127</sup> Editorial, *Mission Herald*, February 1914.

<sup>128</sup> Editorial, *Mission Herald*, February 1914.

- Jordan's first meeting was at Metropolitan Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.
- He told the people the purpose of their work and Africa's needs, and what they needed to do "for Africa's uplift."
- Since has gone from state to state attending state conventions, and from city to city rallying support for the Board.
- Among the "firstfruits" was John Tule (deceased) of South Africa.
- In the first eighteen years, the Board has sent out 47 missionaries.
- There have been \$200,000 contributed to the Board
- At the time there were 88 churches in the field, 100 preachers and teachers, and a membership of 22,000.<sup>129</sup>

Judging from this brief outline history of Jordan's activities it is clear that he was a staunch believer that African American Baptists could redeem all of Africa through the gospel and through other efforts. When reading a retrospective such as this, it is interesting to note the optimism that swelled in Jordan and the Board even amidst the lack of strong financial support from convention in general. Such optimism, nevertheless, did bring forth fruit in relative vibrant African mission fields of work.

In the same issue appears "A Letter from the National Baptist Convention" probably written by President E. C. Morris. As it is from the Parent Body of the convention, it addresses pastors, Sunday school superintendents, and other leaders of auxiliaries and societies affiliated with the convention. The letter states that in 1895 the Foreign Mission Board supported two independent missionaries in the African field, one was Rev. R. A. Jackson. This occurred judging from the chronology before the merger of the three conventions in September. So the writer means the BFMC's board. In this letter, it states that since that time the Board has sent 43 missionaries to the field and trained fifteen nationals to return to their homelands. This letter is to excite interest among the members of the convention to give toward the goal of \$15,000 for the Foreign Mission

---

<sup>129</sup> Untitled, *Mission Herald*, February 1914.

Rally. The convention offered the following suggestions: first, let the week of 5 April be devoted to prayer; second, let the midweek service of that week be devoted to a talk about Adoniram Judson, or some of the missionaries of the Board; three, use the programs sent to the churches by the Board; four, the 11:00 am sermon should be on the Great Commission; and five, every department of churches should rally behind this effort. This letter attempts to add greater support to all of the calls and cries from the secretary over the years. Finally, there appears a detailed and rather forceful letter from President Morris to urge monetary support for the Board's work in Africa.<sup>130</sup>

The year 1915 began with more Evangelical motivations to support the work of the Foreign Mission Board from its secretary, Dr. Jordan. In his article entitled "The Gift of Lives in Missionary Service," Jordan argues that missionary work was "the highest, the truest, and the most enduring service men can render to their fellow men."<sup>131</sup> Clearly Secretary Jordan based this on firm biblical precepts and convictions. He then writes of sin and the need of the gospel, which offers life and hope to all those who would receive Christ. This article is really about the sacrifice of missionaries in the field, and the more than a century of missions throughout the world. This is a softer approach than used by the secretary in previous years; possibly he believed at this juncture that it was better to speak softly and carry a big stick in order to receive more money from individual National Baptists and affiliate groups.

In another article written by Dr. Jordan called "The Light of the World," Jordan repeats Jesus' word that he is the Light of the world from John's gospel. This article is to encourage the faithful to help make Christ known in nations that have yet to receive

---

<sup>130</sup> "A Letter from the National Baptist Convention," *Mission Herald*, February 1914.

<sup>131</sup> "The Gift of Lives in Missionary Service," *Mission Herald*, January 1915.

Christ in general. He states, "To Christ we owe all we have above the most benighted heathen. All that Christian lands possess in knowledge, civilization, and progress; they owe to the influence of Christianity. Christ had been the light of nations in proportion as the people of those nations receive him as the Son of God."<sup>132</sup> Here Jordan links spreading the gospel with destroying civil "heathenism" as well as spiritual "heathenism." The emphasis is on, however, saving souls.

In an editorial entitled "A Gentle Reminder," Jordan reminds his audience of something they hold to as Baptists--the Word of God is the supreme rule of faith and practice (this is the Reformation doctrine of sola scriptura). Though National Baptists had held to biblical teachings, Jordan states that they have neglected some. He states that they called themselves "Missionary Baptists," but the majority of National Baptist churches did nothing for foreign missions. In light of this broad failure on the part of National Baptists, Jordan laments that the teaching to preach the gospel to all nations is clear; he implies that it was a poor state of things to ignore this command. He also writes that the lack of giving was also a clear abrogation of NT teaching, and Jordan believes this was lamentable also. Jordan gives this inducement: "A new and blessed day will dawn upon our people and their missionary efforts if we realize our unscriptural attitude in this matter of missions and systematic contributions."<sup>133</sup> Though Jordan made his points gently, this was a clarion call for biblical obedience as well an indictment on the millions of National Baptists during this day of failing to uphold one of the more fundamental commandments of Jesus Christ their savior.

---

<sup>132</sup> "The Light of the World," *Mission Herald*, January 1915.

<sup>133</sup> "A Gentle Reminder," *Mission Herald*, January 1915.

Also in this issue appears an open letter from the Rev. A. R. Robinson, the chairman of the Foreign Mission Board and Secretary Jordan. In “On Open Letter to Missionary Baptists,” the chairman and the secretary began with a statement on the movement of “world-wide evangelism.” They assert that this world-wide evangelism was unprecedented at that moment in time. According to the letter, Christians believe that by spreading the gospel throughout the world it will hasten the Second Coming of Christ. As pointed out before, this belief had gained currency among Evangelicals during this time, but this position deviates from what Evangelicals had believed historically. The point of this letter is to exhort Missionary Baptists to train themselves and educate themselves in their churches and societies, and to use *The Call of the World* as a textbook in mission study classes.<sup>134</sup>

There is one more statement that appears in this issue that attempts to encourage both giving to missions and establishing mission classes in local churches. Possibly written by Jordan “A Good Church Policy Adopt It” consists of four key points lending themselves for adoption by local churches; here is a summary of these points:

- The entire church is to be involved in spreading the gospel throughout the whole world.
- The entire church is a “Missionary Society;” therefore, every individual Christian is responsible for spreading the gospel.
- Everyone is to either go or give money to support work abroad.
- Giving is an act of worship.<sup>135</sup>

Thought separate from the four key points, the writer called for people to pray at 1:00 pm every day during the week, which was the standard time that the leaders of the Foreign Mission Board gathered to pray.<sup>136</sup>

---

<sup>134</sup> A. R. Robinson and L. G. Jordan, “An Open Letter to Missionary Baptists,” *Mission Herald*, January 1915.

<sup>135</sup> “A Good Church Policy Adopt It,” *Mission Herald*, January 1915.

In the May edition of the *Herald*, Secretary Jordan pressed the theme of the importance of local level participation in the foreign mission program once again. In this issue, he highlighted what can be done within District Associations. Jordan wrote an article entitled “The District Association an Opportunity to Further the Cause of Foreign Missions,” and he emphasizes that associations came into existence owing to the “call for missions.” In these well-attended gatherings, Jordan encourages that the associations bring foreign missions to the attention of the people. Regarding the district association Jordan states: “Its highest service to the Kingdom of God is to make itself an effective agency for getting the gospel propagated throughout the earth.”<sup>137</sup> Jordan further asserts that the program of the meeting should have a place for foreign missions; it should have a prominent place in the meetings. He also states that “foreign missions ought to be prayerfully discussed.”<sup>138</sup>

In the short article “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name!” the editor continued to strike the note of Evangelical promotion of African missions. Jordan states that the next time a church sings the hymn “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name” the following story about the hymn should be told. Jordan re-tells the story: George Grenfall was a missionary in the Congo from 1875 to 1906. He witnessed the horrors of the Arab slave trade in Central Africa, but one day he heard students singing this hymn. This marked a “great contrast” to the ravages of the slave trade and the old way of traditional worship. This singing came as a result of the gospel being preached in this section of the Congo.

---

<sup>136</sup> “A Good Church Policy Adopt It.”

<sup>137</sup> “The District Association an Opportunity to Further the Cause of Foreign Missions,” *Mission Herald*, May 1915.

<sup>138</sup> “The District Association.”

By using this familiar hymn as a bridge, Jordan exhorted and encouraged his National Baptist audience to support foreign missions.<sup>139</sup>

As Jordan had written in more irenic tones during 1915, this changed when he gave his annual report to the National Baptist Convention in September in Chicago. In Jordan's portion of the report, he offers scathing criticisms of the membership of the convention regarding its lack of financial support of foreign missions work. Jordan believed that the lack of devotion to this work could "thwart" God's purpose regarding the redemption of the world. He reiterates that the task of evangelization belongs to the "whole church."<sup>140</sup>

Without mincing any words, this section of the report is a gospel call and a gospel appeal even through a general rebuke. In one telling statement, Jordan remarks that "We are the worst fooled lot that ever lived if we think God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to save all in it who would own and follow him and exempt us, who have charge of the flocks over which the Holy Ghost has made us overseers."<sup>141</sup> In this particular rebuke, Jordan blasts pastors. Overall, Jordan asserts that pastors had been derelict in their duty to encourage their members to support the cause of foreign missions.

By 1919, Jordan as editor of the *Herald* decided to publish the Missionary Lessons for the month. In February 1919, the missionary lesson placed some emphasis on African American Christian missionary history in order to educate Missionary Baptists in the history of certain African American Christians as missionaries. In a section of the

---

<sup>139</sup> "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name." *Mission Herald*, May 1915. This hymn is #176 in the *National Baptist Hymn Book*.

<sup>140</sup> "Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Foreign Mission Board," *Mission Herald*, October 1915.

<sup>141</sup> "Thirty-Fifth Annual Report."



lesson called “The Gospel of Doing Things,” the writer begins by re-telling some of the story of George Liele, who the writer reveals was the first American Baptist missionary ten years before William Carey and thirty-one years before Judson. He also mentions the African American Methodist missionary, John Stewart, who was a missionary to the Wyandotte Indians during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He credits the work of Liele and Stewart as sparking the missionary movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as their work motivated whites. The writer also mentions Lott Carey’s missionary campaign, and he notes the founding of the BFMC only fifteen years after emancipation in order to obey the Great Commission. This section of the study had the intent to foster a sense of pride among Missionary Baptists that throughout their history they have maintained a missionary emphasis. This was an attempt also to encourage current Missionary Baptists to continue this tradition.<sup>142</sup>

In the August 1919 issue of the *Herald* Jordan continued the historical importance of African Christians in order to motivate contemporary African American Baptists. In the article “Did You Know?” there is an Ethiopian element within it as it relates some of the major Africans who contributed to the Christian Church--the Early Church. Jordan cites Tertullian, Origen, Augustine, and Cyprian as major theologians from Africa during this period. Then he forwards an argument on why the churches of North Africa died; he states there were 900 churches, but they died because they neglected the Great Commission. Here is a link with the historical church from an African perspective and Evangelical truth. It also serves as a warning to Missionary Baptists to remain obedient to their Christ and his commandments.<sup>143</sup>

---

<sup>142</sup> “The Gospel of Doing Things,” *Mission Herald*, February 1919.

<sup>143</sup> “Did You Know?” *Mission Herald*, August 1919.

The history lessons continued into 1920 as the Foreign Mission Board anticipated the celebration of the centennial of Lott Carey's mission to West Africa. In the August issue of the *Herald*, the Board announced its plan to commemorate and celebrate Lott Carey's sailing in January 1921. The Foreign Mission Board submitted these plans to the Executive Committee of the convention and received approval in June. The plans were underway. The observance would be on the third Sunday, January 1921. The money raised beyond the expenses of the event would go toward planting a seminary in Liberia.<sup>144</sup>

The January 1921 issue of the *Herald* is dedicated to the observance of Lott Carey's journey to West Africa. Jordan wrote an editorial that accounts for where African Americans were socially and economically since Carey's trip. Jordan believes that "the church has entered a great era of development."<sup>145</sup> He believes this by judging the economic progress in the US. One sign of this was the increased attraction toward cooperation assumingly with white Christians. Though it is great mark of African American Baptist history, this celebration was meant to encourage more African American Baptists to give money to African missions.<sup>146</sup>

"Will you be one?" is an article published in the February issue. In this article, Jordan attempts to get to the root of the overall indifference National Baptists had shown toward supporting missions work. It seemed as though Jordan had inaugurated a pledge system of giving. In a subtle way Jordan exhorts churches with good sized memberships to give to Foreign Missions. He cites that there were some churches that gave an appreciable amount of money per year: one in Pennsylvania gave \$1500 per year, one

---

<sup>144</sup> Untitled, *Mission Herald*, August 1920.

<sup>145</sup> Editorial, *Mission Herald*, January 1921.

<sup>146</sup> Editorial.

Washington, D.C. gave \$750, one in Chicago gave \$600, one in New York gave \$800.00, and one in Atlanta gave \$300. The secretary went on to state that these churches gave sacrificially as all but one was in debt and they all gave their pastors handsome salaries. Then he states that “[t]here are more than 1000 other churches which could do just as well.”<sup>147</sup>

As Jordan brings this article to a conclusion, he issues a most ambitious goal for the churches. The goal was to have 100 churches to pledge \$250 per year for three years; 200 churches to pledge \$150 for a year, and 700 churches to pledge \$100 per year. This was a reasonable plan. At the time the publication of this article, there were 18,000 churches that were members of the convention, and Jordan called only for 1,000 churches to participate in this giving scheme.<sup>148</sup>

In this February edition of the *Herald*, Secretary Jordan celebrated his 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as the corresponding secretary; it will also be the final anniversary celebrated in this position. In “The Quarto-Centennial of Our Secretary” Jordan reflects upon the last twenty-five years of his service to the National Baptist Convention and to Africa. Jordan states,

For the first few years I hoped to return to the pastorate, but the thought of Africa and Africa’s needs and then the big non-Christian world grew on me until, in glad surrender, I finally decided to stick to it and prayed to be spared to travel many years, up and down our favored country and plead for men, women and money to be used in the uplift of the neglected.<sup>149</sup>

Jordan gives a brief overview of the current work. He states that there were 60 American and International ordained missionaries along with three women who were workers, and 105 African workers; this was the grand total of workers in the African field. He admits

---

<sup>147</sup> “Will you be one?” *Mission Herald*, February 1921.

<sup>148</sup> “Will you be one?”

<sup>149</sup> “The Quarto-Centennial of Our Secretary,” *Mission Herald*, February 1921.

that his physical self was tired and the Board needed to find a younger man to assume this work that he had given the last 25 years of life. Regarding his plans for the future, Jordan states that “I have no plans for the future further than to be allowed to work with a yoke-fellow for the good of Africa.”<sup>150</sup> Among what he wanted to see complete that began under his watch were the completion of a church building in Cape Town and for the completion of payment on the 800 acre farm at Middledrift in South Africa.

Jordan’s career as editor of the *Mission Herald* concluded with the September 1921 issue. As he ended his grand tenure, he offered “Only a Few Suggestions” for the Board in its work with the incoming corresponding secretary, Dr. James East. In this little article, Jordan bluntly suggests that Dr. East “avoid the ‘Jim Crow’ [railcar] with its health-ruining discomforts and hardships.”<sup>151</sup> It is obvious that for over 25 years Secretary Jordan had endured the supposedly equal accommodations of the Jim Crow car for African Americans traveling in the South. As he traversed the nation attempting to gain support for the redemption of Africa, Jordan knew the bleak present day conditions for African Americans as he had to succumb to the inhumanity of riding in segregated railcars in the land of his birth. It is a testimony of Jordan’s dignity that he desired something much better for his successor.

Also in this issue Jordan left a letter for all of the Board’s missionaries and workers. In the letter, Jordan encouraged the missionaries and workers that: “The gospel is just as powerful now as ever, and if you, by your lives and efforts, lift up the Christ, all will be well.”<sup>152</sup> This is an appropriate farewell as Jordan sought to keep before the people of the National Baptist Convention that its main purpose was to obey the Great

---

<sup>150</sup> “Quarto-Centennial.”

<sup>151</sup> “Only a Few Suggestions,” *Mission Herald*, September 1921.

<sup>152</sup> Letter, *Mission Herald*, September 1921.

Commission, and the presence of missionaries in the field representing the Foreign Mission Board of the convention is a testimony that it did, in part, obey the commission. As stated by others previously, Jordan was above all a committed Christian man who loved Africa.

There is a re-print of Secretary Jordan's letter of resignation. It is dated July 30, 1921. He addressed it to the chairman of the Foreign Mission Board. The letter indicates that Jordan's resignation would take effect on "Founder's Day" 24 Nov 1921. He recites his history a bit. When he took over as secretary, there were no "recorded members." At the time of his resignation, there were 40,000 members in the mission field. Beginning with Rev. John Tule in 1897, 87 men and women have gone into the mission field sent by the Board.<sup>153</sup>

One final item in this issue must be summarized. Chairman A. R. Robinson gave a report to the convention, and it is under the title of "The Going of Dr. Jordan" in the *Herald*. He writes of the resignation of Dr. Jordan, and states that he would have the title "Secretary Emeritus" with, hopefully, a "Rainy Day Purse" of \$1,200. He also would receive a pension of \$1,200 per year until he dies. Robinson and the Board applauded Jordan as one who gave up much for "the redemption of Africa."<sup>154</sup>

This ended the Jordan Era. Drawing from the various articles and editorials published in the *Herald*, Jordan's task was enormous. Judging from the invectives from the pen of Jordan chastening the members of the National Baptist Convention for its monetary neglect of African missions it would seem as though the Foreign Mission Board's activities floundered during this quarter century. Maybe things failed to

---

<sup>153</sup> L. G. Jordan, "Letter of Resignation," *Mission Herald*, September 1921.

<sup>154</sup> A. R. Robinson, "The Going of Dr. Jordan," *Mission Herald*, September 1921.

materialize how Jordan envisioned and prayed for. As it comes now to piece together a history of the Board's work in South Africa during Jordan's era, it will be evident that the Board did have a considerable presence in South Africa.

As the Foreign Mission Board elected Lewis Jordan as its secretary in February 1896 and R. A. Jackson prepared to travel to Cape Town, South Africa, the entire continent of Africa was at the tail end of its Missionary Century. From the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Protestant missionaries from all over Europe and some from America converged upon the so-called "Dark Continent" to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to Africans in all corners of the continent. African American Baptists had a presence in Africa beginning in 1821 with the arrival of Lott Carey. The American Missionary Baptist Convention sent at least two missionaries to West Africa during the 1840s, and African American Baptists had served as missionaries under the auspices of the Southern Baptist Convention. Of course, with the founding of the BFMC in 1880 African American Baptists retained a slight presence in West Africa. Even though African historiography has focused primarily on European missionary activity in Africa during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, African American presence was there and should be examined more thoroughly.

It has been shown that Lewis Jordan as the secretary of the Foreign Mission Board for over 25 years understood African missions work in terms of obeying the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and fulfilling a type of Providential Design that stipulated that African American Christians should be the primary people group to carry the gospel to Africa. This was no different in substance from what William Colley articulated in his reports as the first corresponding secretary of the Foreign Mission Board. Did Africans in South Africa have this same sense of Providence as it pertained to their destiny? Judging

from letters from African South African missionary workers and even African Americans of the National Baptist Convention in the South African field, there is ample evidence that they understood this African American Baptist mission more in terms of uplift through Industrial Education. For Africans in South Africa and African American missionaries who served there, the gospel was the vehicle to improvement and dignity through Western education. This will be the focus of the next chapter.





HEBIS  
5  
2010  
V.2

---

142  
746  
THS

LIBRARY  
Michigan State  
University



HERALDING SOUTH AFRICA'S REDEMPTION: EVANGELICALISM AND  
ETHIOPIANISM IN THE MISSIONARY PHILOSOPHY OF THE NATIONAL  
BAPTIST CONVENTION, USA, INC. 1880-1930

Volume II

By

Eric Michael Washington

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILSOPHY

History

2010

## Chapter Four: Voices from the South African Field: Echoes of Evangelicalism and Ethiopianism during the Jordan Era

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, South Africa was a well-worn mission field. English missionaries primarily began to enter the southern African mission field owing to the Evangelical Movement of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that transformed spiritually the American colonies and the British Isles. Luminaries among the clergy such as Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, John and Charles Wesley preached the gospel to all ethnic groups on both sides of the Atlantic, but men such as William Wilberforce and Oludah Equiano applied their Evangelical faith to social concerns such as the suppression of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, and the eventual abolition of slavery in the British empire. From 1800 there was a steady stream of missionaries from Great Britain and America on the ground in all parts of southern Africa. Men from the London Missionary Society (LMS) ventured to southern Africa beginning in 1799 with the arrival of John van der Kemp. Missionaries from the LMS worked among displaced groups such as the Mfengu and the Griqua. The former group consolidated during the period of the *Mfecane* that occurred in 1830s, and the latter was a bi-racial group living on the northern frontier of the Cape Colony. In 1800, more LMS missionaries commenced work among the Tswana, a Southern African ethnic group living at the time in what is the Northern Cape. In 1813 LMS missionary James Campbell arrived among the Southern Tswana and received permission to work from Chief Mothibi. The chief warmly welcomed the missionary and encouraged Campbell to send for more instructors. The primary reason Mothibi was so gracious to Campbell was that he recognized the economic benefits he could receive with

European presence in his territory. This would be a theme marking African-European missionary relations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup>

The focus of this chapter is on how National Baptist sponsored missionaries (both African Americans and Africans) perceived of their mission in South Africa. The African American missionaries upheld both the Evangelical standards of the convention and the leaders of the Foreign Mission Board. They also believed in helping Africans develop along economic and social lines, which was part of the civilizing mission of the convention and African American Ethiopianism. In this respect, African American Baptist missionaries were quite similar to their white American and European counterparts. The unique quality of African American missionaries was that they believed they were carrying out God's plan of redeeming Africans; they were a key segment in God's providential plan of saving Africa. Drawing from the plethora of letters sent to the Board from South African evangelists, pastors, and workers is that they desired to spread the gospel for the salvation of souls, but they also intended to build educational institutions to help raise a generation of Africans who could rely on their own devices rather than be pawns of the South African government that was definitely against them.

Letters from the field during this period (1896-1921) came from a rather large geographical area in southern Africa such as in the eastern Cape, Xhosaland, Zululand, the Transvaal, and the Orange Free State. Since this is the case, the context of missionary presence and the colonial politics in these areas must be established. What follows is in

---

<sup>1</sup> J. M. Chirenje, *A History of Northern Botswana, 1850-1910* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1977), 27; Chirenje, *Ethiopianism*, 8; Anthony Sillery, *Founding a Protectorate: A History of Bechuanaland, 1885-1895* (London: Mouton & Co., 1965), 33-34; and Anthony J. Dachs, "Missionary Imperialism--The Case of Bechuanaland," *Journal of African History* 13 (1972), 647-648; Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 100. The *Mfecane* was a phenomenon caused by famine and drought in Southeast Africa. In it, groups of Africans became near nomads as they roamed the region searching for food. In these searches there would be cattle raids that caused displacement.

no way a detailed contextualization such is far beyond the scope of this work. Yet the hope is that a good understanding of what life was like for Africans in southern Africa on the eve of African American Baptist mission work will be founded.

When the first missionaries arrived in southern Africa, the vast majority of Africans in this area of the continent lived within the confines of their own kingdoms and states. The first missionaries encountered Africans in these environs. Along the eastern frontier of Cape Colony lay territory inhabited by the Xhosa. From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onward until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Xhosa fought numerous wars against the British in an attempt to cling to their sovereignty. By the 1880s, however; nearly all Xhosa-speaking people had been incorporated by the British into the Cape Colony. Hodgson states that “Every aspect of their daily lives, their customs, and their beliefs had come under sustained attack from missionaries.”<sup>2</sup> One of the great themes in 19<sup>th</sup> century southern African history is the relationship between missionaries and Africans. Hodgson’s statement indicates her perception of an adversarial relationship between the amorphous face of missionaries and Africans. In preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and bringing the Law of God to bear on those who trust in Christ, it was necessary that missionaries call into error many Xhosa traditional beliefs. At the same time, missionaries were wont to disagree with Xhosa traditional beliefs based upon their own ideas of civilization. What is apparent is that as European missionaries came to eastern southern Africa colonialists and traders made their way there as well.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Janet Hodgson, “A Battle for Sacred Power: Christian Beginnings among the Xhosa” in *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*, eds. Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 68.

<sup>3</sup> Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (New Haven, CT: Yale Nota Bene Press, 2001), 70-71.

Hodgson identifies three periods of Christianity's spread among the Xhosa. The first period is from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to 1820. During this particular period, missionaries had little success in gaining converts to the faith, but the Xhosa appropriated some of the symbols of Christianity and blended them within the corpus of Xhosa belief. Like Christianity, the Xhosa did believe in a High God; but different from Christianity the Xhosa High God was aloof and detached from the mundane activities of the people unless there was a crisis that plagued the community. Also dissimilar from Christianity, Xhosa traditionalism made no distinction between the natural and the supernatural. The Xhosa also believed in the present activity of ancestral spirits.<sup>4</sup>

Syncretism played a role in one of the wars the Xhosa fought with the British during this first period of Christianity's presence among the former. During the 1810s, Xhosa prophets who blended Christian symbols with Xhosa religious symbols appeared to rally the people against British colonial expansion namely Nxele and Ntiskana. The former called for violent resistance against the British while the latter called for Africans to be more active in ordering "their own transformation" in the midst of a changing southern Africa.<sup>5</sup> As a result of these wars the Xhosa lost more territory to the British; therefore, they lost more sovereignty in their own land.<sup>6</sup>

Also during this first period of Christian presence the LMS founded the first permanent mission station among the Xhosa. The missionary was Joseph Williams, and established the station along the Kat River. According to Hodgson, Williams "equated

---

<sup>4</sup> Hodgson, "A Battle for Sacred Power," 68-69. Campbell also views 1820 as a watershed year for the spread of Christian missions in the Cape and beyond. He also concurs that during this period missionaries had few converts to claim. See Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, 104, 106.

<sup>5</sup> Hodgson, "A Battle for Sacred Power," 71; See also J. D. Omer-Cooper, *History of Southern Africa*. Second edition (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994), 44-45.

<sup>6</sup> Thompson, *History*, 74; Omer-Cooper, *History*, 45.

Christianity with western civilization.”<sup>7</sup> Overall, Williams’ work failed to attract good numbers of Xhosa; yet the establishing of this station portended a greater missionary presence throughout the rest of the century.

The second period dates from 1820-1860, and witnessed the closing of the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony that had a profound effect on the Xhosa economically, politically, and socially. In 1820, the British encouraged the immigration of British citizens to settle in the eastern Cape to become agrarians on relative small plots of land. These settlers are known as the Albany settlers. According to Omer-Cooper, this desire on the government’s part failed as the Albany settlers preferred larger tracts of land, which meant encroachment across the frontier onto Xhosa territory. While the new settlers arrived, another group came to settle among the Xhosa from the east; they were the Mfengu who were refugees from southeast Africa having migrated as a result of the *mfecane*, which was a series of raids and migrations caused by droughts. These folk were poor without property and found refuge within the Xhosa chiefdom. This group will play a key role in the development of an African Christian community.<sup>8</sup>

In the wake of the coming of the Albany settlers in 1820, British colonial policy focused on the east. As mentioned above, during this decade the settlers became hungry for more land beyond the frontier; this sparked more trouble between the Xhosa and the British culminating in another war in 1834-1835. Before the war, Xhosa had begun to leave their land and migrate into the Cape to work on European farms. This demonstrates the progressive incorporation of the Xhosa into the colonial economy concomitant with the loss of Xhosa land. When peace between the British and Xhosa ensured in 1835, the

---

<sup>7</sup> Hodgson, “A Battle for Sacred Power,” 71, 73-74

<sup>8</sup> Hodgson, “A Battle for Sacred Power,” 68, 78; Thompson, *History*, 75; Omer-Cooper, *History*, 47. Omer-Cooper also writes much on the nature, process, and results of the *mfecane*. See 55ff.



Xhosa lost more land to the British and the frontier pushed further east. This British annexed this land, and opened it for European settlement only; this territory was the Queen Adelaide Province.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1820s more missionaries arrived among the Xhosa. In addition to the LMS, Wesleyan Methodists and Scottish Presbyterians were active there. The one group that became attracted to Christianity was the Mfengu. Again, this group was a refugee group without land or kinship ties in Xhosaland; therefore, they occupied a low rank in Xhosa society. With mission evangelism and teaching, the Mfengu became enthusiastic Christians and they also embraced Western modes of living and became loyal to the Colonial government. In describing this occurrence, Isichei writes: "Conversion to Christianity involved dislocation, a break from the traditions of the past, and it came more easily to those who had endured disruption already."<sup>10</sup> This became apparent when the Mfengu sided with the British in the 1834-1835 war.<sup>11</sup>

Following the 1834-1835 War, an uneasy peace ensued. The Cape government decided to allow more Europeans to settle on land previously claimed by the Xhosa. With this occurrence, the Xhosa found themselves squeezed out of more and more land; their economy became increasingly dependent on the colonial economy. In 1847, the British created a new colony, British Kaffraria on land ceded to them by the Xhosa. In this new colony, the British allowed Mfengu and former British soldiers to settle on this land. This further infuriated the Xhosa.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Hodgson, "A Battle for Sacred Power," 75; Thompson, *History*, 75; Omer-Cooper, *History*, 69-70.

<sup>10</sup> Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 105.

<sup>11</sup> Hodgson, "A Battle for Sacred Power," 79; Thompson, *History*, 75; Omer-Cooper, *History*, 70.

<sup>12</sup> Thompson, *History*, 75.

With the new colony and more foreign settlement (including Mfengu settlement), the Xhosa found themselves considering yet another war with the British and their collaborators. In December 1850 another war commenced called Mlanjeni's War. Mlanjeni was a type of Xhosa prophet who had come under the influence of Christianity. He dreamt that God was angry at Europeans for killing Jesus Christ, and that God was on the side of African in order to bring wrath upon the Europeans. In addition, Mlanjeni prophesied that a branch from the plumbago tree would render Europeans weak. The war lasted for two years, and the British gained another victory over their Xhosa rivals. As a result, the Xhosa lost more territory as the British annexed more land and added to British Kaffraria that they opened to more European settlement and settlement by African collaborators.<sup>13</sup>

Scottish Presbyterian missions representing the United Presbyterian Church bore limited fruit among the Xhosa, but they had the privilege of ordaining the first ordained African minister. Tiyo Soga became that first ordained African minister. Though Christian missions saw few conversions during this period, Soga was a second generation Christian (his father was a Christian). As a convert himself, Tiyo Soga demonstrated that he had a preaching gift, and the Scottish missionaries encouraged him to obtain a divinity degree in Scotland. Upon finishing he returned to South Africa in 1857 and received ordination. Even as an ordained minister, he experienced discrimination and prejudice owing to his race. Although Soga endured persecution because of his race, he represented a breakthrough for all African Christians and African men who aspired for the gospel ministry. Soga's ordination into the gospel ministry in 1857 would presage a key struggle

---

<sup>13</sup> Thompson, *History*, 77. See also J. B. Peires, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement of 1856-7* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989), Chapter 1, 1ff. Mlanjeni's War provides the immediate context to the Cattle-Killing incident in 1856-1857.

between Africans and Europeans on the mission field that would lead to the South African Ethiopian movement.<sup>14</sup>

During this period, occurred the most pivotal event in 19<sup>th</sup> century Xhosa history and one of the more interesting events in 19<sup>th</sup> century African history. The event referred to is the Cattle-killing incident of 1856-1857. Hodgson asserts that consistent European Christian intrusion on Xhosa custom such as demanding that the Xhosa adopt a market-driven economy helped to precipitate the Cattle-killing incident. The incident occurred owing to Xhosa prophets who forged Christian and Xhosa sacred symbols.<sup>15</sup>

The incident was tragic, and became a key turning point in the history of Christianity among the Xhosa. More colonial intrusion and land loss, missionary activity, and cattle sickness all contributed to the Cattle-killing incident. Peires argues that the lungsickness of the cattle proved to be the most important of these precipitating factors. He states unequivocally that without the lungsickness “the movement could never have occurred.”<sup>16</sup> The reason Peires holds to this argument owes itself to the immediate political, social, and economic context of the Xhosa; they were “batter and divided,” according to Peires.<sup>17</sup> All of these factors caused a malaise to hover over the Xhosa, and in an attempt to regain integrity and sovereignty prophets emerged amalgamating both Christian and Xhosa symbols of power and called the people to cleanse themselves from sin. They stated that the cattle must be sacrificed as a means of forgiveness and repentance from their sins. A number of prophets made such pronouncements, but a sixteen year-old girl, Nongqawuse, stands out as the major prophetic voice calling for

---

<sup>14</sup> Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 110.

<sup>15</sup> Hodgson, “A Battle for Sacred Power,” 80-81.

<sup>16</sup> Peires, *The Dead Will Arise*, 124.

<sup>17</sup> Peires, *The Dead Will Arise*, 124.

such drastic means. She dreamed that if the Xhosa slaughtered the cattle the ancestors would rise up and drive the British out of their land. The results were tragic: 400,000 cattle slaughtered as well as grain; over 40,000 Xhosa died of starvation, and 33,000 Xhosa migrated into the Cape Colony to find wage-earning jobs. Interestingly enough, the Mfengu failed to heed the prophecies and refrained from slaughtering their cattle or sacrificing their grain.<sup>18</sup>

With such devastating results, thousands of Xhosa turned to missionaries and their teaching. According to Mills, the tragic aftermath of the Cattle-killing incident sparked a revival among the Xhosa in the 1860s.<sup>19</sup> During this last period of Christianity's spread among the Xhosa (1860-1910) as understood by Hodgson, missionaries encouraged Christian Africans and seekers to receive industrial education. This fit within the changing economic realities for thousands of Xhosa as they had become part of the Cape colonial economic system. Yet industrial education within the colonial economic system would allow Xhosa Christians to find a better place within it rather than languish at the bottom of the socio-economic stratum.<sup>20</sup>

The so-called Taylor Revival of 1866 is one of the great themes in South African Christian history. Though the revival is called the "Taylor Revival" after William "California" Taylor, a charismatic, Methodist evangelist from the United States, some historians indicate clearly that the Xhosa evangelist and translator Charles Pamla had the great effect on Africans and their subsequent conversion to Christianity. Historians have

---

<sup>18</sup> Hodgson, "A Battle for Sacred Power," 80-81; Thompson, *History*, 78-79; Peires, *The Dead Will Arise*, 123. According to Peires, those who believed in the verity of the prophecies were "believers." The Mfengu as a group rejected this type of spiritual media; therefore, they were "unbelievers." Not only did they fail to slaughter their cattle, they also purchased cattle from "believers." See, 94-95.

<sup>19</sup> Wallace G. Mills, "The Taylor Revival of 1866 and the Roots of African Nationalism in the Cape Colony," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 8, Fasc. 2 (1976), 114-115.

<sup>20</sup> Hodgson, "A Battle for Sacred Power," 68, 83.

asserted that the failure of the Cattle-Killing incident primed the Xhosa to receiving Christianity at this juncture.<sup>21</sup> According to Hodgson, after the tragedy of the Cattle-killing incident, the Xhosa perceived that their traditional religion was of no help against the onslaught of colonialism.<sup>22</sup> In 1865, Pamla had become one of a few African preachers placed forward for ordination by the Wesleyans. When he met Taylor the next year, Pamla was a credible and able preacher of the gospel. This is something that Mills emphasizes even in the aftermath of the revival among Xhosa-speakers in the Cape in 1866. Mills asserts that what the revival revealed was the superior preaching ability of African preachers to Africans. Such an assertion leads to the conclusion that this also set the stage of African Independent church movements later in the century as Africans obviously had the ability and knowledge of Christianity to communicate the gospel effectively to African audiences. If that is the case, then why were European and American missionary societies reluctant to ordain African men into the ministry?<sup>23</sup>

According to Mills, the Cape government's resistance to African advancement economically was part of the reason that African nationalism developed among the African Christian community. Owing to Christian teaching of the equality of all persons and the Western education they received, African Christians believed that the Cape government should allow them equal access to social and economic advancement. African nationalism developed from a double source, according to Mills: the lack of

---

<sup>21</sup> Mills, "The Taylor Revival," 114-116.

<sup>22</sup> Hodgson, "A Battle for Sacred Power," 83.

<sup>23</sup> Mills, "The Taylor Revival," 105-110, 112.

African men being ordained into the ministry; and the lack of economic advancement in Cape society.<sup>24</sup>

This was the context in the Cape (especially the eastern Cape) when the National Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board commenced work in South Africa in the 1890s. As there would be two significant works in eastern Cape, there were thousands of Africans (Xhosa-speakers, primarily) ready to receive the gospel and could respond favorably even they heard it from someone of African descent, but they also wanted education in order for them to advance in Cape society. These are two factors that would play into the Foreign Mission Board's success in the Cape from the 1890s to 1921.

During this period of National Baptist missionary presence in South Africa, they supported work in Natal among Zulu-speakers. The Christian missionary history among the Zulu began in 1836 as the American Board, which was a Boston-based society, began work. This board consisted of Congregationalists who were orthodox Calvinists, but had come under the influence of the Second Great Awakening. Other missionary groups arrived in the wake of the American Board's arrival such as Lutherans from Germany and Norway and English Methodists. Anglicans came among the Zulu during the 1850s under the guidance of Bishop William Colenso, who envisioned the development an African Christian community civilized along English lines and through industrial education. Though there was missionary presence among Zulu-speakers, Norwegian Lutherans were the first group to found a mission station in Zululand proper in 1850.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Mills, "The Taylor Revival," 119-120. See also Hodgson, "A Battle for Sacred Power," 83-86. Hodgson re-asserts Mills' points.

<sup>25</sup> Norman Etherington, "Kingdoms of This World and the Next: Christian Beginnings among Zulu and Swazi," in *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*, eds. Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 90-95; see also Bengt Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 25-27; Omer-Cooper, *History*, 68.

These beginnings of Christian activity among the Zulu coincided with European advancement. Boers (Dutch farmers) who had migrated from the Cape Colony arrived near the Zulu in the 1830s, and their presence eventually led to war in February 1838. Thompson calls this war a “preemptive strike” on the part of the Zulu in order to repel the Boers from settling in the vicinity of the former’s territory. The Boers retaliated at the famous Battle of Blood River (also known as the Battle of Ncome) in December 1838. After this defeat Zulu national unity crumbled, and in the aftermath of this Boers settled on good land in Zululand establishing a republic there, the Natal Republic founded in 1839.<sup>26</sup>

Wesleyan Methodism made great strides among Zulu-speakers during this period of Christian advancement. When the Methodists arrived in Natal in 1841, their work was among the English population; but from those initial chapels among the English-speaking population came work among Africans. At the same time, these English Wesleyan Methodists also complained to the British government regarding the Boers and their misuse of Africans in the Natal Republic. Because of this, the Wesleyans appealed to the British for help. Partially in response to the Wesleyan appeal, the British assumed command of the republic in 1842. As the British took control this territory, the Wesleyans had more freedom to spread; as a result, African evangelists went to work spreading the gospel among other Africans. Owing to this when National Baptists made their presence known late in the century, most Zulu-speaking Christians were Methodists.<sup>27</sup>

Another factor in the spread of Christianity among the Zulu during this period from 1836-1885 was the American Board’s winning the right in 1856 to purchase large

---

<sup>26</sup> Thompson, *History*, 90-91; Omer-Cooper, *History*, 78-81.

<sup>27</sup> Etherington, “Kingdoms of This World,” 94-95; Thompson, *History*, 92-93.

tracts of land they called “mission reserves.” With these lands in control of missionaries, it allowed Zulu converts to live on these lands. According to Sundkler, these lands helped to build the *kholwa* (Zulu Christian community). What is obvious is that these lands aided the *kholwa* to have an independent existence outside of the control of the Zulu kingdom. The importance of this is because when Zulus became Christians they became ostracized in the Zulu nation.<sup>28</sup>

Both Sundkler and Etherington agree that during this phase of Christian missions among the Zulu conversion were few though Sundkler states the rate of conversion was “steady and definite.”<sup>29</sup> Etherington makes the point that conversions remained few as long as the “pre-colonial Nguni institutions” remained stable. When those institutions suffered and dismantled owing to British colonial advancement more Zulu-speakers turned to missionaries and what they offered. As European settlers gobbled up more land, Africans fled to the resources controlled by the mission stations. This began occurring during the 1870s into the 1880s. During this time the *kholwa*, who had their own land, developed into a Zulu middle class. It was in the best interests of mission stations for British colonization to expand more into southeast Africa. As the British annexed more Zulu land, the missionaries were the only group of Europeans who desired to care for the welfare of Africans in the colony. The American Board, for example, opened schools and medical facilities for Africans. This also facilitated conversions of more Africans.<sup>30</sup>

This was the state of missionary activity in Natal and in Zululand when National Baptists commenced their work. Owing to the colonial segregation policy that relegated Africans to reserves outside of the colony and to unsanitary urban zones in Durban or

---

<sup>28</sup> Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets*, 26.

<sup>29</sup> Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets*, 25; Etherington, “Kingdoms of This World,” 97.

<sup>30</sup> Etherington, “Kingdoms of This World,” 97-98; Thompson, *History*, 99.



Pietermaritzburg, Africans suffered socially and economically having to rely on the good graces of European missionary societies. Only the *khlowa* that had become the first generation of Zulu-speaking Christians managed to carve out space in colonial society as relatively prosperous farmers. National Baptist insistence on evangelization and industrial education found a ready audience in this part of southern Africa.

One other area of National Baptist activity was among Tswana-speaking people living in the Transvaal, Orange Free State, and the Cape. Christian missionaries among the Tswana date from the very beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. LMS missionaries planted stations in what would become the northern area of Cape colony. The first missionaries made two visits to the southern Tswana in 1800 and once more in 1805 before settling permanently in 1813. In 1816, the LMS founded another station among another southern Tswana group. Though the Tswana allowed missionaries into their territory, they were more interested in trade than receiving the gospel. When the effects of the *mfecane* arrived among the Tswana-speaking populations during the 1820s and the 1830s, this arrested the progress of missionaries. After the *mfecane* in the 1840s, missionaries once again took up the challenge of evangelizing among the Tswana. During this period the great missionary and traveler David Livingstone worked among the Tswana, and served as a protector of Tswana sovereignty even amidst threats from the Boers during the 1850s.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to missionaries from the LMS, Wesleyan missionaries began work among the Tswana and won the most number of converts as of 1913. According to

---

<sup>31</sup> Chirenje, *Northern Botswana*, 27; Dachs, "Missionary Imperialism," 647-648. See also Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe, "The Spread of Christianity among Whites and Blacks in Transorangia," in *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*, eds. Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 128-129.

Hexham and Poewe, the Methodists had only 3,000 converts in 1883; but in 1913 there were over 21,000 African Methodists in the Orange Free State. There were also over 2,000 African evangelists working in this area. Wesleyans founded their first church in the Transvaal in the 1860s by an African missionary named David Magata. In this area of southern Africa, European missionaries along with African evangelists managed to be successful even though it occurred rather late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to the Comaroffs, what LMS and Methodist missionaries wanted to accomplish among the Tswana was to secure outward belief in the gospel, and conformity to a European way of life. This is summed up in the phrase, “utterance and action,” as written by the Comaroffs.<sup>32</sup>

During the 1890s, African American church people came to South Africa while African South Africans began to form their own independent churches; this phenomenon is called Ethiopianism. This movement has been considered as a pre-cursor to African nationalism in South Africa as it had clear political ramifications as well as ecclesiastical ones. Just as the post-Civil War period witnessed a large exodus of African American Baptists from bi-racial churches to found their own churches, Africans in South Africa defected from mission churches to organize their own independent churches.

Historians agree that the first Ethiopian Church appeared in the Transvaal on the Witwatersrand in 1892 founded by the African Wesleyan preacher, Mangena Mokone. There were church secessions prior to this one such as the Thembu National Church

---

<sup>32</sup> Hexham and Poewe, “The Spread of Christianity,” 128-129. Also on the Methodist beginnings among the Tswana see W. Gordon Mears, *Methodism in the Cape: An Outline* (Cape Town: Methodist Publishing House, 1973), 5, 7, and Daryl Balia, *Black Methodism and White Supremacy in South Africa* (Durban: Madiba Publications, 1991), 14-15; John L. and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*. Volume Two (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 63-64.

founded in 1884 by a Wesleyan evangelist named Nehemiah Tile, the Lutheran Bapedi Church, and the African Church organized by Khanyane Napo both founded in 1889. Being connected to particular ethnic groups these churches “were not the seeds of a national movement,” according to Pretorius and Jafta. Campbell, however, views the founding of the Thembu Church as the beginnings of the entire movement. Since historians have made the correct linkage between the Ethiopian movement and the nationalist movement it is proper to state that these secessions were merely pre-cursors to the more Pan-ethnic movement of the next decade.<sup>33</sup>

The full-fledged national Ethiopian movement of the 1890s began owing to the existence of racial prejudice among mission churches as pertaining to the ordination of African preachers and the establishment of African-governed churches. This is the reason why Mokone resigned from the Wesleyan Church in 1892. Mokone named his new church in Pretoria the Ethiopian Church based upon his understanding of Psalm 68:31, which demanded African self-governing churches immediately. James Dwane was another leader within this movement who was also an ordained Wesleyan minister; he left the Wesleyan Church in 1895. The very next year he joined with Mokone and with S. J. Brander, who led a breakaway group out of the Anglican Church. Within this threesome Dwane emerged as *primus inter pares*.<sup>34</sup>

In 1896, the South African Ethiopian Church decided to forge a relationship with an African American Church; thereby, establishing a direct link between African South

---

<sup>33</sup> Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets*, 38-39; George Shepperson, “Ethiopianism and African Nationalism,” *Phylon* 14 (1<sup>st</sup> Qtr., 1953), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/272419>, accessed October 15, 2008, 9; Hennie Pretorius and Lizo Jafta, “‘A Branch Springs Out’: African Initiated Churches,” in *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*, eds. Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 213.

<sup>34</sup> Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets*, 40-41; Pretorius and Jafta, “‘A Branch Springs Out,’” 214; Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, 114-115.

African church independency and African American Church independency. Though the leaders of the Ethiopian Church left the Wesleyan Church and Anglican Church, they still adhered to Wesleyan Methodist doctrine and Episcopal polity. Because of this in 1896, they sought affiliation with the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Regarding this new relationship, Shepperson notes: "It was almost inevitable that the South African Ethiopian Church should seek affiliation with the American Negro body with which it had so much in common: the African Methodist Episcopal Church."<sup>35</sup>

Campbell elaborates more on the point made by Shepperson. First, Campbell mentions that there were African Americans scattered throughout southern Africa during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There were African American sailors in port cities such as Cape Town, Durban, and Port Elizabeth. According to Campbell, African Americans found refuge in South Africa during the antebellum period in American history. Though there is no direct evidence, Africans may have had direct contact with African Americans during this century. If Africans had no direct contact with African Americans, those of the educated elite were conversant in American history as it pertained to African Americans and had become familiar with African American music through the McAdoo singers who toured South Africa in 1890. These factors help to explain why South African Ethiopians were so quick to form an alliance with the AME Church in 1896.<sup>36</sup>

Chirenje and Campbell offer good summaries on how the Ethiopian Church became affiliated with the AME Church. It started with the Mfengu in Kimberely in Cape Colony. This was an area in which African American music had an audience and influence. Owing to this, an African Jubilee Choir formed in 1890. While on tour in

---

<sup>35</sup> Shepperson, "Ethiopianism and African Nationalism," 9.

<sup>36</sup> Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, 125-132.

America, the promoter abandoned the choir in Cleveland, Ohio; but a young AME minister, Reverdy Ransom, managed to get half of the choir enrolled at Wilberforce University, which was (and is) an AME institution. According to one oral tradition, one of the students, Charlotte Manye, wrote to her sister back in Johannesburg in 1894 or 1895 on Bishop Henry M. Turner's letterhead. Kate Manye, Charlotte's sister, showed the letter to Mokone, who then wrote to Bishop Turner in May 1895 explaining the Ethiopian movement and asking for information about Wilberforce. Turner printed the letter from Mokone in the *Voice of Missions*, the organ of the AME Foreign Mission Board. From there, the link became forged. Campbell also states that historians argue that the Ethiopians' attraction to the AME Church was educational; the AME had a school for Africans to matriculate. At this time, Christian Africans believed that a good education meant progress.<sup>37</sup>

In 1898, the renowned Pan-African bishop, Henry M. Turner visited South Africa and organized the Ethiopians into annual conferences and circuits. He also taught the Ethiopians from the AME *Discipline*, which is the book of church order for the AME Church. According to Anthony, the AME Church had quite an impact on the development of African "consciousness."<sup>38</sup> This relationship between the Ethiopians and AME was short-lived as Dwane decided to break ties with the AME because of his dissatisfaction with being only the assistant bishop of the African Church as an African American was the bishop. He perceived that the American Church believed itself superior

---

<sup>37</sup> Chirene, *Ethiopianism*, 50-53; Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, 132-134. Though Campbell writes cautiously that Mokone could have been Kate Manye's uncle, Chirenje presents it as a solid fact. There are some discrepancies regarding the year Charlotte Manye wrote the letter to her sister. Campbell dates that she wrote the letter sometime in 1894, but Chirenje dates the letter in 1895, which, according to Chirenje, is the same year that Charlotte enrolled at Wilberforce.

<sup>38</sup> Anthony, *Max Yergan*, 48.

to the African Church. Undaunted, Dwane met with the Anglicans in South Africa and then in 1900 established the Order of Ethiopia that became part of the Anglican Church's province in southern Africa.<sup>39</sup>

During the same decade of the 1890s one other important Ethiopian church formed; this one in the Cape. P. J. Mzimba, an ordained Presbyterian minister led a group out of the United Free Church of Scotland. Mzimba and his group named their church the African Presbyterian Church. Sundkler describes this church as ethnic because the Mfengu joined Mzimba in secession from the United Free Church. Like the Ethiopian Church, Mzimba and his adherents desired an African self-governing church but also kept the same Presbyterian doctrine as the mission church.<sup>40</sup>

There were two important Ethiopian churches founded among the Zulu in the 1890s and in the 1910s. In 1896, Samungu Shibe, the African leader of mission work among the Zulu in Natal, opposed the transfer of the work to English-speaking Congregationalists. Because of this, Shibe led other Zulu-speakers out of the Congregationalist mission church and founded the Zulu Congregational Church. The other church began after a rift between the Zulu preacher Gardiner Mvuyana and the missionary leader at the work in Johannesburg. The result of this division was the African Congregational Church organized in 1917.<sup>41</sup>

As mentioned above, historians of African Independent Churches and African nationalism agree that Ethiopianism was a legitimate pre-cursor to the nationalism that

---

<sup>39</sup> Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets*, 40-41; Shepperson, "Ethiopianism and African Nationalism," 9; Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, 136-137. For a more detailed account of Turner's visit to South Africa, see Chirenje, *Ethiopianism*, 62-69. Anthony also mentions the brief association between the Ethiopian Church and the AME, see Anthony, *Max Yergan*, 49.

<sup>40</sup> Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets*, 42-43; Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, 108.

<sup>41</sup> Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets*, 45.

sprouted among the African educated elite in the 1910s. This phenomenon is considered “radical” by Odendaal as it carried a clear denunciation of European ecclesiastical control. In one respect, Ethiopianism aimed to extend the rights of disenfranchised Africans (members of the elite) in South African society; therefore, there were obvious political implications and overtones to this movement.<sup>42</sup> The political ideology that emerged from this movement was purposefully Pan-African in the South African context as it brought together African Christians regardless of ethnic affiliation primarily. Francis Meli interprets this movement as an overt attack against European cultural colonialism as well as an emphasis on African self-determination.<sup>43</sup> Owing to the context of colonial oppression, Ethiopianism went beyond the bounds of church life in South Africa as it posed a distinct threat to the colonial status quo.

As South African Methodists asserted their independence from the Mission churches, Baptists in South Africa were on the brink of inaugurating missions work among Africans in the Cape. Different from other Christian denominations in South Africa, Baptists had a rather short history there only arriving at Cape Colony in 1820 as part of the Albany settlement in the eastern Cape. After over a half century of starting churches in the Cape as well as in Natal, the South African Baptist Union decided to begin work among the vast number of Africans surrounding them. Even before the formal beginnings of the South African Baptist Missionary Society, German Baptists worked among the Mfengu in the eastern Cape since 1869. It was in 1892 that the General

---

<sup>42</sup> Andre Odendaal, *Black Protest Politics in South Africa to 1912* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble, 1984), 23-24.

<sup>43</sup> Francis Meli, *South Africa Belongs to Us: A History of the ANC* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), 7ff. See also Sheridan Johns, “Introduction,” in *From Protest to Challenge: Documents of African Politics in South Africa*. Vol. 1, eds. Thomas Karis and Gwendolen Carter (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1972), 8; and Peter Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: The African National Congress 1912-1952* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971), 9-10.

Assembly of the Baptist Union formalized its mission work by establishing its Missionary Society.<sup>44</sup>

What is interesting about the beginnings of the South African Baptist Missionary Society is that it predates work by African American Baptists by only two years. As white Baptists in South Africa forged their missionary imprint in South Africa, African American Baptist work occurred concurrently. The mission work of the Baptist Union of South Africa and the National Baptist Convention happening simultaneously posed problems between the two groups, but in the end there was mutual respect for each other's mission purview.

With this context established, it is clear that South Africa was no virgin missionary territory. With Dutch Reformed Christians, Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists, South Africans experienced a type of Protestant pluralism. When the first African American Baptist missionary appeared with his family in 1894, it was totally a move that was unlike African American Baptist mission work in Africa previously as it had been solely concentrated in West Africa.

The only extant letters from missionaries and missionary workers from the South African field are in issues of the *Mission Herald*. With such stated, the *Herald* possesses letters from a rather wide-range of mission work in the South Africa field. The letters reveal that the National Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board oversaw no small scale mission work in South Africa. The content of the letters discloses how missionaries in the field were serious about the spread of the gospel, but also earnest regarding the building of mission stations that served as an independent African-run institution

---

<sup>44</sup> H. J. Batts, *The History of the Baptist Church in South Africa* (Cape Town: T. Maskew Miller, 1922), 4ff, 131-133.



reflective of the hope of African uplift. Intermixed with letters from the *Herald* are annual reports from Secretary Jordan that have specific information on the South African field and additional reports. For the early years of Jordan's tenure, there exists no complete collection of the *Herald*; therefore, the analysis in this chapter begins with three issues from 1900, and then jumps to 1910. From there on the each year is represented with letters from the South African field.

There are only a few extant letters from the South African field published in the early issues of the *Herald*, and they are from R. A. Jackson and James Buchanan appearing in three issues from 1900 in *The Afro-American Mission Herald*. In a letter published in the May 1900 *Herald*, R. A. Jackson wrote a letter dated March 21, 1900 from Cape Town. In the letter, Jackson indicates that "Government Officials" have begun to pester him about the nature of his work and his commission. It is unclear what he means by this, but he does state that by doing this the government has "tie[d] the hands of seventy-five Baptist preachers and two hundred lay Baptists here."<sup>45</sup> It may be that the government distrusted Baptists. Jackson also commends E. B. P. Koti who worked as a missionary of the Board at Queenstown in the eastern Cape and desired the Board to help him build a mission house there. Jackson writes: "Bro. Koti is one of the purest of our brethren:--sound and strong in matters of doctrine. We have never recommended to the home churches a better man from the LAND OF DARKNESS [caps Jackson's]."<sup>46</sup> The letter states that Koti had been sent from South Africa to America to make this financial appeal. The statement regarding the "land of darkness" indicates Jackson's appropriation

---

<sup>45</sup> R. A. Jackson, Letter, *Afro-American Mission Herald*, May 1900.

<sup>46</sup> Jackson, Letter.

of the common European designation of Africa, and it also implies his belief in his own cultural superiority against African backwardness.

One more item of interest in Jackson's letter refers to his ambitious goal regarding conversions. At the end of the letter, Jackson writes that "If the churches at home will join us in prayer and help us, by the grace of God we will report 5000 souls saved and added to our South African churches."<sup>47</sup> This statement notes the seriousness of Jackson regarding his mission. This is purely an Evangelical purpose and goal.

In the same issue of the *Herald* a letter published written by J. I. Buchanan appears from Middledrift dated April 6, 1900. In it Buchanan informs the Corresponding Secretary of the migration of most of the men on the station in order to find work. He also writes of the deplorable ecological conditions including an infestation of locusts and drought conditions. All of this is exacerbated with the Anglo-Boer War still churning on at that time.<sup>48</sup>

In the June 1900 *Herald* two letters from Jackson are printed. Both of the letters reveal the dire situation he and his family experienced during this time of war and hardship in South Africa. In the letter dated April 30, 1900, Jackson writes about the possibility that God by his Providence has used the "Boers" (Afrikaners) in order "to attract the attention of Britton (sic) to give rest to the Natives."<sup>49</sup> Here in this statement Jackson possesses the same belief that politically conscious Africans had regarding the British. They believed that if Great Britain would colonize all of South Africa then it would include Africans within its liberal policies. Also in the letter Jackson includes information regarding a fledgling work in Colinsi. Jackson reports that there are "42

---

<sup>47</sup> Jackson, Letter.

<sup>48</sup> J. I. Buchanan, Letter, *The Afro-American Mission Herald*, May 1900.

<sup>49</sup> R. A. Jackson, Letter, *Afro-American Mission Herald*, June 1900.

souls” there under the oversight of Rev. Johnson Mfazwe. In concluding the letter, Jackson writes that the work at Cape Town was “in a healthy state spiritually.”<sup>50</sup>

In the second letter, Jackson informs the Corresponding Secretary that he is waiting for the government to finalize its decision regarding his credentials as a minister and his commission as a missionary of the Foreign Mission Board. He fails to go into any detail regarding why the government is suspicious of him. What is implied here is that the South African government is suspicious of an African American missionary especially within the context of Ethiopian separatism and nationalism in South Africa. Jackson also comments that he was happy that the Board “found Bro. Koti worthy.”<sup>51</sup> This is reference to his request made in the letter dated March 21, 1900 and published the month before in the *Herald*. It is safe to assume that the Board would defray the cost of building a mission house in Queenstown.

Two final letters written in South Africa and published in 1900 appears in the December issue of the *Herald*. For the purposes of this chapter, one letter is of importance. It is from J. I. Buchanan writing from Middledrift dated October 5, 1900. This letter details the low level of the work there at this time. Buchanan states that there are only a few men and women left on the station owing to the migration of the men to find jobs during that desperate time in the Cape. He also implores the secretary that the churches of the convention must provide more funds to help this station to become viable. Buchanan writes these words appealing for greater support: “The brethren must help you feed those who labor with us in the gospel.”<sup>52</sup> Buchanan wants more money to pay Africans workers at the station. He also appeals to his readers’ denominational pride in

---

<sup>50</sup> Jackson, Letter.

<sup>51</sup> R. A. Jackson, Letter, *Afro-American Mission Herald*, June 1900.

<sup>52</sup> J. I. Buchanan, Letter, *Afro-American Mission Herald*, December 1900.

order to receive more financial support: "the Baptist denomination is a great representative body of people and should take a stand for Christ and His kingdom."<sup>53</sup> To take this stand, Buchanan urges the churches to give more money to South African mission work.

From the 1910 August-September issue of the *Herald* there are letters from the South African field. F. Saloni, missionary in Quora Springs, Mpulusi, Idutywa, South Africa writes. In this letter, he reports that they had opened a day school at their Good Hope Mission with an enrollment of 32. They had been unable to pay the teacher there, and they ask for financial help from the Foreign Mission Board. He also reports that there were some conversions.<sup>54</sup>

There are two letters from South Africa in the November issue. The first letter is from Cape Town, where Rev. D. E. Murff led the church that R. A. Jackson founded. Murff writes thanking the Board and Dr. Jordan for \$100, which went to pay on an unnamed debt. He also states that he had been disallowed from entering Natal for the past two years. He gives no reason why this was so. He also states that the church had to place themselves under a white minister. Drawing from these comments, Murff probably gave pastoral oversight to an African Baptist church in Natal in previous years. Now he was able to visit after receiving a letter from a magistrate while visiting Pondoland. He also reports that Mrs. East, the wife of Rev. J. E. East, arrived on 13 September as a new missionary.<sup>55</sup>

In the second letter from South Africa, Peter Mngqibisa from Zilaugo, South Africa writes requesting £15 to purchase a horse since he had no horse to travel. He also reports

---

<sup>53</sup> Buchanan, Letter.

<sup>54</sup> F. Solani, Letter, *Mission Herald*, August-September 1910.

<sup>55</sup> D. E. Murff, Letter, *Mission Herald*, November 1910.

that on the 10<sup>th</sup> (maybe September) he baptized twenty people “who have chosen themselves to be the followers of Jesus Christ.”<sup>56</sup> Mngqibisa was likely one of many African evangelists employed by the Board who worked among his own ethnic group; in this case, this work was among the Xhosa in the eastern Cape. Judging from his need of a horse for transportation, it is probable that the members of this mission work lived in scattered fashion. It is also probable that this little work was a church community rather than a mission station.

In the December *Herald*, there is a letter from a church in East Griqualand in the Cape Province, which included a large population of Tswana-speaking people. In the letter, Rev. John Ntlahla expresses thanks for the money received from the Board. He also states that the people there were “ignorant.” According to Ntlahla, “This is the darkest place in Cape Colony.”<sup>57</sup> He did write that there were some who professed faith in Jesus Christ and had received baptism, and others were eager to learn about Christ. In his description of the people as “ignorant,” Ntlahla’s reference is probably to their ignorance of Christianity and would indicate the lack of missionary work in this particular area of Tswana-speakers. This is interesting because this area attracted missionaries from the LMS such as James Read and Robert Moffat in the early and middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The other letter from South Africa came from James East, an African American missionary commissioned by the Foreign Mission Board. Here in 1910 Rev. East was the supervising missionary of the thriving Middledrift station. Writing from the station, East notes that he received money for his salary, for four teachers, and for emergencies. He

---

<sup>56</sup> Peter Mngqibisa, Letter, *Mission Herald*, November 1910.

<sup>57</sup> John Ntlahla, Letter, *Mission Herald*, December 1910.

also indicates that Wheat Street Baptist Church of Atlanta had agreed to pay the salary for a teacher who replaced Miss Buchanan, the daughter of the late Rev. J. I. Buchanan who founded this mission station. East also reports that he was in the process of “building up a school that the denomination will be proud of.”<sup>58</sup> He writes further that the school would be a Tuskegee in South Africa. Elaborating on this comment East writes, “I have not seen any school like ours in all South Africa. Surely we are beginning a Tuskegee.”<sup>59</sup> This is a clear statement of East’s vision, and indicative of part of the Board’s vision for its work in South Africa and all over Africa. East wanted to use the headway made by preaching the gospel to African South Africans to create a significant niche for their uplift modeled after Washington’s Tuskegee. East remarks more on this issue that the school had begun to train boys in agriculture, which was the only place this occurred in South Africa. He also states that “some of the best native people of South Africa” have sent their children to the school.<sup>60</sup> This is quite a revealing statement that indicates who among Africans in South Africa found this school profitable. It is impossible to be clear on who were “the best” Africans, but these would have been Westernized and Christianized Africans probably. It is also possible that this class of Africans wanted an alternative school to send their children to rather than the older European-run schools such as Lovedale and Adams. They may have believed their children would receive more equitable treatment from a school conducted by African Americans and Africans.

In the March 1911 *Herald* appears a letter and a report from Rev. East. Written from Middledrift and dated December 17, 1910, he enclosed the report from the previous year (1910). He details the layout of the mission station: it has a home, a church, and a

---

<sup>58</sup> James East, Letter, *Mission Herald*, December 1910.

<sup>59</sup> East, Letter.

<sup>60</sup> East, Letter.

school. Mrs. Buchanan was the matron and the cook at the main school. There were three teachers: East, Mrs. East, and Miss Somtunzi. At the outer schools, there were four teachers at each of the four schools: Mrs. Charlotte Dikana, Mrs. Dorcas Ndliviva, Priscilla Sonjica, and Alena Podlani. Rev. Fred Vockerodt served as Rev. East's interpreter. The church had a membership of 200, and the school had 175 students enrolled. This letter and report offers a good summary of the extent of the work at Middledrift at that time, and shows that East oversaw an active and vibrant church and mission complex.<sup>61</sup>

Also in this issue of the *Herald* a letter appears from Peter Mngqibisi from East Pondoland. This is a rather sad letter, but it marks the great sacrifice of some African evangelists as they worked to shepherd their people in the name of Christ. He writes that he had no house to sleep in at night so he had to sleep outside; he also informs the secretary that his children were hungry. He requests \$75 to build a mission house and to purchase food for his family. He also states that he baptized five in December. This letter reflects the harsh realities of mission work during this time period, but it also demonstrates how resolute African evangelists were in the South African field. Even enduring such privations failed to stall his efforts of bringing souls into the Church. Such a letter should have resulted in more money from National Baptists in support.<sup>62</sup>

A brief letter came from Idutywa from F. Solani. He asks simply for more support from the churches in the convention as he preached and ministered to the people there; everything was well he reports. This request accords with what Jordan requested month after month in the *Herald*, and it was current with the many personal appeals the

---

<sup>61</sup> James East, Letter and Report, *Mission Herald*, March 1911.

<sup>62</sup> Peter Mngqibisi, Letter, *Mission Herald*, March 1911.

secretary made to churches, Sunday schools, conventions, etc. as he traveled. This letter also demonstrates the diligence and commitment of African pastors supported by the Board.<sup>63</sup>

One final letter from southern Africa appears in this issue. D. E. Murff wrote from the Transvaal. Murff states that he traveled to the Transvaal “to straighten out some matters touching our work and bring about better conditions between our brethren and the native affairs office in South Africa.”<sup>64</sup> Because of illness, he requests a leave to return to America; his wife was ill as well. Murff also writes of being “broken down” in mind also. Owing to this condition, he and his wife had to give up running the school, or maybe the school ceased to exist altogether; it is unclear from the letter. He did baptize 32 the previous Sunday. In the previous issue, the editor indicated that the Murff’s would return to America by April 1911.<sup>65</sup> D. E. Murff’s return to America left a gaping hole in the Board’s work in South Africa as he was the pastor of the church at Cape Town, which represented the oldest work by the Board in all of southern Africa.

In the May issue of the *Herald* there appears a letter from the outgoing missionary and pastor, Rev. D. E. Murff. Writing from Cape Town dated March 15, 1911, Murff reports that his and Mrs. Murff’s tickets to sail to England arrived, but they would be unable to leave until May. He also notes that he would leave the work (the church at Cape Town) to an unnamed worker (likely an African worker), and under the oversight of Rev. Ernest Baker, secretary of the South African Baptist Union. This is an interesting development with a good degree of significance. It is significant in that it showed the cordial and fraternal relations between the National Baptist Convention and the

---

<sup>63</sup> F. Solani, Letter, *Mission Herald*, March 1911.

<sup>64</sup> D. E. Murff, Letter, *Mission Herald*, March 1911.

<sup>65</sup> Letter, *Mission Herald*, February 1911.



predominately European South African Baptist Union. If Murff and the Foreign Mission Board felt comfortable with Baker's oversight, it meant they had a great deal of confidence that the Baptist Union would take good care of this flock.<sup>66</sup>

In the August issue of the *Herald*, there is a resolution published from the South Africa Native Baptist Association. Jordan helped to found this association; and D. E. Murff served as moderator for six years. He was also the superintendent of missions. The association in session made this resolution on 15 April 1911. In this resolution, the Association commended Murff's service and sacrifice during his tenure, and it asserted that it would continue to carry out its work.<sup>67</sup>

In addition to the resolution, which commended its former moderator, there are reports from missions and churches that were members of the association. From the Tilangwe School in the Cape, Peter Mqgibisa writes that he received his "present," which was assumingly some funds from the Board. He reports that there were 80 people at the six stations with twenty children at the school. Mqgibisa reported nothing on the condition of the church. J. David wrote from Pretoria. He pleads for help to support the teachers on the sixteen stations there, and he reports that "The work of God is going forward." This is a favorable report, which is the first from this particular station. It appeared that this work in the Northern Transvaal was a vibrant one. Finally from Middeldrift in Cape Province, J. E. East reports that they just closed their schools for the mid-winter vacation, and that there was a celebration of the fourteenth anniversary of the church in that area. He states that many Africans came from different areas of South Africa to visit the school, and East and the school gave them an "exhibition" of what they

---

<sup>66</sup> D. E. Murff, Letter, *Mission Herald*, May 1911.

<sup>67</sup> "Resolution and Report from the South African Native Baptist Association," *Mission Herald*, August 1911.

do in terms of foodstuffs they produce like cured meat and butter. He states that they really liked the horse plow. They have received many more applications because of this, and he states that Africans tell him that their children can get training at Middledrift that they can get nowhere else in South Africa. Lastly, Rev. East comments on the church having baptized six the last Sunday and four the previous Sunday. There were others waiting to be baptized. There was hope of building a new church edifice at one of the stations in the next few weeks at an estimated cost of \$100 plus.<sup>68</sup> This ended the report from the association.

Under the title "Destitution and Needs," Jordan published a note from Rev. John Ntlahla from Tsolo, South Africa in the Cape. The letter is dated July 12, 1911. The seriousness of this letter is evident as the editor published it on its own rather than with the other letters from the field. In the letter, Ntlahla informs Jordan that Tsolo was now the main mission station, and the work was progressing well. He states that the chief had him arrested owing to jealousy on the latter's part. He claims that they disliked his "American teaching" and that he would "ruin" the Pondos. One can only surmise what the chief and other leaders among the Pondos meant by this "American teaching." Did they mean it synonymously with "Western" teaching? Was it in English? Was it strictly Christian? Or was it Industrial Education? There is no certainty. In order to hire a lawyer, Ntlahla had to sell his horse that the Board had purchased for him. He needed another horse along with a house now that he was free. Because of this, Ntlahla believed it necessary to ask for the rather large sum of \$250. In reporting about the church, he states that ten awaited baptism. Near the end of the letter he exclaims, "Oh, when will our brethren of the big churches in America see and understand the needs in full in this

---

<sup>68</sup> "Resolution and Report from the South African Native Baptist Association."

benighted Africa.”<sup>69</sup> This particular statement reflects the continual refrain of Secretary Jordan, but coming from Ntlalha there is different tone, an edge even. Ntlalha assumes that African Americans possessed the financial wherewithal to make a big difference in the spiritual and social condition of Africans in Southern Africa. In agreement with Jordan and other leaders in the NBC, he presupposes that African Americans had an acute responsibility to aid in Africa’s redemption. From this letter, there is evidence that this pastor in South Africa shared much of the same sentiments regarding African American obligation and responsibility to Africa as his African American counterparts.<sup>70</sup>

A couple of months later in the November *Herald* there was a letter from both J. David and Rev. Solani. David is thankful and asks for help for the school teachers. Solani needed more money for himself and his family, the increased size of his church building, the education of his children, and he needed to pay his debts. He reports that the work is doing fine, but there was a general need for more missionaries in the South African field. He writes, “We need more leaders from America.”<sup>71</sup> Again, this statement assumes that African Americans had to take on the responsibility of aiding in this work of African spiritual and educational uplift.

In the following year in March, Jordan printed a letter from an African worker in South Africa yet to report in recent issues of the *Herald*. This letter came from J. N. Menze from nowhere specific in South Africa. He informs Jordan that the work is progressing, but they were in “great need of an organ.” Based on this purported need, Menze sought a National Baptist Convention church to pledge either a brand new organ, or a second-hand organ. He also reports that the school was in the process of growing,

---

<sup>69</sup> John Ntlalha, “Destitution and Needs,” *Mission Herald*, September 1911.

<sup>70</sup> Ntlalha, “Destitution and Needs.”

<sup>71</sup> J. David and F. Solani, Letter, *Mission Herald*, November 1911.

and there was need for a dormitory.<sup>72</sup> With these requests, Menze was in no wise shy about asking for great things.

Later in 1912 the *Herald* received and printed a letter from the church in Cape Town, and it appeared that there was a troublesome situation there. The letter is from Maud Warren, and the tone of the letter indicates that Ms. Warren was in the midst of a trial, or at least undergoing some kind of problem. She writes, “The clouds gather thick around me, but I don’t mean to forsake God.”<sup>73</sup> Ms. Warren also indicates that she was brought up in “heathenism,” and she had the task of rearing her four children. For some reason the Board sent her \$10. It is unknown from the letter what capacity she served at the mission in Cape Town. Possibly, Ms. Warren was a teacher at the mission school; nevertheless, she was a Foreign Mission Board worker.

In the same issue, there is a letter updating the work in Pretoria showing great promise there. J. D. Mtselu wrote the letter and states that he was “still doing the Lord’s work.”<sup>74</sup> He also comments that he will go the next day to baptize fifteen persons in the “up country.” Mtselu reports further that there was a church building where he was, and he had twenty stations. In the letter, he appeals for financial help in supporting teachers and preachers; he had to pay them out of his own pocket. Though Mtselu’s financial condition could have been better at that time, this letter reveals a lively mission work throughout north Transvaal.<sup>75</sup>

In the August *Herald* another letter from Ms. Warren appears. This particular letter gives a little more detail about her and the work she did at the church in Cape

---

<sup>72</sup> J. N. Menze, Letter, *Mission Herald*, March 1912.

<sup>73</sup> Maud Warren, Letter, *Mission Herald*, June 1912.

<sup>74</sup> J. D. Mtselu, Letter, *Mission Herald*, June 1912.

<sup>75</sup> Mtselu, Letter.

Town. In the letter, Ms. Warren informs Secretary Jordan that she began a school in Cape Town associated with Shiloh Baptist Church on June 3. She remarks that the parents and the children were quite pleased with this turn of events. There were 77 students in attendance on the first day of school. Though this letter is full of new detail about what went on at the church and mission, Ms. Warren fails to inform the Board regarding the type of school that she inaugurated. More than likely, the school was an elementary school. Based on the attendance figures and the excitement reported by Ms. Warren, the school served a great need for Africans in Cape Town. It also was part of the Foreign Mission Board's vision for African uplift, especially at its oldest church and mission in South Africa. This letter should have been encouraging news for Secretary Jordan, the Board, and the entire National Baptist Convention.<sup>76</sup>

In the same issue of the *Herald* J. D. Zamzam wrote from the Transkei and Good Hope Mission dated June 12, 1912. This is a rather general letter stating that things were well. In his appeal for financial help, he invokes Ethiopianism to encourage Jordan. Zamzam writes: "Don't let the big churches of America forget that Africa is the land of their fathers and we are bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh."<sup>77</sup> Once more, the African workers from this church and mission believed that appealing to Ethiopianism was the key to receiving more financial help. Though it pleased Secretary Jordan to read a letter of this type, Ethiopian appeals did little for the vast numbers of African American Baptists during this period to move them to give large dollars to support South African mission work.

---

<sup>76</sup> Maud Warren, Letter, *Mission Herald*, August 1912.

<sup>77</sup> J. D. Zamzam, Letter, *Mission Herald*, August 1912.

In October readers of the *Herald* received current news from the work in Pretoria; again, it was encouraging news. The letter from John D. Mtselu dated Aug 23, 1912 offers thanks for the money received from the Board and some of the money will be used to pay teachers at the school. He states that the school was getting large, and that it they had been considering receiving some financial support from the Transvaal government. Rev. Mtselu also reports that on August 4, he baptized eighteen into the membership of the church. Lastly, he lists the needs of the church, which included an organ, a bell, and literature. Rev. Mtselu indicates that he wrote to Dr. Boyd to obtain some literature from the Publishing Board to help in writing his sermons. In closing the letter, he states that the Transvaal was still in darkness unlike the Cape. From all indications, the work in the Transvaal was a serious work; and Rev. Mtselu was a zealous minister of the gospel interested in bringing souls into the kingdom of Christ and offering young people a good education.<sup>78</sup>

Toward the middle of 1913 the editor published a letter from Middledrift, which was arguably the most successful mission station of the Foreign Mission Board's work in South Africa. A report from the supervisor of the station, Rev. J. E. East, is printed in the May *Mission Herald*. The letter is dated March 4, 1913, and Rev. East specifies that he is writing from the "Buchanan Mission and Industrial School." Rev. J. I. Buchannan, as mentioned above, was the founder of this station who died an untimely death. In the letter, Rev. East gives a positive report regarding the schools; he states that they would start sewing classes that quarter. The Sunshine School had doubled its enrollment. Rev. East was hopeful that last year was the beginning of something great for National Baptist work in South Africa. The work at the Middledrift location was good, and they found a

---

<sup>78</sup> J. D. Mtselu, Letter, *Mission Herald*, October 1912.

teacher for the carpenter shop. Overall, Rev. East was optimistic; and he looked forward to building a good wagon. Judging from this detailed report, the emphasis at the Buchannan mission station was on Industrial Education; as Rev. East noted in a previous letter he desired to develop the school into the Tuskegee of South Africa.<sup>79</sup>

In the June 1913 issue, there is a letter and a report from the National Baptist Association of South Africa both from Rev. E. B. P. Koti from Queenstown in the Cape. In the letter, Koti refers to affiliation between the “National Baptist Association” and the Baptist Union of South Africa. The reference to the National Baptist Association is the renamed “Native Baptist Association” mentioned above. He writes that there were joint meetings between the groups at King Williamstown in Cape Province. Noting further the cooperation between the association and the Baptist Union, Koti reports that he and James East attended the Union Assembly at Johannesburg the previous October. He states that the association wanted recognition from the Baptist Union, presumably. It is uncertain what Koti means by “recognition.” Did he mean for the Baptist Union to include the National Baptist Association within its ranks? Or did he want the Union to recognize the work of the association so that the former would refrain from encroaching in areas where the association had churches?<sup>80</sup>

In ending the letter, Koti asks for money drawing upon the sympathy of the Board and the readers of the *Herald*. He notes that he had been unable to pay his municipal taxes, and could be put out of his home with his three daughters. Rev. Koti also needed

---

<sup>79</sup> James East, Letter, *Mission Herald*, May 1913.

<sup>80</sup> E. B. P. Koti, Letter and Report, *Mission Herald*, June 1913.

money to visit an African king possibly to negotiate using land for a mission station, or school. He states that the king was “Tondo.”<sup>81</sup>

As stated above, Rev. Koti also included a specific report from the “Native Baptist Association.” It is in this report that there are answers to the questions regarding “recognition.” He reports of a joint meeting with the South African Baptist Union and the Native Baptist Association (NBA). He and East represented the Native Baptist Association; East was the moderator of the association. Undoubtedly, Moderator East placed forward a proposal for the Baptist Union, which requested recognition of the work of the NBA by the Baptist Union; the NBA wanted to run its missions without interference from the Baptist Missionary Society or the Baptist Union. The NBA also wanted its ministers to be recognized officially by the Baptist Union. All in all, the proposal indicated the NBA’s desire to be a “self-supporting” association.<sup>82</sup>

The *Herald* published a letter from Rev. John Ntlahla writing from West Pondoland after a period of silence. In the letter dated June 14, 1913, Rev. Ntlahla reports that he had arrived back at his work and found it well. There were 24 candidates for baptism waiting for his return. On a grim note, Ntlahla wrote of famine in all of South Africa during the year.<sup>83</sup>

A special report appears also in the September 1913 from Middledrift and Rev. J. E. East dated June 27, 1913. He reports of the station’s 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrated the previous week. Rev. East states that they expected to have an overflow amount of students when the school opened in July. Regarding the state of the church, he reports that it experienced steady growth with him baptizing 33 new Christians since Christmas.

---

<sup>81</sup> Koti, Letter and Report.

<sup>82</sup> Koti, Letter and Report.

<sup>83</sup> John Ntlahla, Letter, *Mission Herald*, August 1913.



Rev. East offers a bit of a challenge to National Baptists at the end of this special report: "May the day not be far hence when the American Baptists will take the school in hand and make out of it one of the greatest Negro schools in the world."<sup>84</sup> What exactly is this challenge? Rev. East envisioned that the convention through the Foreign Mission Board would give the appropriate amount money needed not only to support the Buchanan station merely, but to enhance it. This was quite an optimistic vision.

To end 1913, Rev. East's year's end report from Middledrift appears in the letters from the field section of the *Herald*. The letter is dated December 17, 1913, and Rev. East began by writing that as of September of 1913 he and Mrs. East had been in South Africa for four years. Rev. East indicates that he had to deal with famine conditions in South Africa at the beginning of the year. Even in the midst of such a trial, he received \$150 from Dr. W. W. Brown of New York City and used those funds to feed people. Rev. East had a bit of good news for the Board and the readership. They opened a new station 25 miles away, but owing to a lack of ministers and workers he had to take oversight over stations at East London and King Williamstown. One station was doing well, and one other was struggling. He reports that the reason one of the stations struggled was because the leaders of the station had to work in the gold mines. Without stating it, Rev. East implies the lack of support from America. If more National Baptists gave money to support these stations, the men would have remained at their posts of duty. In an addendum, Rev. East states that plans to start a new station ended because it was too close to a white Baptist work.<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup> James East, "Report from Middledrift Station," *Mission Herald*, September 1913.

<sup>85</sup> James East, "Year's End Report of the Middledrift Station," *Mission Herald*, December 1913.

In the next section of the report, Rev. East gives more detail about the church. He writes that for the first nine months they baptized 43 persons. In addition, there were more people who waited as candidates for baptism and two others had joined the church by letter. Forty-five had joined the church during the year. Rev. East also reports “growth of Grace” among his members including some refraining from drinking “Kaffir Beer.” He also states: “They are beginning to believe that it is God’s plan for them to rise by their own efforts.”<sup>86</sup> This is a glaring statement indicative of African American uplift philosophy with a hint of what was good, American Baptist behavior of refraining from alcoholic beverages.

In concluding this letter, Rev. East gives a report of one conversion. The story is about an unnamed man who Rev. East had known since he came to South Africa, and refused to go to church because he had no clothes. He received some clothes on condition that he would go to church at least once per month. He came twice, but then said he was too sick to come to church; but Rev. East noticed him well enough to do his other work and attend “Kaffir Beer” drinks. Finally, Rev. East visited him one Sunday and the man was sick. Rev. East told him about the need of his soul. The man became a convert thereafter, but died a few months later. This is a great testimony of the power of the gospel and the success of the work in Middledrift, and it also serves as an injunction against beer drinking.<sup>87</sup>

In the 1914 Annual Report given by Secretary Jordan to the National Baptist Convention, there are two reports from South Africa. One is from Queenstown and Rev. E. B. P. Koti. He gives a hopeful report on the work even amidst trials and difficulties.

---

<sup>86</sup> East, “Year’s End Report of the Middledrift Station.”

<sup>87</sup> East, “Year’s End Report of the Middledrift Station.”

Rev. Koti reports that there were 86 students and three teachers at the Day School at Queenstown, and he is asking for a National Baptist church or churches to pledge to help them found a Day School 46 miles away at place where he preaches and baptized some into the church. The place is Rattleshock where there are eight people there who work on a farm, and there were preachers at this place as well.<sup>88</sup>

Regarding the church at Queenstown, Rev. Koti reports that they had baptized thirteen that year at the time of his writing with three awaiting baptism. In a previous letter, Rev. Koti mentions that he planned to visit the Tondo king; but in this report he stated that he had yet to visit the king. He informs the Board and the convention that he needed \$25, 000 for the trip to visit the king.<sup>89</sup>

The second letter in the report is from Rev. J. E. East. In the letter, Rev. East states that conditions were poor with unemployed Africans, and a meager food supply of corn and beans. The war was the dominant discussion among all persons, and it has caused disruption in the area where the mission station was. There was no fighting in southern Africa, but the Union of South Africa sent troops to help the British fight the German in German East Africa. Some of these troops were Africans. It was because of this that there was disruption in Cape Province.<sup>90</sup>

In addition to the letter, there is also a more formal report from East. This is a report on the work at Middledrift. He states that one church that is part of the association had failed to be recognized as a church by the government and the South African Baptist Union. East fails to give reasons why the government refused to recognize the church; the Baptist Union had a right to refuse its recognition as Rev. East notes that the

---

<sup>88</sup> “34<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the Foreign Mission Board,” *Mission Herald*, October 1914.

<sup>89</sup> “34<sup>th</sup> Annual Report.”

<sup>90</sup> “34<sup>th</sup> Annual Report.”

congregation believed in baptismal regeneration, which is the belief that water baptism actually serves as a means of spiritual rebirth. This doctrine is repugnant to orthodox Baptists. In making one more comment about the association, Rev. East states that the association resembled a Methodist Conference, and had ordained “unqualified” men into the gospel ministry. These factors made things rather difficult.<sup>91</sup>

East’s report continues with more specific details about the work at the Buchanan station. He remarks on the work done at the main station such as enlarging the parsonage, finishing the school building at the main station, paying off a debt on the parsonage, and paying off a debt on the school building incurred before East arrived. They had built a carpenter shop, and acquired tools. They also had other items for agricultural work and Industrial Education such as horses, grain tanks, etc.<sup>92</sup>

As the report continues, Rev. East offers more details about the school. He reports that there were nearly 100 students at the advanced school where they learned sewing, cooking, laundering, and domestic work and all other “industries.” Rev. East mentions how the children had never seen baked bread, or eaten cabbage and other vegetables from the garden before arriving at Middledrift. Also in the report, Rev. East states that he had taken notice that the children dressed “nicely.”<sup>93</sup>

As the report comes to a conclusion, Rev. East further states that Africans in the eastern Cape “do not accept civilization on first sight.”<sup>94</sup> He mentions how among “believers” there was still clinging to old customs such as selling their girls for cattle, which is a reference to bride wealth. He also mentions circumcision. It is unknown if he

---

<sup>91</sup> “34<sup>th</sup> Annual Report.”

<sup>92</sup> “34<sup>th</sup> Annual Report.”

<sup>93</sup> “34<sup>th</sup> Annual Report.”

<sup>94</sup> “34<sup>th</sup> Annual Report.”

meant the circumcision of girls, or male circumcision at an advanced age. Regardless, this section of the report indicates Rev. East's belief that Christian evangelism and education also meant inculcating Western civilization and the disavowal of African traditions. It also denotes East's disdain for specific traditional practices. In closing, East notes that the Native Baptist Association had achieved recognition by the South African government and the Baptist Union.<sup>95</sup>

In the November 1914 issue a letter from Pondoland in the Transkei. In the letter, John Ntlahla writes that there were serious plans to build a school there, which Madam C. J. Walker pledged to pay for the costs. They obtained the land from the local chief, and the people planned to name the school after Madam Walker. Since Rev. Ntlahla wrote last, the church had baptized 45 and the Day Schools were doing fine. This is quite an interesting letter with the mention of Madam C. J. Walker's interest in National Baptist mission work.<sup>96</sup> Madam C. J. Walker was the first African American woman millionaire, who made her fortune through developing novel hair care techniques. Her willingness to give of her substance indicated that African Americans in the business community had a stake in witnessing African uplift through missionary work.

In the December issue of the *Herald* the 34th Annual Report continues with a reference to Madam C. J. Walker. The report substantiates what Ntlahla wrote previously. Jordan states that Madam Walker agreed to defray the cost of establishing a school in Pondoland, and that he had been named secretary of the Board of Trustees of the

---

<sup>95</sup> "34<sup>th</sup> Annual Report."

<sup>96</sup> John Ntlahla, Letter, *Mission Herald*, November 1914.

prospective school. Laws against Africans owning land may prohibit this project, Jordan reports. If so, he would try to divert the money for the West or Central African field.<sup>97</sup>

The new year of 1915 produced another letter from Middledrift written by James East. He writes that he received \$100 from the Board, and it was well needed. Three weeks previous to receiving the money East indicates that he had to send half of the boarding students home, and parents sent them back two and three times. The problem was the lack of funds, and a mounting debt of \$300. He ends the letter with ringing optimism about the institution he superintended: "I think our Institution is a very great one. It is doing a work for the Native people of South Africa that no other Institution is doing."<sup>98</sup>

In the very next issue of the *Herald* another letter from Middledrift appears, but this one from one J. S. Mahlangu. It is a type of letter of introduction dated December 14, 1914. In the letter, Mr. Mahlangu informs the Board that he had begun studying for the ministry under Rev. James East. He also requests books including Hiscox's *Baptist Directory* to aid in him in his studies. This specifies that Mr. Mahlangu took his task serious, and wanted to be conversant in Baptist doctrine and polity.<sup>99</sup> It also points to East's interest in training African men to preach the gospel and continue the work.

As the year progressed into April, there is another letter from the Middledrift station from East. In the letter dated January 29, 1915, this is actually the first report from this station in 1915. In it, East thanks Jordan for money sent in the amount of \$50.61. This money was for the teachers at the schools and mission stations. Rev. East also writes that the price of food was very expensive owing to the war, and the overall conditions

---

<sup>97</sup> "34<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the Foreign Missions Board," *Mission Herald*, December 1914.

<sup>98</sup> James East, Letter, *Mission Herald*, January 1915.

<sup>99</sup> J. S. Mahlangu, Letter, *Mission Herald*, February 1915.

were just tough. He states that “There is starvation in a thousand homes” in the immediate area of the station.<sup>100</sup>

There is a definite tone of desperation in the letter as it seems as though East was fearful that the station and the school were on the brink of closing. He made a direct appeal to Dr. Jordan and African American Baptists:

I do hope that help is already on the way for our work and workers. I ask Dr. Jordan and our American Negro Baptist [sic], shall our school be shut down? Shall the boys in the carpenter shop where they are learning such a useful trade be sent home? Will other boys be shut off from the golden opportunity of learning to farm?<sup>101</sup>

Besides these questions, East had great concern about the girls and the ministers who assisted him. The girls had begun to learn how to cook and to sew. Lastly, he reports that he had baptized nine persons into the church. Even in such desperate times, there was some encouragement that nine persons had believed the gospel of their salvation and were now members of the Church of Jesus Christ.<sup>102</sup>

In the May *Herald* there is yet another letter from J. E. East giving the Board and the readership of the *Herald* a fresh update of the happenings at Middledrift. In the letter dated March 15, 1915, Rev. East confirms receipt of \$50.00 for the teachers and \$70 for him and the school in January. He was very grateful for the timely help. Rev. East states that the situation in South Africa had become increasingly worse. Corn was scarce and had doubled in price in the last ten days before the date of this letter. He had been feeding the students on corn bread, but the price of flour was too expensive along with corn. On a bright note, East comments that he had “demonstrated the superiority of my methods of

---

<sup>100</sup> James East, Letter, *Mission Herald*, April 1915.

<sup>101</sup> East, Letter.

<sup>102</sup> East, Letter.

agriculture this season."<sup>103</sup> On a sour note, he indicates that people in the area of the station had been stealing their corn. In concluding the letter, East reports that during the services the previous Sunday he baptized three more into the church for a total of sixteen that year.<sup>104</sup>

In this issue, there is a letter from the work in Pretoria the first time in 1915. Rev. John D. Mtselu wrote from Pretoria stating he and the work there had been experiencing a good year; it was the best in four years. He reports baptizing ten at one station and seven at another. To end the letter, Mtselu states that they had been blessed with plenty of rain.<sup>105</sup>

In the final 1915 issue of the *Herald* with letters from South Africa, there is another letter from Mtselu of Pretoria. The letter is dated April 28, 1915, and Rev. Mtselu reports that he baptized 24 former Lutherans in another area of the Transvaal at Reitfontein in early April. He also "received" twelve members at another station. Overall, Mtselu states "The work is promising" in this area.<sup>106</sup>

Before moving on, there must be mention of an incident that occurred in Nyasaland (modern day Malawi) in 1915 that had impact on the National Baptist Convention. During this year, Rev. John Chilembwe, a National Baptist missionary and director of the Providence Industrial Mission who lived in the United States from 1897 to 1899 or 1900, ignited an uprising against British colonial rule. Though the British suppressed the "Rising," they suspected that Chilembwe's African American connections aided in this demonstration of an attempted violent overthrow of their rule. According to

---

<sup>103</sup> James East, Letter, *Mission Herald*, May 1915.

<sup>104</sup> East, Letter.

<sup>105</sup> J. D. Mtselu, Letter, *Mission Herald*, May 1915.

<sup>106</sup> J. D. Mtselu, Letter, *Mission Herald*, June 1915.



Shepperson and Price, the circumstances surrounding Chilembwe's stay in America probably did have an effect on him. He witnessed how African Americans protested against racial discrimination, and he knew the history of African American church independency. These factors, according to Shepperson and Price, contributed to Chilembwe's own sense of independence upon his return to Nyasaland in 1900.<sup>107</sup>

There was an African American presence at Providence, but this presence was by no means insurrectionary or provocative to that end. There were two African American Baptists who traveled to Nyasaland to help Chilembwe. They were L. N. Cheek, who arrived in 1901; and Emma Delaney, who arrived in 1902. The British suspected Cheek of being an Ethiopian (in the South African sense), but nothing Cheek did or said could be remotely connected to Ethiopianism. Likely owing to Delaney being a woman, the British never suspected anything of her. Both left the field in June 1906. The NBC, however, was against the Ethiopian movement. It believed its political overtones were extreme for a church movement even though the National Baptist minister, C. S. Morris who was in Nyasaland in 1899 received a large group of dissident African Baptists in 1899 with the approval of the Parent Body. Because of South African Ethiopianism and Chilembwe's movement, would be African Americans missionaries became unwelcomed in South Africa.<sup>108</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup> Thomas Shepperson and Thomas Price, *Independent African: John Chilembwe and the Nyasaland Rising of 1915* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1958), 93-94.

<sup>108</sup> Shepperson and Price, *Independent African*, 136-138, 142; Killingray, "The Black Atlantic Missionary Movement and Africa," 21. On Morris' acceptance of the African Baptist dissidents, see Williams, *Black Americans*, 71. Morris was one of the few outward emigrationists among the National Baptist leadership. Morris spent a few years throughout southern Africa during the 1890s. Though his focus regarding how the South African government became wary of African Americans during this time is on the AME Church, Anthony states that after 1916 African American Baptists "were also closely scrutinized." See Anthony, *Max Yergan*, 49.

The year 1919 offered a great challenge to the Foreign Mission Board's work in Africa. At the beginning of the year, Secretary Jordan issued a statement on the needs of the work in Africa. Regarding South Africa, Jordan printed only the needs confronting the Middledrift station. The reason for this is because Rev. East submitted a report; there were no other reports that came from the other stations throughout the Union. In the report, East states that Middledrift is the main station of the Board's work in South Africa, and 700 to 800 miles from Cape Town. It was on six acres of land, and it had twenty out-stations. As the report progressed, East emphasizes the type of education Africans received there such the use of the plow, blacksmithing, and the use of carpentry tools. In all of these areas, missionaries had been the instructors. Nothing is reported in this overview of the number of conversions and such. The emphasis was squarely on the success of Industrial Education. As far as monetary need is concerned, East states that the entire work needed \$3,500 in order to finish the church building in Cape Town and pay missionaries and teachers. In asking for money to build a church meeting place in Cape Town, it suggested that East gave pastoral oversight to that work.<sup>109</sup>

In July 1919, the *Herald* printed a letter from Rev. John Ntlahla from Xuili, Umtata in the Cape dated May 2, 1919. He writes that the day school was fine, and he managed to obtain government grants to pay the teachers. He informs Dr. Jordan that the government had been pressing him to build a larger church building; it was too small to house the school children. This was a good note sounded in the ears of the Board. Though the government had made this demand, Ntlalha informs Jordan that he had no money. As the school progressed finely, Ntlalha ends with the rather sad news that the people there

---

<sup>109</sup> James East, Report, *Mission Herald*, January 1919.

had little food and were on the brink of starving owing to the failed crops and a drought.<sup>110</sup>

In the same issue, there are two letters from J. E. East. He informs the Board and the readership that the church in Cape Town was in need of a qualified pastor; he suggested that the church call a man (an African man presumably) and then send him to the US for education. If the Board was unable to send a missionary there, East was afraid the church would fall apart. This substantiates that at this particular time East provided oversight of the church there in Cape Town. In the second letter, East writes that the work “was never in better shape” in Middledrift.<sup>111</sup>

In September, the *Herald* published a letter updating the situation in Cape Town. In a letter dated June 15, 1919 sent from the Buchannan Mission School, Rev. H. A. Payne reports on his visit to the church at Cape Town. It is unknown exactly who Payne was, but he was an African American missionary working in South Africa at that time. He states that the people there were still faithful and in prayer for a pastor. Payne also writes that the people had been praying for years for a pastor, and that they still had a persevering spirit. He also informs the readers that the church wanted to hear from Dr. Jordan at least once per quarter to know that they were still on his mind. In an interesting note, Payne states that the church wanted an African American pastor, not an African pastor. Payne calls this a “prejudice,” however. Payne suggested that they choose a young man from among them and send him to the US for training to return to assume the work, which concurred with what Rev. East suggested. Finally, Payne states that they baptized four candidates just prior to his coming. These had been the only baptisms of the year. In

---

<sup>110</sup> John Ntlahla, Letter, *Mission Herald*, July 1919.

<sup>111</sup> James East, Letter, *Mission Herald*, July 1919.

addition to these baptisms, one person died, and the church excommunicated three members.<sup>112</sup>

The Board received a statement from J. E. East dated June 4, 1919 entitled "Our 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary." This statement appears also in the September *Herald*. East reports of the activities of the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary celebration of the Middledrift station. He states that twenty-years from this year Rev. Buchannan founded the church there. On May 13, the church began its celebration of the anniversary with a feast and worship service on Friday, a prayer meeting on Saturday morning and business meeting and a preaching service that evening. Sunday witnessed a prayer meeting, mid-day worship at 11:00 a.m. in which East preached on the topic of "Our Hope" from Romans 8:31-32. East baptized thirteen persons after the preaching service, and at night there was a covenant service and the Lord's Supper. On Monday, the women of the churches met. All told the churches raised \$105.00 as each of the nine stations came. According to the report, before Buchannan began this mission station the land was empty and barren. At the time of the writing, there were five buildings and four church buildings. East was thankful to God for running such an institution and that many souls had been saved.<sup>113</sup>

Another letter appeared from Middledrift in the November *Herald* from H. A. Payne dated September 20, 1919. He reports that it had been some time that he wrote, and that they were still in the midst of a drought. Nevertheless, the work was still progressing but slowly. Owing to the drought, the price of corn was high; and the government had yet to fix the price because this was the main food source for Africans,

---

<sup>112</sup> H. A. Payne, Letter, *Mission Herald*, September 1919.

<sup>113</sup> J. E. East, "Our 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary," *Mission Herald*, September 1919.

according to Payne. The crop at the station was meager; it was just enough to last for one more quarter.<sup>114</sup>

The new year of 1920 began with another report from Middledrift. Submitted by J. E. East, the letter is dated November 24, 1919. East notes that he received \$200 from the Women's Auxiliary of the Virginia State Baptist Convention via the Foreign Mission Board. He also received \$100 from the Board. He informs Jordan that they were in the process of adding another story to the school building. The African women who were members of the churches that were part of the station had given \$175 for this work. East attributes his success in the fortification of the station to his knowledge of agriculture, and his "sole reliance upon God and the use of common sense."<sup>115</sup> The government had commissioned him to perform demonstrations in the neighboring area of the out-stations. East states that tomorrow he would show some folk how to plant corn. In a serious matter, East writes that there was some reluctance on the part of a minister to serve the congregation in Cape Town; maybe this is a reference to Rev. Payne. It is unstated, but East repeats that Payne stated that he came to Africa to work among non-Christians. In closing, East informs Jordan that his wife and children would leave South Africa for America on March 1; he intended to join them if the work at Middledrift allowed.<sup>116</sup>

In the July 1920 *Mission Herald* an interesting letter appears written by H. A. Payne writes to W. W. Brown in New York City regarding the government's decision not to extend his permit to remain in the Union of South Africa for another six months. At this time, it is really unknown why the government had decided such. Payne had no idea. He writes that in the three years he had been in South Africa he had done nothing out of

---

<sup>114</sup> H. A. Payne, Letter, *Mission Herald*, November 1919.

<sup>115</sup> J. E. East, Letter, *Mission Herald*, January 1920.

<sup>116</sup> East, Letter.

line. He enclosed the letter from the government, which simply states that his permit for six months is up and the prospects look like he will be deported. He could only apply for three months at a time. It is obvious from the tone of the letter that Payne wanted to remain in South Africa to continue his work among African South Africans.<sup>117</sup> Though Payne has no reasons to offer, judging from the context of South African Ethiopianism and the memory of Chilembwe still fresh in the minds of government leaders the government distrusted African American missionaries.

During the autumn of 1920, James East and his wife enjoyed a well-needed respite from their work in South Africa. Secretary Jordan published a report on these receptions that appeared in the November 1920 *Mission Herald* titled "A Worthy Missionary Honored." To express its appreciation to them, two churches responsible for contributing to the Easts' support held receptions in honor of them. Ebenezer Baptist Church in Pittsburgh and Metropolitan Baptist Church in New York City held these receptions. Jordan notes that Ebenezer has paid East \$800 annually; with this noted, Jordan encourages other pastors to follow this lead of support a missionary in the African field with so much generosity.<sup>118</sup>

In the same issue, a letter from East written while he was still in South Africa appears dated August 28, 1920. In this letter, East informs the Board that the matter with Payne had been cleared. The South African government had granted Payne's request to remain in South Africa another year during East's absence. This was good news for the Board as it was on the verge of losing a well-needed missionary and acting superintendent of the Buchanan mission station. Lastly, East states that he planned to

---

<sup>117</sup> H. A. Payne, Letter, *Mission Herald*, July 1920.

<sup>118</sup> "A Worthy Missionary Honored," *Mission Herald*, November 1920.

leave Cape Town on September 17 on his way back to the United States. As he noted in a previous letter, he had planned to leave South Africa during the spring; but he states in this letter that he decided to stay a while in Cape Town to help the church there.<sup>119</sup>

After East informed the Board that the Payne episode has ended, the lead story in the April 1921 issue of the *Herald* was on the expected deportation of the missionaries Rev. and Mrs. H. A. Payne. According to the story, Payne had been sent by the Board to replace J. E. East during the latter's furlough. The report states that the permit he and his wife held would expire on June 1, 1921. The story also notes that the Payne's were supported by Metropolitan Baptist Church in New York City where Rev. William Wells Brown was pastor, and also by the African American Baptists of the State of New York. The writer (probably Jordan) notes that the Foreign Mission Board had appealed to the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, which it was a member of. Nothing had been heard on this appeal as of yet.<sup>120</sup>

The writer continues this story by remarking on the dark prospects of the South African field without the Payne's. He states bluntly that the work was at jeopardy; there were thousands of Africans who were part of the station. Payne was the one leading the work at Middledrift. Jordan gives his reason why there is trouble: "The only objection to our missionary seems to be that he is an American Negro, and that the South African Government that he will teach the African native the principles of manhood and freedom, and so make impossible much of the injustice and forced labor of South Africa."<sup>121</sup>

The Board even brought this matter to the British and American State Departments, but nothing came of this matter at the time of the writing. The report concludes by specifying

---

<sup>119</sup> James East, Letter, *Mission Herald*, November 1920.

<sup>120</sup> Untitled, *Mission Herald*, April 1921.

<sup>121</sup> Untitled.

that Payne was the only African American missionary in that part of Africa. He compares this to biblical episodes such as Daniel in the Lion's Den and Peter in prison. He also saw parallels with the ouster of Christian missionaries in Turkey in 1839.<sup>122</sup>

The final letter from South Africa that appeared in the *Herald* came from an African minister unassociated with the Board. Appearing in the July 1921 issue, a letter from Rev. Paulus Lechega informs the Board and desired it to send missionaries to teach basic Christianity. Even during this time, Africans looked to the United States and the National Baptist Convention in order for help in guiding them in the faith.<sup>123</sup>

In this period of Foreign Mission Board history, these letters from the South African field reveal that there was a vibrant work undertaken there. It is obvious that the crown jewel of the Board's South African field was the Buchannan mission station in Middledrift, Cape Province. There are two significant features about this station. First, the emphasis of this station was on the school and its program of Industrial education. As James East wrote, he wanted this school to be the Tuskegee of South Africa. Though he wrote of conversions and baptisms, it is clear that East stressed what occurred at the school. It was the school that signified the success of the Board's vision of racial uplift, and to a large degree this school helped in uplift in its part of the Cape. The second point of significance relates to the first. For the majority of this period, an African American missionary oversaw this station. This is important because he worked from an Ethiopian framework, and set out to create a station that reflected Ethiopian goals of evangelization of non-Christians and American type of education with the intention of beginning a

---

<sup>122</sup> Untitled.

<sup>123</sup> Paulus Lechega, Letter, *Mission Herald*, July 1921.



community of Christian Africans who could work and live independently of a racially discriminative government.

Out of the numerous mission stations other than the Buchanan station, the station in Pretoria was the most active. The letters from J. D. Mtselu reveal him to be a man focused on building a church rather than a school. His letters emphasized the work of ministry more, and that emphasis seems to have resulted in a church with lots of new converts in Pretoria. Also Mtselu was ardent in carrying the gospel to all of the Transvaal. There is no hint of the South African brand of Ethiopianism in his letters, but the fact that the Foreign Mission Board gave a large degree of liberty to its stations militated against this. African ministers and workers like Mtselu could work without feeling the sting of racial prejudice; therefore, a church independent movement like the Ethiopian movement in South Africa would have been redundant among Africans associated with the National Baptist Convention.

## Chapter Five: Expanding Ethiopianism and South African Redemption during the East Administration, 1921-1930

With the resignation of Lewis G. Jordan, it seemed as though there could be a period in which the Foreign Mission Board would flounder. More than the work of William Colley with the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention, Jordan had done the most to promote and establish African Americans and National Baptists, in particular, as missionary people. The Board needed a man just as capable and earnest as Jordan to provide visionary leadership that maintained what Jordan built, but to make the structure of foreign missions even better. The Board, at the behest of Jordan, decided on James East, the superintendent of the Buchannan Industrial Mission School in Middledrift, South Africa. The Board counted on East's real field experience and qualities as a builder of an institution to keep it afloat in good waters.

Into the East administration, the conversation between Africans in the South African field and the Board intensified. More and more, African pastors and evangelists in the field recognized their need of maintaining a continual relationship with the NBC and its Foreign Mission Board. Like the National Baptist leadership, Africans in the South African field believed that South Africa's redemption was inextricably linked with African American support. From the sample of letters sent from the South African field it is clear that African workers shared the same belief in the paramount role of the Christian gospel with Western civilization in the uplift of Africans in the Union of South Africa.

As of October 1921, the editorial reins of the *Mission Herald* were in the hands of James East. In this issue of the *Herald*, it is noted that Dr. East would assume full leadership of foreign missions as of October 17, 1921; therefore, in this issue there would be no editorials from him, or statements from him. This particular issue details the

transition of the leadership from Jordan to East. With this stated, there is still important sections in the *Herald* worth noting.

The editor of this issue printed a letter from President E. C. Morris of the National Baptist Convention. In the letter, Morris states that Dr. Jordan “has been appointed General Corresponding Secretary of the National Baptist Convention.”<sup>1</sup> In this office, Jordan would basically be a consultant to deal with any issue that concerned the entire convention. This appointment should be viewed as Morris’ recognition of Jordan’s immense significance to the convention as he knew the tremendous sacrificial service Jordan gave to the Foreign Mission Board. This was also a reward to a man who had distinguished himself as a true denominational man. Though Jordan would no longer lead a particular board, his expertise and Christian wisdom would serve all boards of the convention.

In National Baptist tradition, there was a church ceremony/service to install Dr. East into the office of Corresponding Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board. The program appears in the October issue of the *Herald*. According to the program, the service occurred on Monday, October 17, 1921 at 8 o’clock in the evening. Holy Trinity Baptist Church in Philadelphia hosted the service with Rev. W. F. Graham the host pastor, and Rev. A. R. Robinson, Chairman of the Foreign Mission Board presiding over the service. The simple service featured remarks from Rev. J. C. Austin, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church of Pittsburgh, who was also Dr. East’s pastor. Giving a statement also was Rev. W. W. Brown, pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church of New York City, which was a church that had given direct support to East during his tenure in South Africa. The outgoing secretary, Dr. Jordan offered words of farewell; and Dr. East

---

<sup>1</sup> E. C. Morris, Letter, *Mission Herald*, October 1921.

responded to those words of farewell. As a result of this service, Dr. East was now the full-fledged leader of the Foreign Mission Board and his tenure began officially.<sup>2</sup>

With East assuming the seat of editor of the *Mission Herald* as of the November 1921 issue, he began to make his appeals and statements on the work of foreign missions. As East took over as editor, he also allowed other members of the Board to contribute to the *Herald*, especially the aforementioned W. F. Graham who was the treasurer of the Board. Graham submitted an article entitled, "The Outlook for Foreign Mission Work," and in it he reveals his own emphasis on Evangelicalism and Ethiopianism. As Graham lauded the work performed by Jordan during the past 25 years, he states that "thousands of souls" have been saved through the preaching of the gospel by missionaries. He also writes that another goal of African American missions work in Africa was that "the time will come that Africa shall be a Christian civilized continent."<sup>3</sup> From this statement, it is obvious that Graham believed that the preaching of the gospel along with the establishing of mission schools were vehicles of civilization. Without a doubt, in 1921 leaders of the Foreign Mission Board continued to hold to this dual focus of mission work--evangelism and civilization. This suggests also that the leadership believed that the gospel was a means to an end, or at least had a purpose to produce what can be labeled "gospel civilization." Graham used this to motivate the readers of the *Herald* "to give something toward the redemption of our Fatherland."<sup>4</sup>

On the editorial page, there was clear evidence that the East administration would continue where Jordan's left off regarding the place of African Americans and African

---

<sup>2</sup> "Installation of Dr. James East," *Mission Herald*, October 1921. A word about the location of Holy Trinity Baptist Church: it was and is located a half block from the headquarters of the Foreign Mission Board.

<sup>3</sup> W. F. Graham, "The Outlook for Foreign Mission Work," *Mission Herald*, November 1921.

<sup>4</sup> Graham, "The Outlook for the Foreign Mission Work."

American Baptists, in particular in the evangelization of Africa. In the editorial “Is the Evangelization of Africa the Job of the American Negro?” the editor, which was likely East (there would be a team of editors in future issues), argues that God had given African Americans the primary duty to evangelize Africa more than any other American ethnic group. He does admit that he had never articulated this assumption publicly, but had believed this for a period of time. With funds lacking to fulfill this duty, East calls for more African American Baptists to give more, and more money to “the Christian and economic development of the Fatherland.”<sup>5</sup> Like Jordan, East emphasizes an Ethiopian understanding of all Christian African Americans and their obligation to Africa.

To support the argument that East represented continuity with Jordan’s ideology, East offers his main objective as the new corresponding secretary in yet another statement printed in this issue of the *Herald*. In “Our Object as the New Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, N.B.C.,” East articulates his thought regarding the “real work” of the Christian church. He writes: “The real work of the church is to give the gospel to the world and that should be the order of the day.”<sup>6</sup> Like Jordan, East indicates the exact amount of money needed to pay off debts and to send new missionaries into the African field. Judging from this brief article, East would implore the readers of the *Herald* to heed the call of the Christian church and to give sacrificially in order to obey the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dr. East appeals to Baptist polity in one of the more interesting editorials of this issue of the *Herald*. In “Baptists Beware Lest Ye Be Murderers,” East writes a strong

---

<sup>5</sup> Editorial, “Is the Evangelization of Africa the Job of the American Negro?” *Mission Herald*, November 1921.

<sup>6</sup> “Our Object as the New Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, N.B.C.,” *Mission Herald*, November 1921.

article aimed at pastors of National Baptist churches reminding them of their influence as pastors in Baptist churches. He begins by indicating that the Board was \$3,000 behind in paying the salaries for its workers in the mission field. According to East the situation could be remedied because each Baptist church is its own sovereign, a “kingdom,” as East labels it. This meant that each pastor had a great amount of influence regarding how his church gave to foreign missions so that these missionary workers could eat. One problem that East pays careful attention to was that there were Methodist ministers allowed in Baptist churches to raise money for missions, but the money went to support Methodist missionaries. Here is a statement appealing to denominational primacy in giving to missions.<sup>7</sup>

Secretary East wrote an article detailing the struggling Queenstown work. Under the heading “Sending the Light,” East establishes the background on why the Board needed to send a pastor to the Queenstown Baptist Church. He states that the church began back in 1897 by Rev. Thomas, and following the founding of the church Rev. E. B. P. Koti became the pastor and the superintendent of the mission station that included the Lott Carey School. This station attracted the attention of President E. C. Morris as he traveled to South Africa, and baptized hundreds into the church there in Queenstown. The work flourished under Koti, but he resigned in 1914 or 1915 because of the lack of the support from the Board. Koti resided in Natal at the time East wrote the article where he could till the land in order to feed his family. The Board sent Rev. David Tyesi there to revive the work and the church that had hundreds of members but because it was without a pastor for so long East reports that the church membership had dwindled to ten or eleven members. Though East never explicitly states such in this brief article, he implies

---

<sup>7</sup> Editorial, “Baptists Beware Lest Ye Be Murderers,” *Mission Herald*, November 1921.

that this church and mission station would be a crown jewel among all National Baptist work in Africa if members would have given more money to support Koti.<sup>8</sup>

As Dr. East had expressed that the primary mission of the Christian church is to preach the gospel to the world, he also emphasized the need of Industrial Education in this first issue of the *Herald* in which he could write his appeals and views. In this very brief article, East states: "Your Corresponding Secretary is convinced that we must give more industrial training in our schools in foreign lands."<sup>9</sup> East saw Industrial Education as the foremost means of independence and wealth for converts in the foreign field stating the land could be cleared to grow food and timber used to sell and to make items for their houses and the mission station. In the end of this article, East offers this insight: "Salvation comes by faith, but it takes much faith and work to give the people the knowledge of industry."<sup>10</sup> Such insistence came from East's rather successful implementation of Industrial Education at Middledrift.

Beginning in the February 1922 issue of the *Herald* a difference in the approach of East from Jordan is rather clear. East emerges as a more business-like editor and secretary that was much different from Jordan's more pastoral approach complete with exhortations. Even the *Herald* underwent needed changes in format and structure, which East implemented. East's editorials read like reports rather than heart-felt calls to action that readers had grown accustomed to reading during Jordan's tenure. These editorials, however, have important items for the readers to know.

In these editorials, East's great endeavor surfaced--that is to implement "Systematical Giving." In the editorial entitled, "A Great Movement Toward

---

<sup>8</sup> Editorial, "Sending the Light," *Mission Herald*, November 1921.

<sup>9</sup> Untitled, *Mission Herald*, November 1921.

<sup>10</sup> Untitled.

Systematical Giving.” East points out clearly that the viability of the Foreign Mission Board rested on churches giving systematically rather than haphazardly, which was the case at the time of the writing. He states, “We cannot support our foreign mission workers successfully by giving contributions of a few dollars once a year...”<sup>11</sup> East defines this systematic giving as churches lifting offerings once per week, or once per month specifically for foreign missions. Even in this business-like editorial, East uses Ethiopian language to motivate his readers by writing: “Would you see Africa redeemed? Would you see Africa saved? Then, could you not send an offering once a month, even if you have to lift an after collection? Truly, the price of Africa’s redemption must be paid by Negro churches, and must be paid now.”<sup>12</sup> It is quite lucid from this editorial that East stood in the Ethiopian tradition of African American Baptist missions.

This emphasis continued in the next month’s issue along with the co-emphasis of gospel obedience. In a strong statement called “An Appeal to the Brotherhood,” East makes strong and direct perceptions regarding the concern of foreign missions in America, generally, but about the National Baptist Convention, specifically. He states that there were millions of people who made a Christian profession in this country who demonstrated a lack of concern “about the regeneration of heathen peoples in body and mind and spirit.”<sup>13</sup> Pinpointing his immediate audience, East writes a scathing denouncement of its priorities:

Ours is a poor type of Christianity. We are not obedient to the Master, in giving the Gospel to all the world... What tens of thousands of money we spend on our pleasure, when, at the very time of doing so, we insist that we are too poor to do a great work for the Lord Jesus, in soul-winning and race-lifting in America, and to

---

<sup>11</sup> Editorial, “A Great Movement Toward Systematic Giving,” *Mission Herald*, February 1922.

<sup>12</sup> Editorial, “A Great Movement Toward Systematic Giving.”

<sup>13</sup> Editorial, “An Appeal to the Brotherhood,” *Mission Herald*, March 1922.



do an extensive, efficient and abiding work, in saving and elevating whole communities in other lands.<sup>14</sup>

This is a loaded statement coming from the new secretary. In it, he recognizes the misplaced priorities of National Baptists as it pertained to supporting mission work in Africa. Such a statement called attention to the real need of sustaining a work in various African fields, and that was money. If National Baptists were serious about extending their racial uplift philosophy abroad to Africa, it took more than sermons, speeches, and articles, but real financial support.

In an editorial that reflects the above article, East stress what support for missions really meant in the April issue of the *Herald*. Other than supporting missionaries, East stipulates that support must also extend to infrastructure and farm and carpentry equipment. This statement re-iterates the mission philosophy of the Board, which was to preach the gospel so that Africans would become Christians and also to educate them through Industrial Education. In this brief editorial, East drives this point: “We hope our churches will not forget that it is just as profitable to give the Missionaries horses to till the ground, cows to milk, anvils, hammers and drills for the blacksmith’s shop, saws and chisels for the carpenter’s shop, food and clothing for the little children in training at our mission stations.”<sup>15</sup> This remark coming from East emanates from his decade long experience in South Africa as he worked hard to make Middledrift into the “Tuskegee” of South Africa.

In another editorial in the April issue, East wrote quite a poignant and heart-wrenching article in the attempt to motivate National Baptists to take serious their pledges to support missionaries in the field. In this piece, East reveals something that is

---

<sup>14</sup> Editorial, “An Appeal to the Brotherhood.”

<sup>15</sup> Editorial, *Mission Herald*, April 1922.

absolutely heartbreaking. He states that the late Rev. J. I. Buchannan, the founder of the church and mission at Middledrift died of starvation owing to the lack of support received by National Baptists back home. To illustrate this, East remarks: "Every time I looked at the little tombstone which marked his resting place, I thought of that noble man who had died for the want of proper support."<sup>16</sup> Such a story had the intent to cause National Baptists to do more than talk about supporting; it was meant to cause them to give in real terms. To support his point further, East relates to his audience that the Board was behind in its support of missionaries. Such a reality would create a sense of urgency among the members of the convention because they would have to think if there are others in the African field on the brink of starvation.<sup>17</sup>

Secretary East received much help in motivating the masses of National Baptists to do their part in the redemption of Africa. The aforementioned Rev. William F. Graham, the treasurer of the Board and pastor of Holy Trinity Baptist Church in Philadelphia, was a featured writer in the *Herald* during most of the years of East's tenure as secretary. Graham shared East's passion for Africa as well as a fervent Ethiopian sentiment. In an article entitled, "Africa's Better Days," Graham's Ethiopianism is crystal clear:

The Maker and Creator of races would not give to the world two hundred million people in one race without a mission of usefulness, worthiness and helpfulness to the world. The sons of Japheth had their mission, the Sons of Shem had their mission, and we know that Ham had his mission. This is verified from the Word of God that Ethiopia should soon stretch forth her hand to Almighty God.<sup>18</sup>

Graham's assumption here is that God had given nations, or races of people special missions within his plan of redemption, and these nations must realize this and endeavor

---

<sup>16</sup> Editorial, *Mission Herald*, April 1922.

<sup>17</sup> Editorial.

<sup>18</sup> William F. Graham, "Africa's Better Days," *Mission Herald*, May 1922.

to fulfill it. It is obvious that Graham believes that God's mission for African Americans was to aid in the fulfillment of the prophecy of Psalm 68:31. This is interesting because even though Graham believes that African Americans were part of the overall Ethiopian family it seems that he believes that God had given African Americans a special mission to their Ethiopian brethren in Africa. This is a bifurcated view of the mission for the sons and daughters of Ham, and it strongly implies African American exceptionalism. Overall, Graham envisions that 1,000 National Baptist churches would give money on a regular basis for the cause of Africa's redemption.<sup>19</sup>

In connection with this vision of scores of National Baptist churches contributing to the cause of African missions, Graham reveals his belief that the philosophy of Booker T. Washington was alive and well among National Baptists. Written in the wake of Washington's death, Graham exclaims the need for more institutions like Tuskegee in America, but the need of "one hundred in Africa."<sup>20</sup> Even in a statement lauding the most renowned African American leader during this period, Graham looks to the need of Industrial Education in Africa as a key component in its uplift. Here is a clear connection between the gospel and Ethiopianism, which included Industrial Education as a means of African uplift.

In June, the front cover of the *Herald* features an article by Graham that re-emphasizes some of what he asserted in the last issue. In "Making History," Graham directs his statements to younger pastors imploring them to support foreign missions and Africa's redemption with their eloquent words and dollars. He encourages these preachers to be men who leave a mark in history like that of Booker T. Washington and

---

<sup>19</sup> Graham, "Africa's Better Days."

<sup>20</sup> Graham, "Africa's Better Days."

E. C. Morris: these men gave fine addresses, but they also worked hard to uplift the race. Graham also upholds Rev. W. W. Brown, pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church in New York City, who led his church in giving sacrificially and regularly to the Foreign Mission Board.<sup>21</sup>

For the August 1922 *Herald*, Graham wrote yet another lengthy and substantial article entitled “The Foreign Mission Outlook.” This article gives the readers an overview of the progressive work done by Protestants in foreign mission, and especially the work done by the National Baptist Convention under the leadership of Dr. East. Graham states that Protestants on the whole had remained steadfast in the work in the many foreign mission fields, but he writes that Protestants had left the African mission field on the margins of their activities. As this was the case among white Protestants, Graham notes that African American Protestants “are beginning to waken as never before in profoundest interest for the redemption of our Fatherland.”<sup>22</sup>

With this stated, Graham presses the members of the NBC to push forward their efforts to redeem Africa. For Graham, this was a prime opportunity to impress upon churches to give regular monthly offerings to the Board. This had been one of the new innovations of the East administration, and since Graham was the treasurer it befell to him to motivate the churches to support this new program. In his writing, Graham displays optimism as he anticipated that in the near future “one thousand Negro Baptist churches will send in an offering monthly for the upkeep of our mission stations.”<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> William F. Graham, “Making History,” *Mission Herald*, June 1922.

<sup>22</sup> William F. Graham, “The Foreign Mission Outlook,” *Mission Herald*, August 1922.

<sup>23</sup> Graham, “The Foreign Mission Outlook.”

In this article, Graham utilizes an emotional appeal to save the “Fatherland” and to “redeem” Africa in order to draw more monetary support from the churches. Judging from the spirit of the piece, Graham’s remarks represent his own fervent and resonant hope that the National Baptist Convention would assume what the leadership believed was its God-given mission so that Africans would come to Christ through the gospel, but also help them rise socially and economically. Such is buttressed in this very essay when extolling the character of Secretary East when Graham writes:

He believes in Christian civilization for Africa and not merely revival or evangelical redemption---he does not believe in getting the Africans converted and sending them back to the bush; but he believes in what he has taught and accomplished in So. Africa. He believes in saving Africa spiritually; in saving him physically in saving him domestically; in saving him industrially; in making him a man of home life with one wife; a man who will run a store, conduct a farm, raise cattle, build houses and attend church on Sunday.<sup>24</sup>

From this rather all-encompassing statement summarizing East’s mission philosophy, it is certain that the Board had extended even the philosophy held by Jordan especially since East had firsthand experience in the African mission field. Graham’s statement also reflects what African American Protestant Christians desired in their native land of America--“manhood” rights. In essence, the Foreign Mission Board devoted itself to the extension of the African American quest for manhood in Africa through the perceived civilizing effects of the gospel.

Rev. Walter H. Brooks, pastor of Nineteenth Street Baptist Church in Washington, D. C. and a historian as well, wrote a short piece in the August issue called “Criticism.” This is an interesting article in that it draws attention to the need of good criticism in order for a person, or group to improve what it is doing already. The emphasis here is to provide a hypothetical point of criticism of National Baptist mission

---

<sup>24</sup> Graham, “The Foreign Mission Outlook.”

work with the implicit goal of motivating the convention to elevate its work in Africa. There are some explicit points in this article that concur with what other leaders had written and published thus far in the East administration. First, Brooks assumes that African American Christians should be the leaders in mission work in Africa; second, there is also the assumption that African American missionaries had the same capabilities as their white counterparts regarding translating the Bible into African languages; and lastly, Brooks believes that one goal of African American missionary work was to found an African Tuskegee. Even using a hypothetical criticism, Brooks attempts to motivate action in accordance with the purposes stated implicitly and explicitly. Brooks' assumptions reveal his Ethiopian ideas and his ardent Evangelicalism in a seamless blend.<sup>25</sup>

Another article written by Brooks appears in this same issue as well. As the first dealt with a hypothetical situation, this one entitled, "To the Man in the Pew, or Every Christian's Debt" is a pastoral appeal to all National Baptists that accorded with their understanding of salvation through grace alone. It is firmly an Evangelical appeal reflective of sound Evangelical teaching on the atonement of Christ on behalf of believing sinners. The message is clear: just as Christ saved you give others the opportunity to believe in Christ by giving to the Foreign Mission Board. Such an appeal had the obvious intent to move all who had trusted in Christ to give money; this is the objective of the article. Brooks asks a couple of pointed questions to his readers in attempting to meet his objective: "Are you giving your very life freely to the Master, that others, near and far, may have all the blessings of salvation, which are yours today?"<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Walter H. Brooks, "Criticism," *Mission Herald*, August 1922.

<sup>26</sup> Walter H. Brooks, "To the Man in the Pew, or Every Christian's Debt," *Mission Herald*, August 1922.

As noted in Chapter 3, African American Baptists in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century seemingly moved away from a strict Calvinism to a more general Evangelicalism. Brooks' statements in this article reflect that change. Even though he mentions the "vicarious death" of Christ, he assumes that Christ's death was universal and one only needed to place faith in Christ to receive the benefits of what Christ had done already for each and every sinner. In order for African sinners to be saved, it must be the duty of their African American brethren "in the flesh" to provide the means to support missionaries.<sup>27</sup>

One final article in this month's issue of the *Herald* that focuses on motivation comes from the pen of either Secretary East or Treasurer Graham (it is anonymous), and it is entitled simply, "Systematical Giving." As noted above, Graham, in this same issue, upheld the wisdom of this program; therefore, at the end of the issue, there is another appeal. This appeal is linked very much to Ethiopianism and Evangelicalism. The first line states: "We can save Africa by systematical giving."<sup>28</sup> At the end of the article, the writer implored: "Do you love Africa? Will you not comply with his one little request of sending monthly donations to help save Africa?"<sup>29</sup> To motivate National Baptists, the writer connected one's love for Africa and one's Evangelical zeal. This had been the constant note sounded thus far by the East administration.

The editor, Secretary East, continues his strong Evangelical pleas in this issue as well. In a brief editorial titled, "Full Co-operation of the Church," East reminds his readers that "[i]t is the duty of the whole church to give the gospel to the world."<sup>30</sup> The stress of this article is for National Baptists at home to serve in specific ways to expand

---

<sup>27</sup> Brooks, "To the Man in the Pew, or Every Christian's Debt."

<sup>28</sup> "Systematical Giving," *Mission Herald*, August 1922.

<sup>29</sup> "Systematical Giving."

<sup>30</sup> Editorial, "Full Co-operation of the Church," *Mission Herald*, November 1922.

the missionary efforts such as making sure “to send food, clothing, literature, money and implements of all kinds for industrial work...”<sup>31</sup> The final appeal in this article is to reiterate the need for all National Baptists to contribute to the Board regularly, especially monthly.<sup>32</sup>

With the postponement of the Annual Session this year until December in St. Louis, Secretary East gave his annual report at that time. Different from past years of the *Herald* was that the annual report of the Foreign Mission Board failed to appear; however the Board did publish its report as a separate publication.<sup>33</sup> Before offering reports from each field of mission, Secretary East gave his prelude, which is more of a charge to the convention on the very purpose of the church. From this section of the report East revealed to the entire convention his convictions about the high place foreign missions should occupy in the entire program of the NBC. In the first moments of the report, East summarizes the gospel of Jesus Christ and its purpose. As noted before, East’s presentation of the gospel was squarely Evangelical if not strictly Evangelical Calvinistic. He clearly announces that it was because of the sin of humankind that Jesus came to die on their behalf so that they could be saved from eternal damnation:

Yes, he [Jesus] took our sins upon Him and died in our stead to keep us from dying. Now He calls to a sin-stricken world that is being forced by time before the Eternal God where it will receive the horrible sentence of damnation and says to it, if you will hear these sayings of mine and believe on Him who sent me, you will not have to come before the Judge to be sentenced to death, but will pass from death unto life and be eternally saved.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Editorial, “Full Co-operation of the Church.”

<sup>32</sup> Editorial, “Full Co-operation of the Church.”

<sup>33</sup> *Forty-Second Annual Report of the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention, Inc.*, Submitted at Los Angeles, California, September 5-10, 1923.

<sup>34</sup> *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 7-8.



After stating such, East asserts that people all over the globe, especially in places such as Asia and Africa, were dying spiritually because they had yet to hear and believe the gospel. This was why Christ gave the Great Commission, and this commission, according to East, was “the Purpose of the church.”<sup>35</sup> It is by implication that East believes the convention must make sending missionaries to preach the gospel of life its greatest priority among all the other work it did. What is also interesting about East’s comments in this beginning section of the report is that he intimates that the work of the convention was an extension of the work of the Church. He spoke these words in support of this stance: “It is not left with a handful of missionaries or with the missionary societies alone to give the gospel to the world. This all important object is for the whole Christian Church.”<sup>36</sup>

In the beginning of the new year of 1923 contributors to the *Mission Herald* refreshed their bold pleas. In the February issue of this year, the paper published a keenly pastoral appeal called “Receiving and Giving,” penned by Pastor Walter H. Brooks. In this article, Brooks reminds his audience of their obligation to make sure they spread the message of their salvation to all in the world. This was the same refrain that Brooks and others had written before in the *Herald*. Brooks is clear in this article that the only method by which “the heathen” will be saved is “through the preaching of the gospel.”<sup>37</sup> Though this is such a simple statement, it does reveal what the Foreign Mission Board held in priority: salvation of the lost through the gospel. This remained the bedrock purpose of its missionary activities.

---

<sup>35</sup> *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 8. Bold East’s.

<sup>36</sup> *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 10.

<sup>37</sup> Walter H. Brooks, “Receiving and Giving,” *Mission Herald*, February 1923.

According to Brooks, salvation of the lost meant sacrifice on the part of the Church. After appealing to his audience's hearts, he appeals to their hands to reach down into their pockets. While holding dearly to the need that the Church must pray for workers to venture out in the mission field, Brooks asserts that it must pay. He writes: "Moreover, the churches of apostolic times, not only prayed that God would raise up men for the work of the kingdom and in obedience to God, ordained and commissioned those whom God for the foreign fields; but they also gave their means for the support of the men, whom they sent away to preach in other parts."<sup>38</sup> One may believe that the Board's call for more money was just a general one that leaders of the Board made to gather more money, but Brooks indicates that there was a chronic lack of support from the churches of the NBC. He states that churches with thousands of members only gave "crumbs" to the work of foreign missions. This article is a definite earnest appeal to the churches that called on them to obey the gospel and to emulate the very example of the Apostolic Church.<sup>39</sup>

As 1923 continued the *Herald* printed more articles from Walter Brooks urging National Baptists to obey the Great Commission and help the spread of the gospel throughout the world, especially in Africa. As Brooks used the Evangelical faith and its demands to encourage his readers to give more and more to the Foreign Mission Board, he also explains a critical part of National Baptist missionary philosophy in an article printed in April entitled, "The Principle of Self-Help in Foreign Mission Work." What Brooks argues in this short piece is that Christian missionary work at its best operates on the principle of enabling new Christians and new churches to help themselves and to

---

<sup>38</sup> Brooks, "Receiving and Giving."

<sup>39</sup> Brooks, "Receiving and Giving."

order their own affairs. This was the goal of National Baptists intimated by Brooks. Though this article explains this principle, Brooks implies that National Baptists should support the missionaries in the field in order for their work to end so that their converts could have quicker opportunity to experience self-support. He writes:

Let us lay upon the hearts of the churches here [bold Brooks'] the duty of helping mightily the cause of Christ in other lands. Let us insist, that all who are engaged in mission work abroad, cultivate the spirit of self-help, and joyously anticipate the day of complete self-support, followed by years rendered glorious by sacrifices and labor to help others.<sup>40</sup>

The more strident and pinpoint appeals under the East administration continued as East published an editorial in the May *Herald* of 1923. In the article titled "The Danger of Negro Churches Not Having an Outlet for Missionary Activities," East warns the members of the NBC that a vibrant foreign missions arm is tantamount to the success of churches, associations, and the National Baptist Convention. Placing this article into context, it is interesting that East makes such an argument since the convention was active in the African mission field as well as the Caribbean and Latin America fields. Even though this was the case, East implies that there was a disproportionate level of activity based upon the lack of financial support in general. What East communicates discreetly in this article was that National Baptists could and should give more money for foreign missions, and the Board could have a much more active foreign mission work. In addition to these intimations and implications, East argues that African American Baptists as well as all African American Protestants had to be more engaged in African

---

<sup>40</sup> Walter H. Brooks, "The Principle of Self-Help in Foreign Mission Work," *Mission Herald*, April 1923.

missions in order to bring civilization and uplift to Africans in the face of colonialism throughout the continent and segregation in South Africa specifically.<sup>41</sup>

This editorial arguably is East's clearest combination of Evangelicalism and Ethiopianism in his missionary philosophy to date. In the beginning of the editorial, East states without equivocation: "The church is left on earth for the sole purpose of giving the gospel to the world."<sup>42</sup> This was a point the secretary had made previously, and it was one in which he believed the work of the convention was part and parcel with the work of the Church. Near the middle of the editorial in referring to segregation laws in South Africa and its preclusion of African American missionaries from entering the mission field, East states: "In America the colored people own and live in splendid homes; are intelligent and responsive to the teachings of His [Christ's] word. They are advancing side by side with their white neighbors."<sup>43</sup> He reasons that whites in South Africa feared that African Americans will inculcate the ideas of progress, self-assertion, and manhood to African converts, and this would spell the reason why the government had placed a bar on new African American missionaries from entering the country. What was at stake for African Americans was their opportunity to raise the social consciousness of Africans so that they could thrive amidst a system of segregation just like they had in America, according to East.

European missionaries also feared the presence of African American missionaries in Africa, according to East. This overall fear prompted a type of conspiratorial spirit against African American Protestant missionaries in Africa. East writes with ardor:

---

<sup>41</sup> Editorial, "The Danger of Negro Churches Not Having an Outlet for Missionary Activities," *Mission Herald*, May 1923.

<sup>42</sup> Editorial, "The Danger of Negro Churches Not Having an Outlet for Missionary Activities."

<sup>43</sup> Editorial, "The Danger of Negro Churches Not Having an Outlet for Missionary Activities."

Many of the white missionaries do not like to compete with missionaries who are of the same color as the natives among whom they are going to work. Consequently, the black people of America who have made rapid progress in Christianity and civilization are branded as agitators, and cannot pass the emigration officers and get into Africa.<sup>44</sup>

Because of this racist, colonial backlash against African American missionaries, the only field open to African Americans at this time was Liberia. Because of this dire situation, East urges National Baptists to place forward more efforts in sending missionaries there.<sup>45</sup>

Thus far Walter Brooks' articles had been focused on real Evangelical motivations to prompt National Baptists to give more money for the cause of Foreign Missions. In the June 1923 *Herald* Brooks wrote an article that represents the Ethiopian and civilizationist thought of other National Baptist leaders, but the thought of Alexander Crummell especially. In "Three Lost Continents," Brooks criticizes European imperialism and colonization in South America and Africa. In light of his criticism, Brooks believes that history had taught that according to God's Providence governments built on injustice and unrighteousness are doomed to fail. In place of European hegemony, Brooks asserts that Africans among other conquered people would rise up to take their rightful place of honor among the nations and peoples of the world. Owing to this firm belief, Brooks believes that this should motivate National Baptist work in Africa, especially South Africa. He notes: "With these convictions, we should prosecute our mission work in South Africa, in the spirit and hope and good will, and, with patience, earnest endeavor, faith in God, and unceasing prayer, await the triumph of love and civic righteousness, and the new-birth of the once unenlightened, nonprogressive

---

<sup>44</sup> Editorial, "The Danger of Negro Churches Not Having an Outlet for Missionary Activities."

<sup>45</sup> Editorial, "The Danger of Negro Churches Not Having an Outlet for Missionary Activities."

people.”<sup>46</sup> With a strong statement such as this, it is clear that Brooks connects African American missionary activity with God’s mysterious Providential Design to raise Africans to a place of global significance just as Crummell argued in the previous century.

As mentioned previously, under East’s early administration the *Herald* called upon more pastoral voices to attempt to rally the members of the NBC to give their money to the foreign missions program. In the August 1923 *Herald* an article by Rev. Junius C. (J. C.) Austin, East’s pastor and one of his benefactors during his time in South Africa, appears. In “We Should and We Could if We Would,” Austin strikes a loud Ethiopian note. Near the beginning of the article, Austin’s Ethiopianism is stark as well as clear: “In our search for wealth and education we do well to call to mind the great land abounding in wealth which is justly ours. The land of our Father Ham, a birthright of all of his sons which has been taken away for less than a bowl of pottage.”<sup>47</sup> In this passage, Austin refers to the African American quest for global relevance; he believes that this quest by African Americans had an intimate connection with Africa’s relevance. Not only is this Ethiopian, but also Pan-Africanist. As an Ethiopian, Austin flavors his assertion with vivid biblical references to Ham and alludes to Esau’s selling of his birthright to his brother Jacob recorded in Genesis 25. This is one point of difference between Ethiopianism and Pan-Africanism. While both ideologies focus upon the unbreakable bond between peoples of African descent and that the destiny of all Africans are bound up among each other, Ethiopianism is deliberately Christian and biblical.

---

<sup>46</sup> Walter H. Brooks, “Three Lost Continents,” *Mission Herald*, June 1923.

<sup>47</sup> J. C. Austin, “We Should and We Could if We Would,” *Mission Herald*, August 1923.

Austin encourages that all African American efforts, whether they lie in education or sheer Christian ministry, should point to Africa's redemption. He states, "The index of every text-book for the Negro should point towards Africa's redemption."<sup>48</sup> Turning to the role of the African American minister in general, but particular National Baptist ministers, Austin remarks, "The great thought in the mind of the Negro minister of today in every pulpit should be Africa's redemption."<sup>49</sup> Such a statement points to Austin's concern that education and the orientation of the African American ministry should be of practical relevance, not simply the "pie in the sky" practice and preaching of some.

In attempting to motivate National Baptists to give, Austin repeats the theme of Providential Design. In answering his own rhetorical question of why should African American Baptists aid in Africa's redemption, he writes: "WE SHOULD, out of a spirit of appreciation for having been delivered by the hand of Divine Providence from those awful conditions."<sup>50</sup> Connected with this sentiment, Austin urges the readers to help lift up Africa because God had lifted them. Here Austin refers to a type of double lifting up: first, it is clear that Austin meant that God had lifted African Americans from African traditionalism through slavery, and caused them to see the light of Christianity; second, in view of Africa's present Austin intimates that God had lifted African Americans from colonialism and poverty. The latter lifting is obviously an over optimistic interpretation of African American life in the early 1920s, but it did highlight what educated, NBC pastors believed was occurring. Based upon these realities, it was the duty of African American Baptists to place forth a vital effort to bring Africans to what they believed was their rightful place in the world despite white racism in America.

---

<sup>48</sup> Austin, "We Should and We Could if We Would."

<sup>49</sup> Austin, "We Should and We Could if We Would."

<sup>50</sup> Austin, "We Should and We Could if We Would."

From a bold Ethiopian appeal, Rev. C. A. Pugh of Florida published a strong Evangelical appeal in the August issue. Such appeals lying side by side re-iterate the philosophy of the Board and the leadership of the NBC. Both saw no contradiction in holding to both, but saw a powerful symmetry that needed to be utilized in order for the foreign mission program to thrive. Pugh's major argument in his "An Appeal for the Spirit of Missions Substantiated by the Mission Life of Christ" is that the Church must follow the example of Jesus Christ, who "is the truest, noblest example of a foreign missionary."<sup>51</sup> In applying this argument, Pugh prays that if individuals were unable to be foreign missionaries to Africa then let them be able to send missionaries to Africa. Even though Pugh had Africa in focus, he urges a greater faith within National Baptist circles and a greater sacrifice of giving all based upon following Jesus Christ and obeying the Great Commission.

Published in the February 1924 *Herald*, Walter Brooks wrote a brief article explaining what constitutes a Missionary Baptist Church. This particular article gives insight into National Baptist identity during this period, and it also illustrates how National Baptist theology had changed to a more moderate Evangelicalism from a moderate Calvinism. In this piece entitled, "What is a Missionary Baptist Church?" Brooks argues that Missionary Baptists held to giving the gospel to every person. He writes:

Missionary Baptists...believe that God offers salvation to all men, through the gospel of Jesus Christ [Brooks' bold], and therefore, it is absolutely necessary to cause men to know the teachings of God's word, in regard to sin and its punishment, and the love of God, and the mercy of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> C. A. Pugh, "An Appeal for the Spirit of Missions Substantiated by the Mission Life of Christ," *Mission Herald*, August 1923.

<sup>52</sup> Walter H. Brooks, "What is a Missionary Baptist Church?" *Mission Herald*, February 1924.



This statement comes in contrast to what Primitive Baptists believed about offering the gospel, according to Brooks. Brooks states that Primitive Baptists reject the teaching that the gospel should be preached indiscriminately to the world as they “are extreme Calvinists [sic].”<sup>53</sup> Brooks errs in this description of Primitive Baptists regarding their belief about sharing the gospel. Primitive Baptists believed that missionary work must be done through the local church not missionary organizations. Furthermore, Brooks’ description is accurate as it relates to “Hardshell” Baptists; they did believe that missionary work was a waste as they did hold to what has been labeled “hyper-Calvinism.”

Brooks uses this description of what Missionary Baptists were to encourage more National Baptists to give more money to support foreign missions. Following his definition of a Missionary Baptist church, Brooks wrote this stinging remark: “If this is, indeed, the faith of Missionary Baptists, how under heaven can we account for the fact that so many churches, which style themselves ‘Missionary Baptist Churches,’ have neither part nor lot in the work of giving the gospel of Christ to the millions of long-neglected Africa?”<sup>54</sup> For Brooks, this reality made so called Missionary Baptist churches the same as anti-missionary Baptist churches. This is evidence of the biblical teaching that “faith without works is dead.” Based on a proud identity, Brooks implores National Baptists to spread the gospel in Africa.<sup>55</sup>

One theme has been prominent in the articles and editorials written by the editors of the *Herald* during the East administration so far: self-critical. These men have found it

---

<sup>53</sup> Brooks, “What is a Missionary Baptist Church?”

<sup>54</sup> Brooks, “What is a Missionary Baptist Church?”

<sup>55</sup> Brooks, “What is a Missionary Baptist Church?” The teaching of faith without works is dead is found in James 2:26.

unnecessary to sugar-coat anything in their pleadings to National Baptist churches to improve their record of giving to African missions. This self-critical theme continues in the March and April issues of the *Herald* in a piece written by Treasurer and Associate Editor, William F. Graham. In "Denominational Foundation," Graham states bluntly that the foundation of the National Baptist Convention was foreign missions. He also asserts that National Baptists had done a sub-par job in executing foreign missions especially as it related to Africa. Graham believes it to be part of his job to help National Baptist churches "get in better shape" regarding furthering African missions.<sup>56</sup>

Regarding getting into "better shape," Graham advances the thought that local churches must become "strong, self supporting missionary bodies" in order for African missions to advance.<sup>57</sup> This refers to the fact that members of local churches must care for their own churches so that the minister would receive a regular salary and all other work done would be financed. From this, Graham believes a local church can contribute its part "in carrying out the great commission."<sup>58</sup> In bold terms, Graham states this about a Baptist church that disappoints in becoming self-supporting: "A Baptist church fails to become a real church so long as it is on the charitable begging list--it remains in the class of the poor saints, a weak missionary station."<sup>59</sup> Such a statement reflects the general spirit of the African American philosophy of racial uplift so prevalent during that time among the educated elite.

---

<sup>56</sup> William F. Graham, "Denominational Foundation," *Mission Herald*, March 1924 and *Mission Herald*, April 1924. The first part of this article appears in both issues.

<sup>57</sup> Graham, "Denominational Foundation."

<sup>58</sup> Graham, "Denominational Foundation."

<sup>59</sup> Graham, "Denominational Foundation."

How was this to be accomplished, according to Graham? He believes “a manly, strong, God called, intelligent, self-reliant ministry” was key.<sup>60</sup> At this time in the article, Graham is critical of who he deemed uncalled pastors who were in the ministry only for self-aggrandizement. As long as there were ministers in African American Baptist churches who preached only “for the fishes and loaves,” local churches would be unable to be self-supporting and African missions will remain under-funded.<sup>61</sup> According to Graham, “The earnest, God-fearing preacher is a foundation stone in the home base, and to him, the taking of the world for Christ is obligatory.”<sup>62</sup> At this point in the article, one could argue that Graham seems to desire the riddance of the uneducated minister; it appeared as if Graham assumes that uneducated equated to unreliable and uncouth. It does seem as though Graham is a bit chauvinistic in his assertion that only an intelligent ministry can bring out local church self-support that would translate into more money for African missions.

Graham qualifies his view on an educated ministry. He believes that an educate ministry was imperative for church self-sufficiency, but this educated class of ministers had to be race men who supported independent, African American enterprises. Graham writes:

There are a host of educated preachers, holding many of our large churches, who scorn the Negro Publishing House, who ridicule Negro literature and laugh at the idea of Negro Baptist independent schools. These are contrary forces, they constitute an evil leaven, and a little lump of them harnessed in membership of the Nat. Baptist Convention may do untold harm.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Graham, “Denominational Foundation.”

<sup>61</sup> Graham, “Denominational Foundation.”

<sup>62</sup> Graham, “Denominational Foundation.”

<sup>63</sup> William F. Graham, “Denominational Foundation,” *Mission Herald*, April 1924.

Graham believes that the majority of National Baptist leaders must “convert” these “weaker brethren.”<sup>64</sup>

For African missions to become more viable, Graham holds that all levels of National Baptist denominationalism must unite; this meant district associations, state conventions, and the national convention must unite to make spreading the gospel top priority. According to Graham, this is what “other races do through their organizations...”<sup>65</sup> Graham includes National Baptist schools in this mix as well, and they should be considered “as foundation stones” of the denomination.<sup>66</sup> Graham links the schools with the ministry. The schools would ensure an educated, race-conscious ministry that would also be “thoroughly fundamental; thoroughly scriptural, thoroughly New Testament preachers.”<sup>67</sup>

In this piece, Graham strikes a loud chord that was at the heart of National Baptist missionary philosophy: the necessity of independence and self-support. Also for the first time there is mention by a National Baptist leader of the need to remain fundamental in expressing and articulating the faith. Graham believes that white-run schools and seminaries would result in the encroachment of Christian liberalism upon the African American Baptist ministry. He assumes that African American Baptists were more conservative than their white counterparts; and in general this was a correct assessment. For Graham, African American Baptists must remain true to the ideals of self-help and racialism in order to be of any help in Africa’s redemption.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Graham, “Denominational Foundation.”

<sup>65</sup> Graham, “Denominational Foundation.”

<sup>66</sup> Graham, “Denominational Foundation.”

<sup>67</sup> Graham, “Denominational Foundation.”

<sup>68</sup> Graham, “Denominational Foundation.”

In the July 1924 *Herald* another article from Pastor Walter Brooks is presented that employs biblical means to motivate National Baptists to give to foreign missions. In “Help for the Cause in Foreign Lands,” Brooks applies lessons drawn from 1 Corinthians 16 to argue that there is a clear biblical example, a New Testament example, for National Baptists to follow regarding giving money to spread the gospel in foreign lands. He writes nothing specifically about special obligation to Africa, but any person who had read the *Herald* and was part of the National Baptist Convention knew that this article intimated that the duty to give to foreign missions was equivalent to the duty to give to foreign missions in Africa. Regardless, Brooks kept his appeal universal as he writes: “As in apostolic times, so in our day, the churches of Jesus Christ are obligated to give to foreign lands.”<sup>69</sup>

After the whole Tyesi affair in which the missionary spread factionalism in the Cape and attempted to smear the good name the Board had worked hard to achieve, Secretary East believed that he needed to publish an editorial in the *Herald* that clearly articulated the ethical standards and motivations of the Foreign Mission Board. Such a sordid affair like the Tyesi one threatened to siphon off precious financial resources from the Board, and cause undue suffering for missionaries in the field. Knowing this East decided to take an offensive posture, and he wrote clear details regarding what the Board stood for and what it stood against. The purpose here was to focus on a key statement in the editorial that re-iterated the mission philosophy of the Board.

In the editorial “The Policy and Purpose of our Foreign Mission Board,” East primarily writes of the Board’s financial integrity and its purpose in publishing editorials and letters from the field. In doing these things, East states that the purpose was to raise

---

<sup>69</sup> Walter H. Brooks, “Help for the Cause in Foreign Lands,” *Mission Herald*, July 1924.

money for missionaries, not for “personal gain.” He also writes boldly that: “We stand for truth and righteousness.”<sup>70</sup> In this context East also remarks what the missionary philosophy the Board held to. He writes: “We stand for a progressive program in missions, contending that the native people of Africa, where most of our missionary endeavors are exerted, should be taught industry along with the spiritual training; for next to the Bible, the plow will be the greatest factor in the black man’s salvation.”<sup>71</sup> This particular statement stands in agreement with the previous century’s slogan made popular by Thomas F. Buxton of England during the early period of Africa’s redemption directly after the ending of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

In the November 1924 *Herald*, East wrote an update on the situation in South Africa regarding the work at Middledrift. In the section below, there was mention of a letter from the board of Deacons and other officers of the church at Middledrift declaring the pulpit vacant and a request for the Board to send an African American missionary to assume leadership of the work. It was to update this situation that East wrote under the headline, “The Work in South Africa.”<sup>72</sup> What is important here is the description of the type of missionary needed. This description buttresses the overall missionary philosophy of the Board and the NBC. According to the short article, the South African government had conceded to allow an African American missionary to enter the South African field if “he is an agriculturist.”<sup>73</sup> This is an interesting statement since throughout the last couple of years the Union government had been reluctant to allow African American Protestant missionaries to work directly with Africans. Making the concession here reflected that

---

<sup>70</sup> “The Policy and Purpose of our Foreign Mission Board,” *Mission Herald*, August 1924.

<sup>71</sup> “The Policy and Purpose of our Foreign Mission Board.”

<sup>72</sup> “The Work in South Africa,” *Mission Herald*, November 1924.

<sup>73</sup> “The Work in South Africa.”

the Union government saw a benefit for itself in permitting an agricultural missionary to arrive. With the drought and famine, it would have been good for Africans to learn how to feed themselves without relying on financial subsidies from the government. This would free the government to give more governmental aid to poor whites who suffered from this ecological crisis.

Regarding National Baptist missionary philosophy, East offers no contention that a missionary had to be an agriculturalist. In asking the readers of the *Herald* to pray that God would provide a missionary to the Middledrift work, East writes: “May God give us a young man with a wealth of common sense, a consecrated heart, and one who is able to do team work with other local workers. Such a man, with a knowledge of practical agriculture as done in the Southern States, will be a blessing to South Africa.”<sup>74</sup>

This denotes the importance the NBC placed upon Industrial education believing that it was the perfect complement to Evangelical Christianity to uplift and “redeem” South Africa.

In early 1925, the Board embarked upon a full-frontal attack on the members of the convention in order to appeal for more money to support the missionaries in the field, especially in the African field since the vast majority of its missionaries worked there. In the February and March issues of the *Herald*, writers such as Secretary East, J. C. Austin, and Walter Brooks all wrote editorials urging for more consistent giving because the Board had employed then the most missionaries in its history as a board of the NBC.

---

<sup>74</sup> “The Work in South Africa.”

What is of note in these articles is that these leaders used Evangelicalism with very little Ethiopianism to motivate the masses of National Baptists.<sup>75</sup>

Though East's editorial in this issue is forthright and earnest, J. C. Austin and Walter Brooks wrote shorter more concise articles that clearly point to an Evangelical motivation even with a Baptist perspective and just a tinge of Ethiopianism. At this time, J. C. Austin was the chairman of the Foreign Mission Board. In his article, "Can Christ Count on You?" Austin argues that even though Christ had left the Church with the command to preach the gospel to all nations, there were National Baptist ministers and rank-and-file members "who are as blind as Bartimeus to our God-assigned duties" of relieving the poor, down-trodden, and spiritually lost among the nations.<sup>76</sup> Moving from this observation, Austin implores his readers to give sacrificially in light of failing white-run banks. Here Austin appeals to racialism and a lucid biblical message. He writes:

I want to beg every God-called preacher and every Christian with race pride and hope for Africa's redemption to make a sacrifice at once. Send a liberal contribution to our Secretary, James East, and let him know and let Christ know and make the world know that we can be counted on as cross bearers, as good soldiers and co-partners of Jesus Christ.<sup>77</sup>

In a poignant and heart-felt short article, Walter Brooks encourages the readers of the *Herald* to obey the Great Commission in light of the gospel benefits they had experienced throughout their lives in America. This article entitled "Can You Say So?" is quite autobiographical as Brooks relates his own Christian upbringing and subsequent Christian life as a man. He connects this with living in America, a Christian nation according to Brooks. This fact alone, for Brooks, implies that he was a beneficiary of a

---

<sup>75</sup> Editorial, *Mission Herald*, February 1925. In East's editorial, he mentions that the Board now employs more missionaries than it ever did.

<sup>76</sup> J. C. Austin, "Can Christ Count on You?" *Mission Herald*, March 1925.

<sup>77</sup> Austin, "Can Christ Count on You?"



kind providence (he headed this article with a verse from Psalm 16, which states “The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places”). He uses his own life’s example to urge National Baptists to give money to the Board so that missionaries would receive the support they needed and to send out more missionaries even to spread the gospel far and wide. Just as he received saving grace owing, in part, to being reared in this Christian country, Brooks believes the same could happen in other parts of the world where there was little Christian witness, but it could only occur if there was money to send missionaries. Of course, this meant that his audience of National Baptists must give more and more to send missionaries to the African field. He writes these heart-searching comments in concluding this short piece: “the Church of Jesus Christ has wickedly failed to make Christ known to all the world, and when we say the church, we mean every man and woman and every saved child in the church, is guilty to the extent that each one has failed to do his part in making Christ known.”<sup>78</sup>

In the April 1925 *Herald* East published an editorial that focuses on the differences and the challenges of the African mission field called, “Missionary Work in Africa Compared with Missionary Work in Other Lands.” One particular challenge and difference articulated by East in this piece once again reveals part of the African American Baptist philosophy regarding missions work in Africa, but also it reflects African American Baptist thought on civilization. He states rather plainly that in other mission fields such as China, India, and Japan there had been written languages before the advent of missionary activity. In contrast, Africa had “thousands of different dialects” without them being written. The challenge here, as understood by East, was to first commit these “dialects” to writing. This would entail hard work on the part of any

---

<sup>78</sup> Walter H. Brooks, “Can You Say So?” *Mission Herald*, March 1925.

missionary or team of missionaries. East views that literacy was a part of civilization, which is an accurate position; but he assumes that societies without literacy lack civilization.<sup>79</sup>

Regarding this aspect of civilization, according to East, the South African field was progressive. He writes about this progress in terms of the following: “The whole Bible, many songs and song books and other literature have been written in several dialects, including Sexosa [sic], Sesuta [sic], Zulu and other languages.”<sup>80</sup> East fails to mention that this was so because of over a century’s worth of mission work done primarily by European missionaries in southern Africa. Yet this was a great advantage for African Americans entering this field.

Another challenge and big difference that was in the African field, in particular the South African field, was the system of racial segregation in South Africa. East states there was nothing like this social situation in other foreign fields; he failed to consider that Indians faced their own difficulties with English racism even in 1925 as they still were under British colonial rule. Because of his time in South Africa and his knowledge of the social climate, East stipulates key points of the segregation system and other racist policies according to the law such as the Native Land Act of 1913.<sup>81</sup>

Despite these differences and challenges peculiar to the African field, especially the South African field, East offers a concluding statement regarding the role of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Mixing sharp Evangelical language with the major goal of Ethiopianism, East writes:

---

<sup>79</sup> “Missionary Work in Africa Compared to Missionary Work in Other Lands,” *Mission Herald*, April 1925.

<sup>80</sup> “Missionary Work in Africa Compared to Missionary Work in Other Lands.”

<sup>81</sup> “Missionary Work in Africa Compared to Missionary Work in Other Lands.”

In spite of these barriers, however, Africa must be redeemed and the so-called dark continent must become radiant with the Gospel of the Son of God, the Christ, our Lord and Savior. Yea, His mighty power that He ever offers to exercise in our behalf is equal to any obstacle to be met with throughout the great continent. We can, we must give Africa the Christ, the panacea for every ill.<sup>82</sup>

Herein lays the Ethiopian hope for all African American Protestants. East expresses a strong faith that God would never forsake Africans, and that their future ascendancy among the great of the world would occur owing to his decree.

In his steady and pointed pastoral tone, Walter Brooks wrote an article called “Standards of Measurement” appearing in the June 1925 *Herald*. This article, in a sense, urges National Baptists to employ an honest and true measurement of their mission work in Africa. Brooks appeals directly to his audience’s identity as Baptists. Though mostly offering negative points, Brooks manages to commend his audience for a modicum of sacrificial giving. In the main, this work criticizes the lack of giving toward foreign missions by National Baptists.<sup>83</sup>

The major point of this editorial is that National Baptists (by 1925) are wealth-producers for America, and because of this they could afford to give more money to missions. When he remarks about National Baptists, Brooks means all National Baptists including the National Baptist Convention of America and the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention. When analyzing the work of all of these African American Baptists that number 3 million, the average giving to foreign mission was less than five cents per person. This information places the issue of financing missions in perspective.<sup>84</sup>

Acknowledging that all African American Baptists had failed to perform adequately their duty to spread the gospel to all nations, Brooks ends on a positive note.

---

<sup>82</sup> “Missionary Work in Africa Compared to Missionary Work in Other Lands.”

<sup>83</sup> Walter H. Brooks, “Standards of Measurement,” *Mission Herald*, June 1925.

<sup>84</sup> Brooks, “Standard of Measurement.”

He peers back at history and noticed that just 50 years prior there was no African American-initiated foreign missions work. At this point, there were three conventions with foreign missions boards. Fifty years ago there were just a few churches giving any regular money to the cause, but now the numbers had grown as the result of “a wonderful awakening.”<sup>85</sup> Though mostly a critical piece, Brooks remains hopeful that African American Baptists would continue to give more and more as they rode the crest of this awakening in the interest in African missions.

In 1925, Secretary East placed forth a clear rendering of National Baptist mission philosophy in the annual report of the Foreign Mission Board. The Secretary presented the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the Board at Baltimore, Maryland in September. In both a Baptist and Ethiopian spirit, East presents what he terms the “danger” of the day regarding missionary work. He offered a brief history of the missionary work done by African American Baptists from George Liele’s work in Jamaica to recent persons such as R. A. Jackson.<sup>86</sup> With this stated, East then reports that European racism had made it dangerous for African American Protestants to perform missionary work in Africa. He asserts that European colonial powers feared African American presence among Africans under the colonial yoke. According to East, the fear consisted of “the wonderful strides” African Americans had “made in civilization.”<sup>87</sup> In short East intimates that African American missionaries would inculcate the ideas of Christian progressivism that would empower African converts to protest their colonial situations.

---

<sup>85</sup> Brooks, “Standard of Measurement.”

<sup>86</sup> *45<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.*, Submitted September 9-14, 1925 at Baltimore, MD, 5.

<sup>87</sup> *45<sup>th</sup> Annual Report*, 6.

Owing to this fear, European colonial powers moved to bar African Americans from supervising directly missionary work. This had affected National Baptists, and African Methodists--these were particularly independent African American Protestant denominations. East states that colonial powers were reluctant to offer missionary permits to African Americans unless there was a white man who headed the sending missionary group. All of this, according to East, was racism. This defines the danger the National Baptist Convention found itself in during the middle of the 1920s. In order to combat this racism and battle against false notions that African American missionaries were trouble-makers and "agitators," East argues that the Board's work in Liberia must be successful. Basically, the future viability of National Baptist work in the rest of West Africa and South Africa depended upon the Liberian field.<sup>88</sup>

At the end of the report, East appeals to his audience's denominational pride to encourage them to aid in making the efforts of the Board during the coming year profitable. East writes: "Every Baptist, if for no other reason but for pride's sake, should join in to make this drive a success."<sup>89</sup> East states that National Baptist work had retreated in West Africa where it once flourished and surpassed African Methodist work. The secretary laments the fact that that was no longer the case. Also he points out that African Methodist Episcopal work in South Africa had begun to flourish in that it had built a church building in Cape Town whereas the church building at Shiloh Baptist Church remained unfinished. East concludes with these tidbits of news in order to arouse the National Baptist constituency to improve the infrastructure in the African field.<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> *45<sup>th</sup> Annual Report*, 6, 8.

<sup>89</sup> *45<sup>th</sup> Annual Report*, 18.

<sup>90</sup> *45<sup>th</sup> Annual Report*, 18.

Another new feature appeared in the *Herald* in 1925. This feature is the publication of Missionary Circle lessons prepared by Prof. J. E. Briggs of Philadelphia. In December's *Herald*, Briggs presented a lesson on Industrial Missions. This was clearly within the philosophical framework of the Board and the convention. This lesson was both to re-enforce part of the National Baptist Convention's motive for sending missionaries to Africa, but also to provide further encouragement to National Baptists to support the Board's "Million Quarter Drive" inaugurated this year in order for National Baptist to overtake African Methodist mission work in West Africa and eventually build a "Tuskegee for the Africans" in Liberia.<sup>91</sup>

To argue that industry is integral to missionary work, Briggs cites biblical examples such as God's placing of Adam in the Garden of Eden to work the land; this indicated to Briggs that "Adam was to be a farmer, artisan."<sup>92</sup> Of course, this implies that God's intention for all of humanity was for there to be agrarian production; this type of industry is God-like. Moving from a purely biblical assertion, Briggs notes that all human progress depended upon a high level of physical progress. Christian lands had devoted themselves to producing for the physical needs of its inhabitants; therefore, progress in intellectual and spiritual realms had been obtained and maintained. For Briggs, Africa lacked this owing to its pervasive "heathenism."<sup>93</sup>

The challenge for Africa, according to Briggs, was to learn to develop a continent teeming with all sorts of natural resources. The implicit point Briggs makes at this juncture is that the goal of National Baptist missionaries was to preach the gospel foremost to non-Christian Africans, but the goal should go beyond just the spiritual

---

<sup>91</sup> J. E. Briggs, "Missionary Circle Lesson," *Mission Herald*, December 1925.

<sup>92</sup> Briggs, "Missionary Circle Lesson."

<sup>93</sup> Briggs, "Missionary Circle Lesson."

development of African peoples. In order for Africans to develop and progress among the continents of people, they must learn how to cultivate their land to produce wealth. This was where National Baptists came into play; they had both the gospel of Jesus Christ and the knowledge of Industrial Education.<sup>94</sup>

Into 1926 the *Herald* continued to publish the Missionary Circle lessons by Prof. Briggs. In the February issue, one appears titled “The American Negro and Africa.” As noted in the above analysis of Briggs’ lesson in December 1925, this lesson is rife with Ethiopian sentiment. The biblical passage that the lesson rests upon is quite applicable to African American obligation to redeem Africa as it is based on Nehemiah 1:1-11. In this passage of Scripture, Nehemiah, the cupbearer for the Persian king, Artaxerxes, learns of the disrepair of Jerusalem, his homeland. Because of this, he yearned to return home to uplift the city and his people. The major point Briggs forwards in this lesson is that African Americans must have the same type of zeal and fervor to redeem Africa, their homeland as Nehemiah had to redeem Jerusalem. This fits within the entire context of back-to-Africa movements that Ethiopianism is a part of as well.<sup>95</sup>

In supporting this major assertion, Briggs states two key thoughts. First, Briggs remarks that over the past one hundred years Europe had been interested in Africa; but this interest had resulted in imperialism and colonialism. What made this a grave problem, according to Briggs, was that imperialist and colonialist nations were Christian nations. In strong terms, Briggs writes about this incidence:

These Christian, civilized nations have exploited the natives and taken every advantage of them. The white world has waylaid, held up, stripped and beaten Africa and left the natives half dead. The stealing of a whole continent by the

---

<sup>94</sup> Briggs, “Missionary Circle Lesson.”

<sup>95</sup> J. E. Briggs, “Missionary Circle Lesson: The American Negro and Africa,” *Mission Herald*, February 1926.

white Christian nations of Europe is the biggest piece of rascality in the history of the human family. It is unparalleled in the record of mankind.<sup>96</sup>

This lesson on the recent history of European contact with Africa would only be taught in an African American context. Second, even though Europe's interest in Africa had been malevolent primarily Briggs states that African American knowledge of Africa was "pitiable." Compared to what other nations of people knew about their homelands, African Americans had little knowledge of Africa, and had little desire to know about Africa, according to Briggs. This had major ramifications for the future as Briggs asserts that: "through Africa civilized and Christianized may the Negroes of the world ever expect to be a sister nation and not a serf nation in the sisterhood of nations."<sup>97</sup> For Africa to have its place in the sun, and for there to be a great Pan-African nationhood, Briggs implies that African American Christians were the linchpin to aid in causing this to occur.

In concluding this lesson, Briggs declares what the African American obligation was to Africa. First, African Americans should learn all they could about Africa. Second, African American Christians must take to heart that they were responsible for the redemption of Africa more than any other group. For Briggs, redemption was multi-faceted including material, intellectual, and spiritual. Third, Briggs calls for African American colleges to make courses on Africa obligatory such as courses on African history, literature, etc. Also there should be mission courses on Africa. This lesson had the intent to cause missionary circles definitely to think more about its support (or lack thereof) toward African missions.<sup>98</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup> Briggs, "The American Negro and Africa."

<sup>97</sup> Briggs, "The American Negro and Africa."

<sup>98</sup> Briggs, "The American Negro and Africa."



As 1926 continued J. S. Mahlangu's visit to America garnered more and more attention in the *Herald*. Though Mahlangu's visit had particular importance to the South African field, Brooks' article, however, exemplifies the 1920s National Baptist gospel commitment and Ethiopianism. The primary assertion Brooks makes in this work is how one conversion can lead to many. He points out that at one revival meeting in Pittsburgh East received the gospel, and he became a missionary to Africa. While there, East preached the gospel and Mahlangu heard it and became a Christian. All of this underscores the significance of both preaching the gospel at home and sending missionaries preaching the gospel abroad, especially to Africa.<sup>99</sup>

As noted previously, an important aspect of African American Ethiopianism is the inculcation of American/Western civilization to Africans in order, in part, to dispel what they conceived of as darkness in Africa. Brooks upholds this Ethiopian aspect in referring to East's role in Mahlangu's life. With his standard eloquence, Brooks writes:

This poor native was born and reared in a heathen home. He was asnighted [sic]: Dr. East brought to him the Light of Life. He was in intellectual darkness, and Dr. East instructed him in the knowledge and arts of civilized life. He was naked like most of his fellow countrymen: Dr. East taught him the art of dressing and rightly caring for his body in every way. He was a stranger to the implements of modern industry: Dr. East taught this man how to make his instruments and how to use them.<sup>100</sup>

From here Brooks also exclaims how Dr. East taught Mahlangu how to build and live in Western homes rather than the mud-huts of traditional South Africa. With the gospel of Jesus Christ, East brought to Mahlangu all of the specifics of Western civilization and culture in everyday living. This short essay presents J. S. Mahlangu as a paragon of National Baptist endeavor in Africa as a National Baptist missionary traveled to South

---

<sup>99</sup> Walter H. Brooks, Untitled, *Mission Herald*, May 1926.

<sup>100</sup> Brooks, Untitled.

Africa preached the gospel and civilization, and then a convert embracing all of this and them becoming a preacher himself. There would be more men like Mahlangu if money continued to flow from National Baptist churches and individuals and missionaries sent to Africa.<sup>101</sup>

In the very next issue in June, there is a short piece on Mahlangu, and this little article pinpoints the key benefit of having him tour certain sections of the United States. At the time of this writing, Mahlangu was in Texas speaking and preaching at churches there. The writer indicates this about Mahlangu and what his presence meant to National Baptists: “Rev. J. S. Mahlangu, who was trained and ordained for the ministry during the time Secretary East was a missionary in South Africa, and who was brought to this country as an ocular demonstration of the power of God on heathen life, has been in this country nearly one year.”<sup>102</sup> The article states that Mahlangu would return home finally in July after a rather fruitful time in America drumming interest for the mission work in South Africa.<sup>103</sup>

In the August 1926 *Herald*, Secretary East reveals the new missionary couple who would travel to South Africa and superintend the Middledrift station. The couple was Rev. and Mrs. John L. Spencer. In two brief notes, East offers a little personal background on both. It must be stated that East never mentions that this couple would undertake the work in South Africa, but the context and subsequent letters from Frederick Vockerodt substantiates this. Besides being an ordained Baptist minister, Spencer was also what the people at Middledrift and the government wanted from an African American missionary--he was a farmer and he received an education at Hampton Institute

---

<sup>101</sup> Brooks, “Untitled.”

<sup>102</sup> Untitled, *Mission Herald*, June 1926.

<sup>103</sup> Untitled.

in order to improve his farming skills. Even though the Board acquiesced to the wishes of the Buchanan Mission and the Union government, supplying an agricultural missionary was exactly what the Board desired as well.<sup>104</sup>

In the November 1926 issue, Arthur H. Thomas contributed an essay entitled “The Importance of the Church,” which encapsulates the very spirit of National Baptist theology inclusive of Ethiopianism during this period in its history. Nothing is known about the writer, however. Thomas’ argument in this work is that the African American Church is the primary means to uplift Africa rather than a wholesale repatriation back to Africa. In supporting this thesis, Thomas concurs with other African American Protestant thinkers who held to the notion of God’s Providential Design in allowing African slavery for the purpose of African redemption in the continent. In a provocative yet unoriginal statement, Thomas observes:

Among the agencies for the uplift and enlightenment of the Negro race, the most influential is the church. Not the uplift of the American Negro, only, but also the two hundred million members of the race in Africa, for whom the American Negro is but a committee, brought to this country by Providence to learn of the true God and master the arts of civilization, that through various ways he might lift up his brother left in the jungles.<sup>105</sup>

Herein lays a statement totally consistent with the thought of Alexander Crummell, Edward Blyden, and the founders of African American Baptist denominationalism. The belief in God’s Providence causing the transportation of millions of Africans to the shores of America for many of them to become Christians and then Christian missionaries to Africa still held sway. This is yet another piece of evidence that demonstrates how enduring this belief was among African American Baptists.

---

<sup>104</sup> Untitled, *Mission Herald*, August 1926.

<sup>105</sup> Arthur H. Thomas, “The Importance of the Church,” *Mission Herald*, November 1926.

In further elaborating on this bold assertion, Thomas argues that foreign missions directed to Africa must be the “arm” of the African American church to perform “the duties assigned to us by Providence.”<sup>106</sup> By planting churches in Africa, African American Christians would share with Africans the great benefits of the church, which would be true intellectual and spiritual enlightenment according to Thomas. Through the church the development of Africans along these lines would occur just as it had with African Americans. Thomas pointedly remarks: “The church must be developed because it develops...No individual can give two or three hours of his time to church services every Sunday without receiving improvement in spirit and in mind. Not only such knowledge as will help him to face life after death, but also the life of today.”<sup>107</sup> In short, Thomas asserts the great relevant value of the church to remedy problems faced by Africans in all facets of life, even the problem of racial prejudice. This is high confidence in the Church of Jesus Christ and African Americans who are members of it.<sup>108</sup>

Publishing lessons for Missionary Circles continued to be a feature in the *Herald*. From time to time, lessons had a distinct focus and application on African missions. Published in May 1927, the *Herald* published another lesson written by Prof. Briggs; this one is entitled, “Africa, the Strategic Mission Field of the World.” In this lesson, Briggs advances the thesis that Africans desired to hear the gospel, and that they wanted to convert out of their “darkness.” Briggs implores African American Baptists that they should exert more effort in order to bring the gospel to more Africans on the continent. This had to be the top priority for the convention in light of the paucity of African

---

<sup>106</sup> Thomas, “The Importance of the Church.”

<sup>107</sup> Thomas, “The Importance of the Church.”

<sup>108</sup> Thomas, “The Importance of the Church.”

Americans in the African mission field. There were many, many Europeans and white Americans on the mission field there; and this should have signaled a general embarrassment among National Baptists because of their lack of missionary zeal for Africans.<sup>109</sup>

In light of this situation, Briggs' appeal to his readers is patently Ethiopian. According to Briggs, African Americans needed to do the major part in evangelizing Africa and this meant sending more missionaries and spending more money. Briggs states: "Our apathy and indifference is appalling. Our eyes are blind and our ears are deaf to the plight of our black brothers and sisters in heathen darkness."<sup>110</sup> This is a strong statement meant to shake National Baptists out of their slumber regarding giving sacrificially to extend Christ's Kingdom in Africa, their "fatherland."

For the October 1927 *Herald*, East wrote an editorial called, "The Sacred and Solemn Obligation of the Negro Church of America to Africa." In it, East re-articulates his belief in Providential Design: "Years ago a few of the black people were miraculously taken from Africa and planted in America. Evidently the purpose of God in bringing them here was that they might get the torchlight of Christianity and civilization and carry it back to their own people."<sup>111</sup> To use contemporary support of this belief, East states that African Americans were better fit to carry the gospel and civilization to Africa than other communities of the African Diaspora in the Western Hemisphere. He labels African Americans as "forerunners of civilization and Christianity" among all African peoples.

---

<sup>109</sup> J. E. Briggs, "Missionary Circle Lesson: Africa, the Strategic Mission Field of the World," *Mission Herald*, May 1927

<sup>110</sup> Briggs, "Africa, the Strategic Mission Field of the World."

<sup>111</sup> Editorial, "The Sacred and Solemn Obligation of the Negro Church of America to Africa," *Mission Herald*, October 1927.

East was a definite believer in African American exceptionalism.<sup>112</sup> This notion of African American exceptionalism was inextricably linked with the civilizationist aspect of Ethiopianism.

As East continues this piece, he carries the same note of African American exceptionalism with a rift of paternalism. He asserts that in light of European colonization and oppression Africans lacked the enlightenment needed for self-protection. The intimation here is that Africans needed protection from European oppression and racism, and that African Americans owing to their possession of Christianity and civilization and having overcome slavery had the wherewithal to protect their African brothers and sisters.<sup>113</sup>

Toward the end of this editorial, East relates African sentiment regarding these issues. He makes it known that the information he was about to share was from Africans he knew. The sentiment among Africans, according to East, was that there were too few African American missionaries in Africa. Africans wondered why African Americans remained at home rather than to serve their own people while European missionaries entered the African field in much larger numbers. To buttress this claim, East states that there were less than 50 African Americans working as missionaries in Africa at the time of the writing. The number of European and Americans of European descent is 7,000.<sup>114</sup>

This once again was an Ethiopian appeal to National Baptists. It is meant to convince further that African Americans must heed this clear call of God's Providence, and take advantage of such a high calling. In conclusion East remarks:

---

<sup>112</sup> Editorial, "The Sacred and Solemn Obligation."

<sup>113</sup> Editorial, "The Sacred and Solemn Obligation."

<sup>114</sup> Editorial, "The Sacred and Solemn Obligation."

The thing that will give people the greatest name by the generations yet unborn will be their going back [to Africa] in large numbers as missionaries, as industrial teachers, as heralds of higher education, carrying the blessings of Christianity to every part of Africa, so that from many parts of that mighty land princes will be rising and millions and millions will be stretching forth their hands to God.<sup>115</sup>

The year 1930 was a milestone year for National Baptists. This year marked its “Jubilee”--fifty years in existence using the 1880 organization of the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention as its founding year. Secretary East used the convention’s Jubilee and the upcoming Semi-Annual Foreign Mission Board meeting and Missionary Conference to excoriate the members of the convention regarding their stinginess pertaining to foreign missions. In uncompromising language East chastises his readers regarding the low ebb of foreign missions financial support:

If there was ever a time in the brief history of the American Negro when we should meet and take time to concentrate on the redemption of Africa, it is now. The ultimate purpose and plan of Jehovah in bringing thousands and thousands of black men and women from the shores of Africa was not to be slaves in the South, not to develop the cotton industry, not to make their white masters rich; neither that they should become Christianized and civilized, not to have fine homes, fine churches and fine schools for themselves here in America; not that they should become wonderful singers, preachers, orators and excel in other professions here in this country. Slavery was only a means to an end, a training institution where industry was taught in a most practical way. The ultimate purpose evidently was, that we should carry back to our brothers and sisters, enslaved by millions in thousands of villages in heathen darkness, the torchlight of Christ and civilization.<sup>116</sup>

This is probably the clearest and most substantial articulation of the Ethiopian providential view of African American history and African American Christian purpose from East. Even in 1930 after fifty years toiling to carry the gospel back to Africa, the theological premise remained unchanged. East continues to upbraid his readers by reminding them that they had failed to comprehend “the purpose of God,” and that they

---

<sup>115</sup> Editorial, “The Sacred and Solemn Obligation.”

<sup>116</sup> Editorial, *Mission Herald*, January 1930.

had cared more about notoriety and fancy church buildings than the souls of their African brethren.<sup>117</sup>

In East's long statement on God's purpose in African American history, there is a strand of thought reminiscent to Booker T. Washington's. In *Up From Slavery*, Washington observes that owing to slavery African Americans were in a better position than whites when the Civil War ended because the former had learned how to work, how to be industrious.<sup>118</sup> This is no surprise since East was a fervent proponent of Industrial Education, which he implemented during his tenure as a missionary in South Africa. East also embraced the same type of amalgamation of racial uplift and civilization Washington endorsed.

The editorial above is a fitting conclusion to the first fifty years of African missions sponsored by National Baptists. The belief that God's plan for Africa's redemption included the enslavement of millions of her sons and daughters so that he would save their souls to return to their ancestral homeland to preach the gospel was the backbone of National Baptist missionary work in Africa. Just as Jordan sounded the same notes in a more pastoral way, East was in concert as he sang with compassion and a true love for Africans.

As the Jubilee convention passed, East notes how it was apparent that his beloved National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. had placed African missions on a lower shelf of priorities. With an evident sense of melancholy East penned these words: "Many of our leaders seemed to have forgotten the place that Foreign Missions should have had in the

---

<sup>117</sup> Editorial.

<sup>118</sup> See Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* ed. W. Fitzhugh Brundage (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003), 47-48.



great Jubilee.”<sup>119</sup> With the voice of a prophet East asserts with untamed boldness that when the leadership forgets foreign missions, God will judge them and their work; there will be no prosperity. Could there be any denying the seriousness Dr. East brought to his work and his calling? Here is evidence of it.<sup>120</sup>

By analyzing this selection of editorials, articles, and reports, the National Baptist leadership within the Foreign Mission Board spoke with one voice regarding the place of African American Baptists in God’s redemptive plan regarding Africa. African American Baptists’ strong sense of God’s Providence failed to help them shake off their rather paternalistic view of their relationship with Africa. Like their European counterparts, African American Baptists referred to Africa as the “dark continent” and wrote of Africa’s darkness in terms of spiritual darkness, but also of intellectual darkness and backwardness. While these African American Baptist leaders clearly clung to their kinship ties to Africa, they were quite Western in their assessment of Africa’s condition.

What is also so clear about the sentiments from the pens of these National Baptist leaders is that though they remained firmly committed to Ethiopianism, they were overtly and unashamedly Baptists. Secretary East, in particular, had a keen awareness of the need for the National Baptist Convention to be the leading African American denomination on the mission fields of Africa. This is demonstrated as he kept well abreast of what the AME Church did in its fields in Africa, and East wanted to outpace it. Denominational pride is quite evident in this analysis of the editorials and other pieces of writing appearing in the *Herald* during East’s tenure in office.

---

<sup>119</sup> Editorial, *Mission Herald*, October 1930.

<sup>120</sup> Editorial.

## Chapter Six: "I am trying to Establish a Big School Here:" Expanding the Ethiopian Vision in South Africa

As Dr. East established himself as the new corresponding secretary, the South African field continued to maintain itself. This is an understatement. Compared to the work in the West African field during East's tenure, the South African field blossomed into a vibrant field bursting with great potential for future years of productivity beyond 1930. This is important for at least two reasons. First, the history of African American missionary activity centered in West Africa since 1821 with Lott Carey and Colin Teague's arrival in Liberia. Subsequent work sponsored by the American Baptist Missionary Convention in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the work done by the BFMC during the 1880s all focused on West Africa. Even African Americans who served under the auspices of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention worked in West Africa. Second, historians of South African missions have ignored the general contribution of African Americans. A lively work supported by the NBC during this period signifies that this organization needs more attention by historians of African missions.

Select letters from 1921 to 1930 demonstrate how African pastors and evangelists (with one African American pastor) caught the vision of the Foreign Mission Board. Also some annual reports from Secretary East demonstrate the same. These men (and women who taught and worked with the women) acknowledged South Africa's great need of the gospel concomitant with Western civilization, but they envisioned that these two gifts would establish self-dependent African communities in the Union rising up to prove to Europeans in the Union that they had the capabilities to achieve greatness. Also the

letters indicate that the South African field was the most active and largest field in the NBC's work in Africa contradicting Chirenje's assertion.

During this Segregation Era (1910-1948) in South Africa, Thompson states that missionaries had serious influence on African groups. Missionaries from Europe and North America provided education for Africans since the government provided no kind of education for Africans. Africans took advantage of this by attending schools such as Lovedale, Adams College, and Fort Hare.<sup>1</sup> These schools produced that generation of African leaders that would pose a great challenge to the government in the 1940s and beyond. This is why African evangelists and pastors employed by the Foreign Mission Board were so intent on building educational institutions to educate their people. This fit squarely with the National Baptist sense of African redemption.

In this period, Africans had to deal with intense land alienation and suppression of economic opportunity. The aforementioned Native Land Act of 1913 relegated Africans to only seven percent of the land (their land was "reserves"). The Urban Areas Act (1923) stipulated that Africans could no longer have permanent residence in the cities unless employed by whites. The implication of this act was that it made the cities the havens for whites. In the wake of the Land Act, African farming collapsed; this caused African men to migrate to the cities and the mines to earn very poor wages to support their families back on the reserves.<sup>2</sup> With more men moving to the urban areas, this would mean a greater opportunity for evangelization for pastors and evangelists. Baptists would take advantage of this situation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Thompson, *History*, 156.

<sup>2</sup> Thompson, *History*, 164; Omer-Cooper, *History*, 169.

J. S. Mahlangu, the pastor and superintendent of the mission station in the Transvaal wrote a letter to the Board dated 8<sup>th</sup> November, 1921. This letter appears in the January 1922 *Herald*. He writes with a bit of hope for better relations between him and the Board owing to the change in leadership with Dr. East assuming the post of secretary. Mahlangu states that he hoped “the Master is rebuilding the bridge from America to our country with much more base than before.”<sup>3</sup> This refers to his perceived neglect on part of the Board during Jordan’s administration of the work in the Transvaal. Outside of these comments, Mahlangu states that the work there was “growing more and more” in terms of new members who have joined the church. He writes that the church had over 100 members, and the Sunday school had 40 students. He writes bluntly that if he would receive adequate funds from the Board they would be able to have a Day School at Kliptown, but at the present they lack the money to have such. Mahlangu also reports that he had expanded his evangelistic activities to include the Orange Free State, and there were 113 members there with a young minister overseeing the church. Based upon this letter, prospects were good in that part of the Union of South Africa.<sup>4</sup>

Another letter published in this issue from South Africa came from H. A. Payne, who was the new superintendent of the Middledrift station. In the letter dated November 6, 1921, Payne offers his congratulations to his predecessor, James East, in assuming his new position. As the letter continued, Payne was rather self-effacing as he stipulated that he desired the Board to have “all of the say” in the running of the work. In this statement, Payne implies that East’s experience there at Middledrift would lend him to operate the station from Philadelphia rather than allowing Payne to supervise as he deemed fit. In

---

<sup>3</sup> J. S. Mahlangu, Letter, *Mission Herald*, January 1922.

<sup>4</sup> Mahlangu, Letter.

more serious tones. Payne states that the station had no support from the Board at this time. This situation had been the source of continual “anxiety” for him and others at the station. He writes much about the pending purchase of a farm for the station, which East knew about possibly and probably planned before leaving South Africa. Payne was hopeful that if the station obtained the farm that the prospects of the station would improve.<sup>5</sup>

In the February 1922 issue of the *Herald East* published a rather surprising letter from Rev. E. B. P. Koti dated November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1921 from Harding, Natal, South Africa. In the letter, Koti congratulates Dr. East for his appointment as corresponding secretary, and then he asks for re-instatement as a missionary of the Foreign Mission Board. Also in the text of the letter Koti pleads to “let bygones be bygones” indicating that there had been some friction between the two men in the past probably surrounding their work together in the Native Baptist Association. Koti requests support for his work in Natal and also in Pondoland, where he supervised that work independently. He writes that they had no place of worship in his potential main station at Qaugola in Natal because of “the attitude of those in authority.”<sup>6</sup> More than likely, Koti refers to European authority in Natal province. He was interested in doing some farming on the land there. All in all, there were 123 members in all of these stations. Koti asks for only £5 per month of support realizing how wide the Board’s operations were at that time.<sup>7</sup>

The other letter from South Africa in this issue came from John Ntlahla who wrote from the Transkei, and the letter is dated December 14, 1921. The report is rather positive regarding the growth of the work as Ntlahla states that they had twelve stations

---

<sup>5</sup> H. A. Payne, Letter, *Mission Herald*, January 1922.

<sup>6</sup> E. B. P. Koti, Letter, *Mission Herald*, February 1922.

<sup>7</sup> Koti, Letter.

and five day schools. In addition, the church had 452 members. Though the growth had been good, Ntlahla indicates that they lacked the funds to build worship buildings even though they had the land to do so. The greatest need of this work was money even to support Ntlahla.<sup>8</sup>

In May the *Herald* printed another letter from Koti in Natal. The letter dated March 22, 1922 indicates that he received the money sent to him by the Board. Koti also indicates that Nineteenth Street Baptist Church under the pastorate of Rev. Walter Brooks had agreed to support his work. After this news, Koti explains the challenges he faced ministering in Natal compared to ministry in the Cape. First, he remarks that non-Christian Africans in Natal were “deep down in ignorance and superstitious practices and beliefs in witchcraft in a degree lower than Cape Natives.”<sup>9</sup> An interesting difference that Koti notes was that in the Cape the “Native Code” disparaged African tradition and custom, but in Natal there were allowances for tradition and custom. The reference to the “Native Code” is a reference to various laws, or codes specifically for Africans in the various provinces of the Union of South Africa. For Koti, this was an impediment to the work of gospel missions and against Christian practices in general. He offers the example that African traditional marriage was “more valid than...Christian marriage.”<sup>10</sup> One of Koti’s goals in light of the situation in Natal was to found a private school for Christian education, but the lack of money was a serious obstacle to this goal.<sup>11</sup>

A lengthy letter dated February 18, 1922 from Middledrift appears in this issue written by Rev. H. A. Payne. He indicates that the school had grown much as the station

---

<sup>8</sup> John Ntlahla, Letter, *Mission Herald*, February 1922.

<sup>9</sup> E. B. P. Koti, Letter, *Mission Herald*, May 1922.

<sup>10</sup> Koti, Letter.

<sup>11</sup> Koti, Letter.

had employed four African teachers to teach the students. In another positive note, Payne states that the South African government had included more Industrial Education for the lower school standards for Africans. Commenting on this change, Payne writes: "You do not know how glad I am of this, it will make our nation more industrious than it has been. It will be a great help to our future industrial school, for as you know that our people are beginning to think industrially."<sup>12</sup> It is obvious how integral Payne believes Industrial Education was to the uplift and self-sufficiency of Africans in South Africa. Not only this, Payne holds firmly that Middledrift was among the institutions that exemplified the great virtue of self-dependency especially in light of the station obtaining a new farm. The focus and goal at Middledrift was still to become "an African Tuskegee."<sup>13</sup>

Published in the June 1922 *Herald* is a letter from John Ntlahla dated May 28, 1922. Writing from Xwili Bityi, Ntlahla opened the letter thanking Dr. East for the money sent to support the work, and he also indicates that during his fifteen years of work under the Board he had received little support. Ntlahla seemingly connects the good amount received then with the new leadership on the Board, namely Dr. East's post as secretary.<sup>14</sup>

The report about the work was rather promising. Ntlahla states that the church was growing along with all other aspects and departments of the work. At the time of the letter's writing, there were fifteen waiting candidates for baptism according to Ntlahla. Not only was the church growing, the three Day Schools were as well; Ntlahla states that they needed to build a new school building because of overcrowded conditions. He also

---

<sup>12</sup> H. A. Payne, Letter, *Mission Herald*, May 1922.

<sup>13</sup> Payne, Letter.

<sup>14</sup> John Ntlahla, Letter, *Mission Herald*, July 1922.

reports concerning the work with the “Poudos” (maybe a reference to the Pondos), which was “very, very pleasing” and blessed by the favor of the chief.<sup>15</sup>

One final letter from South Africa came from Rev. H. A. Payne in Middledrift dated May 30, 1922. He reports that he received money from the Board to pay the teachers at the Sunshine School and the Mount Zion School. About the church Payne states that they “are working on the spiritual side of the Church.”<sup>16</sup> His work thus far had wrought improvement among the members of the church. Payne also states that last year they had “revival,” and one (revival) had already settled there since the beginning of the year.<sup>17</sup>

In closing the letter, Payne mentions the farm. According to Payne, “The farm is still safe and we hope to have it in the near future.”<sup>18</sup> The statement about the farm was of great concern for East since it was his intention to secure land for a farm while working at Middledrift. It seemed as though the future of this station held in place because of the good prospects of this land for farming. Arguably, the farm would enable the station to become truly the “African Tuskegee.”

The next letter from the South African field appears in the November issue of the *Mission Herald*. The letter is from the Transkei written by John Ntlahla dated September 11, 1922. In the letter, Ntlahla thanks Dr. East for \$75 sent from the Sunday School of Union Baptist Church in Philadelphia where Dr. W. G. Parks, the new president of the convention was the pastor. He offers congratulations to Dr. East for his appointment as corresponding secretary, but laments that he was in the middle of doing great work in

---

<sup>15</sup> Ntlahla, Letter.

<sup>16</sup> H. A. Payne, Letter, *Mission Herald*, July 1922.

<sup>17</sup> Payne, Letter.

<sup>18</sup> Payne, Letter.



South Africa when he received this new position. With a slight sense of resignation, Ntlahla writes: "I realize now that although you are there you are still in Africa and we are enjoying the good fruits of your work."<sup>19</sup> In closing, he reports that the church and the school were doing well and "progressing;" during the last quarter of the year twelve Africans received baptism out of "heathenism." At last, their new school building was just about finished.<sup>20</sup>

At the end of the year of 1922, a letter from E. B. P. Koti appears in the *Herald* from Natal without a date. Koti details in this letter that the Union Parliament allowed him the opportunity to build on two parcels of land. Koti intended to build some buildings on this land, and because of such he solicited help from African American Baptists to help defray the cost of this ambitious project. In a statement quite reflective of African American Ethiopianism and uplift philosophy, Koti writes: "We want to show these people that a black man can do something for himself if only given a chance."<sup>21</sup> The strength of such a statement is to appeal to the same sentiment shared by the audience of this letter.

Koti closes the letter by reporting on the work at the mission station. He remarks about his preaching schedule on the Lord's Day, which included preaching at every out station. Even if there were five converts at a given location, Koti had services for them. The great need of this station, according to Koti, was an industrial school. His desire was to see traditional Africans send their children to a mission school, but they "are against schooling their children."<sup>22</sup> Koti states that he would school traditional children free of

---

<sup>19</sup> John Ntlahla, Letter, *Mission Herald*, November 1922.

<sup>20</sup> Ntlahla, Letter.

<sup>21</sup> E. B. P. Koti, Letter, *Mission Herald*, December 1922.

<sup>22</sup> Koti, Letter.

charge only if they would receive money to support a teacher from the Board. As of now, only Christian Africans could afford to support a teacher; therefore, only Christian children received an education there in Natal.<sup>23</sup>

Since Secretary East gave his Annual Report to the convention in December of this year, it is worth ending the activities of 1922 in the South African mission field with his report, which he drew from the letters sent to him that year. He also reprinted his own article he wrote for a South African newspaper as well as a letter written by the leaders of the Middledrift mission. For the purpose of this chapter, there will be no analysis of the letter from Middledrift reprinted in the report because its content is unrelated to the themes therein. This portion of the Annual Report offers a good summary of the year's work in South Africa, and it also anticipates the upcoming year's needs.

East begins his South African report by highlight the work at Middledrift. For obvious reasons on East's part, he considered this the crowning jewel of the Board's work in South Africa. According to East, Middledrift was "the largest and most important mission station under the auspices of the National Baptist Convention."<sup>24</sup> What East emphasizes in this report on Middledrift was its Industrial School, and for good reason as East exclaims. He states: "The native people are crying for light and instruction as never before."<sup>25</sup> All of the departments of the school had remained "active" throughout the school year; these departments were carpentry, blacksmithing, and wagon-making. Also students had learned agriculture, and women students had learned domestic science being trained as home-makers and housekeepers. In addition to the Industrial Arts, the school

---

<sup>23</sup> Koti, Letter.

<sup>24</sup> *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 19.

<sup>25</sup> *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 19.

also possessed a ministerial training class of which one student had received ordination during the year.<sup>26</sup>

Regarding the potential purchase of the farm for the Middledrift station, East offers more clarity than what Payne wrote in his letter sent and published earlier in the year in the *Herald*. East reports that the plans were almost finished to make the first payment on a \$5,000 farm in the Cape. He indicates that the land would allow for the cattle owned by the station to graze, and that the land was well-watered. Such an addition to the Middledrift station would make it truly a South African Tuskegee.<sup>27</sup>

In this report, East makes it plain that the work of the Board in South Africa was to help establish a semblance of African institutional independence there. He mentions that whites in South Africa enjoy a “monopoly” on education, and only African American-run schools--at Middledrift and another run by the AME Church in the Transvaal--offered any type of competition. In a pointed statement, East explains: “The zeal of the native people for a liberal education and the white man’s fear of the black man getting control of the schools where he might shape his own destiny are largely responsible for the doors of South Africa being closed against the colored people of America.”<sup>28</sup> Whether this statement is accurate, or not, it reflects an African American sentiment upon racial affairs in South Africa that were similar to the opinion in America. The issue was about control. Africans in South Africa recognized the liberating power of education, especially in the control of themselves or African Americans, who desire to see them free of white domination. East reasons that this was why the South African government had barred African American missionaries from entering the Union.

---

<sup>26</sup> *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 19.

<sup>27</sup> *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 22.

<sup>28</sup> *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 20.

In addition to commenting on white fear of African control of education, East also asserts that whites in South Africa feared African control of churches. Owing to the history of racial prejudice in South Africa, East states that it was “very difficult for the white man to pastor the native man” because of this independent African churches had arisen.<sup>29</sup> Because the Board’s churches had African American and African pastors at the helms, the government was suspicious of its work and labeled it “Ethiopian.” Even in such a harsh racial climate, East remarks that “Our native Baptist churches are moving on to success...”<sup>30</sup>

Moving from the theme of racism, East notes the need for physicians in South Africa. This was something that East observed during his eleven years in South Africa, and he reprinted his newspaper editorial on this issue in this report for the convention. In prefacing his editorial, East argues that white land policy (especially the Native Land Act of 1913) had taken land from Africans, and the incidence of migrant labor had caused Africans to fall prey to diseases because the lack of arable land had prevented Africans from drinking milk and other staples they used to rely upon for nutrition. In addition to these phenomena, Europeans brought diseases such as “tuberculosis, typhus, [and] small pox.”<sup>31</sup> Since the majority of Africans lived in crowded dwellings without proper ventilation, these diseases had proper conditions to flourish. The lack of access to proper medical treatment resulted in the loss of thousands of lives, according to East.<sup>32</sup>

By bringing attention to this sad reality, East desired the convention to think of ways to send medical missionaries to South Africa. East, however, states that European

---

<sup>29</sup> *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 20.

<sup>30</sup> *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 20.

<sup>31</sup> *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 23.

<sup>32</sup> *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 23.

colonial governments failed to recognize American physicians; this was the case in the Union of South Africa also. Also in the Union, Africans were unable to attend the universities owing to the color bar; and the cost to educate Africans overseas was too expensive. This was quite a problem for a Christian organization.<sup>33</sup>

In the article, “The Need for a Native Doctor,” East links health with Evangelicalism. Again, this article is part of East’s report to the NBC; its significance in this chapter is that he wrote during his tenure as a missionary in South Africa. He asserts that Jesus Christ had concern for the health of people as noted in his many miracles of healing recorded in the Gospels. East also states, “The New Testament shows that the physical healing of the people often led to the salvation of many.”<sup>34</sup> With this statement, East revealed that his concern as a Christian missionary (at the time) was for the physical health of the people he served as well as their spiritual health.

The focus area is the eastern Cape, namely King Williamstown and Alice; this was the area that East lived and worked in while he was in South Africa. Though his remarks are laced with an African American civilizationist sentiment, a reader cannot help but view what he reported as a real problem bordering upon a health crisis. East reports how ill-trained “witch doctors” and “medicine men” had caused “human suffering” and “untimely deaths.” He also criticizes traditional remedies that had also caused undue harm such as a traditional healer making a patient sit on a hot iron until it burned the person in order to treat a physical malady.<sup>35</sup> All of his criticism reveals his sharp disdain of this particular aspect of southern African traditional society that went part and parcel with African American Ethiopianism.

---

<sup>33</sup> *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 23.

<sup>34</sup> *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 25.

<sup>35</sup> *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 25.

East's argument in this article is for the government to allow Africans entrance into a medical school or allowance to take medical courses. This is the only remedy East envisions in order to alleviate the crisis he had witnessed among Africans in the Cape. At the bottom line of this article is East's assertion that color prejudice had helped to cause this health problem; and the reversal of color prejudice would lead to the ultimate solution of this problem. Even though this article is about health issues, East connected Evangelical concerns and social concerns to both a South African audience and his African American audience.<sup>36</sup>

In February 1923, there was only one letter from South Africa printed in the *Herald*. This letter came from John Ntlahla writing from the Transkei dated October 1, 1922. This letter is once more a positive report from the work in this part of southern Africa. Ntlahla states that he along with E. B. P. Koti and H. A. Payne attended a meeting of the Baptist Union of South Africa representing the Native Baptist Association where they "made a good impression" upon the other messengers in attendance.<sup>37</sup>

The rest of the letter offers brief summaries of his visit to Oanda, which was an out station of the work in Transkei, and the progress being made at his church. About Oanda, Ntlahla focuses on the gardening taught at the school. Regarding his church, the Day School was well; and they hoped to open their new building later that month. Ntlahla also mentions his brother, Josie, who at the time of the writing worked in Pondoland. John Ntlahla urges the Board to add him to the list of supported missionary workers.<sup>38</sup>

Although there is only one letter from the South African field in this issue of the *Herald*, there is a long excerpted report from J. E. East about his work at Middeldrift.

---

<sup>36</sup> *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 26.

<sup>37</sup> John Ntlahla, Letter, *Mission Herald*, February 1923.

<sup>38</sup> Ntlahla, Letter.

This is quite an informative report as it details some of the history of South Africa as well as the current conditions (current as of 1921 when East left the mission field). It is unknown why this report appears in this issue nearly two years after the East's returned to America, but it does reflect East's missionary philosophy and his vision for National Baptist work in South Africa. The excerpts presented in this issue focus upon farming at Middledrift and land.

In the section on farming, East mentions the lack of land available for Africans curtailing their agricultural development in a land that was primarily an agricultural paradise. According to East, there was a primary reason for the lack of land: minority-ruled governmental policy. The Native Land Act of 1913 allowed Africans only seven percent of the land in the Union; because of this Africans were unable to subsist on such meager land holdings. With the diamond mines in Kimberely and the gold mines on the Witwatersrand, African men migrated to work there to feed their families. All in all, the lack of land enriched white farmers who found a market for their farm products and purchased the overstocked cattle of Africans.<sup>39</sup>

With these occurrences causing Africans to depend on whites for their economic livelihood, East argues for the need of Industrial Education in South Africa as the major program of National Baptist mission work. He states anecdotally that when he had appealed to whites that Africans needed more land whites looked at the small land holdings of Africans being under-utilized and quipped that Africans were unable to use their little land properly. East points out that if he and others could teach African farmers good agricultural skills then they could well-utilize their small land in order to get more land. This assertion is quite Washingtonian similar to Washington's metaphor of "casting

---

<sup>39</sup> J. E. East, Untitled, *Mission Herald*, February 1923.

down one's bucket where he was." East realizes that if Africans in South Africa were to obtain their manhood rights and a modicum of independence they had to make themselves indispensable in an area in which they were well-suited to contribute to the economic health of the Union. East points out in this section that Africans grew corn as a staple, and that they were pastoralists. The implication is that with proper schooling in agricultural techniques that Africans could dominate in corn production and cattle-raising.<sup>40</sup>

The next excerpt focuses on the land issues faced by Africans in South Africa that made them dependents of whites in the society. In this section, East argues that African dependence was a result of a calculated plan on the part of the Union government for the benefit of whites. The Native Land Act, according to East, meant to push African men off of the land to work in the diamond and gold mines as cheap, unskilled laborers. In addition, East asserts that the government knew how to cause the migration of African men: take their arable land because Africans will keep their cattle over desiring to produce crops on the land. By making this assertion, the readers of the *Herald* received knowledge of the harsh, *de jure* racism that was present in South Africa.<sup>41</sup>

With the institutional racism that existed in South Africa during this period, East presents the case why National Baptist missionary presence was necessary. He reveals a big difference between European missionaries and African American missionaries. East declares that European missionary efforts were short-sighted and failed to uplift Africans who came to believe the gospel. He states: "Many European missionaries laboring among the natives only seek to get them to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but never urge them

---

<sup>40</sup> East, Untitled.

<sup>41</sup> East, Untitled.



to build homes, to dress, to educate their children and to live as the white man lives. No, to them, the hut is good enough and no furniture is necessarily needed."<sup>42</sup> There is much in this statement. First, East intimates that many European missionaries desired to keep Africans in a type of inferior position in South African society; and they viewed Christianity as only an insurance policy against eternity in hell. Second, East assumes that missionary work was to be concerned with social and economic uplift as already noted before. Third, East's statement is paternalistic, which African American Ethiopianism tended to be. This paternalism assumes that African culture was in some way deficient, and needed the civilization inherent (according to East's perception) in Christianity.

For East it was imperative that Africans in South Africa control their own institutions among which the church was highly important. Any attempt by Africans to control the Church resulted in the government labeling it as "Ethiopian" in a pejorative sense. According to East, this label whether it was warranted or not disabled an African church from receiving a building permit and allowance to engage in missionary work among other Africans. For East, this spelled the great need for African American Baptists, who controlled their own churches, to have a presence in South Africa in order to give African Baptists the control they needed over their own churches.<sup>43</sup>

That there existed independent African Baptist churches (under African leadership) was because of National Baptists. East mentions the work of Rev. R. A. Jackson at this point, who organized Shiloh Baptist Church in Cape Town in 1894. From there, he summarizes the beginning of the church and mission station where he labored--

---

<sup>42</sup> East, Untitled.

<sup>43</sup> East, Untitled.

Middledrift, which J. I. Buchannan founded in 1897. This is a clear Ethiopian case East makes: if Africans in South Africa were to control their churches, which in turn would establish schools under their control they needed the help of African Americans with their degree of civilization. In brief, East holds that African uplift depended upon African American missionary endeavor.<sup>44</sup>

There are two letters from the South African field that appear in the April issue of the *Herald*. One from Fred Vockerodt who wrote from the Buchannan Mission dated February 7, 1923, and one from L. J. Tshalata who wrote from Harding, Natal dated February 6, 1923. Both men wrote of the then privations current in South Africa. Vockerodt states plainly that “people are starving.”<sup>45</sup> Tshalata writes that they were having “a bad time” in his part of South Africa as: “Prices on stock are going down; cows are sold for one pound, oxen for two pounds and horses (the full age horse) for three pounds or two bags of mealies.”<sup>46</sup> Tshalata also mentions something interesting in terms of East being the secretary. Despite the fact that Tshalata had received no monetary support from the Board through African American Virginia Baptists, he had hope because East served as a missionary in South Africa and he knew those who were in the South African field. Tshalata states: “Dr. East, I thank the hand which brought you from America to Africa and again for taking you from Africa to America. The result is that we who were not in America are known. We are not only known but we are also getting

---

<sup>44</sup> East, Untitled. In this section of the report, East also mentions the work done by the AME in South Africa including it in the whole African American scheme of African uplift in South Africa.

<sup>45</sup> Fred Vockerodt, Letter, *Mission Herald*, April 1923.

<sup>46</sup> L. J. Tshalata, Letter, *Mission Herald*, April 1923.

support.”<sup>47</sup> Even amidst severe trial, Tshalata remains hopeful that National Baptists would continue their support primarily because of James East.

After a long period of silence, a letter from Shiloh Baptist Church in Cape Town appeared in the May 1923 issue of the *Herald*. The letter from D.W. Daniel is dated March 26, 1923 from Cape Town, of course. The rather substantial letter addresses six items. First, Daniel thanks East and the Board for recommending a man for the pastorate of the church. Daniel states that the church had been without a pastor for thirteen years and it had been a great struggle for it to remain in existence. Second, Daniel notes that the church had a young man from within the congregation that desired ministerial training at Middledrift, and Daniel desires to know who should receive the money for his training: Rev. Payne, or the Board in America. Third, he mentions that their work in the Cape would be far more advanced beyond what it was but lack of a pastor had arrested the church’s development. Fourth, the church only had 40 members, and Daniel explains that if they had help (probably pastoral help) the church would flourish and be missionary-minded. Fifth, Daniel thanks the church’s deacons for their help during this time of trial. Sixth, Daniel thanks East for the support that enabled the church to build its current edifice.<sup>48</sup>

The May *Herald* published the last quarterly report of 1922 from the church and work in Harding, South Africa where E. B. P. Koti ministered and supervised. Other than writing about the Christmas tree and the end of the year farming, Koti states that he had a chance to preach to traditional Africans (Koti calls them “red people”) about the origins of Christmas, and the previous Lord’s Day he baptized five new converts. Koti also

---

<sup>47</sup> Tshalata, Letter.

<sup>48</sup> D. W. Daniel, Letter, *Mission Herald*, May 1923.

thanks the Board for the support he had received, especially the financial underwriting of Nineteenth Street Baptist Church, which Walter Brooks led. He was grateful to have “true friends” in America.<sup>49</sup>

One final letter from South Africa appears in this issue. J. S. Mahlangu wrote from Transvaal dated April 18, 1923. First, Mahlangu offers a promising summary of his work in the Orange Free State, where he experienced success in re-vitalizing the missionary work of the late Rev. Sondukwana. From the letter, Sondukwana had a fairly extensive work in the Free State as Mahlangu visited at least two churches there; and he reported that he baptized twelve converts at Sunsosses and met with another thirty converts there. At a place called Bearweek, Mahlangu baptized five more converts and received thirteen other Africans into the church by Christian experience.<sup>50</sup>

Mahlangu also offers a brief report of his own station where the people there purchased a house to meet in on the Lord’s Day worship service. The cost was £115.0.0 of which they will pay over time. An Afrikaaner farmer agreed to have Mahlangu’s church to house a school in his “Native village,” which Mahlangu remarks was against the norm among Afrikaners in the Transvaal. With this new and promising prospect, Mahlangu asks the National Baptist “family” for money to support a teacher. In ending this portion of the letter, Mahlangu writes simply that the “work of our main station is pleasing me.”<sup>51</sup> Without a word from Secretary East or other writers who published articles in the *Herald* this letter on its own should have served notice to the readership and to the churches of the NBC the great need mission work had. If the main station and the out stations in the Transvaal were to flourish, they needed copious amounts of money;

---

<sup>49</sup> E. B. P. Koti, Quarterly Report, *Mission Herald*, May 1923.

<sup>50</sup> J. S. Mahlangu, Letter, *Mission Herald*, May 1923.

<sup>51</sup> Mahlangu, Letter.

if the revived work in the Orange Free State was to survive it needed more churches to give their money.

In June 1923, the *Herald* published a rather heart-wrenching letter from L. J. Tshalata writing from the Middlewater School in Harding, Natal dated April 26, 1923. In very terse words, Tshalata informs Secretary East that he had yet to receive any support from the Virginia Baptists that year (something that East would have known already). Without this aid, which Tshalata counts on and made plans based on receipt of these funds, he would “be in danger.” What this danger was, Tshalata fails to indicate. He also states that “This year is very hard,” which probably refers to the drought or poor agricultural conditions in Natal. After such a dour report, Tshalata ends the letter by indicating that the Native Association ordained two men as ministers who served in Natal with him, namely E. Ndlazi and Charles Paper.<sup>52</sup>

To end the letter, Tshalata mentions that the famine in the area had caused the number of students to decrease sharply. He appeals for financial help to build a fence to protect their “garden” from wild animals. Even in the midst of severe famine, this station showed the type of promise to encourage more National Baptist churches and individuals to give money. From the letter, it was obvious that Secretary East had concern for this station.<sup>53</sup>

In the August 1923 *Herald* a letter from Eban Koti appears summarizing the work of the Native Baptist Association in its “Transvaal Branch.” He writes from Natal dated June 11, 1923. This is the first time learning of the association’s presence in the Transvaal indicating that the Native Association was truly a “national” one in that it had

---

<sup>52</sup> L. J. Tshalata, Letter, *Mission Herald*, June 1923.

<sup>53</sup> Tshalata, Letter.

member churches in the Cape, Natal, and in Transvaal. Koti writes that he attended a session of the Transvaal Branch, and witnessed a successful session “spiritually, morally and financially.”<sup>54</sup>

What is of note in the letter is Koti’s report of the ordination of two ministers. One of the ministers came from the “Apostolic Faith Mission,” which was a Pentecostal group; and the other according to Koti returned after wandering “away from the fold.” It is unknown what that means, but it does reflect that African ministers were wont to shift denominational allegiances. What this part of the letter projects is denominational integrity on the part Koti and other leaders of the Native Association. The association committed itself to Baptist principles and practices, and refrained from being something other than Baptist.<sup>55</sup>

One other comment on the Transvaal meeting is that four people received baptism as new converts. This statement gives the readers an indication that associational meetings were, in part, meant to attract non-Christians to the Church. There was evangelistic preaching in the meetings geared to “win the lost.” It was nothing unusual for African American Baptist readers to learn of this because the same took place in their associational meetings.<sup>56</sup>

Other than missionary letters, there is an article in this issue of the *Herald* written by Bessie Payne, wife of Rev. H. A. Payne. Bessie Payne writes specifically about the condition of African women in South Africa, and offers an interesting perspective regarding the special attention and ministry women needed. This article, “The Outlook for Native Women of South Africa,” has a strong Ethiopianist bend, but more on the

---

<sup>54</sup> E. B. P. Koti, Letter, *Mission Herald*, August 1923.

<sup>55</sup> Koti, Letter.

<sup>56</sup> Koti, Letter.

civilizationist aspect of it. First, Payne admits that African women in South Africa were “look[ed] down upon.”<sup>57</sup> She refers to the recent occurrence in America giving women the right to vote owing to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920. Payne states that this had allowed women greater participation in American civic, social, and religious life. In her thinking, this was a good thing. In relation to South Africa, there had been some women who had gone to school and “have tasted somewhat of civilization.”<sup>58</sup> These women, according to Payne, wanted the same type participation American women had earned.

To support this assertion that women occupied an inferior station in society, Payne summarizes what an average African woman did. She cared for the children, she cooked, she helped to prepare the fields for planting season, she harvested the crops, and then she prepared the home for the winter. All of these things she did with little help from the men though Payne writes that most of the men had migrated to Johannesburg to work in the mines.<sup>59</sup>

The second major point Payne makes in this article is that the civilization of African women would result in better homes for Africans. Through mission education (National Baptist), “civilized” boys and girls desired to change the situation for women and home life described above. For change, the younger generation must be the one causing it. Payne writes:

They are the ones upon whom we depend in civilizing South Africa. If we can instill in them principles for which we stand then there is some salvation, but it can only be done through the children. They are beginning to understand that if

---

<sup>57</sup> Bessie Payne, “The Outlook for Native Women of South Africa.” *Mission Herald*, August 1923.

<sup>58</sup> B. Payne, “The Outlook for Native Women.”

<sup>59</sup> B. Payne, “The Outlook for Native Women.”

they are to have good homes they must have good women, and already there is a change.<sup>60</sup>

Payne writes further that the men had more respect for their wives, and that they realized that it was better for their wives to be “housewives” in a Western sense--staying in the home and caring for the children rather than spend an inordinate amount of time in the fields. Even though Payne sees housewifery as essential in civilization, she also views education for women as important. There was a need for African nurses, she states.<sup>61</sup>

In reading this article, it is clear that Payne’s missionary philosophy went far beyond teaching African children the basics of the Christian faith. There would be no successful missionary endeavor without instilling African American civilization in order for there to be a re-orientation of African society in South Africa. Payne’s concerns were clearly bourgeois and fairly conservative, but in South Africa the idea of African women being housewives was something altogether radical. Such a focus would help to engender a Christian society among Africans that was on the path toward self-support, integrity, and manhood and womanhood. The structure of South African society denied African men and women the opportunity to choose for men to be primary financial supporters of their households and for African women to work in the home and work as home-makers.

During September, the Foreign Mission Board gave its Annual Report to the National Baptist Convention in Los Angeles, California. In this report, Secretary East reprinted a letter from the South African field that failed to appear in previous issues of the *Herald*. The letter is from John Ntlahla who wrote from the Transkei dated June 15, 1923. This is an encouraging letter stating how appreciative he was of the work Dr. East did and continued to do in Africa, especially South Africa. After thanking East for the

---

<sup>60</sup> B. Payne, “The Outlook for Native Women.”

<sup>61</sup> B. Payne, “The Outlook for Native Women.”



money received from the Union Baptist Sunday School, Ntlahla makes an interesting remark about the significance of the work done by National Baptists: "I might say this, South Africa is the product of work among the Baptists."<sup>62</sup>

Ntlahla also mentions the extension of Baptist work in South Africa. He reports that he and H. A. Payne had traveled to Cape Town on business regarding their school in Quanda, but while there they organized a new church in that he believed would "be a big church." This was quite encouraging as it made two churches under the auspices of the Board in Cape Town.<sup>63</sup>

Another issue that Ntlahla refers to in the letter was the school at Quanda. Quanda was important owing to the controversy with David Tyesi and his unauthorized work in competition with the Board's work. Ntlahla urges Secretary East to continue to support the school at Quanda because "many people speak well of" him there; and he should persevere in a work he began.<sup>64</sup> This letter demonstrates the high esteem South Africans held the work done by Secretary East and the Board.

The report on the South African field is a glowing one. East reports that the "South African field stands out as one of our greatest fields of missionary activity."<sup>65</sup> Among the fourteen mission stations, there were "over 7,000 Baptists" in the South African field that included churches and stations all over the Cape, in Natal, in the Transkei, in Pondoland, in the Orange Free State, and in the Transvaal. Owing to migratory labor, there could have been more members, admitted East. Also there could be

---

<sup>62</sup> *43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report of the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention, Inc.* Submitted at Los Angeles, California September 5-10, 1923, 22.

<sup>63</sup> *43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report*, 22.

<sup>64</sup> *43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report*, 22.

<sup>65</sup> *43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report*, 42.

no church. With African being dependent on white South Africa, this was one of the effects on church life.<sup>66</sup>

Among the fourteen stations, there were many out stations that had Sunday schools and Day Schools. East reports that at this time there were nine Day Schools operated by affiliated churches, and only one industrial school, which was located at Middledrift. East describes the industrial school at Middledrift as “perhaps the greatest educational institution connected with our Board” on the continent of Africa.<sup>67</sup> The school continued to teach in the areas of agriculture, industry, normal, and ministry. The Board had no ownership of the land that the school rested upon; according to East, a chief ceded the land to Buchanan back in 1897. Since then, the province was in basic ownership of the land. It was important for the Board to obtain ownership of the land to “assure” that the school can remain where it was.<sup>68</sup>

Though it is clear from this report that the work in the South African field was flourishing, the large issue that hindered the work, according to East, was the restrictions that the South African government had placed upon the new arrival of African American missionaries. Heretofore, there had been no clear statement issued by the government regarding its actions. East had only conjectured about the reasons, and no letter from an African South African evangelist had hinted at a reason. One can only hypothesize regarding East’s concern here. It is fairly certain that East and other National Baptist leaders concerned about “Africa’s redemption” believed that African American presence in Africa was the special ingredient for a progressively successful missionary venture. African Americans with their Ethiopianism (that included their civilization as well) were

---

<sup>66</sup> *43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report*, 42-43.

<sup>67</sup> *43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report*, 43.

<sup>68</sup> *43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report*, 43.

necessary to lift up Africans in South Africa. Africans were unable to lift themselves, unlike African Americans.<sup>69</sup>

In the October 1923 *Herald*, there is a letter written by L. J. Tshalata in Natal dated July 28, 1923. This letter reports of some of the stark realities in South Africa during this time. He first thanks Dr. East for the timely \$100 that brought some needed relief from the harsh economic times. Then Tshalata laments the lack of support from America. He writes: “We are here in dark Africa as you know. We are unable to do the thing desired, that is, to establish big schools to change dark Africa into light....If we could get the proper support from America, we could tell the children of the red people to come without money.”<sup>70</sup> Such a statement coming from an African pastor working for the Board had the potential of drawing more money from National Baptists reading the *Herald*. Tshalata’s statement also points to the sentiment that African evangelists employed by the Board believed it to be the responsibility of African Americans to better South Africa through their monetary support. This was the reverse side of the whole uplift philosophy. There was a sort of dependence created in the minds of Africans in the mission field as a result of African American Baptist mission philosophy as one of racial uplift mixed into the sharing of the gospel.

In January 1924, there appears one promising letter from the Native Baptist Church of Queenstown. The principal of the school there, Christopher C. Geilishe, wrote the letter dated December 6, 1923. This is a glowing letter placing the new pastor, Ernest Ndlazi, in a good light. Geilishe reports of the “zeal” of Ndlazi when he took up the ministry in Queenstown despite the church possessing only six members and had been

---

<sup>69</sup> 43<sup>rd</sup> *Annual Report*, 43.

<sup>70</sup> L. J. Tshalata, Letter, *Mission Herald*, October 1923.

without a pastor for seven years. He states that Ndlazi preached with passion and that won back some of the departed members, and then he went from house to house preaching among traditional Africans. From that effort, the church gained more members through conversion and baptism. All told, Ndlazi had baptized eighteen converts during 1923.<sup>71</sup>

Regarding the school, Geilische states that he became the principal of the school on January 29, 1923. He writes that as principal he had “a heavy task.” There were students there without clothes; therefore, Geilische had to use a portion of his salary to purchase clothing for students. He was grateful, however, that Ndlazi had joined him in taking charge of the school; Ndlazi also used some of his salary “to build up the school from all points of view.”<sup>72</sup> Judging from this letter, the school was in need of more funds as both the principal and the pastor had to use their salaries to build the school. This was a prime case for greater support from National Baptists.

In February 1924 the *Herald* published a letter from John Ntlahla dated December 13, 1923 from the Transkei. Ntlahla manifests his gratitude upon receiving a check of \$75 from the Sunday School of Union Baptist Church of Philadelphia. He appreciates the support from Union Baptist stating that: “We are doing good work in these parts of the country. We could not have such work if it was not for the Sunday School of the Union Baptist Church of Philadelphia.”<sup>73</sup> This was a good testimony to urge other churches, Sunday schools, association, or conventions to give to the African missions work on a regular basis.

---

<sup>71</sup> Christopher Geilische, Letter, *Mission Herald*, January 1924.

<sup>72</sup> Geilische, Letter.

<sup>73</sup> John Ntlahla, Letter, *Mission Herald*, February 1924.

Ntlahla gives specific details about the good work occurring in the Transkei. He states that they “have added a large number of souls to our church.”<sup>74</sup> In addition to this, they have built two meeting houses for two churches. To give evidence of the work, Ntlahla intends to send “hand-work” done by the school children to Union Baptist’s Sunday school. Such would definitely encourage Union’s Sunday school to continue to give their support to this work, and it had the purpose of engendering a good sense of pride and accomplishment knowing that they were doing their part in South Africa’s redemption.<sup>75</sup>

A letter from L. J. Tshalata gives the Board and the *Herald’s* readership an update on his fortunes and his on-going work in Natal. He reports that money sent by the Board had enabled him to re-build a “better and bigger” house than his previous one. Tshalata expresses his gratitude to both God and the Board for this blessing; he writes that “The power of God is wonderful.”<sup>76</sup>

Tshalata mentions that his mission work was expanding. Judging from the letter, it seems as though he had taken oversight of a work in Debeka that one Mdobana led. Tshalata writes that he had “a big meeting” there at the church, and he baptized ten people; in addition to those who joined the church through baptism there were two more who joined by Christian experience. With this church, the work now had eight out-stations with the one main station at Harding. Tshalata reports that the station had three Day Schools along with five Sunday schools housed that were part of this overall work.

---

<sup>74</sup> Ntlahla, Letter.

<sup>75</sup> Ntlahla, Letter.

<sup>76</sup> L. J. Tshalata, Letter, *Mission Herald*, February 1924.

With the expansion of this work, there was a need for more sites to build church meeting houses, but the money was scarce. This was the major need for this station.<sup>77</sup>

In a letter dated January 24, 1924, L. J. Tshalata again wrote with a report from his work. This letter is printed in the April 1924 *Herald*. After thanking Secretary East for the money he sent, Tshalata makes this statement that embodies National Baptist motivation for its African missions work: “I am trying my best to establish a big school here with the aid of our Baptist friends in America.”<sup>78</sup> What did Tshalata mean by “big school?” Judging from the work at Middledrift and other schools throughout the National Baptist network of stations, it is safe to assume that Tshalata had an industrial school in mind. African pastors shared the same vision for uplift that the Board and the convention shared; Tshalata envisions African self-sufficiency and freedom from reliance on the government for any type of aid through Evangelical Christianity and Industrial Education.

There is a real exciting and optimistic tone to the letter. Tshalata makes mention that they possessed a good number of pupils attending their school, and that he was quite busy preparing school desks and other furnishings for the school to meet government standards. In concluding this letter, Tshalata makes an appeal to National Baptists: “Tell our brothers and sisters in America to do all they can to give us religion, education and better social and economical conditions.”<sup>79</sup> This closing statement gives insight into the expectations of some African pastors supported by the Board. They saw their destiny dependent upon the financial support given by National Baptists. Of course, the leaders of the Board as well as the Executive members of the convention held to the same view.

---

<sup>77</sup> Tshalata, Letter.

<sup>78</sup> L. J. Tshalata, Letter, *Mission Herald*, April 1924.

<sup>79</sup> L. J. Tshalata, Letter.

All of what Tshalata wanted such as education, religion, etc. were the ingredients in redeeming South Africa.

In the same issue a second letter from L. J. Tshalata is printed. This letter is one of thanks for the quick response to the previous letter that described the privations experienced by the people in Natal. Tshalata thanks the acting secretary, W. A. Harrod, for \$75 to help alleviate the suffering. The generosity overwhelmed him, and he comments: "This work you are doing here in Africa is above my giving gratitude to you; that is to say I have no words capable of thanking you for what has been done by you for Africa."<sup>80</sup> Tshalata re-iterates his plans to build a great school in Africa, but he admits that he needs continual support from National Baptists in order for these plans to come to fruition. Regarding the growth of the church, he states that "[m]any people are confessing Christ."<sup>81</sup>

A letter and a report from Eban Koti appear in this issue as well. In the letter dated January 30, 1924, Koti gives thanks for his salary as it came at the right time. Koti's tone is more effervescent than usual, and much more hopeful. Like Tshalata, his co-worker in Natal, Koti writes in language that reflects his own ideas about National Baptist missionary motivation. He pens these words that would have rung beautifully in the ears of Secretary East and the Board: "But we believe that in God's mercy and by the good Christians of the National Baptist Convention, one day we shall be intelligent, Christ-like, and civilized, as are our Christian brothers and sisters in America."<sup>82</sup> When reading and analyzing such a statement, it must be asked whether Koti wrote such in order to gain more missionary support, or did he really mean this? Regardless of what

---

<sup>80</sup> L. J. Tshalata, Letter, *Mission Herald*, April 1924.

<sup>81</sup> L. J. Tshalata, Letter.

<sup>82</sup> E. B. P. Koti, Letter, *Mission Herald*, April 1924.

this statement could mean, on the surface Koti's remarks mirror what National Baptists believed was their mission in South Africa and in their other mission fields in Africa. In this statement by Koti, there is a philosophical connection between missionary in the field and missionary board. The significance of this philosophical connection can never be over-stated. Arguably, Koti represents the ideal African missionary pastor: he received education from the NBC at Benedict College in South Carolina, he accepted a call to return to South Africa under the auspices of the Foreign Mission Board, and he continued to persevere in the work of building churches and a mission station retaining the missionary philosophy taught to him by the NBC.

As stated above, Koti includes a report for the year of 1923 with his letter. In a very eloquent style, Koti summarizes their quarterly meeting in December in which he preached the gospel to non-Christian Africans during the Christmas season. On 23 December 1923, Koti states that he baptized ten women into the Church; those baptisms made a total of sixteen for the entire year with another fifteen as candidates for baptism.<sup>83</sup>

Koti had much good to state about the support he received from the Board. In general, he writes that South Africa appreciated the support more than the field in West Africa. The reason he offers to support this statement is that the South African field had been neglected. This statement is accurate in light of the history of missions in Africa. Europeans and Americans devoted more time, energy, personnel, and money to developing fields in West and Central Africa rather than in South Africa. More specifically, Koti acknowledges that support for the South African field by National Baptists had experienced a great boost owing to East's assumption to the secretary's

---

<sup>83</sup> E. B. P. Koti, "Yearly Report," *Mission Herald*, April 1924



office. For Koti, East used his new position to assure that his former missionary field received ample support.<sup>84</sup>

In concluding this report Koti comments that his particular work in Natal had a total of three Day Schools with only one teacher to serve them. The work also had two Sunday schools that shared that literature received from the Sunday School Publishing Board. Because of such, Koti was thankful.<sup>85</sup>

A letter from the Cape appears in this issue from Fred Vockerodt. In the letter dated January 24, 1924, Vockerodt is grateful for his monthly salary, but reports of the drought and famine conditions there. He writes: "We thank the Lord that we are still alive."<sup>86</sup> In the absence of H. A. Payne, Vockerodt was the acting superintendent of the Buchanan Mission Station, and admits that he labored very hard "to keep things going in these arduous times."<sup>87</sup> He writes well of "the excellent support of our good Christian friends in America" that had enabled the station to continue amidst economic impoverishment.<sup>88</sup>

Though there was severe drought and famine, Vockerodt notes that the spirit was high at the Buchanan mission. He had baptized nearly every Lord's Day since Payne departed for America. The church experienced a nice season of growth according to this report, but Vockerodt neglects to include any specific numbers.<sup>89</sup>

As Koti alluded to in his report, Vockerodt is confident that East's position as secretary would benefit the work in South Africa. Vockerodt remarks: "I know you are

---

<sup>84</sup> Koti, "Yearly Report."

<sup>85</sup> Koti, "Yearly Report."

<sup>86</sup> Fred Vockerodt, Letter, *Mission Herald*, April 1924.

<sup>87</sup> Vockerodt, Letter.

<sup>88</sup> Vockerodt, Letter.

<sup>89</sup> Vockerodt, Letter.

interested in the salvation of Africa. That has always been your special subject while you were here in Africa....Brother East you know our needs. You can lay them on the hearts of our American brothers and sisters.”<sup>90</sup> This testifies to the importance that East, as a former missionary in South Africa, held in the hearts of his former co-workers in the South African field. They knew that he would never ignore this field, which at this time was arguably more important to the Board than its work in West Africa owing to its vibrancy and growth.

One final letter from the South African field appears in this April *Herald*. It is from one of the teachers at the Buchannan Mission, Gertrude Ntlabati dated February 26, 1924. She brought to the Board’s attention the problem of those who graduated from Buchannan were unable to further their education at other schools in South Africa because the government refused to recognize the certificate graduates received from the school because the government considered it as only a training institute, not an Industrial School. This is an intriguing observation since East and the entire convention clearly called the Buchannan Mission School an Industrial School. Ntlabati urges the Board to change the status of the school in order for graduates to gain more education. She also urged the Board to send “a lady teacher” who could teach domestic sciences such as “cooking, house-wifery, dressmaking, etc.”<sup>91</sup> Ntlabati states that these types of courses were “in great demand here by the native people.”<sup>92</sup> This letter reveals that there were African women who wanted to learn Western ways of keeping a home. For them, this was part of living in a civilized manner as believed by African Americans also.

---

<sup>90</sup> Vockerodt, Letter.

<sup>91</sup> Gertrude Ntlabati, Letter, *Mission Herald*, April 1924.

<sup>92</sup> Ntlabati, Letter.

In the next month's issue a number of letters are printed from the South African field, which indicates the growing importance of this field of National Baptist work at the time. Out of the four letters there are only two that describe on-going work. The first letter printed from the field is from L. J. Tshalata dated March 20, 1924. In this letter, Tshalata reports of difficulty in obtaining permission from the government to build a church building. He had no understanding why this was so. Tshalata also reports of the events of the Quarterly Meeting of the churches of his station, which he states attracted traditional Africans as well as "church people." They baptized nine converts at the meeting, and three traditional Africans became Christian converts. Last, Tshalata states that the Middle Water school was doing quite well as the enrollment swelled with Christian children and children of traditional parents. Because of this, they needed more support to pay more teachers and to continue to offer free education. Tshalata writes that since they had to charge school fees some parents had to withdraw their children. More support from America was paramount in order to keep the school viable.<sup>93</sup>

The second letter is from E. B. P. Koti dated March 31, 1924 from Harding, Natal. In this letter, Koti writes about his upcoming travels to Pondoland for the Quarterly Sessions, and to East London, which was in the Cape, for the association meeting. Though there is little about any work that took place in Natal or elsewhere, this letter should have given the contemporary readership of the *Herald* a good idea of the expansiveness of National Baptist affiliated mission work in the South African field. Without National Baptist presence there would have been no Native Baptist Association. This letter indicates that the relevance of the field of National Baptist missionary work.<sup>94</sup>

---

<sup>93</sup> L. J. Tshalata, Letter, *Mission Herald*, May 1924.

<sup>94</sup> E. B. P. Koit, Letter, *Mission Herald*, May 1924.

A letter from Josie Ntlahla arrived dated March 31, 1924, and it appears in this month's issue of the *Herald*. He wrote from Pondoland, and was the brother of John Ntlahla. He is quite appreciative of the money and clothes he received from the Board. It seemed that now this work had the regular support of the Board. Ntlahla reports how traditional Africans in his area had begun to attend church services. In colorful language, he writes:

When I now see the people who were heathen yesterday attending services like all Christians, wearing clothes, not listening to any one who reviles the Baptist Church, because they have seen a marvelous thing, (people being dressed by the Church) I rejoice. This has taught me a new lesson: that salvation is not only coming by strong sermons, but also by deeds.<sup>95</sup>

In this statement, Ntlahla recognizes that material benefits had a powerful draw to traditional Africans; and they came to believe that coming to church would offer them something tangible. Also Ntlahla links a degree of civilization ("wearing clothes") with outward acceptance of Christianity and Christian practices. In the end of the note, he writes that the church baptized five persons into its membership.<sup>96</sup>

The officers of the church at Middledrift sent a letter of request to the Board (no date). The letter states that the board of deacons had decided to ask Dr. East to send a missionary to assume pastoral duties at the church and mission station. The Deacon board formally declared the "pulpit vacant." The request, though a bit unclear, suggests that the church desired an African American man to come be the pastor. This may be the case since the letter states that: "The Secretary of the Interior would like for you to give the name of the missionary who is to take the work at Middle Drift."<sup>97</sup> Because of this, the government could have lifted its ban against African Americans working as missionaries

---

<sup>95</sup> Josie Ntlahla, Letter. *Mission Herald*, April 1924.

<sup>96</sup> Js. Ntlahla, Letter.

<sup>97</sup> Middledrift Church Officers, Letter, *Mission Herald*, April 1924.

in South Africa. With this letter, it is now obvious that Payne had left the work at Middeldrift indefinitely. The most successful mission work performed in South Africa thus far was in a potentially precarious situation according to this letter.

In August, the *Herald* published a letter from one the newer missionaries, Ernest Ndlazi, who wrote from Queenstown and the First Native Baptist Church. This particular letter is dated June 23, 1924. Ndlazi expresses his thanks for his salary for the months of May and June, and states that the money came at the right time because the people there were in the grip of suffering. He writes that “There are no crops in the land.”<sup>98</sup> This was because of the continued drought in South Africa that had resulted in scores of deaths in the area.<sup>99</sup>

Even in the teeth of such harsh economic and ecological conditions, both the church and school experienced growth. Ndlazi reports that the church in Queenstown “is growing gradually.”<sup>100</sup> The church boasted of a membership of over fifty people with six more waiting candidates for baptism. This bit of news was encouraging because the church had only six members when Ndlazi came to minister there. Regarding the school, there were 78 students, who came from sad family situations. Many were orphans, poor, destitute, and even naked literally, according to Ndlazi. With a student population in that sort of material condition, this letter had to serve as an alarm to the readers that more money was essential in supporting this worthwhile mission.<sup>101</sup>

The *Herald* published one more letter from South Africa in this issue. It came from J. S. Mahlangu in Kliptown, Transvaal, and dated May 25, 1924. This letter offers a

---

<sup>98</sup> Ernest Ndlazi, Letter, *Mission Herald*, August 1924.

<sup>99</sup> Ndlazi, Letter.

<sup>100</sup> Ndlazi, Letter.

<sup>101</sup> Ndlazi, Letter.

report on the total membership of the entire work there including the out-stations. Mahlangu states that as of the end of the last calendar year there were 419 members of the various churches of the mission work. At the time of the writing of the letter, the churches had gained 54 members including 44 new converts baptized into the membership of the respective churches. This gain was something quite pleasing to Mahlangu.<sup>102</sup>

Mahlangu mentions the needs of the station as following: a new paint job on the inside of the church at Kliptown, which was the main church and station; a pulpit and platform; a bell; and a fence. He also states that they needed a house for the main mission station. This is quite a list of needs. Yet Mahlangu is hopeful that National Baptists would continue to support his progressing work. In the letter, he makes this statement: "This great push is due to our being well supported by our American Negro Baptists, to whom we owe a great debt of gratitude."<sup>103</sup> This is an encouraging statement. This is one that would have been especially important to East and the rest of the Board because it demonstrates that the money raised for the support of missions and missionaries was being put to the noble use intended for it.

In the September 1924 *Herald* another letter from Ernest Ndlazi appears from the church at Queenstown dated August 1, 1924. He once again thanks Secretary East and the Board for his three month salary of \$75. According to Ndlazi, the money was most useful because drought and famine persisted in this area of the Cape, and he reports that people were starving to death. Still, there were no crops for people to harvest or consume.<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup> J. S. Mahlangu, Letter, *Mission Herald*, August 1924.

<sup>103</sup> Mahlangu, Letter.

<sup>104</sup> Ernest Ndlazi, Letter, *Mission Herald*, September 1924.

Other than the terrible conditions owing to the lack of rain and food, Ndlazi attempts to describe the deplorable spiritual condition of the people in the area. He writes: "Heathenism is in its extreme. The women and girls are the animals for products of sale. The life of my people is too hideous too explain, but I thank God that when salvation reaches them, they become different people."<sup>105</sup> It is unclear what Ndlazi means regarding the statement on women and girls. It may have been a reference to the traditional practice of bride wealth in which families exchanged cattle and other goods for wives for their sons. If so, Ndlazi definitely believes this practice to be "heathenish." According to Christian marital practices, this practiced would have been prohibited.

Ndlazi writes little detail about the actual work taking place at Queenstown besides that it "is progressing." The one need that he mentioned in the letter was the need for a Mission House to serve as a parsonage, which the church had raised a modest sum of money for already. Ndlazi references that the church had the necessary land for the building, but the money on hand was too paltry to lay even the foundation. The implication here is that African American Baptists needed to fund this project if it was to be completed.<sup>106</sup>

The month of September was the time of the NBC's Annual Session, and according to custom the Foreign Mission Board gave its annual report to the convention. For purposes here, only a summary of what pertains to South Africa will be included. In 1924 the city of Nashville hosted the convention from September 10-15. In the report, Secretary East comments that the number of missionaries and workers in the South

---

<sup>105</sup> Ndlazi, Letter.

<sup>106</sup> Ndlazi, Letter.

African field as twenty-one; the workers included full time teachers at various mission and Day schools.<sup>107</sup>

By surveying the amount of letters received from the South African field in 1924 thus far, it should be evident that the work there was thriving. In the annual report, East buttresses this observation. He states that in South Africa the “work has grown in leaps and bounds.”<sup>108</sup> According to East revival of old work in the Transvaal and the beginning of new work in the Orange Free State contributed to this growth in the South African field. Because of this, the South African field encompassed every province in the Union of South Africa as well as work in Lesotho (then known as Basutoland).<sup>109</sup>

This report gave the convention an update on the work at Middledrift, which East claims was “One of our best organized schools of our mission stations.”<sup>110</sup> He notes that H. A. Payne had returned to America, but he states nothing about the reason why this had occurred. It is left to surmise that the South African government refused to renew his temporary passport as feared during the previous year. Because of this, East states that the mission station there had undergone “a drawback.”<sup>111</sup> This was what a previous letter from Middledrift suggested. The real update regarding this situation was that the Union of South Africa’s government communicated that it would allow another African American missionary on the ground at Middledrift only if he was an agriculturalist. In addition to this, East remarks that the Metropolitan Baptist Church in New York City where W. W. Brown was the pastor had pledged to support whoever the Board located to

---

<sup>107</sup> *44<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention, Inc.* Submitted at Nashville, Tennessee, September 10-15, 1924, 10.

<sup>108</sup> *44<sup>th</sup> Annual Report*, 33.

<sup>109</sup> *44<sup>th</sup> Annual Report*, 33.

<sup>110</sup> *44<sup>th</sup> Annual Report*, 33.

<sup>111</sup> *44<sup>th</sup> Annual Report*, 33.



serve at the Buchanan Industrial Mission School. He also warns that the degree of racial prejudice in South Africa was higher than in the American South, and because of this “the Gospel coupled with industrial training is the only panacea” to remedy all the difficulties that rose from racism and segregation in the Union.<sup>112</sup> Following this statement, East exclaims that if the improvement of social conditions occurred with aiding people to live in better quality homes the oppressor would have to take notice and ameliorate legal racialist policies. Such a statement mirrored what Booker T. Washington espoused in his own philosophy of racial uplift. African Americans had to begin at the bottom, and work hard demonstrating their worthiness to realize greater rights and freedoms.<sup>113</sup> East has demonstrated that he was quite the Washingtonian in apply Washington’s racial uplift philosophy to the South African mission field.

A final remark about the South African field concerned itself with the Native Baptist Association. About this association, East states that it was “a large” one that consisted of churches in Cape Province and in Natal Province. The Board’s churches in the Transvaal (as noted in earlier letters sent from missionaries there) formed a branch of the association. This association helped in the organization the entire work done by African pastors and evangelists, according to East. Overall, East states that “Great good is being done” through the association.<sup>114</sup>

In October’s issue, only one letter appears from South Africa. Dated September 27, 1924, E. B. P. Koti wrote from his station in Natal. He acknowledges the receipt of \$150 from the Board, which must have been a few months salary in advance. Writing about the progress of the work in Natal, Koti reports of an amazing conversion of a

---

<sup>112</sup> *44<sup>th</sup> Annual Report*, 35.

<sup>113</sup> *44<sup>th</sup> Annual Report*, 34-35

<sup>114</sup> *44<sup>th</sup> Annual Report*, 35.

traditional African man. He states that there was a man who was hostile to Christianity so much so that he blocked his wife (who became a convert) from receiving Christian baptism. As this man's hostility continued, he came to believe in Jesus Christ and became a Christian with their two girls the very month of the writing.

The urgent need of this station, according to Koti, was teachers to teach and lead in the Day School. With the need for teachers was also the connected need for money to pay these teachers. At this time, the station lacked the money to support three teachers adequately. This was the obvious point for the Board to consider, and appeal for more support from the churches. By implication, Koti expresses that this was the greatest need of this work for the long-term as he remarked that this section of Natal "is the most backward section of the country" he had witnessed.<sup>115</sup> Because of this, a viable, well-funded school was necessary.

In concluding the letter, Koti reports that their worship building was half-complete. He indicates that this was so important for his people to view because of the harsh living conditions they experienced over the past few years in Natal. To see a church building rising from the ground near completion, would give the people well-needed hope, according to Koti. In his own words, he states: "We have to put up something to [sic] encourage the people who struggle under these hard times, and fix, as it were, a beacon at the turn of things after a hard fight we have had in this province."<sup>116</sup>

As judged from this statement, the economic conditions had taken a mental toll on the people in Natal. The church building on the rise in Natal at this time Koti believes would be a symbol of optimism. By intimation, Koti hoped that this symbol of a church building

---

<sup>115</sup> E. B. P. Koti, Letter, *Mission Herald*, November 1924.

<sup>116</sup> Koti, Letter.

would reflect the hope that is in the gospel of Christ and the Church of Christ. For traditional Africans living in the area, seeing a church built as the province is in the grip of such difficult economic times would indicate the power of Christianity and would serve to draw seekers to enquire about the faith.

As 1924 closed, the *Herald* re-printed a number of letters from the South African field, which at year's end proved to be the most active field of the Board's African mission field. Koti sent a letter to the Board dated August 17, 1924 from his station in Natal. The letter indicates his appreciation to Dr. East's recent sojourn in West Africa accompanying new missionaries to the Liberian field. There is no report of the work in Natal in this letter, but just well wishes and platitudes. To offer a sense of Koti's admiration of East and his work, he writes these glowing remarks: "We are rightly proud of your achievements in Liberia, as well as of your unprecedented success in rousing live interest in the churches at the home base to the point of giving regular support to the Foreign Mission Board."<sup>117</sup> These words indicate two interesting points, in particular. First, Koti's statement reveals the satisfaction he had in receiving regular money, which witnessed that East's campaign for regular monthly contributions from National Baptist churches, Sunday schools, etc. had worked as intended. Second, these sentiments also acknowledge the importance of the *Mission Herald* to those in the mission field. Koti received encouragement knowing that the Board he worked for took its mandate seriously to redeem Africa.

A letter from Joseph Lepele writing from Middledale Pass, South Africa dated October 28, 1924 appears as well. Lepele, like Koti, confesses that he had read the *Herald* and found that Secretary East had traveled to West Africa to help re-vitalize the

---

<sup>117</sup> E. B. P. Koti, Letter, *Mission Herald*, December 1924.

work there. He extends his prayers for success in Liberia. Lepele did offer a report on his work stating that he had 112 members at this main station church with nine persons who awaited baptism. He mentions something of his work in Zululand where there were 32 members in his church with another three waiting as candidates for baptism. This was one of the lesser known works in South Africa, but this letter shows that there was a spark of vitality there.<sup>118</sup>

Lepele states that they had no church building at the main station; therefore, they held their worship services at his home. In fact, he writes that there was neither a church building at the Zululand station. These were two needs of this station, but he indicates that there was a much more pressing need for his people there. He writes that “some of our members are afraid to come in our prayer meetings on account of their nakedness.”<sup>119</sup> Lepele’s hope was that God in his kind providence would provide for these folk, but such a statement had the intention of calling indirectly upon the readers of the *Herald* to give their money to clothe his destitute people. He further implies that Divine Providence included the kind actions of others.<sup>120</sup>

The final letter from the South African field appearing in this issue of the *Herald* is from Josie Ntlahla writing from Pondoland without a date. He confirms receipt of his salary from the Board, which he received with “great joy.”<sup>121</sup> He reports that the work in Pondoland has experienced “some nice revivals” since April of this year.<sup>122</sup> For Ntlahla, revivals refer to conversions and baptisms, and he writes that since April he had baptized twenty-two people. In addition to receiving these by baptism into his church, Ntlahla

---

<sup>118</sup> Joseph Lepele, Letter, *Mission Herald*, December 1924.

<sup>119</sup> Lepele, Letter.

<sup>120</sup> Lepele, Letter.

<sup>121</sup> Josie Ntlahla, Letter, *Mission Herald*, December 1924.

<sup>122</sup> Js. Ntlahla, Letter.

states he received five people from churches affiliated with the Baptist Union. At the time of writing, there were converts waiting to be baptized. This was some good news of growth to report.<sup>123</sup>

Ntlahla's letter should have proven to be a great encouragement. He states also that they had begun a Sunday school there in Pondoland, which, according to Ntlahla, was the first in that area. Also he added that it gave him joy to see people converted from traditionalism who were antagonistic to Christianity that after conversion confess the death of Christ on their behalf. Again, such a letter indicated that the Board's work had extended and its African workers were dutiful and earnest.<sup>124</sup>

It was in the May 1925 issue of the *Herald* that the first letters appear from the South African field that year. The first letter is from Ernest Ndlazi dated February 3, 1925. With elation, he reports that he received a box of clothing from the Missionary Circle of Shiloh Baptist Church. Ndlazi remembers how he wrote letters to the Board that described the people's destitution, and this letter testifies how National Baptists responded to the need of the people there in Queenstown.<sup>125</sup>

About the progress in the church, Ndlazi states that on the second Sunday of March (March 8) he would baptize ten converts. He looked forward to this being a joyous occasion, and indicated the success of the ministry there. Almost viewing the upcoming baptisms rather indifferently, Ndlazi then reveals that he needed baptismal clothes. This statement implies a need that National Baptists must supply.<sup>126</sup> Regardless, the letter indicates that Africans in this field had believed the gospel, and would be added to the

---

<sup>123</sup> Js. Nthahla, Letter.

<sup>124</sup> Js. Ntlahla, Letter.

<sup>125</sup> Ernest Ndlazi, Letter, *Mission Herald*, May 1925.

<sup>126</sup> Ndlazi, Letter.

church. This was all good news for the Board and the convention at large because those who peered closely at the happenings of the African field knew that Queenstown had its share of struggles in the recent past, but since Ndlazi has been there that church and mission showed great promise.

According to Ndlazi, the economic conditions in Queenstown and the surrounding area were still rough. He implies that there were inflated prices on staples such as corn and sugar. Ndlazi states that he was expected to attend the association meeting in the Transkei in April, and he lacked train fare; therefore, he seemed to want the Board to provide him money to travel to the meeting.<sup>127</sup>

In concluding the letter, Ndlazi asks Dr. East when he would return to South Africa. This query and his comments that follow indicate his great appreciation for East, as a dedicated missionary and leader. Both reveal how at least one South African pastor supported by the Board viewed African American Baptist leaders. He writes with sincerity regarding Dr. East's next visit to South Africa: "Dr. East, when are you going to visit South Africa? You are needed here, as you know that you are the prize of Africa, and our salvation is depended upon you."<sup>128</sup> Although it is unclear what Ndlazi meant by "our salvation," but the context relates to the idea of redemption. Here is an African pastor who hung his hopes on the redemption of South Africa, and all of Africa on the presence and work of African Americans.

Written December 5, 1924, E. B. P. Koti wrote and reported from Natal, and the *Herald* published it in May 1925. He gives a positive report on the climatic conditions; finally, they had rain in Natal. Koti writes that they had rain during the entire month of

---

<sup>127</sup> Ndlazi, Letter.

<sup>128</sup> Ndlazi, Letter.

November. Because of this the farmers began to plant their crops. This was great news coming from this part of South Africa.<sup>129</sup>

Koti offers a very general and somewhat vague progress report on the work in Natal. Though Koti gives no real substantive details about the work, he did remark about his attitude toward the work and a little lack of patience. He testifies that:

The Lord's work is steadily proceeding under His guidance. Sometimes we are inclined to wish for some striking phenomenon to show quick results of one's efforts, but that is not always His way of working or giving a blessing. Under such circumstances, we need His sustaining grace to keep us ever looking up, waiting patiently, and possessing our souls in faith in Him who said, "Without me, ye can do nothing."<sup>130</sup>

From these lines, it seemed as though the work was going well enough, but these sentiments are from what is called a "pastor's heart." Koti demonstrates that he possessed a pastor's heart that desired to see members of his flock grow as Christians.

Drawing the letter to an end, Koti mentions East's significance to National Baptist work overall in Africa. He notes that it took much effort to motivate National Baptist churches and individuals to give money to support the work of African missions. Following this statement, Koti dwells on God's Providence in setting East as a missionary in South Africa for eleven years, and then placing him as Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board and what this meant. Quoting from William Cowper's hymn, Koti states with eloquence:

"God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform." This is evidenced in our particular case by your coming into this country as a missionary and remaining without a break for eleven years, which today stands you in good stead as Secretary to the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention. At the first impulse, we regretted losing you in the field, but your remaining there is a blessing and the hope of salvation of all Africa.<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>129</sup> E. B. P. Koti, Letter, *Mission Herald*, May 1925.

<sup>130</sup> Koti, Letter.

<sup>131</sup> Koti, Letter.

Like Ndalzi in Queenstown, Koti recognizes the importance of having an African American denomination supporting mission work in Africa. The implication is that African Christians and evangelists were unable to redeem, or save Africa at this time, and that they needed African American help to lift them to where they needed to be in the future.

One other letter appears in May 1925, and this is from two of the officers of the church and mission at Middledale Pass dated January 19, 1925. Daniel Khena and Joseph Lepele write to inform the Board that their Transvaal and Orange Free State branch of the Native Baptist Association met in Johannesburg during the beginning of January. The branch voted to send J. S. Mahlangu to represent them at the Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention in September 1925. They desired that Mahlangu would inform the convention of their work in these two Northern provinces of the Union of South Africa, and to state their intention to remain affiliated with the NBC “while the church exists.”<sup>132</sup> This is an interesting note for this is the first mission work that determined to have such a strong tie with the NBC. They further offer these comments in support of their intentions: “We like that our work here must be your work, even ourselves, and that you may have a voice in this work.”<sup>133</sup>

They report that the work in their branch of the association had been progressing nicely, and that they had a good meeting on the first Sunday in January at the church at Kliptown at which two people received Jesus Christ by faith. This letter is indicative, once again, of the expanding purview of the Board’s work in South Africa. This letter

---

<sup>132</sup> Daniel Khena and Joseph Lepele, Letter, *Mission Herald*, May 1925.

<sup>133</sup> Khena and Lepele, Letter.



should have let all the readers know that the Board's activities in South Africa were worthwhile supporting further.<sup>134</sup>

The above letter refers to Kliptown, and the June 1925 issue published a letter from J. S. Mahlangu from Kliptown Baptist Church in Johannesburg, which is dated April 6, 1925. Mahlangu thanks the secretary for sending the quarterly salaries of all of the workers connected with this work. He also stipulates a few details about the recent district branch meeting in Harrismith, Orange Free State. This was where Joseph Lepele was the minister, who Mahlangu describes as "our very promising minister."<sup>135</sup> On another positive note, Mahlangu reports that the provincial government in the OFS had allowed the church there to have a site to build upon in Harrismith, which was a "native location." For him, this was a very gracious act of God because of the racism that persisted in the OFS.<sup>136</sup>

In this letter, Mahlangu indicates that the goal of his church in Johannesburg was to build a church meeting-house. One reason for this was that the building would "be a great reference for the authorities and be our great key with which to open other places."<sup>137</sup> By making this statement, Mahlangu desires to vindicate his people and his work before the white government in Transvaal. This was only one reason for erecting a church building. The major purpose was to save souls; it "will mean the salvation spot of many thousands of souls and great light and Gospel appeal."<sup>138</sup> With this goal of building a church, Mahlangu asks the Board and the whole convention for financial aid in performing this.

---

<sup>134</sup> Khenka and Lepele, Letter.

<sup>135</sup> J. S. Mahlangu, Letter, *Mission Herald*, June 1925.

<sup>136</sup> Mahlangu, Letter.

<sup>137</sup> Mahlangu, Letter.

<sup>138</sup> Mahlangu, Letter.

In the August 1925 *Herald* there is a letter published from Fred Vockerodt writing still from the Buchanan Mission School dated March 21, 1925. He writes that he received \$70 for his salary along with an additional \$70 for the two teachers who worked at the Fireside School. Like other South African missionaries, Vockerodt has glowing plaudits for Dr. East. He exclaims: "I am prepared to say to the public that the Foreign Mission Board is doing a most excellent work under your leadership, exceeding the past years under the hands of Dr. L. G. Jordan."<sup>139</sup> Again the workers who worked along with East in the South African field realized that their field had gained more attention owing to East's new position. He knew their needs, and he knew the attention they demanded in order to keep the entire viable and prosperous.

According to Vockerodt, the work at Middledrift pressed forward despite the harsh drought and famine. He reports that they baptized regularly, and that the schools remained steady in their growth with good numbers of students. At the end of the letter, Vockerodt urges East to send a missionary to the station to undertake its leadership. It seemed as though the oversight of such a work was too much for Vockerodt, whose health was a bit fragile judging from this letter.<sup>140</sup>

In the September 1925 issue there are three more letters from the South African field published, which, again, shows the vibrancy and importance of this field in missions work of the NBC. The first letter is from John Ntlahla without a date. He informs Secretary East that he had received his \$75 salary, and he relates his thankfulness to the

---

<sup>139</sup> Fred Vockerodt, Letter, *Mission Herald*, August 1925.

<sup>140</sup> Vockerodt, Letter.

Board for its support of him and his work. The Board had yet another appreciate missionary under its authority in this field.<sup>141</sup>

The work in the Transkei was steady and progressing. Ntlahla writes that “Our work in this dark land has been blessed and we have complaint to make.”<sup>142</sup> Elaborating on this statement, Ntlahla mentions that they had begun a brand new mission station at Sigubudwini, where they received twelve persons into the membership of the church there including six through baptism. In addition, Ntlahla remarks that the “red people” desired to hear the gospel in this area. Some of the women of this station, according to Ntlahla, worked with the traditional women and some among them had converted to Christ. This new location proved to be quite a fertile missionary field.<sup>143</sup>

In addition to re-iterating his request for a baptismal suit, Ntlahla enquires about a new missionary at Middledrift. It would be only natural for a pastor at a nearby location to be concerned about Middledrift since it was the best run station in this field by National Baptists. He writes that the people at Middledrift “have been disappointed in having no minister.”<sup>144</sup> In a statement that supports the point that some Africans in South Africa believed the redemption of their homeland was in the hands of African Americans, Ntlahla reported that a man at Middledrift stated “that the salvation of the black men in this country depends upon the people of America.”<sup>145</sup>

The second letter in the September issue is from the other work in Natal led by L. J. Tshalata without a date on the letter. He was glad to be in receipt of his \$75 salary, and he gives “thanks to all American brothers and sisters who sacrificed themselves as means

---

<sup>141</sup> John Ntlahla, Letter, *Mission Herald*, September 1925.

<sup>142</sup> Jn. Ntlahla, Letter.

<sup>143</sup> Jn. Ntlahla, Letter.

<sup>144</sup> Jn. Ntlahla, Letter.

<sup>145</sup> Jn. Ntlahla, Letter.

of lifting and leading Africa out of darkness.”<sup>146</sup> Once again, an African pastor recognizes the help needed to redeem Africa by African Americans.

Following his opening words of thanks and appreciation, Tshalata details how he had used the money sent to him by the Board and how helpful it had been. First, he used the money to rebuild his house that burned down. Second, he succored orphans because of this money. Third, he even sent young person to college with the money. The money stretched to help many in this field; and such a report is a sparkling testimony to how regularly supported missionaries could make a tremendous difference in their areas of ministry.<sup>147</sup>

In making these statements, Tshalata indicates that there was a threat to the continued existence of his school. He states there was another mission school there in his part of Natal that was free and gave the children clothes to wear. It is obvious that Tshalata’s school was unable to do this unless it received more substantial money from the Board. He fails to state if this was a European-run school, but it may have been. If so, this bit of information should have encouraged African American Baptists to give more money to its most vital mission field in order to do as much as a European-led mission school.<sup>148</sup>

In ending the letter, Tshalata mentioned that the association met in the Transkei and there elected E. B. P. Koti as its moderator for that year. The next session of the association would be at Harding. In brief, Tshalata states the work there in Natal was “going on nicely,” and folk there were becoming Christians. Like Ntlahla in the previous letter, Tshalata calls for a new missionary to head the work at Middledrift. Tshalata

---

<sup>146</sup> L. J. Tshalata, Letter, *Mission Herald*, September 1925.

<sup>147</sup> Tshalata, Letter.

<sup>148</sup> Tshalata, Letter.

believes that the new missionary had to be an African American man as he writes, “We wish that place to have a man from America always.”<sup>149</sup>

The third letter from South Africa is from one of the new works supported by the Board in the Orange Free State. Joseph Lepele wrote from Middledale Pass, OFS (no date for the letter), and he offers a little summary on the association meeting he and his church hosted in March of that year. He comments on Koti’s sermon, and how much encouragement his people received by attending such a meeting since this was the first such meeting of the association in the OFS.<sup>150</sup>

Lepele indicates that during Mahlangu’s visit to America, the responsibility of supervising the entire work in the Transvaal and the OFS will be upon him. Because of this and the travel entailed in caring for churches separated by great distances, Lepele urges Dr. East to “not keep him [Mahlangu] there long.”<sup>151</sup> It should be remembered that Mahlangu was to represent the Branch Association at the NBC Annual Session in 1925.

At the last, Lepele, like his colleagues, offers kind remarks to East and his work in South Africa. He writes: “We hope you will keep on supporting our work here. In our meetings we always speak highly of you and of the way you are taking care of the work in South Africa. Your name is known in every church and to every member as our great helper and father, even to our little children.”<sup>152</sup> With yet another African pastor proclaiming the greatness of East, it is apparent how significant the continued support of the NBC was for these men. Unable to trust European missionaries wholly, and without

---

<sup>149</sup> Tshalata, Letter.

<sup>150</sup> Joseph Lepele, Letter, *Mission Herald*, September 1925.

<sup>151</sup> Lepele, Letter.

<sup>152</sup> Lepele, Letter.

the financial wherewithal to lift themselves. African American Baptist support was paramount.

The fourth and final letter from South Africa in this *Herald* is another from the Transkei and John Ntlahla dated May 28, 1925. He reports of the meeting that his church hosted of the association writing that it “will never be forgotten in the history of our Native Baptist Association.”<sup>153</sup> He writes that it was a well-attended meeting with many ministers giving reports of their work; these reports stated that there had been plenty of baptisms in the churches, “which showed that the heathen are confessing our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior.”<sup>154</sup> This is certainly a bright report of the association, and illustrates the seriousness and zeal of these churches all connected to the National Baptist Convention.

Once again, Ntlahla bemoans the absence of a missionary at Middledrift. Representing the sentiments of arguably the entire South African field, he explains: “We are crying for a good man to take the Buchanan Mission. It is sad to see good work going down, for we know of many battles fought in this place and your determined struggles to build up this work. Something must be done.”<sup>155</sup> These words assume that East, as the former superintendent of this work, would have by this time sent a qualified man. It seems as though the process was taking too long for the missionaries in the field because the lack of success at Middledrift could spell future struggles for their individual works as National Baptists may be hesitant to support the smaller works.

Again, every September was the Annual Session of the convention, and the Board gave its annual report to all of the leaders and delegates of the National Baptist

---

<sup>153</sup> Jn. Nthahla, Letter, *Mission Herald*, September 1925.

<sup>154</sup> Jn. Ntlahla, Letter.

<sup>155</sup> Jn. Ntlahla, Letter.

Convention, which met at Baltimore, Maryland in 1925. In this month's *Herald*, East and the editorial board decided to, at least, publish a summary of the report. Even this new feature, in order to draw key points pertaining to South Africa the published annual report must be consulted. Given that the work was underdeveloped (but under revival), East gives a very brief summary of the South African work. He reports merely that there were twenty-three supported workers in the field, twenty-five Sunday schools, and twelve Day Schools. In one note of interest, East states that the Board had sent missionaries to the South Africa field; he lists no names, and neither did he list a sending date. He reports this with an additional note that the Board awaited government permits so that they could purchase tickets for the new missionaries to sail. In reality, missionaries had been commissioned, but remained in America waiting permission from the Union government. The assumption is that these missionaries would be joining the work at Middledrift.<sup>156</sup>

As noted in a couple of letters from the Orange Free State from this year, the Branch Association consisting of churches in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State voted to send J. S. Mahlangu to represent it at the Annual Session of the NBC in Baltimore. In the October *Herald*, the editors published a piece by Mahlangu entitled "My Impression of American Black Folks."<sup>157</sup> In the beginning of the article, Mahlangu admits that his association with African Americans in South Africa especially James East engendered his desire to visit America and dwell with African Americans. He mentions that he arrived in America on August 18, 1925, and also it was the Board that made this visit a reality.<sup>158</sup>

---

<sup>156</sup> 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Report, 16.

<sup>157</sup> J. S. Mahlangu, "My Impression of American Black Folk," *Mission Herald*, October 1925.

<sup>158</sup> Mahlangu, "My Impression."

Mahlangu's visit to America and his stay with African American Baptists made two impressions upon him. First, he noticed the great African American Baptist church buildings and that the churches owned these buildings. In particular, Mahlangu visited Union Baptist Church of Philadelphia, a church that was a fine supporter of South African missions at this juncture. He witnessed that the church was well-attended with people standing around the sanctuary; also he noted how many children and adults were in attendance at Sunday school. In noticing this, Mahlangu writes, "My people think that the Sunday school is for children, since there is the word 'school.'"<sup>159</sup>

The other great impression Mahlangu notes was what he deems "the freedom enjoyed by my black folks in this country..." that included "their beautiful homes" and "high civilization and cleanliness..."<sup>160</sup> From Mahlangu's perspective as an African South African residing in the Transvaal, African Americans possessed a high degree of freedom. Home ownership and other types of "civilized" behavior and living were things that most, if not all, Christianized Africans in South Africa desired to obtain. These were the very things that white South Africans in power refused to allow Africans to possess in order to maintain a strict racial hierarchical system.

Based upon what Mahlangu saw in America among African American Baptists, he is able to make a strong appeal to them to devote themselves more and more to supporting the South African mission field. Mahlangu's appeal is biblical with an Ethiopian application. First, he likens this appeal to the biblical Macedonian Call the Apostle Paul received recorded in Acts 16:9 with the famous line, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." Mahlangu saw African Americans living what he perceived to

---

<sup>159</sup> Mahlangu, "My Impression."

<sup>160</sup> Mahlangu, "My Impression."



be good lives with far more materially than his own people in South Africa recognized that African Americans were in a position to provide help. Second, he applies this biblical occurrence to African Americans being willing to help their “own flesh and blood.”<sup>161</sup> If the Apostle Paul, being a Jew, heeded the call of the Spirit to help Gentiles by preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, certainly African Americans would send help for their own living in South Africa. Like in other letters appearing this year particularly, Mahlangu articulates a clear understanding of African American duty toward the redemption of South Africa and all of Africa.

In the November 1925 *Herald* there is only one letter from the South African field, and it is from a newly supported missionary, J. M. Bhodlani who wrote from Herschel dated August 21, 1925. He confirms the receipt of \$25 from the Board, which drawing from the letter made good on a promise from East to begin support of Bhodlani and his work. Understandingly, Bhodlani was excited over the forging of a relationship with the Foreign Mission Board, and he pours out the accolades upon Secretary East and what he meant to South Africa and Africa as well. He writes these colorful words:

Now, Dr. East, I want to tell expressions of my heart as I consider what you are doing in this dark continent of Africa. One day our Lord spoke of a good Shepherd. Today I think of these true words because I said, “The Shepherd, leaving the ninety and nine in the fold, He goes in search of the straying one.” That is the very mount on which you stand, the flames of your light appear to us. However dark and stormy the night is, however full of danger and uncertain the way is, however long and wearisome the search, may that God of mercy make you not hesitate until the lost Africa is redeemed.<sup>162</sup>

Bhodlani, like his colleagues in the South African field, perceive Secretary East as the man who would single-handedly with God’s help save all Africa’s lost.

---

<sup>161</sup> Mahlangu, “My Impression.”

<sup>162</sup> J. M. Bhodlani, Letter, *Mission Herald*, November 1925.

In describing the work in Herschel, Bhodlani states that it “is slowly and gradually growing.”<sup>163</sup> He reports that the church had a membership of 78, which included four baptized earlier in August. They had organized a “Sisters’ Meeting” with his wife, Idah Bhodlani leading it. The Sunday school he described as “very heavy” since there is no teaching help; it is assumed that he as the pastor was doing the teaching.<sup>164</sup> This was the readership’s introduction to this work signifying more growth in this field, and indicative of the prudent use of financial support by the Board. Even though the Board’s leaders wrote month after month regarding the lack of funds received by National Baptists to support African missions, the fact that the Board began to support any work in the South African field revealed that East was able to stretch those meager funds to help small, burgeoning works in South Africa flourish.

The January 1926 *Herald* continues the story of J. S. Mahlangu’s tour of America. In a brief report, Mahlangu wrote of his visit to Oklahoma, and the amount of money churches there gave to him and his work in South Africa. According to the list of churches, Mahlangu visited large city churches and small country churches as well as attending a session of the state convention. All told, he received \$484.83. This amount of money would take about four years to be received from the Board on a quarterly basis; thus, Mahlangu’s visit to Oklahoma resulted in a significant amount of money to defray some of the cost of his work. He writes nothing about his activities at these churches, but it is assumed that he preached about the Church’s necessity to spread the gospel to the world, and African American obligation to send missionaries to Africa to aid in its redemption. More than likely, Mahlangu spoke about the work he had done in the

---

<sup>163</sup> Bhodlani, Letter.

<sup>164</sup> Bhodlani, Letter.

Transvaal and Orange Free State emphasizing the needs there. Whatever he stated specifically, it was effective as the amount of dollars raised indicates.<sup>165</sup>

In the February 1926 *Herald*, there are three letters from the South Africa field, but two of importance for this chapter. The first letter is from Ernest Ndlazi from Queenstown. The point of importance in this letter is that Ndlazi informs the Board of a new field of work he opened in the Cape at Mpotulo, which was near his home base of Queenstown. He reports that on Sunday, November 22, 1925, he baptized eight converts at Mpotulo. In describing this new field, Ndlazi states: "No doubt you know Mpotulo is a center of real red natives and a real heathenism, but I am glad to say God is on my side, although struggling hard."<sup>166</sup> Even with this stated Ndlazi had a real hope for this new field as he reports that the headman there was a deacon in the church; therefore, he favored Ndlazi's presence. With such a man in the church, finding a good piece of land should have been no problem.<sup>167</sup>

About the home work at Queenstown, Ndlazi offers a good report. He states the church had been growing in its morning service, and the evening attendance had maintained itself. The church had Sunday school classes and Bible classes that on Sunday afternoons attracted good numbers of adults and children. All was well according to this letter from Queenstown.<sup>168</sup>

The other significant letter from South Africa is from the Middledale Pass station, and sent by Joseph Lepele undated. He acknowledges the receipt of \$125 for the last quarter of 1925. This letter speaks more of what East and the Board's support meant to

---

<sup>165</sup> J. S. Mahlangu, "My Impression of American Black Folk," *Mission Herald*, January 1926.

<sup>166</sup> Ernest Ndlazi, Letter, *Mission Herald*, February 1926.

<sup>167</sup> Ndlazi, Letter.

<sup>168</sup> Ndlazi, Letter.

this work. In quite colorful language, Lepele writes: "The warm love poureth from the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention, and it is a home to which we shall stick. Our country is a land of darkness and heathendom, but through the love of God we know the grace of the Lord."<sup>169</sup> There is no mention of the progress of the work in the Orange Free State; there were only sweet words recognizing their need for support from their African American Baptist brethren.

In the June *Herald* the editors published a letter from Josie Ntlahla from Pondoland without a date. He notes that he received his monthly salary of \$25 with words of gratitude to Dr. East and the rest of the Board. There is a somber and serious tone to the letter as Ntlahla reports of the progress in Pondoland. He writes that: "Our work in Pondoland is going forward with difficulty. We are looking forward with great hope of development. We ask you not to forget this dark country in your prayers, for we are working among heathen who know nothing about Christianity."<sup>170</sup> In this statement, Ntlahla demonstrates that he possessed a similar attitude toward his fellow Africans that African Americans Baptists had. Traditional Africans were "heathen," and often times described in hostile terms. This indicates that Christian Africans in South Africa had by this time viewed themselves as a distinct group within the Union while at the same time recognizing the great need of the gospel among their brethren by the flesh.

There are two other tidbits of information Ntlahla shares with his readers in this letter. First, he informs the Board and the readers of the *Herald* that Sunday schools were in operation in all of the stations in Pondoland. In assessing the Sunday schools, Ntlahla

---

<sup>169</sup> Joseph Lepele, Letter, *Mission Herald*, February 1926.

<sup>170</sup> Js. Ntlahla, Letter, *Mission Herald*, June 1926.

states that the “work is prospering spiritually and educationally.”<sup>171</sup> The second bit of news is that the station had applied for a piece of ground to build a church building upon. They waited what the government would decide on this. Though difficulties abounded in working among “red people,” this report indicates solid progress in Pondoland.<sup>172</sup>

In the same issue, the *Herald* published a letter from Natal from the White Mountain Baptist Church under the pastorate of J. M. Bhodlani. The letter, sent by Elliott Mehlomakulu the church secretary, is dated April 2, 1926. The letter is full of kind accolades for Dr. East, and exhibits the common sentiment among the mission station churches during this period that viewed Dr. East as a prime human instrument in Africa’s redemption. An example of such is as follows: “We are very glad that God sent you first to Africa and then back to America. You are a wonderful instrument through whom He is sending the price of Africa’s redemption.”<sup>173</sup> This church, like others supported by the Board, recognized that Africa’s redemption stood with their African American Baptist brothers.

The only letter published in the July issue is from Swinburne written by J. J. Lepele dated May 5, 1926. In this rather lengthy letter, Lepele first thanks the Board for \$93.75 for the workers at the various out-stations in both Transvaal and OFS. Following this, he offers some detail on the progress of the work in the Transvaal and OFS as he supervised the entire work while J. S. Mahlangu has been in America. Since Mahlangu’s absence, Lepele reports that he baptized 40 converts in the OFS and another 30 in the

---

<sup>171</sup> Js. Ntlahla, Letter.

<sup>172</sup> Js. Ntlahla, Letter.

<sup>173</sup> Elliott Mehlomakulu, Letter, *Mission Herald*, June 1926.

Tra

the

low

at

th

w

C

T

s

A

d

si

d

e

th

n

in

L

B

—

—

—

Transvaal. He writes that he traveled to every church in the Branch; it is obvious he did this to baptize those 70 souls.<sup>174</sup>

In writing about the workers at the out-stations, Lepele lists them and their locations. This list gives the readers knowledge of how expansive the entire work in OFS and Transvaal was. There were workers in the Johannesburg area, in different places in the OFS, and in Lesotho (then Basutoland) and Zululand. About these ministers, Lepele writes: “They are splendid preachers. Their knowledge of the Word is very limited, but God graciously uses them and many souls have been born again through their efforts.”<sup>175</sup> This, in part, reveals Lepele’s emphasis in his work in South Africa. His main goal was to see many souls saved and joined to the Church of Jesus Christ. This was true uplift of Africans.

Lepele’s emphasis on evangelism and salvation continues in the letter as described that they began a new church in Standerton in the Transvaal, where he baptized six new converts. Also he reports of his visit to Lesotho where he preached at the chief’s dwelling on April 18. In this portion of the letter, he writes that after he preached the chief stood and admonished all of his people that they should “come to Jesus.” Regarding this occasion also, Lepele writes that the chief had assured that the mission could have a nice piece of land to build a church meeting place and a school. The chief was very much interested in Industrial Education for his people. With this reported, Lepele exclaims that Lesotho needed an African American missionary.<sup>176</sup>

As mentioned above, Moderator E. B. P. Koti sent a report from the Native Baptist Association that the *Herald* published in July. Written on April 19, 1926, this

---

<sup>174</sup> J. J. Lepele, Letter, *Mission Herald*, July 1926.

<sup>175</sup> Lepele, Letter.

<sup>176</sup> Lepele, Letter.

report is of the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Assembly of the association held in Harding, Natal at the Qanqala Baptist Church on April 7. Koti mentions that some of the ministers were unable to attend the meeting owing to the lack of communication and the long distance of the various churches in the Union. Despite this, the association re-elected all of its current officers by acclamation. Each church representative present gave a report, which allowed the readers of the *Herald* to know where each pastor was and the size of the church. Without giving all of the detail of these individual church reports, these were the churches that offered a report: Buchanan Mission, Middledrift; East London; Shiloh Baptist, Cape Town; Xwili Baptist, Transkei; Middle Water, Harding; Qanqala Baptist, Harding; and Qungqwome, Pondoland. Regarding membership, these churches reported a membership of about 1,600.<sup>177</sup>

The numbers and the amount of baptisms reported indicate a growing group of churches despite having undergone severe drought and famine. All of the churches reported thriving Day Schools, and Sunday schools. The work begun by National Baptists in South Africa was on solid ground despite the government's ban on African American missionaries. Koti ends the report by stating that the services on Sunday with the Lord's Supper that evening ended "a very pleasant association meeting."<sup>178</sup>

The final American letter by J. S. Mahlangu appears in the August *Herald*. In the letter, Mahlangu expresses his gratitude for all of the kind treatment he received from his African American Baptist brethren. Specifically, he thanks them for the "royal treatment" he received from them, especially from the ministers in the South. At the time of the writing of this note, he was set to leave on July 27, and would have arrived at Cape Town

---

<sup>177</sup> E. B. P. Koti, "Report of the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Assembly of the Native Baptist Association," *Mission Herald*, July 1926.

<sup>178</sup> Koti, "Report of 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Assembly."



around August 22. Mahlangu also thanks the Board for increasing his monthly salary to \$50; this was probably because he oversaw so many churches in such an expansive territory in the Transvaal and OFS. This was a good and fair gesture by the Board.<sup>179</sup>

In the September 1926 *Herald*, the readership learned about the work at Evaton, Transvaal led by Daniel Khena for the first time. In the letter dated July 20, 1926, Khena indicates that he had received his quarterly salary from the Board. This also means that this was yet another station receiving support from the Board. This was the result, in part, of Mahlangu's successful tour of America and his publicizing of the work occurring in Transvaal and OFS. Khena states that the work "is slowly and gradually going on."<sup>180</sup> He also writes that he anticipated baptizing four converts in the month of August. In addition, Khena states that "The Sunday school is slowly and surely progressing."<sup>181</sup> This introductory letter from Khena conveys that there was hope that this work would progress, especially with funds from the Board.

The second letter from South Africa in September 1926 came from Frederick Vockerodt and the Buchanan Mission School dated July 15, 1926. This letter contains pertinent information regarding the future of the mission and the role the Board would assume. First, Vockerodt thanks the Board for money received to pay salaries for Vockerodt and workers and teachers employed at the mission. In expressing how fragile the financial condition of this mission was, Vockerodt writes: "I do really appreciate your help from time to time, because if it were not for your support, I doubt that this work could live three months."<sup>182</sup> This statement reveals that the mission had yet to mature

---

<sup>179</sup> J. S. Mahlangu, Letter, *Mission Herald*, August 1926.

<sup>180</sup> Daniel Khena, Letter, *Mission Herald*, September 1926.

<sup>181</sup> Khena, Letter.

<sup>182</sup> Fred Vockerodt, Letter, *Mission Herald*, September 1926.

financially to the extent to support itself. This point is substantiated in what Vockerodt writes further.

He states that the Middledrift church and the association had decided to allow the Board to have joint ownership of the mission station including the Industrial school. One benefit for the Board was that it meant that it owned actual property in South Africa, but it also indicated that this long-standing work acknowledged as the Board's best in Africa had retrogressed. The major reason was the evident lack of strong leadership that East provided during his eleven year tenure, and the drought and famine over the past couple of years. The Board's co-ownership meant also that the work would survive in order for the new missionary, Rev. Spencer to build up even beyond where it was when East left it.<sup>183</sup>

Finally, Vockerodt states that "the church is still existing." Though the tough times had taken their toll in the membership, they remained a cohesive group. Vockerodt reports that he baptized seven new Christians in connection with their anniversary services. The crop situation was still insufficient in the eastern Cape, according to Vockerodt; in fact, he writes that in some parts of that district there were no crops. The forecast was odious for the people of the church. That the church remained together evidenced God's preserving grace bestowed upon these folk.<sup>184</sup>

The October *Herald* published a more cheerful letter from Fred Vockerodt as it updates the condition of the church at Middledrift. Dated July 22, 1926, Vockerodt expresses his gratitude for the money received from the Board, and he indicates that the

---

<sup>183</sup> Vockerodt, Letter.

<sup>184</sup> Vockerodt, Letter.

“work is going happily on, and we feel sure that God is for us.”<sup>185</sup> More specifically, Vockerodt states that “[t]he church is growing stronger each day.”<sup>186</sup>

As the church was well spiritually judging from what Vockerodt notes, the people were well physically despite the presence of Typhus fever in nearby areas in the eastern section of the Cape. What is interesting about this information is that the people in this area of the Cape desired medicine from America remembering how Dr. East aided them in the past during an outbreak of Spanish influenza. This was another opportunity of African American Baptists to offer needed help to suffering Africans.<sup>187</sup>

Vockerodt also reports that the church was in continual and fervent prayer for the arrival of Rev. Spencer. It is obvious the Spencer’s waited clearance from the South African government to enter the country at this time. Suspicion of African American missionaries continued. It is unknown if they waited in America, or in Cape Town. Vockerodt writes that all of the members of the church were on the look-out for the mail to read of Spencer’s arrival in the country. The mystery of this situation engendered some anxiety in the church as they were ready to receive their new pastor from America.<sup>188</sup>

As Vockerodt ends the letter, he revealed his own Evangelical stance as a missionary pastor. He indicates clearly that “we still have to preach the old gospel.” This is of utmost importance, but he also writes that they must offer clothing, food, and medicine whenever they had the ability to do so. He states that when they had the material and physical items to offer one “can lecture them all night.” Vockerodt saw that the offer of material things for people was a prime opportunity to preach the gospel of

---

<sup>185</sup> Fred Vockerodt, Letter, *Mission Herald*, October 1926.

<sup>186</sup> Vockerodt, Letter.

<sup>187</sup> Vockerodt, Letter.

<sup>188</sup> Vockerodt, Letter.

faith and repentance. Even at funerals, Vockerodt writes that he seized the opportunity to preach repentance.<sup>189</sup>

In a letter dated August 13, 1926, J. M. Bhodlani wrote from his station in Natal. He received his \$50 salary from the Board, which he is thankful for. Bhodlani also reports that he had been away from his home “walking among” traditional leaders in his district to speak with them about Jesus Christ. He also made contact with the local chief, who desired to forge a “union” with Dr. East. All of this boded well for an expansion of this work in this district of Natal.<sup>190</sup>

Though Bhodlani fails to detail real specifics about his work at his home station in Herschel, he did offer a point about the progress of the work. In a joyous tone, Bhodlani writes that he “cannot tell the number of people who are going to be baptized on August 29, 1926.”<sup>191</sup> Such an exclamation indicates solid growth. In addition, Bhodlani desires to hold to East’s teachings. There was no specific statement about East’s teachings, but it can be safely assumed that he held to Baptist doctrine, but also to African American and African Christian beliefs about racial uplift.<sup>192</sup>

L. J. Tshalata wrote a heart-wrenching letter from Natal dated August 11, 1926 published in this issue. The only news of anything taking place in his church was the death of his father of whom he states that Dr. East knew. According to Tshalata, his father died in Christian hope; and he expects to see him once more in heaven. After informing Dr. East and all of the readers of the *Herald* of this sad occurrence, he writes

---

<sup>189</sup> Vockerodt, Letter.

<sup>190</sup> J. M. Bhodlani, Letter, *Mission Herald*, October 1, 1926.

<sup>191</sup> Bhodlani, Letter.

<sup>192</sup> Bhodlani, Letter.

that he “greatly” depended “on the help from America.”<sup>193</sup> This dependence reflects the fledgling nature of Tshalata’s church in Natal; it lacked the financial wherewithal to support itself. Yet it also points to Tshalata’s perspective of African American Baptists. From this perspective, the NBC and its Foreign Mission Board possessed the necessary monetary power to support this church and a whole host of churches in South Africa. Also Tshalata took a humble even deferential posture before the NBC looking to African American Baptists as redeemers.<sup>194</sup>

One more letter from South Africa in this issue comes from Joseph Lepele of the OFS, and the letter is dated August 23, 1926. He writes about the upcoming return of J. S. Mahlangu, and he affirms that everything Mahlangu had remarked about regarding South Africa was accurate and true. There were two items of detail that Lepele writes of regarding the progress of the work in the OFS. First, he states that God had blessed the work there; specifically, God had blessed them to begin building a meeting house in Harrismith. Second, during his preaching in different locations in the OFS, and possibly in the Transvaal, “several professed to have received Christ.”<sup>195</sup> The work of saving souls continued in this area of the Union.<sup>196</sup>

Toward the end of the letter, Lepele re-iterates his view of his relationship with Dr. East and the NBC. He states: “Dear sir and father, we are trusting in you as your dear little children.”<sup>197</sup> This indicates that Lepele had assumed a deferential posture before Dr. East who he held in eminence. It is unknown how sincere such a statement is. Was this just flattery to win more money for this work? It could have been, but such a tactic would

---

<sup>193</sup> L. J. Tshalata, Letter, *Mission Herald*, October 1926.

<sup>194</sup> Tshalata, Letter.

<sup>195</sup> Joseph Lepele, Letter, *Mission Herald*, October 1926.

<sup>196</sup> Lepele, Letter.

<sup>197</sup> Lepele, Letter.

have failed as the Board did its best to be even-handed in its support of the churches and missions. More accurately, this statement reflects the gratitude Lepele had toward the Board giving support to this work. This particular work was a revived one through the work of Mahlangu; this work in the OFS had been independent of National Baptist work previously.

The year of 1926 ended with one other letter from the South African field. Dated September 10, 1926, C. S. Papu from Cape Town wrote a substantial report of the work occurring at his church. After informing the Board of the receipt of his \$50 quarterly salary, he details specifics about the regular school, Sunday school, and church. Regarding the school, Papu states that enrollment continued to grow each day with the majority of students being men. In total, there were 60 students. He even lists the courses taught in the school such as gardening, history, and hygiene. The curriculum at the school was reflective of Papu's and the church's perspective of Christianity and mission work. They firmly believed that Christianity was a vehicle of general uplift. By offering these courses, students could possess knowledge and skills that would enable them to progress in their livelihoods and earn more money possibly. There is no indication in the letter whether the school had governmental accreditation, which would have allowed students to receive a diploma recognized by the government so that the graduates could secure better jobs.<sup>198</sup>

According to Papu, the Sunday school was also growing with an enrollment above 45 students and the church had a good membership. This Sunday school possessed a number of lay preachers who would leave the church building to evangelize to lost souls. The Sunday school had a definite evangelical spirit and emphasis to it. The church

---

<sup>198</sup> C. S. Papu, Letter, *Mission Herald*, December 1926.

had a membership of 120 that included those at the out-stations. The church also had a missionary zeal as Papu writes that: “The gospel is being proclaimed every day and the souls are being saved.”<sup>199</sup> From this portion of the letter, it is apparent that this work was strong on evangelism and took seriously the Great Commission.

Papu re-informs the Board of the church’s plan to build a church building in Cape Town. In this re-iteration, he also asks the Board “to give a large sum of money” to defray some of the costs of building.<sup>200</sup> He also informs the Board that he had convinced the church to concur that there would be a partnership in financing this building project with them and the Board. Once more, a church receiving support from the Board expected it to offer great help in its work showing its dependence on the “Mother Board.”<sup>201</sup>

In the year 1927, the first letter from the South African field appears in the February *Herald*. This letter is from J. S. Mahlangu dated October 25, 1926, and offers a substantial report on his work in the Transvaal and the associated work in the OFS. In the beginning of the letter, he reports that he had devoted his time to work at the main station in Kliptown (near Johannesburg) where they had added nine converts to their fellowship for the entire year. Early in the month of October (1926), he visited the church at Harrismith where J. J. Lepele ministered. Mahlangu was there to lay the cornerstone for the new building rising there and the services connected with this glad occasion. Commenting on the worship services, he states that they “were really splendid and inspiring.”<sup>202</sup> At this time, the church raised \$100 toward the completion of the building

---

<sup>199</sup> Papu, Letter.

<sup>200</sup> Papu, Letter.

<sup>201</sup> Papu, Letter.

<sup>202</sup> J. S. Mahlangu, Letter, *Mission Herald*, February 1927.

along with some donations of farm animals. This news was good news of progress to the friends of African mission work who read the pages of this publication.

Mahlangu also extends his gratitude to those churches that gave to his work recently including Holy Trinity in Philadelphia and Nineteenth Street Baptist in Washington, D.C. This support was a direct result of Mahlangu's travels throughout America visiting National Baptist churches, district associations, and state conventions. National Baptists should have been proud that their money went toward such a good work.<sup>203</sup>

In the May 1927 *Herald* a report from J. J. Lepele ministering in the Orange Free State appears. In this letter, Lepele informs the Board that the new building in the Orange Free State was complete and they had a dedication service on December 25, 1926 in which J. S. Mahlangu preached. He informs Dr. East that they owed £80 on the building and desired help from the Board to help alleviate the debt. Most importantly for the purposes of this chapter, Lepele states that the work continued to grow in membership; there were now 190 members inclusive of the church at Harrismith and the out-stations.<sup>204</sup> This is evidence of the re-vitalization of a work begun by the Board earlier in the century.

This month's issue published the half-year report from Koti's work in Natal. This is an encouraging report as Koti writes that they baptized twenty-two persons at the quarterly meetings of the mission stations. Detailing more about the on-going work, Koti explains the need for a school there so that the work could remain viable and effective. At this particular time, the station lacked the financial ability to have its own school. In this

---

<sup>203</sup> Mahlangu, Letter.

<sup>204</sup> J. J. Lepele, Letter, *Mission Herald*, May 1927.



context, Koti reveals something of his missionary philosophy: “It is a great drawback to our efforts to preach to these people. We must give them religion, as well as education, in order that they may be intelligent citizens and good Christians.”<sup>205</sup> Such a philosophy is certainly in agreement with the philosophy of the NBC during this period.

Dated January 6, 1927, Ernest Ndlazi wrote from Queenstown. He states that the work there was progressing “nicely.” He also comments on the fledgling work in Mpotulo, which he states “will be a great place some day.”<sup>206</sup> He remarks further that this up-start work was in the midst of “raw natives” who “need to be trained to work, to plough and clean houses.”<sup>207</sup> On the surface, this reads as though it has nothing to do with Christian evangelism; but it does. Ndlazi believes, as did others, that the gospel and aspects of Western civilization connected inextricably. To end this note, Ndlazi writes on the great support he had received from African Americans as his work would have been unable thrive or continue without their financial help. He followed this by expressing the need of having an African American missionary in South Africa (he referenced his disappointment that the Board decided to send an African American missionary to Liberia rather than to South Africa). He re-iterates their dependence on Dr. East by writing: “Remember, we are looking to you for everything, and you are the founder and builder of this South Africa...you are our father and mother.”<sup>208</sup> Though these words drip with sugary sweetness, they do express a type of desperate yet charming spiritual kinship between Africans in South Africa and African Americans. This spiritual connection was possible only through the bond they had through Christianity.

---

<sup>205</sup> E. B. P. Koti, “Half-Year Report,” *Mission Herald*, May 1927.

<sup>206</sup> Ernest Ndlazi, Letter, *Mission Herald*, July 1927.

<sup>207</sup> Ndlazi, Letter.

<sup>208</sup> Ndlazi, Letter.

In this same issue, there is a letter dated January 11, 1927 from a new minister named S. N. Mgquamqo. The publication of this letter indicates the ever widening net of National Baptist support in southern Africa. Mgquamqo writes that he was the pastor of Cherry Baptist Church in Beaconsfield, which was in the northern section of the Cape. He recounts the service he held on December 25, 1926 and how he preached the gospel to non-Christian Africans in the area who attended the service. Mgquamqo also writes that he baptized five new converts in January. In concluding the letter, he expresses that he had a strong interest in expanding the work of Baptists in South Africa. Though he asks for no support explicitly in the letter, the mere publication of it in the *Herald* suggested that the Board contemplated offering some support here. This would be yet another church and mission work that the Board would finance in South Africa.<sup>209</sup>

Writing in December 1926, a letter from Jossie Ntlahla in West Pondoland describes the recent work there; and it is a bright report. Ntlahla writes that last quarter (as of the time of the writing) he baptized four new Christians into his church, and he anticipated baptizing more at the next quarterly meeting of the churches he oversaw. He also notes that the women had been busy preaching the gospel to other women during their meetings. So far three women had been converted through these meetings.<sup>210</sup>

Once again in the same July issue of the *Herald* another letter from the South African field appeared. This one is from John Ntlahla dated February 7, 1927. In the letter, he offers a good report regarding church growth and strong attendance in the schools the mission station operated. Ntlahla writes that they had “added a good number

---

<sup>209</sup> S. N. Mgquamqo, Letter, *Mission Herald*, July 1927.

<sup>210</sup> Jossie Ntlahla, Letter, *Mission Herald*, July 1927.

of souls to our church” and that there are ten more to be baptized.<sup>211</sup> In the two day schools there were 170 students enrolled. All of this indicates a flourishing work supported by National Baptist money there at this time.<sup>212</sup>

In a letter dated March 6, 1927, Jossie Ntlahla wrote regarding the progression of his work in Pondoland. Published in the August 1927 *Herald*, Ntlahla indicates that the work among the Pondo was going nicely. Especially of note is his reference that Baptists were now earning respect among the people there. Ntlahla states that before he arrived in Pondoland Baptists had little respect, but that had changed as a result of the work he had done there. Christians and non-Christians developed good respect for the Baptists.<sup>213</sup>

Ntlahla also reports of a joint-service his church held with a Wesleyan church in Pondoland in which Chief Victor Poto preached. According to Ntlahla Baptist folk attended the meeting in good numbers (120 from the Pondoland churches) with fewer in attendance among Methodists including members of the AME Church. What is striking about this report is that Ntlahla quoted the chief (who was also a Wesleyan minister) who stated that though he was a Wesleyan the Church (meaning the universal Church) was for Africans. This statement could be interpreted in at least two ways. First, the chief could have been evidencing his South African type of Ethiopianism, which was more nationalistic than its African American namesake. Second, he could have been claiming that the Church of Jesus Christ (regardless of denominational affiliation) was inclusive of Africans.<sup>214</sup> It is difficult to interpret even given the context of the statement.

---

<sup>211</sup> John Ntlahla, Letter, *Mission Herald*, July 1927.

<sup>212</sup> Jn. Ntlahla, Letter.

<sup>213</sup> Jossie Ntlahla, Letter, *Mission Herald*, August 1927.

<sup>214</sup> Js. Ntlahla, Letter.

Ntlahla also reports of conversions in this letter. He writes of the conversion of a traditional family through the preaching of Chief Poto. Ntlahla tells the story a sick little girl who implored her family to convert by commanding them to remember what the chief had said to them in the church meeting. This is evidence of the power of the gospel as even a little girl pointed her family to faith. To the National Baptist audience reading this letter, it demonstrated the need to continue its support of South African missions.<sup>215</sup>

In the October 1927 *Herald* the Annual Report from Eben Koti's work in Natal is published. This rather detailed report describes the work up to June 30, 1927. In a rather impressive statement, Koti writes that the work he did and oversaw in Natal was "pioneering work." He compares his work to the work done for 25 years by a white Congregationalist minister, and he laments that the people were ignorant of the faith and were still considered to be Christians. Koti writes: "Even those who have embraced Christianity are only one step from heathendom."<sup>216</sup> By this he means that they had yet to loosen themselves from the entanglements of traditional beliefs. In reciting this brief little history, Koti prefaces the need for an industrial school in this district of Natal. He desires a good Day School to train new converts and teach them to read. It is obvious that Koti believes in preaching the gospel among non-Christians, but for people to progress socially and otherwise they needed education, which a mission station had to provide.<sup>217</sup>

As far as the numbers go for this mission work, there were eight preaching stations with 159 members. Koti reports that during the past year they baptized 35 new converts; but they also dismissed eight persons from membership. Regarding the enrollment numbers in the Sunday schools and Day Schools, there were 33 and 25

---

<sup>215</sup> Js. Ntlahla, Letter.

<sup>216</sup> E. B. P. Koit, "Annual Report," *Mission Herald*, October 1927.

<sup>217</sup> Koti, Annual Report.

enrolled respectively. These were the highest enrollment numbers. This explains Koti's urgency about building an industrial school in Harding.<sup>218</sup>

One final letter of interest published in 1927 is from J. J. Lepele writing from the Orange Free State. Lepele offers a general report of the Transvaal Branch of the Native Baptist Association. This branch included local churches and mission stations in the Transvaal, Orange Free State, Basutoland (now Lesotho), and Zululand. In the report, Lepele indicates that the branch association attempted to build a meeting place and an entire mission station for the church in Basutoland. The association urged the Board to send an African American man to take charge of this work. Their goal was for an African American missionary to build a Tuskegee type school in Basutoland.<sup>219</sup>

In the April 1928 *Herald*, a rare letter from C. S. Papu appears that gave an update on his work in Maitland, South Africa. Papu's letter is full of platitudes to the Board and its continued support of the work there. He writes: "Your help is doing a great work here in South Africa. The heathen are being saved through your help, the work is prospering through your advice and aid. You are indeed a great blessing to Africa on the whole. The sons of Africa shall ever stretch forth their hands to you and the Board."<sup>220</sup> This particular section of the letter demonstrates Papu's evangelical-mindedness and concern. He desires that Africans there would receive the gospel in fulfillment of the aforementioned biblical prophecy in Psalm 68, and this was what the Board's money went toward. This letter also denotes the connection that Papu perceived was necessary for Africans in South Africa to become Christians--African American financial help.

---

<sup>218</sup> Koti, "Annual Report."

<sup>219</sup> J. J. Lepele, Letter, *Mission Herald*, December 1927.

<sup>220</sup> C. S. Papu, Letter, *Mission Herald*, April 1928.

In the next month, J. S. Mahlangu's Annual Address as Moderator of the South African Native Baptist Association (formerly the Transvaal Branch of the Native Baptist Association) appears. This address highlights the vision of National Baptist Africans for the expanded work of churches supported by the Board. One important issue Mahlangu places before the Body was the need to have a school, or seminary to train young ministers. In pressing this issue, Mahlangu states: "The time needs trained ministers. If at all we will be machinery of uplifting our fallen brothers and sisters physically, economically, educationally and religiously, we must develop our ministry in educational lines. May God allow it."<sup>221</sup> This statement clearly illustrates (once again) the African acceptance of the National Baptist vision of racial uplift through the means of Christianity. Christian teaching and conversion is the foundation of general uplift among Africans.

In ending the report, Mahlangu offers a word of gratitude to the Board and Dr. East for sending all of the ministers the *National Baptist Voice* (the organ of the NBC) as well as Sunday school literature all free of charge. By receiving the *Voice* these ministers could keep well-informed of convention matters, and it served as a tangible item of connection between African American Baptists and African Baptists in South Africa. By receiving free Sunday school literature, these fledgling churches never had to worry about purchasing literature from other sources in South Africa. Also regarding the Sunday school literature African Americans wrote for African Americans and persons of African descent. This was a welcome benefit for being supported by the NBC for these churches.<sup>222</sup>

---

<sup>221</sup> J. S. Mahlangu, "Annual Report," *Mission Herald*, May 1928.

<sup>222</sup> Mahlangu, "Annual Report."

In a letter from L. J. Tshalata the importance of African American self-dependency emerges. Published in the August 1928 *Herald*, Tshalata writes these interesting words: "Here in Africa the black people are looked upon as a people who can't do anything by themselves and our church is despised, as the leaders are black; but this you are doing makes us to be not despised because we are now supported regularly like the church whose leaders are white."<sup>223</sup> It can never be underestimated what National Baptist support meant to these African Baptists in Natal. As the passage alludes to, National Baptist support offered the white on-lookers with real evidence of the wherewithal of people of African descent. It proved that African and African American Baptists could apply the intelligence needed to run church affairs.

The South African field continued to experience growth as more and more Africans throughout filled the various churches. Various letters indicate such. Mahlangu's letter dated April 2, 1928 stipulates that his church in Kliptown boasted of a membership of 250.<sup>224</sup> In May 1928, Jossie Ntlahla writes that his station in Pondoland had added 29 members pushing the membership to 266.<sup>225</sup> Writing in October 1928, L. J. Tshalata writes that there were over 400 active members at his station in Natal increased by 25 baptisms so far during that year.<sup>226</sup> These conversions and membership totals testify to the constant activity of these stations in South Africa, and it was a marked success by the Foreign Mission Board.

Into 1929 the letters received from the South African field reflect much of the same. The stations in South African remained steady in their growth, and African pastors

---

<sup>223</sup> L. J. Tshalata, Letter, *Mission Herald*, August 1928.

<sup>224</sup> J. S. Mahlangu, Letter, *Mission Herald*, June 1928.

<sup>225</sup> Jossie Ntlahla, Letter, *Mission Herald*, September 1928.

<sup>226</sup> L. J. Tshalata, Letter, *Mission Herald*, September 1928.

continued to look to America for constant financial help to spread the gospel among their non-Christian countrypersons. For example, in a letter dated November 5, 1928 but published in January 1929 J. J. Lepele writes that he prays that “every church in American to become a monthly contributor to the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention to help save Africa.”<sup>227</sup> More money from America meant more African souls saved. In the same letter, Lepele comments regarding a local chief who was a preacher and member of an out-station church there in the Orange Free State. Lepele informs him of Dr. East, and the chief commanded all of his people to face the “East” in a symbolic gesture of their gratitude to such a great man.<sup>228</sup>

The theme of South African Baptist dependence upon African American Baptists continues in a letter from J. S. Mahlangu dated February 9, 1929. Writing from Johannesburg at this time, Mahlangu articulates his reliance upon East and the Board, and he also states something of particular note about the overall activity of the NBC: “Under your leadership, sir, the National Baptist Convention, Inc., has more missionaries than any other Negro Christian body in America.”<sup>229</sup> After reciting this bit of information, Mahlangu expresses their need of the Board and all National Baptists to help them build a church building, which he needed at one of the stations.<sup>230</sup>

Regarding growth, the following information drawn from various letters evidences the vitality present in specific stations in the South African field. Overall, the South African field remained the most successful for the Foreign Mission Board as the 1920s drew to a close. L. J. Tshalata reports in December 1928 that his work in

---

<sup>227</sup> J. J. Lepele, Letter, *Mission Herald*, January 1929.

<sup>228</sup> Lepele, Letter.

<sup>229</sup> J. S. Mahlangu, Letter, *Mission Herald*, April 1929.

<sup>230</sup> Mahlangu, Letter.



Middlewater. Natal had a total membership of 635 spread throughout twelve out-stations including sixteen baptized during the last quarter of 1928.<sup>231</sup> In J. J. Lepele's annual report from the work in the Orange Free State, the Harrismith Baptist Church reported a membership of 399 with 61 joining through baptism. The Vrede Baptist Church boasted of a membership of 124 persons of which 21 received baptism.<sup>232</sup> Dated June 4, 1929, Mahlangu writes that because of African American money, "49 souls were received by baptism throughout the year..."<sup>233</sup> Total membership of the work there in Johannesburg and Kliptown was 293 at the time of Mahlangu's writing.<sup>234</sup> From Natal, Koti presents his half-year report stipulating that his church had 228 members in January, but with twelve added through baptism the membership stood at 240.<sup>235</sup> To re-iterate, these numbers indicate a thriving field of missionary work for the Board.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, 1930 was the Jubilee year for the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. As the convention and Foreign Mission Board entered its fiftieth year of ministry, its South African mission field was alive and prospering. Letters from the field this year demonstrate this. Other letters indicate that African pastors in the mission field continued to believe in the same Ethiopian vision held by Dr. East and other National Baptist leaders.

Printed in the April 1930 *Herald*, L. J. Tshalata offers his Quarterly Report ending on December 31, 1929. Regarding the numbers, Tshalata reports that his Middlewater station had fourteen stations altogether and 327 active members. Among these stations, there were seven schools one of them was a Day School. The Board should have been

---

<sup>231</sup> L. J. Tshalata, Letter, *Mission Herald*, April 1929.

<sup>232</sup> J. J. Lepele, "Annual Report," *Mission Herald*, June 1929.

<sup>233</sup> J. S. Mahlangu, Letter, *Mission Herald*, September 1929.

<sup>234</sup> Mahlangu, Letter.

<sup>235</sup> E. B. P. Koti, "Half-Year Report," *Mission Herald*, September 1929.

pleased with this steady growth, and it should have been an encouragement for all National Baptist contributors.<sup>236</sup>

J. J. Lepele in his capacity of Corresponding Secretary of the Transvaal Branch of the South African Native Baptist Association sent a report detailing the membership of the churches of this branch. This report dated May 27, 1930 appears in the July 1930 *Herald*. In the Orange Free State, there were two main stations---Harrismith Baptist Church and Vrede Baptist. Harrismith Baptist reported a membership of 478 including 76 baptisms thus far in 1930. There were eleven out-stations connected to this church. Vrede Baptist with five out-stations reported 158 members including 34 baptisms this year. The report on the Transvaal churches is incomplete, but the report indicates growth for that year as there were 48 new members among the churches. Total membership of the churches is missing from the report.<sup>237</sup>

The last report published in the *Herald* for 1930 came from L. J. Tshalata dated June 16, 1930. This particular report is his annual report; therefore, it has updated membership numbers. In the report, Tshalata writes that he oversaw at that time fourteen stations in Natal including a church at Port Shepstone that had an unspecified number of stations. At a recent meeting of all of the stations in the Port Shepstone area, he baptized seventeen new converts. Tshalata then informs the Board that he went to a place called Ntonga and baptized 26 more new converts.<sup>238</sup>

In addition to the recent baptisms, Tshalata offers new information regarding the specific needs of his work in Natal. He explains that the lack of facilities "is our

---

<sup>236</sup> L. J. Tshalata, "Quarterly Report," *Mission Herald*, April 1930.

<sup>237</sup> J. J. Lepele, "Report of the Transvaal Branch of the South African Native Baptist Association," *Mission Herald*, July 1930.

<sup>238</sup> L. J. Tshalata, "Annual Report," *Mission Herald*, September 1930.

hindrance in doing some church matters.”<sup>239</sup> Since his work was thriving, there was a need for more teachers in the schools and evangelists at the out-stations; but the problem there was the lack of money. Tshalata states that he paid the teachers and evangelists out of his own money that he received from the Board. The implication in this situation is that the growing work would sputter without more financial support from the NBC as everyone needed adequate financial support.

The final letter of interest is from J. S. Mahlangu dated July 9, 1930, and enclosed was a letter from a Sotho chief with fraternal sentiments toward African Americans. In Mahlangu’s portion of the letter, he writes that the chief, Matela, gave him the letter thinking that Mahlangu had plans to travel to the United States to attend the Jubilee convention. Mahlangu also informs the Board that Chief Matela donated some land to build a church building and a school in Basutoland; and the chief and his people were desirous of learning Baptist doctrine.<sup>240</sup>

What is remarkable about the chief’s letter is his articulation of Providential Design. This raises two questions: how did the chief know of African American Christian thought on this issue? Did he recognize this independent of any knowledge of African American Christian thought? There is a possibility that the chief would have read past issues of the *Herald*, and that he echoed what he read in an attempt to draw interest and money from the National Baptists. In the letter, the chief wrote that African Americans were “our fellow people.” He also wrote that through African Americans his people would “be enlightened.” In addition, the chief remarks that African Americans “are out

---

<sup>239</sup> Tshalata, “Annual Report.”

<sup>240</sup> J. S. Mahlangu, Letter, *Mission Herald*, September 1930.

torch-bearers and our Moses,” and “our redeemers.”<sup>241</sup> Regarding the chief’s expression of Providential Design, he writes: “It’s a full belief in me that, it was all through the love of God that Americans were made slaves and from thence they merged into a feared, civilized nation the world through, in industry, education, development and general progress towards the betterment of the Negro.”<sup>242</sup> The tenor of these comments by the chief indicates his outward belief that he needed African American Christians. What the chief desired was the tools of what he termed civilization such as education and the industrial arts. The chief recognized what Christianity offered him potentially: economic and social uplift.

This survey and analysis of letters and reports published in the *Herald* during this nine year period reflects how invaluable this primary source is for understanding National Baptist mission work in South Africa. Since these letters and reports from the South African field survive only on the pages of this monthly newspaper, there is no other source to read of activities, hopes, dreams, sentiments toward African American Baptists of African Baptists in South African under the employ of the Foreign Mission Board. Without this source, J. S. Mahlangu, L. J. Tshalata, Ernest Ndlazi and others would be lost to the historical record for these names fail to appear in South African historiography. For scores of Africans in the Union of South Africa during this period, these men and other pastors, teachers, and evangelists were important leaders in their respective communities. It is a good thing that historians can read the writings of these men in the *Herald*.

---

<sup>241</sup> Chief Matela, Letter, *Mission Herald*, September 1930.

<sup>242</sup> Chief Matela, Letter.

The contributions of African American missionaries are also something the *Herald* reveals during this period also. Compared to their presence during the Jordan era, their presence is relatively minimal. The Payne's, however, attempted to keep the works at Middledrift and in Cape Town afloat, but the South African government succeeded in revoking their visas thereby removing them from the Union. As discussed in this chapter and the previous one, the South African government assumed that African American missionaries would cause African nationalism to diffuse through their African South African converts. All in all, African American missionaries maintained the Ethiopianism that marked NBC missionary philosophy from the beginning. Because of the *Herald* there can be recognition of the work done by H. A. and Bessie Payne.

As the year of Jubilee came to an end, the letters from the South African field gave evidence of an expanding mission field. Though there were no African American National Baptists working in the field, African pastors, evangelists, and teachers worked tirelessly to preach the gospel and to help uplift thousands of Africans in South Africa. African ministers carried the same Ethiopian vision for South Africa that National Baptists had. This demonstrates that African Americans and Africans in South Africa worked hand and hand in their attempt to redeem South Africa. Even in a time of economic depression, the Foreign Mission Board continued to receive enough money to keep these mission stations in operation. During this time of economic uncertainty, there remained hope for redemption.

## Conclusion: Heraldng Still, but the Vision Has Changed

During the 1990s, I read the *Mission Herald* for the first time. I and my pastor at the time went on a sick call, and I noticed these mission magazines at the home of the person we visited. These magazines had stories about National Baptist mission work in Africa, and I asked to borrow them because of my interest in Africa. I never returned those issues though it was my intention to return them. The magazines, which are still in my possession, are issues of the *Mission Herald*. At that time, I had no knowledge that I would travel to Philadelphia to hunt for past issues of this publication, nor did I know I would travel to Yale Divinity School for more issues. I never knew that I would use past issues of the *Herald* to write my doctoral dissertation. This is an indication of the mysteries of Divine Providence.

As I collected photocopies of the *Herald* from 1912 to 1934, I noticed quickly that these issues had a special quality to them unlike the more contemporary issues I already had. The old issues were full of editorials, exhortations, news from Africa, and of course letters from the field. Contemporary issues had far less of this type of information; it was quite specialized. What I realize now at the end of this project is that the Foreign Mission Board had multiple purposes in publishing an organ: first, it was a medium for the Corresponding Secretary to voice his concerns about the support of missionaries in the field and to implore National Baptists to give more so that they could saturate the African mission field and assume their God-ordained purpose; second, it was a repository of letters from the mission field informing the readership of the work undertaken there with the purpose for National Baptists to continue supporting workers in the field; and third, it was a source of news from Africa, especially news from the African press in

South Africa. These old nearly forgotten issues were a source of connection for African Americans and Africans since African workers in the field received free issues of the *Herald*. These older issues demonstrate that African American Baptists had a real interest in Africa, and wanted the readers of their monthly mission newspaper to be informed of occurrences in Africa.

From the contemporary issues of the *Herald* gone are explicit editorials and commentary on God's Providential Design for African Americans in enduring slavery, believing the gospel, and giving the gospel to Africa. Is it because African Americans are nearly 150 years from the slavery experience? Does this elapse in time make Ethiopianism obsolete and passé? This is possible. It is a rare thing for African American Baptist ministers to preach and teach on God's providential dealings with his people. Without musings on God's Providence, Christians lack a historical perspective to help inform their future endeavors. It is obvious in studying the history of African American Baptist foreign missions to 1930 that they possessed a keen sense of God's Providence and applied their perceptions of it. Their comprehension of the intricacies and mysteries of God's Providence drove their actions to establish missionary fields in various parts of Sub-Saharan Africa.

African American Baptist reading of Divine Providence is key in understanding what drove Baptist leaders from the 1810s onward to keep the prospect and reality of sending their own to Africa as missionaries. Looking back to the days of Lott Carey, there was a sense of what Providence had laid before African American Baptists; they believed God had opened a door for them to work for Africa's redemption. William Colley and others during the late 1870s kept this same belief alive as they realized that

African Americans were the best suited to bring the gospel to Africa. This remained the refrain all the way to 1930. For these leaders among African American Baptists, they read Providence's writing in the Abolitionist movement, in the Civil War, and in Emancipation; it all pointed to God raising them up in the Western world to travel back to their ancestral homeland with the gospel of Jesus Christ believing earnestly that they would help to usher in a period of African resurgence even in the midst of Imperialism and Colonialism. This was a type of tacit attack on Imperialism and Colonialism as no African American Baptist missionary or leader in the Foreign Mission Board publically denounced colonial rule.

There is no longer the same sense of urgency among National Baptists regarding their missionary presence in Africa. This is unfortunate. As described in the early chapters of this work, African Americans had a strong commitment to establishing strong missionary fields in West, Central, and South Africa. There can be an argument posited that the existence of the National Baptist Convention owes itself to African missions commitment. Going back to Lott Carey in 1821 to the missionaries supported by the American Baptist Missionary Convention to the missionaries sponsored by state conventions in the southeast United States to the actual founding of the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention in 1880 the concern for African missions was the motor toward African American Baptist unity. The unity that exists today rests on other concerns than spreading the gospel in Africa. James East recognized a shift even back in 1930 when he lamented the fact that African missions had lost its steam among National Baptists.

What are some scholarly concerns that the contemporary state of National Baptist missionary work in Africa highlights? One concern is: what happened to Ethiopianism?



The answer to this question lies in the history of National Baptist foreign mission beyond James East's tenure as Corresponding Secretary that ended with his demise in 1934. J. H. Jackson and C. C. Adams were the immediate successors of East; did they alter or re-interpret African American Ethiopianism? Another concern is with the continued expansion of the South Africa field. There is still National Baptist missionary presence in South Africa, but it is nowhere near as it was in 1930. What happened? Reading these past issues of the *Herald* it is apparent that Dr. East and the Board desired a revitalization of the West African field. With the prohibition of African American missionaries in South Africa throughout the 1920s, African American Baptist missionaries traveled and worked in West Africa. Was this the cause for the decline in the South African field? These are vital concerns that need to be addressed in future scholarship.

What is of particular interest regarding future scholarship is tracing even more the centrality of African missions in the formation of the National Baptist Convention. This would entail searching and unearthing more primary sources detailing the history of the American Baptist Missionary Convention of the 1840s and its sponsorship of missionaries in West Africa. The same holds for state conventions that sent missionaries to West Africa building upon Sandy Martin's work. Much more needs to be researched on the history of the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention as well from 1880 to 1895. Research in this area will offer a clearer picture of the great interest African American Baptists had in preaching the gospel in Africa. Was their concern wider than preaching the gospel? Or did they want to build schools and hospitals also as the future generation of African American Baptists did?

One African pastor in South Africa sent a letter stating that he hoped that the name of James East would always be remembered in South Africa. This hope went unrealized as the name of James East has failed to survive among African Baptists in South Africa. The Buchanan Industrial School, James East's great accomplishment to the South African mission field, is no longer in existence. The legacy of R. A. Jackson, Lewis Jordan, and James East remains as long as there is a work progressing in South Africa under the auspices of the Foreign Mission Board. Interestingly enough, the name of the late, great pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church in New York City, William Wells Brown, remains as a church in Soweto bears his name. We are left with the memory that there was an African American pastor and an African American Missionary Baptist church with a heart for South Africa's redemption, and as they stretched out their hand toward Africa South Africans stretched back.

## Bibliography

- 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report of the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention, Inc.* Submitted at Los Angeles, California, September 5-10, 1923.
- 44th Annual Report of the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention, Inc.* Submitted at Nashville, Tennessee, September 10-15, 1924.
- 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention, Inc.* Submitted at Baltimore, Maryland, September 9-14, 1925.
- Adams, C. C. and Marshall A. Talley. *Negro Baptists and Foreign Mission.* Philadelphia, PA: Foreign Mission Board of the NBC USA, Inc. 1944.
- Afro-American Mission Herald*, May, June, December 1900.
- Anthony, David Henry, III. *Max Yergan: Race Man, Internationalist, Cold Warrior.* New York: New York University Press, 2006.
- Anyabwile, Thabiti. *The Decline of African American Theology: From Biblical Faith to Cultural Captivity.* Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2007.
- Articles of Faith and Church Covenant.* Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, 2000.
- Balia, Daryl. *Black Methodists and White Supremacy in South Africa.* Durban: Madiba Publications, 1991.
- Baptist Hymnal.* Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2004.
- Banks, William L. *A History of Black Baptists.* West Conshohocken, PA: Infinity Publishing.com, 2005.
- Batts, H. J. *The History of the Baptist Church in South Africa.* Cape Town: T. Maskew Miller, 1922.
- Blyden, Edward W. *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race.* Baltimore, MD: Black Classics Press, 1994.
- Boyce, James P. *Abstract of Systematic Theology.* Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2006.
- Boyd, R. H. *What Baptists Believe & Practice.* Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, n.d.

- . *Baptist Sunday School Catechism*. Nashville, TN: R. H. Boyd Publishing Corporation, Reprinted 2000.
- Brackney, William H., ed. *Baptist Life and Thought: A Source Book*. Rev. ed. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1998.
- Brawley, E. M. "Contending for the Faith." In *The Negro Baptist Pulpit: A Collection of Sermons and Papers by Colored Baptist Ministers*, edited by E. M. Brawley. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971.
- . "Lord's Supper." In R. H. Boyd, *What Baptists Believe & Practice*. Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, n.d.
- Brawley, Edward, ed. *The Negro Baptist Pulpit: A Collection of Sermons and Papers by Colored Baptist Ministers*. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971.
- Brink, Emily. "English Metrical Psalmody." In *Psalter-Hymnal Handbook*, eds. Emily Brink and Bert Polman. Grand Rapids, MI: CRC Publications, 1998.
- Brink, Emily and Bert Polman, eds. *Psalter-Hymnal Handbook*. Grand Rapids, MI: CRC Publications, 1998.
- Brooks, Walter H. *The Silver Bluff Church. A History of Negro Baptist Churches in America*. Washington, DC: Press of R L Pendleton, 1910. Documenting the American South; <http://www.docsouth.unc.edu/church/brooks/brooks.html> (accessed March 23, 2010).
- . "Evolution of the Negro Baptist Church." *Journal of Negro History* 7. No. 1 (January 1922): 11-22.
- Brown, J. "Christian Baptism." In R. H. Boyd, *What Baptists Believe & Practice*. Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, n.d.
- Brown, J. Newton. *A Baptist Church Manual: Containing the New Hampshire Declaration of Faith, Suggested Covenant, Rules of Order, and Forms of Church Letters*. Rev. ed. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1994.
- Campbell, James T. *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.
- . *Middle Passages: African American Journeys to Africa, 1787-2005*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2006.

- Campbell, Ted A. *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999.
- Caver, R. M. "Biographical Sketch." In E. C. Morris, *Sermons, Adresseses, and Reminiscences and Important Correspondence*. New York: Arno Press, 1980.
- Chirenje, J. M. *A History of Northern Botswana, 1850-1910*. Rutherford, NJ: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1977.
- . *Ethiopianism and Afro-Americans in Southern Africa, 1883-1916*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1987.
- Cobb, John. *Baptist Training Union Series: Baptists and Christian Doctrine*. Series Three. Nashville, TN: Sunday School Publishing Board, 2003.
- Cook, Faith. *Our Hymn Writers and Their Hymns*. Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2005.
- Crummell, Alexander. *Destiny and Race: Selected Writings 1840-1898*. Edited by Wilson Jeremiah Moses. Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1992.
- Dachs, Anthony. "Missionary Imperialism—The Case of Bechuanaland." *Journal of African History* 13 (1972):647-658.
- De Baptiste, R. "A Gospel Church." In *The Negro Baptist Pulpit: A Collection of Sermons and Papers by Colored Baptist Ministers*, edited by E. M. Brawley. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971.
- Drake, St. Clair. *The Redemption of Africa and Black Religion*. Chicago: Third World Press, 1991.
- Duignan, Peter and L. H. Gann. *The United States and Africa: A History*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Edwards, Jonathan, *Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England*. In Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*. Vol. 1. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005.
- Elmore, Charles. *First Bryan 1788-2001: The Oldest Continuous Black Baptist Church in America*. Savannah, GA: First Bryan Baptist Church, 2002.
- Equiano, Olaudah. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano: Written by Himself with Related Documents*. 2nd ed. Edited by Robert J. Allison. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007.

- Frederickson, George M. *Black Liberation: A Comparative History of Black Ideologies in the United States and South Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Frey, Sylvia R. and Betty Wood. *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.
- George, Carol V. R. *Segregated Sabbaths: Richard Allen and the Rise of Independent Black Churches 1760-1840*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.
- George, David. *An Account of the Life of Mr. David George, from Sierra Leone in Africa; Given by Himself in a Conversation with Brother Rippon of London, and Brother Pearce of Birmingham (1793)*. In "Face Zion Forward" *First Writers of the Black Atlantic, 1785-1798* eds. Joanna Brooks and John Saillant. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002.
- Goodwin, Everett. *Down by the Riverside: A Brief History of Baptist Faith*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2002.
- Gospel Pearls*. Nashville, TN: Sunday School Publishing Board, 1921.
- Fallin, Wilson Jr. *Uplifting the People: Three Centuries of Black Baptists in Alabama*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2007.
- Franklin, John Hope and Alfred A. Moss. *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006.
- Fisher, Miles Mark. "Lott Cary, the Colonizing Missionary." *Journal of Negro History* 7 (October 1922): 380-418.
- Fitts, Leroy. *History of Black Baptists*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1985.
- . *The Lott Carey Legacy of African American Missions*. Baltimore, MD: Gateway Press, 1994.
- Freeman, E. A. *Epoch of Negro Baptists and the Foreign Mission Board*. New York: Arno Press, 1980.
- Gomez, Michael A. *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.
- Harvey, Paul. *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities Among Southern Baptists 1865-1925*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.

- Harvey, William A. *Bridges of Faith Across the Seas: The Story of the Foreign Mission Board National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.* Philadelphia, PA: Foreign Mission Board National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. 1989.
- Harvey, William A., Dollye W Cunningham, and Bruce N. Alick. *The Missionary Worker's Manual.* Philadelphia, PA: Foreign Mission Board National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., 2002.
- Hicks, William. *History of Louisiana Negro Baptists from 1804 to 1914.* Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1914; Documenting the American South. <http://www.docsouth.unc.edu/church/hicks/hicks.html> (accessed March 21, 2010).
- Hine, Darlene Clark, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold. *The African-American Odyssey.* Combined Vol. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000.
- Hiscox, Edward T. *Principles and Practices of Baptist Churches.* Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1980.
- Hiscox, Edward and Everett Goodwin. *The New Hiscox Guide to Baptist Churches.* Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1995.
- Horton, James Oliver and Lois E. Horton. *Black Bostonians: Family Life and Community Struggle in the Antebellum North.* New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1979.
- Hudson, Winthrop Still. *Baptist Convictions.* Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1963.
- Isichei, Elizabeth. *A History of Christianity in Africa.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995.
- Jackson, J. H. *A Story of Christian Activism: The History of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A, Inc.* Nashville, TN: Townsend Press, 1980.
- Jackson, Luther P. "The Religious Development of the Negro in Virginia From 1760-1860." *Journal of Negro History* 16, no. 2 (April 1931): 168-239.
- Jacobs, Sylvia M. "The Historical Role of Afro-Americans in American Missionary Efforts in Africa." In *Black Americans and the Missionary Movement*, edited by Sylvia Jacobs. Westwood, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982.
- Johns, Sheridan. "Introduction." In *From Protest to Challenge: Documents of African Politics in South Africa.* Vol. 1., eds. Thomas Karis and Gwendolen Carter. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institute Press, 1972.

- Jones, Lawrence Neale. *African Americans and the Christian Churches 1619-1860*. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2007.
- Jordan, Lewis G. *Negro Baptist History, U. S. A. 1750-1930*. Nashville, TN: Townsend Press, 1995.
- Killingray, David. "The Black Atlantic Missionary Movement and Africa, 1780s-1920s." *Journal of Religion in Africa*. Vol. 33 (Feb 2003): 3-31.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1581633> (accessed April 4, 2010).
- Leith, John H., ed. *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1982.
- Levine, Lawrence. *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- The London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*. Pensacola, FL: Chapel Library, n.d.
- Love, E. K. "Regeneration." In *The Negro Baptist Pulpit: A Collection of Sermons and Papers by Colored Baptist Ministers*, edited by E. M. Brawley. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971.
- Lovett, Bobby J. *Black Man's Dream: The Story of R. H. Boyd, the First One Hundred Years*. Nashville, TN: Mega Corporation, 1993.
- . *How it Came to Be: The Boyd Family's Contribution to African American Religious Publishing from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Nashville, TN: Mega Publishing Corporation, 2007.
- Lumpkin, William. *Baptist Confessions of Faith*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1959.
- Lynch, Hollis R. *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot, 1832-1912*. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Martin, Sandy D. "The Growth of Christianity Missionary Interest in West Africa among Southeastern Black Baptists, 1880-1915." PhD Diss., Columbia University, 1981.
- . "The Baptist Foreign Mission Convention, 1880-1894." *Baptist History and Heritage* 16:4 (October 1981): 13-25.
- . *Black Baptists and African Missions: The Origins of a Movement 1880-1915*. Macon GA: Mercer University Press, 1998.
- McBeth, H. Leon. *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist History*. Nashville, TN: Boardman Press, 1987.



- Mears, W. Gordon. *Methodism in the Cape: An Outline*. Cape Town: Methodist Publishing House, 1973.
- Meli, Francis. *South African Belongs to Us: A History of the ANC*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988.
- Mitchell, Henry. *Black Church Beginnings: The Long-Hidden Realities of the First Years*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Mission Herald*, 1910-1917, 1919-1930.
- Montgomery, William E. *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African-American Church in the South 1865-1900*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1993.
- Morris, E. C. *Sermons, Adressesses and Reminiscences and Important Correspondence*. New York: Arno Press, 1980.
- Moses, Wilson Jeremiah. *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850-1925*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- . *Alexander Crummell: A Study of Civilization and Discontent*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- . "Introduction." In Alexander Crummell, *Destiny and Race: Selected Writings, 1840-1898*, edited by Wilson Jeremiah Moses. Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1992.
- Nash, Gary B. *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community 1720-1840*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- National Baptist Hymn Book*. Fourth Edition. Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1905.
- Nettles, Tom J. *Teaching Truth, Training Hearts: the study of catechism in Baptist Life*. Amityville, NY: Calvary Press Publishing, 1998.
- Northrup, David. *Crosscurrents in the Black Atlantic 1770-1965: A Brief History with Documents*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008.
- Odendaal, Andre. *Black Protest Politics in South Africa to 1912*. Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble, 1984.
- Parrish, C. H. "Sanctification." In *The Negro Baptist Pulpit: A Collection of Sermons and Papers by Colored Baptist Ministers*, edited by E. M. Brawley. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971.

Pendleton, James M. *Christian Doctrines: A Compendium of Theology*. Philadelphia, PA: Judson Press, 1957.

---. *Baptist Church Manual*. Nashville, TN: Boardman, 1966.

Perry, Rufus L. "The Scriptures." In *The Negro Baptist Pulpit: A Collection of Sermons and Papers by Colored Baptist Ministers*, edited by E. M. Brawley. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971.

*Philadelphia Baptist Confession of Faith: being The London Confession of Faith Adopted in 1742 by The Baptist Association with Scripture References and Keach's Catechism*. Sterling, VA: G. A. M. Publications, 1981.

Pius, N. H. *An Outline of Baptist History*. Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1911; Documenting the American South.  
<http://www.docsouth.unc.edu/church/pius/pius.html> (accessed March 22, 2010).

Poe, William A. "Lott Cary: Man of Purchased Freedom." *Church History*. Vol. 39, no. 1 (March 1970): 49-61. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3163213> (accessed June 19, 2009).

Pugh, Alfred Lane. *Pioneer Preachers in Paradise: The Legacies of George Liele, Prince Williams, and Thomas Paul In Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Haiti*. St. Cloud, MN: Paradise Publishing, 2003.

Puller, A. W. "Final Perseverance of the Saints." In *The Negro Baptist Pulpit: A Collection of Sermons and Papers by Colored Baptist Ministers*, edited by E. M. Brawley. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971.

Raboteau, Albert. *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

---. *A Fire in the Bones: Reflections on African-American Religious History*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1995.

Raiford, G. W. "Repentance and Faith." In *The Negro Baptist Pulpit: A Collection of Sermons and Papers by Colored Baptist Ministers*, edited by E. M. Brawley. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971.

Redkey, Edwin S. *Black Exodus: Black Nationalist and Back-to-Africa Movements, 1890-1910*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969.

Reisinger, Ernest and Fred Malone, "Introduction to the 1977 Edition." In James P. Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology*. Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2006.

- Richards, W. Wiley. *Winds of Doctrine: The Origin and Development of Southern Baptist Theology*. New York: University Press of America, 1991.
- Saillant, John. *Black Puritan, Black Republican: The Life and Thought of Lemuel Haynes 1753-1833*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- . "Missions in Liberia and Race Relations in the United States, 1822-1860." In *The Foreign Missionary Enterprise At Home: Explorations in North American Cultural History*, edited by Daniel H. Bays and Grant Wacker. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2003.
- Sanneh, Lamin. *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983.
- . *Abolitionists Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of Modern West Africa*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Shepperson, George and Thomas Price. *Independent African: John Chilembwe and the Nyasaland Rising of 1915*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1958.
- Sillery, Anthony. *Founding a Protectorate: A History of Bechuanaland, 1885-1895*. London: Mouton & Co., 1965.
- Simmons, William J. *Men of Mark: Progressive, Eminent and Rising*. Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, Inc., 1970.
- Sobel, Mechal. *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Stokes, Andrew J. "Justification." In *The Negro Baptist Pulpit: A Collection of Sermons and Papers by Colored Baptist Ministers*, edited by E. M. Brawley. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971.
- Taylor, James Braxton. *Biography of Elder Lott Cary, Late Missionary to Africa*. Baltimore, MD: Armstrong and Berry, 1837. In *The African Preachers*. Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1998.
- Thomas, E. L. *A History of the National Baptist Convention: The Programs, Personalities, and Power Base*. Nashville, TN: Townsend Press, 1999.
- Torbet, Robert. *A History of the Baptists*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2000.
- Turner, William C. *A Journey through the Church Covenant: Discipleship for African American Christians*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2002.

- Vandavel, R. B. "The Way of Salvation." In *The Negro Baptist Pulpit: A Collections of Sermons and Papers by Colored Baptist Ministers*, edited by E. M. Brawley. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971.
- Walshe, Peter. *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: The African National Congress 1912-1952*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971.
- Washington, Booker T. *Up From Slavery: with Related Documents*. Edited by W. Fitzhugh Brundage. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003.
- Washington, James Melvin. *Frustrated Fellowship: The Black Baptist Quest for Social Power*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004.
- Westminster Assembly. *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 2001.
- Wheeler, Edward L. *Uplifting the Race: The Black Minister in the New South 1865-1902*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986.
- Whitted, J. A. *A History of the Negro Baptists of North Carolina*. Raleigh, NC: Presses of Edwards & Broughton Printing Co, 1908; Documenting the American South. <http://www.docsouth.unc.edu/church/whitted/whitted.html> (accessed March 23, 2010).
- Williams, Walter L. *Black Americans and the Evangelization of Africa 1877-1900*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982.
- Woodson, Carter G. *History of the Negro Church*. Washington, DC: The Associate Publishers, 1921.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



3 1293 03063 8294