

A stylized, high-contrast illustration of a human figure in black silhouette. The figure has a red cross on its chest and is holding a white object, possibly a cigarette or a pen, in its mouth. The figure is set against a background of bold, geometric patterns in green, blue, orange, and yellow, with white outlines. The overall style is reminiscent of mid-century modern graphic design.

Summer 1998
Number 1

RECONCILIATION

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PCCNA
RECONCILIATION

The Official Journal of the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America (PCCNA)

Co-Editors

Dr. Harold D. Hunter and Dr. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr.

Layout and Design

International Church of the Foursquare Gospel
Los Angeles, California

Publication and Distribution

Assemblies of God
Springfield, Missouri

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RECONCILIATION is published semi-annually and sent to PCCNA member churches for distribution to all licensed ministers within their organizations. Scripture quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.

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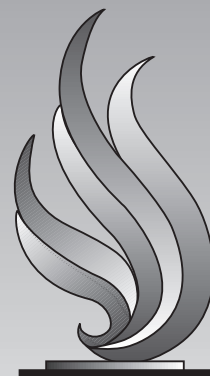
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Reconciliation— Pentecostal Style

We stand on the verge of seeing dramatic change effected for the cause of justice and righteousness. The acclaim which surrounded the “Memphis Miracle” must come to life in the realization that our journey together will be fraught with many diversions.

Pastors routinely see their sanctuaries littered with the remains of those who thought a dramatic episode of repentance was sufficient to survive. This is no less true when it

comes to transformation of the Pentecostal community into a living organism that treats all of God’s children equally.

Those who are peacemakers seldom know a tranquil life. A pentecostal approach to reconciliation should build on the pentecostal insistence that we know personally those with whom we minister. Personal relations may be ignited at chance encounters, but this is hardly the sum of a healthy relationship.

The prophet Amos saw a plumb line that God used to measure Israel. Such a plumb line placed alongside North American Classical Pentecostalism would draw attention to personal sacrifice. Can Pentecostals who do not wholly commit themselves think they are faithful to the heavenly call?

How many pastors introduced their congregations to the Racial Reconciliation Manifesto? This historic document adopted by the PCCNA in 1994 has been reproduced here for the benefit of those who are willing to be measured by a plumb line. Those who do not live by the Manifesto need to reconsider if they were really part of the Miracle in Memphis.

European-American Pentecostals must needs educate themselves regarding the lives of their African-American, Hispanic, and Asian-American colleagues. We may know for whom the bell tolls, but do we know why the bell tolls? The community must work together to facilitate this process and cope with questions and differences of opinion. Doubtless, the length of this journey will test the endurance of all.

Casual contact tends to let one easily escape to a familiar

comfort zone that avoids the realities of those who face a different life. European Americans have a debt to repay. Pentecostals once preached about restitution, but now that the stakes are high this teaching has been conveniently relegated to the annals of yellow-paged conference minutes. Those who think Bishop McKinney’s depiction of environmental discrimination to be an anomaly are among those who need to expand their libraries.

Definitions of sin that do not move beyond individual moral accountability are often found in social groups that benefit from the status quo. Ignorance is not a satisfactory excuse. The gospel demands that we truly know what we believe and how we accomplish the Divine Mandate. One is hard pressed to complain of libertines who delete passages of Scripture when we are not following the whole counsel of God.

Dire predictions of coming race wars in the United States are ignored to the peril of our entire country. Has PCCNA come into existence for such a time as this? We pray that *Reconciliation* will serve as a table where equals exchange their pain and triumphs. It will not be possible—or desirable—to avoid controversy. Such a momentous undertaking requires nothing less than the triumph of righteousness over hypocrisy and indifference. The early church was hardly able to avoid conflict when Peter wavered on the issue of sharing the gospel with all peoples.

It is an unavoidable truism that our society divides us according to race, gender, class, age and the like. These deeply-entrenched rivalries must be conquered by the healing power known well to Pentecostals. The miraculous reversal of ravenous cancer is not passé even to the fortunate who take modern medicine for granted. Neither should one think that the scars on our country are beyond God’s healing power. But, neither again must we think in terms of being passive observers. We are empowered to be agents of healing.

W. J. Seymour’s comprehension of God’s marvelous work among the chosen people was not satisfied with a static formula that failed to realize the unique empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Did God raise up the Azusa Street Revival or is it now merely the stuff of legends generated by those satisfied with the status quo? Does the flame still burn brightly?

During Advent we experience a special presence of the Christ-child. The fourth Gospel explains the event as God emptying Himself and taking on flesh. New creatures in Christ know the indwelling Spirit of Christ. Therefore, we must incarnate Christ’s presence in our society. Persons full of the Spirit must utilize the empowering of the Spirit in the fight to obliterate barriers erected by our society.

Finally, a word of acknowledgment is in order to explain how the publication of *Reconciliation* is possible. First, the editors are not receiving an honorarium. The International Church of the Foursquare Gospel has not charged for layout and design of the publication and we are indebted to the Assemblies of God for printing and distributing the magazine at no cost to PCCNA. This is a marvelous show of unity for the good of the whole community. 🕊



Currently director of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church Archives and Research Center; Dr. Hunter has served on the faculties of the Church of God Theological Seminary and ORU School of Theology. Thirty years of ministry as evangelist and pastor also includes service as Executive Director of the Sunday School Department for the Church of God of Prophecy.



key verse that surfaces in our discussion of the issue of justice is Micah 6:8, *“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you,*

A God of Justice

by Bishop George D. McKinney

A look at justice issues must be framed within the context of Holy Scripture. The whole of Scripture and holy history reveals that God is a God of justice who is deeply concerned about the fatherless, the widows, the marginalized, and the oppressed. God is a God whose justice demands that those who have been entrusted with His wisdom, His power, His knowledge, His ability, must use such gifts to God’s glory, in the cause of justice.

but to do justice, and to love kindly, and to walk humbly with your God?” Consider also the wisdom and the justice literature from the Psalms, particularly Psalm 82:2-4, *“How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”*

Please notice the demands for justice. Both of these texts, along with others, show that we must take aggressive action in the cause of justice.

Notice too, Ecclesiastes 5:8, *“If you see in a province the oppression of the poor and the violation of justice and right, do not be amazed at the matter; for the high official is watched by a higher, and there are yet higher ones over them.”* Isaiah 1:17 reads, *“Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.”*

Justice is a theological concept like righteousness, faithfulness and holiness; all well known attributes of God. Justice loses its meaning when

separated from God. A cultural concept of justice will change with public opinion and the prevailing political philosophy. To understand the biblical concept of justice we must understand and answer the questions, “Who is the owner of everything,” and “Who owns what?” These questions are answered in Psalm 24:1.

A working definition of justice is that justice is God’s demand that we be accountable stewards of whatever we have received from God. The preacher serves justice when preaching the whole gospel to the whole person. The teacher does justice when teaching the truth about history, values and life. The judge performs justice when judging without regard to the person or pocketbook of the one who stands before him or her.

The Sin of Referral

The evangelical Christian has long ignored many contemporary justice issues. We have frequently committed the sin of referring justice issues to some other institution. The Church has referred the justice issue of hunger to government welfare programs. We have referred the justice issue of racism to the legislatures and to the courts. We have referred the justice issue of the education of poor and minority children in the inner cities to a bankrupt and overburdened educational institution. Yes, we have referred the issue of economic justice to government and big business. We have referred the issue of environmental justice, the pollution of our air, the water and the stockpiling of toxic waste materials to insensitive government agencies.

We must repent of the sin of referral and recover our rightful role as the salt of the earth, change agents and preservatives of the earth; as the light of the world, giving life and illuminating the dirty and scandalous behavior of those who don’t know God.

A careful review of recent, and not so recent, church history reveals that the Church has too often come down on the wrong side of justice or has remained silent. Perhaps this is because to stand for justice may cost one’s life. It may ultimately lead to a crucifixion. Time and time again the Church has missed great opportunities to make a clear witness for God and for justice. Yet in those times the Church’s silence and inaction have brought shame upon the family of God. Nevertheless, God has always raised up faithful witnesses who are willing to die for the cause of justice and God’s glory.

When the State Church in Germany entered into complicity with the evil Nazi regime, the “Confessing Church” rose to the challenge. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Niemoeller stood their ground on Scripture and opposed the injustice that was inflicted upon the Jews in the Holocaust. Many were martyred rather than compromise. Further, the Church was not only silent, but it participated and profited from the global African slave trade. Yet there are lonely voices crying out for justice during those centuries of trafficking in human flesh. The dehumanizing process violated every biblical principle related to God’s creation and redemptive plan through Jesus Christ.

The voices that cried out for justice were isolated and frequently silenced. These voices included the slaves who were converted to the Christian faith and identified with the God of justice; spiritual giants like William Wilber-

force of England, John Brown, Nat Turner and the Quaker movement.

During the more-than-one-hundred years of segregation, lynching and discrimination in the United States, the evangelical Church has not used its moral and spiritual influence to bring about change. Rather the Church resisted change, was married to the status quo and attempted to justify injustice by perverting Scripture. As I reflect on my involvement in the Civil Rights Movement, I think the most painful criticisms were those received from fellow Christians who did not understand that we were being beaten, jailed and enduring all of the suffering for the cause of biblical justice.

Justice does not merely make suggestions. Justice demands aggressive action. To refuse to obey justice is rebellion, a sin against God who established justice.

The Christian Response to Unjust Policies

When a believing community becomes aware of unjust public policies based upon unjust laws, justice demands that we work to change the law and the public policy. A California law known as Proposition 209 went into effect in 1997. It had the net effect of closing the door of opportunity to black citizens who need tax-supported higher education. In the fall of 1997, 196 black students applied for admission to the medical school of the University of California at San Diego. Because of Proposition 209, which said that no longer would any consideration be given to anyone on the basis of race or past discriminatory actions, not one of these 196 applicants was admitted. Not one! What they were saying was, "Blacks need not apply. They do not qualify." At Irving Medical School and the medical schools of the University of California at Berkeley and at San Diego, not one black was admitted. It's a justice issue.

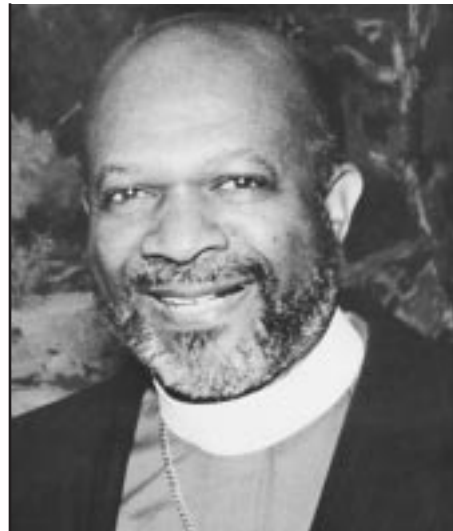
The same is true with the law schools. Only one black was admitted to a state-supported law school in the whole of California. It's a justice issue.

Twenty-six states are now preparing to adopt the same kind of law in an attempt to turn back the gains of the Civil Rights Movement - gains that were made at tremendous cost, including death. Justice demands that we protest and act to change this unjust law that denies tax payers access to tax-supported higher education.

Public policies that allow low income hous-

ing to be built and maintained on known toxic waste sights must be dismantled. About a year ago, a group of us traveled to Washington, D.C., and met with Vice-President Al Gore regarding this injustice. We had with us a black pastor from Dallas who testified that he, his wife and their seven children did not know that the low income housing in which they lived was built over a toxic waste site. Now it's too late. All of the children are affected with cancer or some other debilitating disease or deformity. The husband and wife, only in their late fifties, are dying from cancer. In their community, the cancer rate is twenty or thirty times higher than in the rest of the city. The tragedy of the situation was that the city of Dallas was aware that the location was a toxic dump, but no appropriate action was taken. The church, when it is aware of these circumstances, must bring pressure to bear upon those in power, demanding that justice be served to those who are defenseless.

God is a God of justice. Scripture contains many passages that speak to the issue of justice and how the people of God are expected to treat others justly. While it is the case that the world around us frequently acts in unjust ways, and at times, even codifies and legalizes such things, the Church is called by the gospel of Jesus Christ to stand apart from the world and offer love, justice and reconciliation. To be sure, sometimes the Church has failed. Yet a survey of Christian history also provides us with examples when the Church rose to the occasion to guarantee justice for those around it. When it is aware of these circumstances, the Church must be ready to bring pressure to bear upon those in power. It must demand that justice be served to those who are defenseless. Unless it does, it falls short of the expectations that God has for God's people. ✎



Bishop George D. McKinney, Ph.D., is pastor of St. Stephen's Church of God in Christ in San Diego, California. He is prelate of the Southern California Second Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction. A member of the PCCNA Executive Committee, Bishop McKinney gave this presentation to PCCNA on October 2, 1997, in Washington, D.C., at the National Church of God.

An Interview

with Bishop Gilbert E. Patterson

Hunter: Bishop Charles H. Mason, an “apostle” for the whole of Pentecostalism, actively sought racial reconciliation prior to the Azusa Street Revival. What he witnessed at Azusa Street under the leadership of William J. Seymour empowered him to pursue this vision with even greater vigor. Days of racial harmony were numbered, however, and our generation is living to see a worsening of race relations. How can Pentecostalism take a more active role in healing the wounded soul of America?



Bishop Gilbert E. Patterson, co-chairperson of PCCNA, serves on the Church of God in Christ Presidium. He is bishop of the Tennessee Fourth Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, pastors Temple of Deliverance Church of God in Christ and his television program is carried nationally. The interview was conducted by Dr. Harold D. Hunter on January 10, 1988, at the Temple of Deliverance in Memphis, Tennessee.

Patterson: I have said that the Holy Ghost is the answer, because throughout the New Testament Scripture God used the Holy Ghost as the great unifier — from the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost when they began to speak with other tongues onward. They were all Galileans, but they spoke in all of the languages of earth. That demonstrates that God was using the Holy Ghost to cover all nationalities.

You get the same picture when Philip goes down to Samaria. Philip preaches Christ in Samaria and the Spirit picks him up and takes him out of the gates. There he meets the Ethiopian who was the secretary or treasurer to the queen. Here the same message of Pentecost goes back to Ethiopia. Every time you look at the work of the Holy Spirit in the early church, there was something about crossing lines of ethnicity and bringing people together.

The Azusa Revival was multi-racial and multi-ethnic. It made people seemingly unaware of color. Under Bishop Mason, the Church of God in Christ achieved a mix of 50 percent

black and 50 percent white from 1907 to 1914. It makes one wonder what might have happened to race relations in America had those early-Pentecostal

whites been willing to buck the tide of racism in society and stay together. I believe we would have avoided the kind of racial problem that we now face.

Here we come full circle, almost 100 years later, and the racial tensions are heating up almost as never before. Notice how this is the case even among our own Pentecostal ranks. We were great in 1994. But the “Memphis Miracle,” as it was called, was two years before the presidential election. We didn’t have a meeting in 1995 and by 1996 there was a great “falling away.” The intensity of the spirit of fellowship was not there because we had taken our political positions. This means basically that the whites were allied with Republican conservatism and the blacks were allied with what is usually called the Democratic liberals. It’s up to us as Pentecostals to find a way to place fellowship ahead of politics. If we don’t, I hope I won’t be around when whatever happens, happens.

Hunter: Thirty years ago, a hero of this country, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated here in Memphis. Many articles and major television stories continue to say that his last speech was given in a “Masonic” temple. Of course, it was Mason Temple, the site of annual Church of God in Christ convocations that attracts more than 40,000 saints to Memphis. Why should America remember this tragedy?

Patterson: When the garbage workers’ strike erupted in 1968, I quickly aligned with them. I took a tremendous brunt of criticism for being aligned with them because our church, for the most part, did not get involved until the strike heated up and brought in the entire black community.

Mason Temple, the headquarters of the Church of God in Christ, has through the years been used as a meeting place whenever a large facility was needed by the black community in Memphis. I served on a nine-person strategy committee of the community that invited Dr.

Martin Luther King. Some wanted to bring in Stokley Carmichael and H. Rap Brown because that “Burn, Baby, Burn” thing was in the air.

Dr. King told us about the threats on his life from what he called “our sick white brothers.” He went on to say that it really doesn’t matter now and he delivered his “I’ve Been to the Mountain Top” speech. I think that everybody there that night knew we were hearing him for the last time. Around six o’clock the next day, a Thursday, Dr. King was killed.

Hunter: While in Memphis for the PCCNA conference in 1995, I purchased various items from the Church of God in Christ bookstore. I remember picking up the Church of God in Christ magazine, *The Whole Truth*, and noticed the current issue had a picture of President Bill Clinton with the Church of God in Christ Presidium on the cover.

I also know that Vice-President Al Gore visited your church last year. Apparently some European-American Pentecostals had a difficult time understanding what this meant. It reminded me of Bishop McKinney’s paper at the 1997 PCCNA conference in Washington, D.C., when a European-American questioner thought McKinney missed an important moral point that he actually assumed (e.g. abortion).

Patterson: When I observe various organizations that are supposedly putting biblical principles back into government—the Moral Majority is one and the Christian Coalition—I wonder why they do not understand that we have some problems to discuss when they see their particular constituency is about 99.9 percent white and there is a complete absence of blacks. I feel the only way we will ever bring about reconciliation will be to recognize that it cannot be done on political grounds. It must be done through our faith, our belief.

Basically, black people vote for the Democratic party. That is because the so-called liberal politicians have been more attuned to our problems. Vice-President Gore came to our church not to speak, but to sit in the audience as a worshiper. The call I received from his office was that he was going to be in our city and he wanted to worship with us. Of course,

anyone would be proud to have the Vice-President of the United States come to their worship, especially when he says that he wants to hear the pastor preach.

After I finished my sermon, I asked the Vice-President to come to the platform and to make some remarks. I said (before presenting him) that most black people usually vote for the Democratic Party, but that is not an endorsement because it doesn’t mean that we believe in same-sex marriages and abortion. For the most part, blacks see the Democrats more like the Good Samaritan. Now, in the parable Jesus told, He mentioned the priest. He saw the man who had fallen among thieves, but he crossed over to the other side. The Levite came and looked at him, but he still refused to help him. But the Samaritan—and we don’t know what he believed, he could have been an abortionist—stopped to help the man who had fallen among thieves.

We cannot ignore the history of the black man in America. When you spurn affirmative action, you are saying that 200 years of injustice can be cured in 20 to 25 years. That is impossible! All over this country, efforts are under way to get rid of anything that seems aimed at giving some kind of an edge to those who have been kept behind for many years.

We have a real mess on our hands and politics will not solve this for us. Somehow the spiritual leaders across color lines are going to have to come from behind their politically-conservative positions and others from behind their politically-liberal positions and they must sit around a table, or — we are doomed to worse days ahead. ☞

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“History of Women in the Pentecostal Movement”

by Rev. Dr. Cheryl J. Sanders,
Howard University School of Divinity



*Dr. Cheryl J. Sanders is senior pastor of the Third Street Church of God (Anderson, IN) in Washington, D.C., and professor of Christian Ethics at the Howard University School of Divinity. Author of *Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture*, Dr. Sanders presented this paper to PCCNA in Memphis on October 1, 1996.*



On the whole, the Holiness-Pentecostal movement in the United States has made a distinctive contribution to the historical evolution of religion in America by involving blacks, women and the poor at all levels of ministry. There are well over 100 church bodies listed in the Directory of African American Religious Bodies which can be identified as Holiness or Pentecostal. These churches were led by black Christians around the turn of the century who “came out” of the Black Baptist and Methodist churches, seeking “the deeper life of entire sanctification” and Spirit baptism; “Their initial concern was not so much to start a new denomination as to call the existing ones back to the wells of their spirituality” (Turner 1991: 248). What the Holiness and Pentecostal churches have in common is an emphasis upon the experience of Spirit baptism. Although some of these

churches have adopted the sexist and racist norms of white mainline Protestantism, others have produced compelling models of cooperation between male and female leaders.

Church historian Susie Stanley uses the term “stained-glass ceiling” to describe barriers to women’s leadership and advancement in Christian denominations with a long history of ordaining them. At the beginning of the present century, the ordination of women was accepted virtually throughout the Holiness movement. And when Pentecostalism emerged shortly thereafter, “it carried through this theme and was perhaps even more consistent in the practice of the ministry and ordination of women” (Dayton 1998: 106). Compared to mainline denominations which began ordaining women only in recent years, the Holiness movement has a “usable past” (Stanley 1994: 52). Women in five Wesleyan-Holiness denominations—Church of God (Anderson, Indiana), Church of Nazarene, Free Methodist Church, Salvation Army, and the Wesleyan Church—currently constitute twenty-five percent of the clergy in their denominations, whereas women comprise seven percent of the clergy in thirty-nine other denominations that now ordain women (Stanley 1993: 2).

In 1978 Pearl Williams-Jones surveyed five major Pentecostal bodies

and categorized them with respect to their treatment of women’s ministry and leadership. (Williams-Jones 1977: 31-34) The first category, consisting of churches who insist upon the subordination of women in ministry roles, actually comprises the overwhelming majority of black Pentecostals: the Church of God in Christ, the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, and the Bible Way Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ, World Wide. The second category, churches which grant women positions of authority equal to men, includes the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World and the Mount Sinai Holy Church of America (which was founded by a woman, Bishop Ida Robinson).

In general, over the course of the twentieth century there has been a dramatic and substantial decline in women’s ecclesial leadership in the Holiness and Pentecostal churches. Stanley cites statistics showing that the proportion of women clergy in the Church of the Nazarene fell precipitously from twenty percent in 1908 to one percent more recently and, in the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana), from thirty-two percent in 1925 to fifteen percent. As early as 1939, a Church of God publication set forth a radical theological and ethical commentary upon the decline of women preachers.

The prevalence of women preachers is a fair measure of the spirituality of a church, a country or an age. As the church grows more apostolic and more deeply spiritual, women preachers and workers abound in that church; as it grows more worldly and cold, the ministry of women is despised and gradually ceases altogether. It is of the nature of paganism to hate foreign people and to despise women, but the spirit of the gospel is exactly opposite. (Brown 1939: 5)

In this view, the rejection of women's ministerial leadership represents a worldly loss of focus upon the egalitarian spirit of the Christian gospel. Not surprisingly, the re-establishment of barriers to church leadership by most of the Holiness-Pentecostal groups on the basis of sex in the early decades of this century coincide with their increased complicity with prevailing mainstream practices of racial separation and segregation.

The story of the 1906 Azusa Street Revival, which marks the beginning of Pentecostalism as an international movement, offers a model of cooperative ministry and empowerment among the sexes, where authority and recognition are granted to either sex based upon the exercise of spiritual gifts. The early Pentecostal movement was led by William J. Seymour, a man whose own life's story reflects practically all major facets of the denominational racism experienced by black Christians in the United States. Born in Louisiana in 1878, Seymour was raised as a Baptist, as a young man joined a local black congregation of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Indianapolis, Indiana, and next was drawn to the Evening Light Saints, a name widely used at the time for the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana).

After joining the Holiness movement, Seymour came under the influence of a black woman pastor, Lucy Farrow, in Houston, Texas. He attended her church in 1903. Significantly, she was the first to expose Seymour to the practice of speaking in tongues.

He heard a woman pray aloud in a language, or what seemed to be a language, that no one there could understand. Seymour was touched to the core. As a man of prayer himself, he

could sense that this woman had somehow attained a depth of spiritual intensity he had long sought but never found . . . These experiences changed Seymour's life. After the meeting he asked Lucy Farrow, the woman who had spoken in the strange tongue, more about her remarkable gift (Cox 1995: 49).

Farrow introduced Seymour to the white Pentecostal pioneer, Charles Fox Parham, who ran a Bible school in Topeka for missionaries where she had worked as a "governess." When Seymour enrolled in Parham's classes in Houston, he was subjected to the indignity of having to sit in a hall where he could hear the classes through the doorway, in keeping with the Southern "etiquette." Seymour accepted Parham's advocacy of tongue-speaking, but rejected his racist prejudices and polemics.

Seymour's work with women ministers continued. He was invited by Neely Terry, a Holiness woman from Los Angeles, to pastor a Holiness congregation in California which had been founded by Julia W. Hutchins. Seymour traveled to Los Angeles bearing the message that speaking in tongues was the necessary evidence of the Pentecostal experience, but Hutchins rejected his preaching and locked him out. He found refuge in the home of Richard and Ruth Asberry on Bonnie Brae Street, where he conducted several weeks of prayer meetings. When on April 9, 1906, Seymour finally manifested the tongue-speaking experience he had promoted in his preaching, a revival broke out and crowds began to gather at the Bonnie Brae Street residence and in the streets. He leased a vacant building at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles from the Stevens African Methodist Episcopal Church (where several persons worshiping with him had formerly been members), a two-story wooden structure located in a poor black neighborhood in Los Angeles near some stables and a lumberyard. Within a few days more than a thousand persons were trying to enter the small mission building and the Azusa Street revival was underway. The core group consisted primarily of black female domestic workers, but over a period of three years, from 1906

to 1908, the Revival drew persons of every race, nationality and culture. In Seymour's own words, "the work began among the colored people. God baptized several sanctified wash women with the Holy Ghost, who have been much used of Him" (MacRobert 1988: 4).

On the surface, this account of the Azusa Street Revival presents an all-too-familiar image of a black man leading a congregation of black women that seems less than empowering from the vantage point of gender. The revival resulted from the partnership of women and men unified by their desire to experience the spiritual empowerment of speaking in tongues. Seymour was largely mentored, guided and offered a context for ministry by women. Women were involved in every aspect of his spiritual development; moreover, women were willing to follow his tongues doctrine and experience its full effects as a public witness.

In this light, the focus of empowerment was not the cooperation of men and women with each other as an end in itself. Rather, the people were spiritually empowered by their ability to respond to charismatic leadership, a process facilitated by the willingness of one man to welcome the participation and preaching of women. And when the desired spiritual manifestations came forth among this humble gathering, the experience of corporate charismatic empowerment drew attention from all parts of the world.

Seymour eventually encountered some negative experiences with white women in the revival who did not share his perspective on racial unity. When Parham visited Azusa Street at Seymour's invitation in October of 1906, he denounced the revival as a "darky camp meeting" (Turner 251). The two white women who helped him publish the periodical *Apostolic Faith*, with an international circulation

Church historian Susie Stanley uses the term "stained-glass ceiling" to describe barriers to women's leadership and advancement in Christian denominations with a long history of ordaining them.

of 50,000 subscribers, effectively destroyed Seymour's publication-outreach ministry by taking both the periodical and the mailing list to Portland, Oregon. There one of them founded another evangelistic organization. In his book *Fire from Heaven*, Harvey Cox notes how Seymour's disillusionment with white Pentecostals affected his understanding of the gift of tongues.

Finding that some people could speak in tongues and continue to abhor their black fellow Christians convinced him that it was not tongue speaking but dissolution of racial barriers that was the surest sign of the Spirit's pentecostal presence and the approaching New Jerusalem.
(Cox 63)

Finding that some people could speak in tongues and continue to abhor their black fellow Christians convinced him that it was not tongue speaking but dissolution of racial barriers that was the surest sign of the Spirit's pentecostal presence and the approaching New Jerusalem (Cox 63).

Seymour saw the breaking of the color line as a much surer sign, than tongue-speaking, of God's blessing and of the Spirit's healing presence, signifying that the charismatic ideal of

cooperation with the Spirit had become compromised in practice by the forces of racism. Once the whites defected, the Azusa Street Mission became almost entirely black. The denominations which took the lead thereafter to spread the pentecostal doctrine and practices, e.g., the Church of God in Christ and the Assemblies of God, were organized along racial lines and generally assigned subordinate roles to women.

White racism ultimately undermined and destroyed the vision of racial equality promoted by the early Pentecostals. Interracial cooperation could not be sustained within the charismatic leadership structures where cooperation between the sexes had been so conspicuous (at least temporarily). As a result, Seymour revised the doctrines, discipline and constitu-

tion of his Apostolic Faith movement to recognize himself as "bishop" and guaranteed that a successor would always be "a man of color" (Synan 1988: 781). However, after Seymour's death in 1922, it was a woman of color who assumed the leadership of the Mission—his widow, Jennie Seymour. As is often the case after the death of charismatic leaders, the mission located at Azusa Street did not last very long. The building was demolished in 1931, and the land was lost in foreclosure in 1938, two years after Jennie Seymour's death.

That a man led this movement is perhaps unremarkable; that he was so heavily influenced by women's spiritual leadership is hardly unprecedented. What is highly unusual here, however, is the immediate interracial and international impact produced by this tiny core group of black women and men. Together they exercised charismatic gifts in a manner which would alter the course of church history throughout the twentieth century. Today Pentecostalism has become the dominant expression of Christian worship in many major urban centers, claiming some 410 million adherents worldwide.

The largest denomination of the Holiness-Pentecostal tradition, the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), does not permit the ordination of women, but has the most powerful women's department of any black denomination (Gilkes 1990: 229). Despite this restriction, women have exercised ministerial leadership in numerous ways; serving as evangelists, worship leaders and religious activists; sometimes having charge of churches in the absence of a male pastor. The distinctive leadership orientation of the COGIC women led to levels of female empowerment and male-female cooperation that would prove vital to the success of the denomination throughout the twentieth century, in contrast to the Azusa Street Mission which failed after the death of Seymour. Cheryl Townsend Gilkes has offered this general observation regarding the importance of the establishment of structures of female "influence" as a determining factor in the survival of black religious movements.

Although many denominations were formed between 1895 and 1950, those that survived and flourished were those with strong women's departments. Structures of female influence enable denominations with charismatic male founders to grow after those founders died; other denominational movements with high visibility but no structures of female influence almost disappeared (Gilkes 237).

The Women's Department of the COGIC was formed shortly after the beginning of the Azusa Street Revival. Bishop Charles H. Mason, a former Baptist minister who, with C.P. Jones, founded the COGIC as a holiness denomination, participated in the revival and received the gift of speaking in tongues. As a result, a split occurred with Jones and in 1907 the COGIC became Pentecostal under Mason's leadership. Around the same time, Mason recruited Lizzie Woods Roberson from a Baptist academy to organize the Women's Department as its "overseer." What is unusual about this development is that Mason was divorced and thus did not have a wife to appoint to this position, as normally occurred in other black denominations where the women's organizations are led by the wives of the ecclesial leaders.

This historical "accident" generated the model of a nearly autonomous women's organization. Mason not only recruited Mother Roberson to head the women's work, but also, on her advice, appointed women's overseers along the same jurisdictional and district lines as the male overseers who later became bishops. The title "overseer," a literal translation of the Greek word usually translated as "bishop," was used in the early days of the church for both men and women leaders in the church. Such usage implied that the founders of the COGIC and other denominations initially envisioned a church organized in parallel structures of both male and female overseers (Gilkes 237).

The adoption of the terminology associated with episcopally governed churches reflected both the Baptist roots of their leadership and a Presbyterian tendency toward "more or less sharing power between the laity and

the clergy” (Gilkes 229). Gilkes has determined that these black church-women transformed their autonomy into a form of power best described as “influence” and “created a pluralist political structure in an episcopally governed church where pluralism was never intended”(Gilkes 240). This autonomous-parallel structure more closely resembled the dual sex political systems characteristic of some West African societies than the patriarchal episcopal polities of European origin. The women employed distinctive leadership styles and methods that promoted broader-based participation.

The women’s methods of leadership have evolved in direct contrast to the authoritarian style demanded by the nature of episcopal polity: hierarchical, individualistic and dominating. In comparison, women’s leadership tends to be consensus oriented, collective and more inclusive, involving larger numbers of people in decision making (Gilkes 240).

The emergence of the COGIC Women’s Department was timely in view of the plight of black women in church and society during the first decade of the twentieth century. First, the spiritual and professional focus of this organization of black women produced significant affirmations of black female personhood.

In the face of culture assaults that used the economic and sexual exploitation of black women as a rationale for their denigration, the Sanctified Church elevated black women to the status of visible heroines—spiritual and professional role models for their churches (Gilkes 225).

A second factor is the professionalization of Christian education (in contrast to the concurrent marginalization of Christian education by Baptist and Methodist denominations), which enabled women to use their roles as educators and the “educated” as a source of power and career opportunity. Thirdly, the Women’s Department presented “professional” role models for black working women, at a time when employment opportunities for black women were primarily restricted to domestic service at low wages. Thus “higher education and work were identified as legitimate means of upward

mobility for black women and they were encouraged to achieve economic empowerment through white-collar employment” (Gilkes 225). An important consequence of this emphasis upon higher education and professional employment was the financial empowerment of women, whose numerical dominance in the churches in turn created a situation that clearly contradicted the ethic of male domination and control.

As a general rule, these churches rejected cultural norms and organizational models that imitated white patriarchy. For both the Holiness and the Pentecostal churches, holiness was the premier ethic and guide for liturgy, preaching and polity.

Church members could not advance ideologies of patriarchy that contradicted standards of holiness since “holiness” was the most important achieved status in these churches—and a status not humanly conferred. Biblical debate concerning women was confined to structural norms, not the nature, quality, or character of women per se (Gilkes 231).

The positive affirmation of women’s nature, quality and character sets these churches apart from other Protestant and Catholic traditions whose exclusion of women from leadership is grounded in the rejection of the full humanity of women. As a result, even where structural prohibitions have been in effect, women nevertheless found ways to exercise their gifts of ministry and leadership to the benefit of the entire church body. For example, women evangelists and revivalists founded churches, so they were included in church histories. In addition, male church leaders often reported in their spiritual biographies that they became converted in response to the ministry of female preachers and revivalists. Thus, it was not gender but spiritual gift which qualified individuals to be acknowledged and honored in Holiness and Pentecostal circles; “the personal and congregational accounts passed down in written records and oral tradition placed a high value on the contribution of women and men to the most important goal of the church—salvation and holiness” (Gilkes 231).

Following Gilke’s analysis, the model of

leadership developed by the COGIC Women’s Department is a dialectical one, based on a tradition of protest and cooperation. On the one hand, this dialectics is driven by the women’s struggle against structures and patterns of subordination based on sex. On the other hand it is driven by their determination to maintain unity with black men in the face of racism and discrimination in the larger society and in response to internal power struggles among male leaders within the denomination. Because cooperative and egalitarian norms govern this dialectical model, the structural exclusion of women from certain positions in the church is partially offset by the maintenance of various spaces and spheres for women to exercise their spiritual gifts and leadership.

Although the prevailing norms of racial and sexual exclusion eventually were brought to bear upon various Pentecostal denominational structures, these churches nevertheless provided important opportunities and role models for women’s spiritual and social empowerment. The shifting patterns of inclusion and exclusion in these churches have been governed by two primary factors: namely, the egalitarian doctrine of the Holy Spirit on the one hand and the impact of racist, sexist and elitist societal norms on the other. Pentecostal leaders of today, both male and female, can recover and reclaim the inclusive impetus of the early twentieth century, as the Spirit guides the church into the twenty-first century.✎

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An Interview with Jack Hayford

Robeck: How did leaders of the Pentecostal Movement come to the place where they were willing to talk about the issue of racial reconciliation?

Hayford: It is difficult to know how to discuss that part of our history. We wanted to say, responsibly, that we had sinned and failed God. They weren't conscious sins of antagonistic opposition to other people. They were reflections of our being blinded by our own flesh, our own historic traditions and our culture, rather than being different from the culture. We had become mirrors of the culture and we did not recognize how unrepresentative of Jesus and His Church we were.

Robeck: Why did Pentecostal leaders choose to focus on reconciliation between black and white Pentecostals instead of casting a broader net on the subject of racism?

Hayford: We did not attempt to deal with other aspects of needed racial reconciliation because the most historic and entrenched problem in North America was the black/white separation. I want to emphasize that we recognized our insensitivity to the mistreatment historically of Native Americans by the church and by society. We were fully aware of the obvious insensitivities to the growing Latino and Hispanic cultures in North America, not to mention our post-World War II era attitudes toward the Asian American and especially the Japanese populations. These are things that we didn't attempt to deal with at Memphis, but I don't want to suggest that we were either insensitive to them or that we supposed that they had been previously resolved.

Robeck: Why did the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America choose to dissolve itself rather than simply invite the African American Pentecostal leaders to join it?

Hayford: We didn't want to say to our black brothers and sisters, "Come and join our outfit." We realize that the white person seldom recognizes the response that is required of a black person even if the invitation is accepted. Insensitivity may generate a low-grade bitterness. We didn't want to plan anything with that history, so we asked our black brothers and sisters, "What might

we do together?" And we realized that we needed to have black leadership in primary leadership at the outset.

Robeck: How do you understand the structure of leadership for the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America?

Hayford: The objective was to precipitate a trans-ethnic fellowship of people of acknowledged Pentecostal tradition. The inclusion of "Charismatic" was a point of bridging that many people would not recognize unless they understood some of the history of Pentecostalism. Another part of the reconciliation agenda that was dramatically introduced to us was the place of women. It is very biblical that women have a place in public ministry. And who should do that more aggressively than Pentecostals when we take as our founding text the birthday of the Church at Pentecost (Acts 2) and the announcement of the power poured out from on high upon "*your sons and your daughters*" and "*your servants and your handmaidens*" (Joel 2:28-30).

Robeck: On several occasions since Memphis, I have been asked to preach in different Pentecostal churches on the subject of racism and racial reconciliation. I have found it difficult for white Pentecostals to understand the concept of racism. How do you talk about it with your own people?

Hayford: I have preached some messages to our congregation called "Outracing the World." I have underscored the community of failure. It is essentially a failure of white American Christians, by virtue of our perception that because we are neither hateful nor antagonistic, we are not burning crosses on people's lawns, we are not saying hateful, aggressive things or in anywise seeking strife, that we are not racists. I have tried to disabuse them of the idea that the definition of racism is violence and since I am not violent, I am not racist.

Robeck: What do you understand racism to be?

Hayford: It is very difficult to use the term "racist" or "racism" with people that love the Lord and who tend to be agreeable to all peoples, without making them feel as though you have just slapped them in the face. We feel first and think second. What I have



Jack Hayford



Cecil Robeck

This interview was originally conducted on behalf of the Dupree Center for Christian Leadership, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. It has been edited and used by permission.

tried to do is establish a climate in which people can, with perception, say, “Oh, I do need to repent.” Intentionality is the key word for the living Church today, and that goes for all points on the color spectrum. That is not just a white responsibility. All of us have a responsibility to exercise intentionality and it begins with recognizing that there is more than I can imagine that I don’t recognize. I need to say first, “Holy Spirit, would you show me what I don’t see, and what I do see, would you help me to act on it when I see it?”

Robeck: Living as I do in Pasadena, I think a great deal of the riots that took place in Los Angeles in 1992. They had great implications not only for our area, but also for all of our cities. What did you say that helped your own congregation deal with some of the issues raised by these riots?

Hayford: The riots are a watershed moment in our city’s life. It became one in our church’s life. It is one in my own life. Even before the riots took place, there had already emerged an integration of pastors across the city at every dimension denominationally and ethnically. God had sovereignly prepared us for interfacing and mutually supporting one another. We had a network of churches that immediately swung into action. When I stood before the congregation that Sunday and bared my heart, we did not realize the depth of the strain and hurt that was present in the black community, not to mention the stresses that were manifest between the Asian [especially in the Korean community] and the Black community in the environment of this tragic cataclysm.

Robeck: Did you have any concrete advice for your people?

Hayford: I asked them to go home that afternoon and, if they would, to bring groceries to the church because we were going to take things to the inner city. People who lived where the riots were did not have the ability to buy food near their homes. The stores had been burned. Our congregation gave \$250,000 on the spot. That is a lot of money for us. But we gave it away over the ensuing weeks in various aspects of ministry. Another \$250,000 came to our church from across the nation. And it was a joy to use it this way!

Robeck: How would you describe the racial makeup of your own congregation, the Church on the Way, in Van Nuys, California?

Hayford: I am very grateful to say that today we mirror closely our immediate area. We did not do that five years ago. We had a considerable racial mix prior to the riots, but our mix today is probably about 15% Black, 5-7% Asian, 20% Hispanic or Latino, 5-7% Middle Eastern and the balance would be largely European Americans. We also have a number of Native Americans in our congregation.

Robeck: What specifically would you say to our readers that they might do during day-to-day life that would help to break down walls between the races?

Hayford: Take the initiative. Go to people and say, “Look, I realize that I don’t know how to relate to people very well who are outside my own ethnic or racial tradition. Would you help me?” I would start with brothers and sisters in Christ. Make it an open matter that you acknowledge, maybe with laughter. I don’t know any neat way to do this. I think we just need to say “Hey, I’ve been blowing it.” Don’t indict the other person with having blown it.

Just say, “I don’t know how to do this. Will you help me?” Usually they will say “I don’t either. Let’s have lunch and talk about it.” Then a relationship forms.

Robeck: Is there any last word you would like to leave with our readers?

Hayford: Let me simply say that there is a living Savior who stopped by a well in Samaria. When a woman said, “I don’t understand why you are even talking to me because you are of another ethnic group,” remember that it was Jesus’ need to go through Samaria. It was his intentional show of the love of God that brought about not only her change, but the response of the whole community. What we are dealing with is that which will break down walls that obstruct the spread of the message of the reconciling love of God. Jesus modeled it. The First-Century Church pointed the way. And we are answering that same Spirit. God bless you as you seek to do that. 🙏

Memphis 1994: Miracle and Mandate

Dr. Vinson Synan



Footwashing at Memphis '94; Co-chaired by Bishop I. Clemmons and Bishop



It was called a miracle because it ended decades of formal separation between the predominantly black and white Pentecostal churches in America. In its beginnings, the Pentecostal movement inherited the interracial ethos of the Holiness Movement at the turn of the century. One of the

miracles of the Azusa Street revival was the testimony that “the color line was washed away in the blood.” Here in the worldwide cradle of the movement a black man, William J. Seymour, served as pastor of a small black church in Los Angeles, where from 1906 to 1909, thousands of people of all races gathered to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the accompanying evidence of speaking in tongues. Often black hands were laid upon white heads to pray down the power of Pentecost. From Azusa Street the movement spread to the nations and continents of the world.

It was a day never to be forgotten in the annals of American Pentecostalism—October 18, 1994—when the Spirit moved in Memphis to end decades of racial separation and open doors to a new era of cooperation and fellowship between African-American and white Pentecostals. At the time, it was called the “Memphis Miracle” by those gathered in Memphis as well as in the national press which hailed the historic importance of the event.

In the beginning, practically all the Pentecostal movements and churches in America were inter-racial with many having thriving black leaders and churches. But from 1908 to 1924, one by one, most churches bowed to the American system of segregation by separating into racially-segregated fellowships. In “Jim Crow” America, segregation in all areas of life ruled the day. Gradually Seymour’s Azusa Street dream of openness and equality faded into historical memory.

The PFNA

The separation of black and white Pentecostals was formalized in 1948 in Des Moines, Iowa, with the creation of the all-white Pentecostal Fellowship of North America (PFNA). As incredible as it seems today, no black churches were invited. The races continued to drift further and further apart.

But by the 1990s the climate had changed drastically in the United States. The civil rights movements and legislation of the 1950s and ‘60s swept away the last vestiges of legal “Jim Crow” segregation in American life. Schools were integrated. Many doors were opened for all to enter into American public life. Most churches, however, remained segregated and out of touch with these currents. The year



B.E. Underwood

1948 also saw the beginnings of the salvation-healing crusades of Oral Roberts and other Pentecostal evangelists. Both blacks and whites flocked together to the big tent services. Along with Billy Graham, Oral Roberts and other Pentecostal evangelists refused to seat the races in separate areas. Although the churches remained separate, there was more interracial worship among blacks and whites who flocked together to the big tent services.

The advent of the charismatic movement in 1960 and the creation of the Society for Pentecostal Studies (SPS) in 1970 brought more contacts between black and white Pentecostals. The congresses sponsored by the North American Renewal Service Committee (NARSC) in the 1980s and 1990s also brought many black and white Pentecostal leaders together for the

first time while serving on the steering committee to plan the massive charismatic rallies in New Orleans, Indianapolis and Orlando.

The Architects of Unity

The leaders, who above all, brought the races together in Memphis in 1994 were Bishop Ithiel Clemmons of the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), and Bishop Bernard E. Underwood of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church. These men had met while serving on the NARSC board planning the New Orleans Congress of 1987. With great trust and mutual dedication, these two men were able to lay the groundwork for the 1994 meeting in Memphis.

The process began when Underwood was elected to head the PFNA in 1991. At that time he purposed in his heart to use his term to end the racial divide between the Pentecostal churches. On March 6, 1992, the Board of Administration voted unanimously to "pursue the possibility of reconciliation with our African-American brethren." After this, there were four important meetings on the road to Memphis.

The first meeting was on July 31, 1992, in Dallas, Texas, in the DFW Hyatt Regency Hotel where COGIC Bishop O. T. Jones captivated

the PFNA leaders with his wit and wisdom. The second meeting was held in Phoenix, Arizona, on January 4-5, 1993, where COGIC pastor Reuben Anderson from Compton, California (representing Bishop Charles Blake) played a key role in bringing understanding of the challenges of urban ministries in America. The third session convened at the PFNA annual meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, on October 25-27, 1993. Here, Jack Hayford of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel and Bishop Gilbert Patterson, of the Church of God in Christ, strongly affirmed the plans for reconciliation. A fourth meeting in Memphis in January 1994 became known as the "20/20 Meeting" because 20 whites and 20 blacks joined to plan the climactic conference that was planned for October 1994 in Memphis. There, it was hoped, the old PFNA could be laid to rest in order to birth a new fellowship without racial or ethnic boundaries.

The Memphis Miracle

When the delegates arrived in Memphis on October 17, 1994, there was an electric air of expectation that something wonderful was about to happen. The conference theme was "Pentecostal Partners: A Reconciliation Strategy for 21st Century Ministry." Over 3,000 persons attended the evening sessions in the Dixon-Meyers Hall of the Cook Convention Center in downtown Memphis. Everyone was aware of the racial strife in Memphis where Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in 1968.

Here, it was hoped, a great racial healing would take place. The night services reflected the tremendous work done by the local committee in the months before the gathering. Bishop Gilbert Patterson of the Temple of Deliverance Church of God in Christ, and Samuel Middlebrook, Pastor of the Raleigh Assembly of God in Memphis, co-chaired the committee. Although both men had pastored in the same city for 29 years, they had never met. The Memphis project brought them together.



Dr. Vinson Synan, Dean of Regent University School of Divinity, is an advisor to the PCCNA Executive. Author of the widely-read Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition, Dr. Synan is chair of the North American Renewal Service Committee (NARSC) and an ordained minister with the International Pentecostal Holiness Church.

The morning sessions were remarkable for the honesty and candor of the papers that were presented by a team of leading Pentecostal scholars. These included Dr. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. of Fuller Theological Seminary and the Assemblies of God; Dr. Leonard Lovett of the Church of God in Christ; Dr. William Turner of Duke University and the United Holy Church; and Dr. Vinson Synan of Regent University and the Pentecostal Holiness Church. In these sessions, the sad history of separation, racism and neglect was laid bare before the 1,000

In a moment of tearful contrition, he washed the feet of Bishop Clemmons while begging forgiveness for the sins of the whites against their black brothers and sisters. A wave of weeping swept over the auditorium. Then, Bishop Blake approached Thomas Trask, General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God, and tearfully washed his feet as a sign of repentance for any animosity blacks had harbored against their white brothers and sisters. This was the climactic moment of the conference. Everyone sensed that this was the final seal of Holy Spirit approval from the heart of God over the proceedings.

or more leaders assembled. These sometimes chilling confessions brought a stark sense of past injustice and the absolute need of repentance and reconciliation. The evening worship sessions were full of Pentecostal fire and fervor as Bishop Patterson, Billy Joe Daugherty and Jack Hayford preached rousing sermons to the receptive crowds.

The climactic moment, however, came in the scholar's session on the afternoon of October 18, after Bishop Blake tearfully told the delegates, "Brothers and Sisters, I commit my love to you. There are problems down the road, but a strong commitment to love will overcome them all." Suddenly there was a sweeping move of the Holy Spirit over the entire

assembly. A young black brother uttered a spirited message in tongues after which Jack Hayford hurried to the microphone to give the interpretation. He began by saying, "For the Lord would speak to you this day, by the tongue, by the quickening of the Spirit, and he would say:

"My sons and my daughters, look if you will

from the heavenward side of things and see where you have been – two, separate streams, that is, streams as at flood tide. For I have poured out of my Spirit upon you and flooded you with grace in both your circles of gathering and fellowship. But as streams at flood tide, nonetheless, the waters have been muddied to some degree. Those of desperate thirst have come, nonetheless, for muddy water is better than none at all.

"My sons and my daughters, if you will look and see that some have not come to drink because of what they have seen. You have not been aware of it, for only heaven has seen those who would doubt what flowed in your midst, because of the waters muddied, having been soiled by the clay of your humanness, not by your crudity, lucidity, or intentionality, but by the clay of your humanness the river has been made impure.

"But look. Look, for I, by my Spirit, am flowing the two streams into one. And the two becoming one, if you can see from the heaven side of things, are being purified. And not only is there a new purity coming in your midst, but there will be multitudes more who will gather at this one mighty river because they will see the purity of the reality of my love manifest in you. And so, know that as heaven observes and tells us what is taking place, there is reason for you to rejoice and prepare yourself, for there shall be multitudes more than ever before coming to this joint surging of my grace among you, says the Lord."

Immediately, a white pastor appeared in the wings of the backstage with a towel and basin of water. His name was Donald Evans, an Assemblies of God pastor from Tampa, Florida. When he explained that the Lord had called him to wash the feet of a black leader as a sign of repentance, he was given access to the platform. In a moment of tearful contrition, he washed the feet of Bishop Clemmons while begging forgiveness for the sins of the whites against their black brothers and sisters. A wave of weeping swept over the auditorium. Then, Bishop Blake

(continued on page 18)

Racial Reconciliation Manifesto

Challenged by the reality of our racial division, we have been drawn by the Holy Spirit to Memphis, Tennessee, October 17-19, 1994, in order to become true "Pentecostal Partners" and to develop together "A Reconciliation Strategy for 21st Century Ministry". We desire to covenant together in the ongoing task of racial reconciliation by committing ourselves to the following agenda.

I. I pledge in concert with my brothers and sisters of many hues to oppose racism prophetically in all its various manifestations within and without the Body of Christ and to be vigilant in the struggle with all my God-given might.

II. I am committed personally to treat those in the Fellowship who are not of my race or ethnicity, regardless of color, with love and respect as my sisters and brothers in Christ. I am further committed to work against all forms of personal and institutional racism, including those which are revealed within the very structures of our environment.

III. With complete bold and courageous honesty, we mutually confess that racism is sin and as a blight in the Fellowship must be condemned for having hindered the maturation of spiritual development and mutual sharing among Pentecostal-Charismatic believers for decades.

IV. We openly confess our shortcomings and our participation in the sin of racism by our silence, denial and blindness. We admit the harm it has brought to generations born and unborn. We strongly contend that the past does not always completely determine the future. New horizons are emerging. God wants to do a new thing through His people.

V. We admit that there is no single solution to racism in the Fellowship. We pray and are open to tough love and radical repentance with deep sensitivity to the Holy Spirit as Liberator.

VI. Together we will work to affirm one another's strengths and acknowledge our own weaknesses and inadequacies, recognizing that all of us only "see in a mirror dimly" what God desires to do in this world. Together, we affirm the wholeness of the Body of Christ as fully inclusive of Christians regardless of color. We, therefore, commit ourselves "to love one another with mutual affection, outdoing one another in showing honor" (Romans 12:10).

VII. We commit ourselves not only to pray but also to work for genuine and visible manifestations of Christian unity.

VIII. We hereby commit ourselves not only to the task of making prophetic denouncement of racism in word and creed, but to live by acting in deed. We will fully support and encourage those among us who are attempting change.

IX. We pledge that we will return to our various constituencies and appeal to them for logistical support and intervention as necessary in opposing racism. We will seek partnerships and exchange pulpits with persons of a different hue, not in a paternalistic sense, but in the Spirit of our Blessed Lord who prayed that we might be one (John 17:21).

X. We commit ourselves to leaving our comfort zones, lay aside our warring racial allegiances, respecting the full humanity of all, live with an openness to authentic liberation which is a product of Divine Creation, until the shackles fall and all bondage ceases.

XI. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Azusa Street Mission was a model of preaching and living the Gospel message in the world. We desire to drink deeply from the well of Pentecost as it was embodied in that mission. We, therefore, pledge our commitment to embrace the essential commitments of that mission in evangelism and mission, in justice and holiness, in spiritual renewal and empowerment, and in the reconciliation of all Christians regardless of race or gender as we move into the new millennium.

Manifesto Committee

Bishop Ithiel Clemmons
Leonard Lovett
Cecil M. Robeck, Jr.
Harold D. Hunter



The incredible “Memphis Miracle” has now become the “Memphis Mandate.” All Spirit-filled believers must join in a crusade of love and good will to show the world that when the Spirit moves, those who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit will move forward to bring the lost to Christ and to full ministry and fellowship in churches that have no racial, ethnic or gender barriers.

approached Thomas Trask, General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God, and tearfully washed his feet as a sign of repentance for any animosity blacks had harbored against their white brothers and sisters. This was the climactic moment of the conference. Everyone sensed that this was the final seal of Holy Spirit approval from the heart of God over the proceedings. In an emotional speech the next day, Dr. Paul Walker of the Church of God (Cleveland, TN) called this event, “the Miracle in Memphis,” a name that struck and made headlines around the world.

That afternoon, the members of the old PFNA gathered for the final session of its history. In a very short session, a motion was carried to dissolve the old, all-white organization in favor of a new entity that would be birthed the next day. But more reconciliation was yet to come!

When the new constitution was read to the delegates on October 19, a new name was proposed for the group – Pentecostal Churches of North America (PCNA). It was suggested that the

governing board of the new group have equal numbers of blacks and whites and that denominational charter memberships would be welcomed that very day. But before the constitution came before the assembly for a vote, Pastor Billy Joe Daugherty of Tulsa’s Vic-

tory Christian Center asked the delegates to include the word “Charismatic” in the new name. Over a hastily-called luncheon meeting of the “Restructuring Committee,” it was agreed that those Christians who thought of themselves as “Charismatics” would also be invited to join. When the vote was taken, the body unanimously voted to call the new organization the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches of North America (PCCNA). Thus the Memphis Miracle included the beginning of healing between Pentecostals and Charismatics as well as between blacks and whites.

Another milestone of the day was the unanimous adoption of a “Racial Reconciliation Manifesto” that was drafted by Bishop Ithiel Clemmons, Dr. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., Dr. Leonard Lovett, and Dr. Harold D. Hunter. In this historic document, the new PCCNA pledged to “oppose racism prophetically in all its various manifestations” and to be “vigilant in the struggle.” They further agreed to “confess that racism is a sin and as a blight must be condemned . . .” while promising to “seek partnerships and exchange pulpits with persons of a different hue . . . in the spirit of our Blessed Lord who prayed that we might be one.”

After this, the election of officers took place with Bishop Clemmons chosen as Chairman and Bishop Underwood as Vice-Chairman. Also elected to the Board was Bishop Barbara Amos, whose election demonstrated the resolve of the new organization to bridge the gender gap as well. The other officers represented a balance of blacks and whites from the constituent membership.

The Memphis Mandate

The subsequent meetings of the PCCNA in Memphis in 1996 and Washington, D.C. in 1997, have shown that the road to racial reconciliation in America will not be short or easy. Everyone agrees that there is much more to be done and much to overcome. The incredible “Memphis Miracle” has now become the “Memphis Mandate.” All Spirit-filled believers must join in a crusade of love and good will to show the world that when the Spirit moves, those who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit will move forward to bring the lost to Christ and to full ministry and fellowship in churches that have no racial, ethnic or gender barriers. ☞

The “Memphis Miracle” was a triumphant moment in the history of Pentecostal race relations in North America. But it was only a moment. Pastors and other church leaders

How to Work toward Racial Reconciliation

by Dr. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr

returned to their places of ministry with a great deal of good will. They wanted to do the right thing, but they have not always known how to translate their mountain-top experience into action.

This is understandable. Our histories and experiences are all different. They require different approaches as we move along the process of racial reconciliation. Some pastors and congregations have extensive experience promoting racial reconciliation. Others do not. The following suggestions may be helpful as you consider your next step in this healing process.

- 1. Acknowledge that there is a problem** of how we relate to one another across racial and ethnic lines.
- 2. Personalize the problem.** Ask yourself what role you play, implicitly or explicitly, that contributes to the present situation, then offer it to the Lord.
- 3. Seek God for wisdom** in addressing the problem in your own life.
- 4. Begin to pray regularly for a specific pastor or a local congregation** that is of another color or race. As they become part of your regular prayer life, your attitudes toward them should begin to change.
- 5. Seek out one or more individuals of another race and build a relationship.** Do not assume that this is a relationship that will only benefit the other person. Open yourself to receive as much as you give.
- 6. Listen to the other person as a peer.** Be willing to learn from him or her. This is critical. Do not assume that you have all the answers or that money is the real issue. Move past the level of rhetoric and hear the heart.
- 7. Begin to share with your congregation** those things you are learning in your new relationships.
- 8. Be willing to enter into a pulpit exchange across racial and/or ethnic lines.** Exchanges may be extended to include a food festival, music, youth activities and cooperative efforts in the community. Together Celebrate their significant cultural events (e.g. Cinco de Mayo, Martin Luther King Day, Chinese New Year).
- 9. Adopt another congregation as a sister congregation.** Ask them what contributions you can make to their lives. Ask them what they would like to do for your congregation. Act on those things that are possible to do. Do not over-commit yourself or your resources. It can lead to disappointment. Prioritize.
- 10. Share with other pastors** what you are learning and how it has blessed your church.