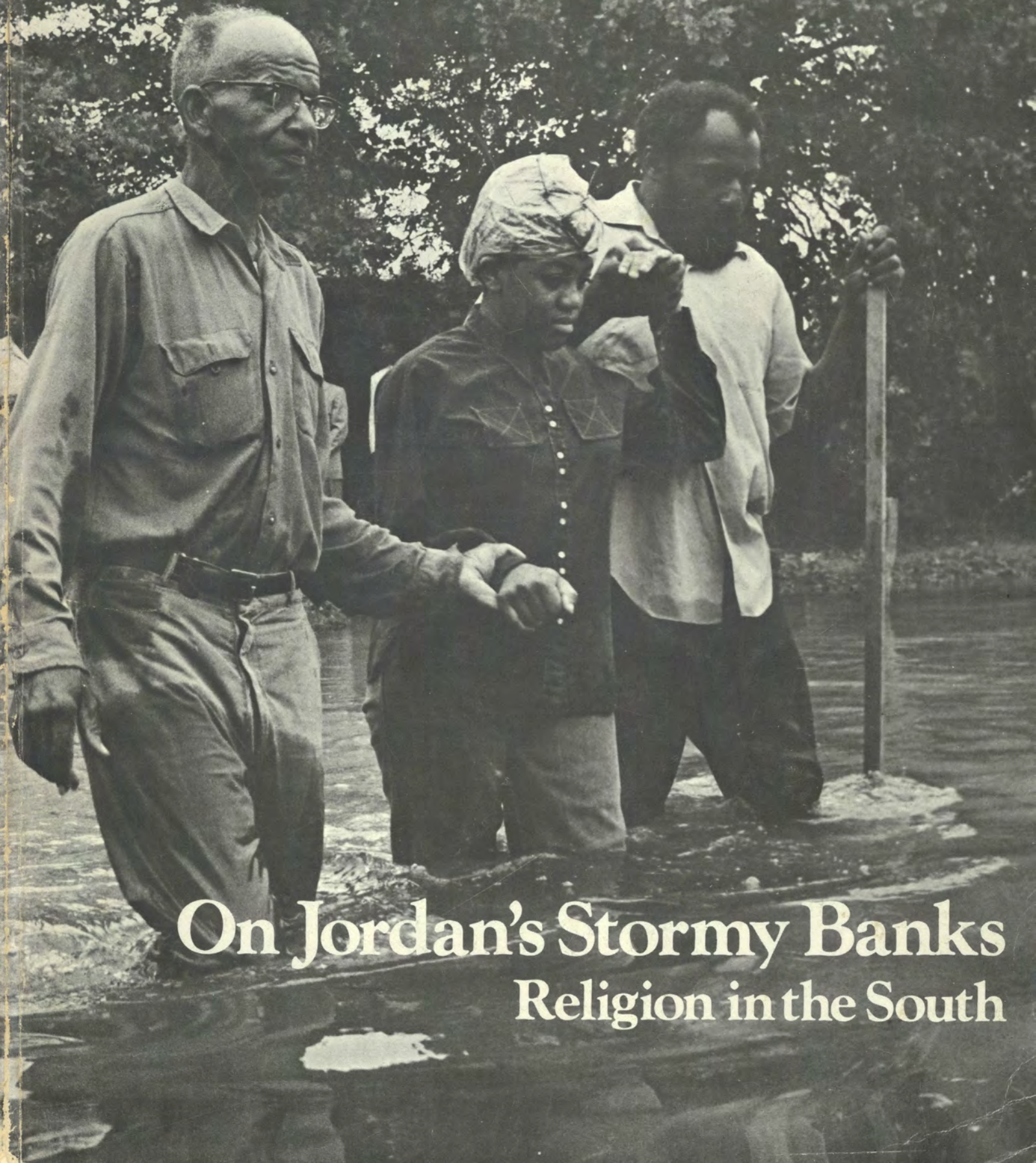


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Southern Exposure



On Jordan's Stormy Banks
Religion in the South

On Jordan's stormy banks I stand
And cast a wistful eye
To Canaan's fair and happy land
Where my possessions lie

In the spring of 1975, before Jimmy Carter burst upon the nation's consciousness and the "born-again" experience became the latest titillation of the nation's news media, a group of us met at Will Campbell's farm in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee, to plan a *Southern Exposure* issue on religion in the South. We knew the task would be difficult and approached it with more than the usual amount of ambivalence and trepidation. We knew also that for a regional journal of politics and culture, the subject was unavoidable.

In our talks with other people over the next 18 months, we have discovered that it seems virtually impossible to capture the essence of this aspect of our collective cultural identity, at once so varied and yet so similar and overwhelmingly pervasive. Rev. Joseph Roberts of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta warned us early that we would not be able to put together a comprehensive volume on Southern religion, but rather should aim for a "patchwork" that would reflect its rootedness, its richness and its limitations.

As the election year progressed, it became even more apparent that we had to go beyond the shallowness of the national media coverage. Southerners know that being born again is not a recent religious phenomenon, nor is today's evangelical/charismatic revival the last we are likely to see. What we offer here finally is a collection of articles and interviews that probe more deeply the roots of Southern religious traditions and give witness to its variety of expression.

As is our habit in this journal, we have elected to let people speak for themselves — their perceptions, their analysis, their feelings. While some view religion as the central, sustaining experience in their life, others are equally convinced of its pernicious consequences. Our aim has simply been to include as many of these stories as possible in the hope that they will help others better understand and comprehend the complexity of this coat of many colors.

For most people in the South, life has truly been lived on "stormy banks." The testimony of Granny Reed reveals the importance of the vision of the promised land and the hope of salvation to people whose portion in this world has required constant struggle for survival. We glimpse in the portrait of the Old Regular Baptists a church that embodies the spirit of harmony and fellowship, yet to outside observers remains an oddity. The interview with

John Lewis about the civil-rights movement of the early '60s and the story of the People's Institute of Applied Religion illustrate the potential of religious convictions for moving people to struggle for freedom in the "here and now." The interviews with black churchmen indicate the degree to which a religious experience forged from oppression differs from its white counterpart. And Thelma Stevens profiles how the Methodist church women's fight for dignity and equality within the institutional church has gone hand and hand with their concern for broader, social reform.

It would be a disservice, however, to view Southern religion only in the light of its personal implications. In its institutional expressions, it has occasionally represented the best of our culture, teaching and acting from a position of social justice; more often it has represented the worst, a cultural bastion at the service of the political and economic status quo. The special research section on Protestant Power and Wealth examines the considerable corporate strength of the three major denominations and documents examples of the church's privileged partnership with secular powers.

Finally, we must note, as a personal statement as much as an intellectual observation, that today no less than in years past, religion lies close to the heart of the Southern experience. William Faulkner once expressed it this way:

"Remember, the writer must write out of his background. He must write out of what he knows and the Christian legend is part of any Christian's background, especially the background of a country boy, a Southern country boy. My life was passed, my childhood, in a very small Mississippi town, and that was part of my background. I grew up with that. I assimilated that, took that in without even knowing it. It's just there. It has nothing to do with how much of it I might believe or disbelieve — it's just there."

Perry Walker's cover photograph is a baptism performed by the Gatewood Baptist Church of Marshall County, Mississippi. The officiating deacons are Fred Gipson on the left and Quentell Gipson on the right. Cover design by David Jenkins.

Photo credits for opposite page: Alice Lloyd, College Photographic Archives (top); Joe Holloway (center); Carter Tomassi (bottom).



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Special Issue Editors

Jim Sessions
Sue Thrasher
Bill Troy

Managing Editor

Bob Hall

Editorial Staff

Susan Angell
Bob Arnold
Kathleen Doble
Bill Finger
John Gaventa
Steve Hoffius
Chip Hughes
Jennifer Miller
Jim Overton
Joe Pfister
June Rostan

Composition

Southern Types
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Lay-Out and Design

Bob Dorland

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Special thanks to guest editors Jim Sessions and Bill Troy of the Southern Appalachian Ministry in Higher Education (SAM, 1538 Highland Avenue, Knoxville, Tenn. 37916). The SAM staff works with community colleges in the Southern Appalachian mountains. It recently published a resource guide entitled *Appalachian Issues and Resources*.

from our readers. . . .

I discovered your publication by accident yesterday at approximately 12:30 a.m. I was intrigued by the "Southern" in the title, the word "Labor" in black and, most of all, by the statement "Breakthrough at J.P. Stevens" on the cover. I picked up a copy of Volume IV, Number 1-2 and leafed through the pages. When I reached page 189 and read part of the first paragraph, I had to buy the copy.

Your publication is subversive, radical, leftist and pinko! (I have been called all of these and worse for believing in labor unions.)

The "Will He or Won't He?" article hits home with me. I am a prejudiced white racist mountain boy. By my own admission and definition, I am a "Conservative."

I am a senior at Appalachian State, majoring in political science. I am a dedicated George Wallace supporter and was a member of the Students for Wallace organization during the primary in this state. I once contemplated joining the Ku Klux Klan, and last year I was an officer of the College Democrat Club at Appalachian.

I am an individualist and I am definitely a nonconformist. I am also paradoxical. I am a social conservative and an economic liberal. I have been taught, socialized if you will,



to believe in good old traditional "American" (Southern) values: God, country, national defense, law and order, etc. But I have not been taught to believe in capitalism.

I have been socialized as both a social conservative and an economic liberal by my father. After he was discharged from the Army following World War II, he worked away from home and belonged to an electrical workers union. He returned home and worked non-union because there were no unions. Seventeen years ago, he started working at the Newland Knitting Mill. Twice he has led attempts to unionize this plant. J.P. Stevens provided this small mill with money, advisors, legal aid and free anti-union literature. Their help to the company made possible company victories both times.

My father is not only where I got my unionism; he is where I got my belief in George Wallace Populism. I agree with the "George Wallace supporter-turned-union organizer" that Wallace "was the first to articulate working people's grievances, before it became fashionable," but I do not agree with him that Wallace has "manipulated and used" the working man. If Wallace were running for any office, and it was legally possible for me to vote for him, I would.

I am not a hypocrite. As I stated earlier, I am a prejudiced person. I do not claim to be otherwise. But I do



believe in self-interest. It is in the self-interest of all workers in the South, both black and white, to unionize. I believe that the white mill owner has used the black man to keep out unions in the past. He has divided the workers along color lines by saying, "We whites have to stick together." He has given the poor white worker the black to look down on. He has threatened to fill the jobs of white union inclined workers with blacks who would be glad to get the job. Therefore, out of economic self-interest, not a love of blacks or a belief in civil rights, I believe blacks and whites have to come together and work together to unionize Southern workers.

Self-interest will win over converts that reform talk won't. People who don't believe in other "liberal" ideas and programs will join labor unions if you can prove to them that it is in their own best interest.

In conclusion, I would like to say you have a great publication. Keep up the great work.

What can I do to help repeal the right-to-work law in North Carolina?

Kent W. McCoury
Cranberry, N.C.

I am enclosing a check for one copy of the book, "Here Come A Wind - Labor on the Move."

I was the third man to sign up to join the UMWA at Morley, Tennessee,



District 19, Local 2975, when the big organizing drive started in the early thirties. I knew Bill Turnblazer well. I remember the mine wars at Harlan County and a few others. I too faced the rifles and machine guns of the company thugs, but I am still here today. I am close to retirement now and working for Con-rail as station engineer.

Charles E. Osborne
Royal Oak, Mich.

As a former resident of southern Kentucky, I urge you to keep the voices of Southern struggle alive, and let us in the North hear them.

Tom Culotta
Baltimore, Md.

I find your work so consistently excellent and to the point that I keep giving away copies to people who either need to know about the magazine or to whom it would be enormously useful. That turns out to be a lot — most recently some French people doing research on US agricultural policy.

The problem is that I am always giving away *my* copies.

Bethany Weidner
Washington, D.C.

Please send the book, "Here Come A Wind." I was a miner in 1931 and worked for 30 years in the mines in Harlan County. I feel that I had a small part in helping to organize our great union. I'm sure I will treasure this book.

Walter Rose
Covington, Ky.

I hope y'all stick in there. I'd like to see more along the lines of your issue on the land, especially stuff like power elite interlocks, and most of all, things on conservation of the environment, and regional planning for the South, if there is such a thing.

Neal Wright
Columbia, S.C.

Last year I had less than \$2500 to report to the IRS. This year, I don't know where *that's* coming from. Your \$8 subscription fee represents a large part of my weekly grocery bill.

After being involved in the fight for human rights for 34 years, I'd like to receive and read your magazine. I've worked for a printer, and I can write a fair story. If we can trade services, a subscription for a story, then let me hear from you. Otherwise, you let the people who have money read your *Southern Exposure*.

Linda Bullock
Atlanta, Ga.



“And we’ll all sing together”

by Rich Kirby

Trying to describe the religious folk music of the Southern mountains is a little like trying to organize the church itself — songs, like people, just will not line up quietly in neat rows. Still, there are patterns in this varied and vital tradition, and searching for them reveals, as well as anything can, the intensity of religious feeling that has always been part of mountain life.

Religious singing in the mountains flourished with the wave of revivals that has swept the region in the last two hundred years. The emotional intensity of these movements combined with the strong musical traditions of the area to produce some of America’s most powerful music. It is true folk music — home-made music that people use in their everyday lives to express their deepest feelings.

At the same time, the familiar dynamics of social mobility have acted as a counterweight to this tradition. Typically, churches which begin on the fringes of established religion change as they get more rooted; a generation that goes to carpeted churches and listens to the choir looks back in embarrassment on its predecessors who shouted and danced on bare boards. This process has happened to every religious revival movement in the mountains. But persistent economic hardship has prevented the mountains as a whole from going through this upwardly mobile change. As a result, the reservoir of folk creativity, often left behind by various churches, has waited for the next round. The process continues today.

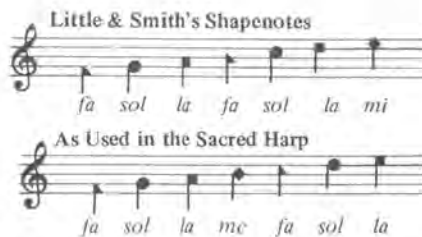
Roots

Folk traditions in the British Isles go back unbroken to the pre-Christian era. Their heathen origins, however, meant that English songs were repressed by Anglicans, and even more by the Puritans. Of the little religious folk music that survived, only a small portion crossed the waters with the early settlers. The New Puritans continued to scorn music and celebrations altogether, and finally reduced church singing to no more than two dozen tunes. Only in the

backwoods could people who wanted to sing do so unhampered by convention or the restrictions of the church. It was here on the New England frontier, outside the cities where music was controlled by the wealthy, the educated and the church, that folk music took its first root in America.

Singing schools, conducted by itinerant masters and held in taverns, quickly grew up to satisfy people’s desire to learn religious music. They taught the notes of the scale by an Elizabethan system of “solmization” in which the seven-note scale is rendered FA-SOL-LA-SOL-LA-MI. Singers could learn tunes by these syllables before singing the words.

Then around 1798, two innovators named Little and Smith found a new way of putting music on paper. They took the four syllables FA-SOL-LA-MI and gave each a separate shape on the musical clef:



Shape-note singing will no doubt rank as America’s great contribution to the teaching of music. It simplified the notes and their relationship to each other, allowing the old singing masters to teach music to people who the city-bred musicians considered hopeless. The system quickly won acceptance and its influence continues to the present day, especially in the South.

The music centers in the East were less friendly. They disdained the new works of the self-educated, shape-note song writers, forcing them to develop their own publishing institutions. The new music drew heavily on folk tunes and the democratic spirit of post-Revolution America; the tunes were lively, strong, and popular. Harmony was introduced, making the music all the more unconventional to the Puritan critics.

Nevertheless, writing music in shape-notes persisted. Perhaps the best of the little recognized but highly talented shape-note composers was William Billings (1746-1800), a cobbler who, according to the *Sacred Harp*, “was criticized by many musicians and music writers, and while he did not believe so much in rules, he wrote some very fine music.” Another rugged individual, the Reverend John Leland, was described vividly in the *Sacred Harp*:

In 1808 he took a preaching tour from his home in Massachusetts to Washington with his Cheshire cheese which made his name national on account of that trip... The farmers of Cheshire, of whom he was pastor, conceived the idea of sending the biggest cheese in America to President Jefferson. Mr. Leland offered to go to Washington with an ox-team with it, and preach along the way, which he did. The cheese weighed 1,450 pounds. He died with great hope of rest in the glory world.

Revivals

Despite the established church’s distaste for shape-note singing, the music was well developed by the time the Baptists and Methodists began to penetrate the religious vacuum of the frontier. The Presbyterian Church dominated the New World outposts, but it held little appeal for the poorer and less-educated settlers. In sharp contrast to the Calvinists’ elitism, the revivalists’ Arminian doctrine (salvation open to all by faith) and down-to-earth emotional style struck a responsive chord on the frontier. The democratic impulse that had nourished the rise of religious folk music was now

Rich Kirby lives in Dungannon, Virginia. He has been a student of mountain music since his grandmother sang Old Regular Baptist hymns to him as a boy in Kentucky. These days he sings on records like New Wood and Cotton Mill Blues (June Appal) and plays with anybody who’ll stop to pick a while.



photo by Baldwin-Watris

being tapped for an even larger social movement. As one historian writes, "The close connection of the Colonial Government, the Established Church, and the aristocracy of the Tidewater makes it impossible to treat the (revival) movement as solely religious. It was more than that. It was a protest against religious, social and political privilege — and because education was closely associated with the privileged classes, somewhat too against education."¹

Revivalists, especially Baptists, were heavily persecuted from 1750 to 1775, but they flourished nonetheless. The influence of their doctrines on the frontier was boundless, and by the dawn of the nineteenth century they had unleashed a storm of religious activity in all but the plantation South.

The revival movement culminated in that amazing phenomenon, the camp meeting — a gathering of hundreds or thousands of people in remote areas for days or weeks of continuous religious observances. It was with the camp meeting that religious folk music took root among the masses of the Southern mountaineers. The first camp meeting was held in Logan County, Kentucky, in 1800. For the next 30 years, common people —

mostly black and white farmers — attended these incredibly intense gatherings that centered on the struggle within the participant over her/his feelings of sin and salvation. Preachers vividly described heaven and hell. Songs, prayers, groans and shouts from

repentant sinners and the energy released by so many people crowded together made the camp meeting an irresistible force. One observer writes, "at no time was the floor less than half-covered. Some lay quiet, unable to move or speak. Some talked but could not move. Some beat the floor with their heels. Some, shrieking in agony, bounded about like a fish out of water. Many lay down and rolled over for hours at a time. Others rushed wildly about over the stumps and benches, then plunged, shouting 'Lost! Lost!' into the forest."²

The singing at the meeting was nothing less than pure folk music. Baptists and Methodists generally used the hymns written by John and Charles Wesley and Isaac Watts, who set out to write for "the meanest Christians" and therefore used plain English. But on the frontier, people persistently made their own music. Louis Benson, the historian of sacred music, deplored the camp meeting's "illiterate and often vulgar Revival Hymnody":

The people were ignorant, the preachers were itinerant ... and the singing largely without books... The tunes had to be very familiar or very contagious, the words given out one or two lines at a time if not already known. Under these condi-

ODE ON SCIENCE

*A shape note hymn written
by Deacon Janaziah, 1798*

The morning sun shines from the east
And spreads his glories to the west
All nations with his beams are blest
Where'er the radiant light appears
So science spreads her lucid ray
O'er lands which long in darkness lay
She visits fair Columbia
And sets her sons among the stars
Fair freedom her attendant waits
To bless the portals of her gates
To crown the young and rising states
With laurels of immortal day
The British yoke, the Gallic chain
Was urged upon our necks in vain
All haughty tyrants we disdain
And shout long live America

(Original Sacred Harp, 242)

tions the development of...a rude type of popular song, indifferent to anything in the way of authorized hymnody, seems to have been inevitable.³

Benson was accurately, if unwittingly, describing the creation of religious folk music — an evolving body of songs improvised from familiar hymns and the scriptures, interspersed with refrains and set to easily singable tunes.

We know about the camp-meeting songs largely because of the shape-note songbooks, which were firmly established in the South by 1810 and shortly afterwards disappeared everywhere else. Collections were introduced as late as 1855, and several are still in print, notably the *Sacred Harp*, *New Harp of Columbia*, and *The Southern Harmony*. In the years before the Civil War, the books and their accompanying singing schools meant music for large numbers — the same folks, by and large, who went to camp meetings — so the songbook compilers included many camp meeting songs. From these songbooks we can see the vital process that produced a large body of native folk music.

- Familiar words were set to new tunes. For example, the *Sacred Harp* has five tunes for “When I can read my titles clear to mansions in the skies,” five for “Farewell vain world, I’m going home,” and six for

On Jordan’s stormy bank I stand
And cast a wistful eye
To Canaan’s fair and happy land
Where my possessions lie.

Ballad tunes were used for sacred songs (“Lord Love!” became “And Am I Born to Die”). So were fiddle tunes, considered “too good to remain in the exclusive employ of the devil.” Interestingly, the songbook composers preserved some fiddle melodies in jig-time (6/8) as well as the usual reels (2/4 or 4/4).

- Music was designed to involve many people, not just a few trained specialists. Group singing was more important than a good “performance.” In the shape-note books each of the three or four parts is developed like a melody, a practice resulting from what George Pullen Jackson called “southernizing.” Southern frontier congregations had no instruments to carry harmony and no choir director to assign parts, so the alto part had to be interesting — or no one would sing it.

This sort of democracy extended to

the singing style as well. “Who is going to tell Sister So-and-so not to step on it quite so hard,” asked Jackson, “and why, in the name of good sense, should she bear the audience in mind when there is none? This is democratic music making. All singers are peers. And the moment selection and exclusion enter, at that moment this singing of, by, and for the people loses its chief characteristic.”⁴

- Complicated texts became more simple and repetitive, thus more suitable for group singing. This additional democratic feature of camp-meeting songs is similar to black spirituals, and in fact, some songs from the period have been preserved among singers of both races. There is some dispute over

the direction of this interchange. Jackson pointed out that blacks learned Christianity from whites and probably learned white music also. Folklorist Alan Lomax argues that blacks led in developing “songs of great beauty within the fragmentary compass of the easy-to-sing congregational leader-chorus formula; and it was in this direction that the white folk spiritual has steadily developed.”⁵ Certainly frontier religion brought the two races closer together socially than any other activity in the old South.

The result of this freewheeling cultural crusade was quite astonishing: hundreds of thousands of people, often illiterate, learned to sight-read music and sing in four-part harmony —

Example of “Southernized” Music

Alto Part of a Philadelphia-Published Song

As “Southernized” in a Georgia Songbook



photo by Al Clayton

Bright Morning Star

Bright morning stars are rising,
Bright morning stars are rising,
Bright morning stars are rising,
Day is a-breakin' in my soul.

Oh, where are our dear fathers,
Oh, where are our dear fathers,
Oh, where are our dear fathers,
Day is a-breakin' in my soul.

They are down in the valley praying,
They are down in the valley praying,
They are down in the valley praying,
Day is a-breakin' in my soul.

Bright morning stars are rising, etc.

Oh, where are our dear mothers,
Oh, where are our dear mothers,
Oh, where are our dear mothers,
Day is a-breakin' in my soul.

They have gone to heaven a-shouting,
They have gone to heaven a-shouting,
They have gone to heaven a-shouting,
Day is a-breakin' in my soul.

Bright morning stars are rising, etc.

an achievement of which store-bought music was and is incapable. From this creative ferment evolved many of the forms of mountain religious music we know today, including the familiar verse-chorus form and the spiritual, like "Bright Morning Stars," that is largely chorus.

Retreat

The tide of religious enthusiasm was clearly shifting by the mid-1800s. As early as 1830, trained musicians had settled in Southern cities and driven the uncouth shape-note singers back into the hills. The more urban Methodists and Baptists had never been too sure about the "excesses" of the camp meeting or the perfectionism it implied. As time went on, their disapproval was less and less subtle. The former underdogs were by now well off, well accepted, and well enough satisfied to be uncomfortable with the crudities of the past. They came to look down on the average mountain church — and its music. For example, the first general Methodist hymnal (1859) systematically ignored camp-meeting songs, taking only 17 of its 357 tunes from the shape-note books, and none of those had camp-meeting origins. Only in the mountains were people able to keep up their own music without undue interference from those who thought it unseemly.

In the years following the Civil War, the mountain churches split and split again — evidence not only of doctrinal difference but of a desire to keep the church local, democratic, family- and community-centered. Isolated from each other and from the outside, communities built up individual song traditions. Some churches used instruments, some did not; different ones used different tunes for the same texts. Often enough churches split over whether to adopt some musical innovation, with one faction choosing to "seek the old paths and walk therein." Nevertheless, religious folk music continued to evolve in the mountains, as did fiddle music, old ballads, and the like.

The two traditions that survived the best, that dug deep in the hills and can be found intact today, are shape-note singing and the music of the Old Regular Baptists. Shape-note singing seriously declined after 1870, but its widespread influence continued.



photo by Baldwin-Watris

Groups using the songbooks still meet in north Alabama, east Tennessee, western North Carolina and north Georgia. More importantly, I believe the experience of so many people singing harmony helped shape a larger tradition of trios and quartets as well as particular features of popular music today. For example, the use in many shape-note songs of a harmony part pitched higher than the melody (completely foreign to conventional church music) still survives in the high harmony heard in so many country churches and bluegrass songs.

The Old Regular Baptist Church preserved a style of singing wholly different from anything else in the mountains. As Calvinist Baptists, their doctrines differed radically from the Arminian revivalists: if salvation is pre-determined, revivals are a waste of time. In fact, the church was known for awhile as the "anti-missionary Baptists" (see Ron Short's article elsewhere in this issue). In general, they disapproved of instrumental music and displays of emotion in church, but they shared a number of tunes and texts with the camp-meeting and shape-note singers. The Old Regulars sing now, as they did in the nineteenth century, in complete unison; words are either lined out by a song-leader or read from a songbook printed without music. The tunes are slow, solemn, highly ornamented, and quite often in archaic-sounding modes or gapped scales (five tones instead of seven). Other traditions, including the early Puritans, the camp-meeting revivalists, and even today's Old Order Amish, use the lining-out method, but nothing in American music compares to the power of a group of Old Regular Baptists singing their somber tunes. Even when standard hymn texts are used, they are sung to different music. For example:

AMAZING GRACE (as sung at Old Regular Baptist Church, Jeff, Ky.)

A - ma - zing grace - how sweet the sound
that saved a - wretch like - me. I once was lost
but now I'm found, was - blind - but now I - see.

The details of other developments in religious folk music immediately following the Civil War are largely lost forever. We know that many congregations refused to change at all. Others clung to the musical forms of the past as they sang new evangelical hymns "in the old manner, with marked and arbitrary rhythm and inserted slurring half notes."⁶ The awareness of the outside world's hostility toward their forms of worship seems to have increased steadily as Emma Bell Miles recalled in her remarkable book *Spirit of the Cumberlands* (1905):

God knows what the old ceremonies mean to those who take part in them; but such is the persecution in some places where the curiosity of the town is pressing close in on us that even after a congregation has met together to hold a foot-washing, if any city people are present who are not well-known and trusted, the occasion will be quietly turned into an ordinary preaching.

But neither repression nor inaction from the mainline denominations could keep the religious spirit of the lower classes from bursting forth. In 1867, a National Holiness Movement started (the source of the present Church of the Nazarene) and when it assumed respectability, another holiness movement called the Latter Rain Movement began in east Tennessee in 1892 (which led to various branches of the Church of God). Similarly, revival activity on a local level periodically erupted, fell away, and returned.

Re-entry

The next major period for religion in the mountains began around 1900 when the outside world came crashing back in. Appalachia's rich timber stands, then coal, brought in capital and capitalists. Coincidentally, the

national denominations discovered in their own back yard a people so benighted that they required the church's best missionary efforts. The outside church continued to pity or scorn the uneducated, undisciplined, emotional mountaineers, but now it wanted to transform their culture, their entire life style, into something more familiar to mainstream American institutions — a process which, of course, helped the economic exploitation of land and labor.

The music the missionaries brought with them included the products of a commercialization of religious music that began after the Civil War and continues to the present. Newly respectable church members wanted a more refined sort of music which would suit their calmer decorum, and a number of writers began to fill this need, notably P. P. Bliss ("Almost Persuaded," "Hold the Fort"). The style turned into a musical movement when a travelling revivalist named Dwight L. Moody hired Chicago YMCA singer Ira D. Sankey. Sankey's moving tenor added a striking emotional appeal to Moody's preaching and soon the pair were enthraling throngs on two continents, making them the first of the "superstar" evangelists. Sankey himself wrote hundreds of songs, now mostly forgotten, and other writers were not long in following. Publishing houses quickly issued songbooks, recognizing that there is more money in peddling copyrighted originals than in folk songs. Homer Rodeheaver (who sang with Billy Sunday) was the most prominent entrepreneur of what has been called a "religious Tin Pan Alley."

This music was essentially a religious version of Victorian popular music, with flowery tunes (almost always in major keys) and conventional harmonies. Where frontier people had sung of salvation through struggle, the new music talked of salvation through quiet acceptance — an obvious way of encouraging people to reconcile themselves to the emerging industrial society. Optimism was the encouraged mood, and revivals flourished amid thickets of joy bells, heavenly lifeboats and fountains of delight.

There is no record of what happened when this music was introduced to the mountains, but shortly afterwards the mountain gospel song (of the sort recorded by the Carter Family) made

its entry. It is a cross between the popular evangelistic music and the older mountain traditions, taking themes and images from the mainstream music and vigor and directness of tune and style from folk music. Most of the popular tunes are owned by one publisher or another; but "Keep On the Sunny Side," "I'll Fly Away," "Will the Circle Be Unbroken," "Somebody Touched Me" and many similar pieces deserve at this point to be called folk songs.

Needless to say, the folk roots of gospel music are not well cared for, certainly not by the publishers. Few songbooks have more than a token of the old music. Most are harmonized for the pianist's convenience, not the singer's interest. The old minor tunes are largely gone, as are the archaic and beautiful five-toned ones. Songs that country-church singers render (in a more or less oral tradition) with a steady driving beat are often written with a singsong, watered-down rhythm. Publishers have issued songbooks and sponsored singing schools to popularize their music, just as they did a century ago — only now the music has more connection to a safe and sedate mainstream than to folk traditions.

The missionary churches left little room for religious emotion or for social action. It is not surprising then that a reaction burst out in the form of the Pentecostal Holiness movement, which swelled in the 1920s and within two decades had, by one estimate, as many adherents as any other brand of Protestantism. Like the emotional revivals of the past, Pentecostalism appealed to the dispossessed in society, whose ranks were swelled by the Depression. Like the previous revivals, the movement released a vast reservoir



photo courtesy of Baptist Home Mission Board

of energy and emotion. Once again, people danced, sang, spoke in tongues and in other ways reproduced the climate of the camp meetings, though now in more hostile surroundings. One Methodist historian of sects claimed Pentecostals attracted people with "unstable nervous structures...the ignorant, in whom the lower brain centers and spinal ganglia are strong." Others have called them apolitical for their rigid doctrinal rejection of the world, but this seems to me to be consistent with a belief that the world as we know it is truly in need of radical change, a belief that has led many country preachers to be excellent organizers for social change.

Like the previous revivals, the Pentecostal movement made full use of the power of music — lively, simple, repetitive, accompanied by guitars, banjos or whatever is handy, and involving the whole group. Alan Lomax notated the following piece from Kentucky, pointing out that it used the very old leader-chorus form of a Negro work song:

O DAVID! (collected by Alan Lomax in eastern Ky.)

Leader	Chorus	Leader	Chorus	Leader
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O David, yes, yes! My lit-tle Da-vid, yes, yes! And he
killed Go-li-ath, yes, yes! Yes he killed Go-li-ath, yes, yes!
My lit-tle Da-vid, yes, yes! My lit-tle Da-vid, yes, yes!
was a shep-herd's boy, yes, yes! was a shep-herd's boy, yes, yes!

Today

At present, religious music in the mountains covers a cultural range equivalent to that of secular music. At one side is the more or less pure folk music of Regular Baptist and Old Harp Singers; on the other the Nashville-style slick gospel groups like the Oak Ridge Quartet, which recently achieved the distinction of being the first gospel act to book into a Las Vegas resort. To get some idea of this territory one has only to turn on the radio Sunday morning. Start early — stations rarely give rural churches prime time — and consider the fact that this is the only time you can ever turn to the media for live folk-style music. Religious music is subject to the same forces as all mountain music, including commercialization, emphasis on polish and performance, and the general invasion of city culture into the country — and as Dr. Jackson said so long ago, "city people do not sing." Still, churches have been able to shelter more handmade mountain music than any other institution. To hear it is to renew and affirm the journey mountain people have traveled in the last 200 years.

Footnotes

1. John C. Campbell, *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1969 reprint).
2. Louis V. Benson, *The English Hymn*, 1915, as quoted in George P. Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands* (New York: Dover, 1965), p. 215.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Jackson, *White Spirituals*.
5. Alan Lomax, *Folk Songs of North America* (New York: Doubleday, 1960).
6. Campbell, *The Southern Highlander*.

That Holding Out Spirit

Johns Island, six miles from Charleston off the South Carolina coast, is a low-lying swamp-covered sea island; until the '30s it was accessible only by boat. On it live the descendents of plantation slaves who, in their isolation from the mainland, preserved more fully than in most rural black communities the richness of their Afro-American folk traditions. The earliest forms of black Christian worship in which prayer, testimony, sermon, possession, music and dance were intertwined (as they were in Africa) have remained alive on Johns Island. Moving Star Hall has played an important role in this survival.

A number of such meeting houses used to exist throughout the sea islands. But when we moved to Johns Island in the early 1960s, only Moving Star Hall was still thriving. Throughout the 1960s it served as a central factor in the community and religious life of a portion of the black population of Johns Island. Besides housing weekly interdenominational class meetings (most people coming to Moving Star Hall also belonged to a regular church on the island) there was a burial-and-tend-the-sick society and a fraternal order.

Today the tradition of meeting at Moving Star Hall is dying out. Only a few gatherings are held in the hall each year. The all-night watch meetings of Christmas and New Years and most of the other religious services take place at the regular denominational churches on the island.

by Guy and Candy Carawan

photography by Robert Yellin



photo by Thorsten Horton



I remember when Moving Star Hall was built, 'round about 1913, '14. Father help build the hall. Mother, too. We all throw money until we gets enough to buy the land. All pay seven dollars for the lumber. All join and make that hall.

Mrs. Isabel Simmons



*Here am I again once more,
Heavenly Father.
The worm of the dust
Ready to bow this hour of the
morning
On my bruised and bending knee.
Thank you, My Father, for your
guardin' angel,
That guard me all night long
Until morning light appear.
And before he went from his watch,
He touch my eyes this morning
with a finger of love,
And my eye become open
And behold a brand new Monday
morning.*

*Oh God, if you so please
Give us that holding out spirit,
That You may own us all
When we done trod across the
many street of Charleston.
Oh God, what I say for our
neighbors,
And the neighbors' children around
in this vicinity,
Oh please, Our Father,
Make them more patient,
more acknowledge,
May we love each and one another.
Help us to help each other.*

Mr. James Mackey

That's so much the most thing I could do— shout. I'll tell you, with the spirit of God, you don't care what pain you got. You forget about that when you shout. When I going out, I feel so painful I scarcely don't go. But I say to myself, just as well if I go now, 'cause will come a day when the limbs fail me.

Mr. James Mackey



Now some of us, because we can read a little bit more, forget about the place we came from and some of the songs which help us go on. When older folks sang those songs — “Been in the Storm So Long,” “Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen” — it helped them realize they’re trusting in God and reaching for a better day. We certainly wouldn’t want the children to get away from it. We should cherish it, we

should preserve it and keep it.

Now If we hide those sweet songs and try to get away from what we came from, what will we tell our children about the achievement we have made and the distance we have come?

Mr. Esau Jenkins



In the meeting, Brother Joe Deas, he are the oldest person in there, we takes him for the leading man. Brother Deas takes the text, when is preaching night, and the boys supposed to preach from that text he give you. You can go preach anywhere you want to preach, but you come right back to that same text.

Any individual, soon as the man finish preach, if you want to raise a song, you raise it. And another way, anytime we call someone up to preach, if anybody want to sing for you, can sing you up there. Then one can sing you down. Anybody.

Mr. John Smalls

We all as kids went to Moving Star Hall. As far as I was concerned, I just had to be there. We used to enjoy the singing and the shouting. And at a certain period of the night, all the youngsters in there had to go up front and kneel down and everybody prayed . . . All of a sudden it just start dying off.

For one thing most of the young people started going away. Like me, I went in the Army. I was about fifteen. Once the kids start going to different places, and we start to be more enlightened, then we start getting away from this old type of thing . . . This is good, but it doesn't help your eating. Why waste time with something that you aren't gonna get anything out of at all? You gonna be looking forward to when you die, and man, you hungry now.

Mr. William Saunders.



A NEW DAY BEGUN

Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring
Ring with the harmony of liberty
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea

Sing a song, full of the faith
that the dark past has taught us
Sing a song, full of the hope
that the present has brought us
Facing the rising sun
of a new day begun
Let us march on, till victory is won.

interview with John Lewis by Jim Sessions and Sue Thrasher

In the winter of 1959-60, the nation was mesmerized by a group of young, black college students in Nashville, Tennessee, who appeared at a segregated lunch counter one Saturday afternoon and asked to be served. All that spring, they filled the jails and the nation with their freedom songs, sparking similar actions and demonstrations across the South. Although an earlier sit-in had been held in Greensboro, North Carolina, it was the small coterie of Nashville students who gave impetus to the concept of nonviolent direct action, and continued to provide critical leadership as the Movement spread.

By the spring of 1963, many of the students had moved on to help organize other Southern cities. Still the Nashville movement persisted. The Nashville Christian Leadership Council (NCLC) held mass meetings regularly, and the local chapter of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) continued to demonstrate for open public accommodations.

One of the demonstrations stands out clearly in my memory. It was a chilly spring afternoon. The demonstrators were mostly high school students; the target was one of downtown's "fancier" restaurants, the kind that most of the students would not be able to afford once it was opened. They left the First Baptist Church holding hands and singing, showing not the least sign of fear. They returned almost immediately, some hurt and bleeding, running to avoid the

violence that had awaited them. They were cared for and sent home. They were also asked to return the following day for another demonstration at the same location.

A few of us were left in the front of the church, talking quietly, trying to make some sense of a situation where none existed. There was a commotion in the back and we looked up to see four or five young white guys. No doubt, they had been partly responsible for some of the blood that had been shed earlier; their hostility had apparently only been whetted by the confrontation. They stood now in the doorway, threatening, yet showing some signs of discomfort and wavering bravado, a little unsure that it was cricket to make trouble in a church.

I had been more than slightly shaken by the events of the afternoon, vulnerable to all the feelings of ambivalence and helplessness that were all too familiar to white Southern students of my generation. And now, I sat stunned by the fact that they had actually come into the church, obliterating by their very presence my make-believe lines of us and them. They could easily have been the good old boys from my high school, the ones who had joined the army or gone to work in the local paper mill because that was what everyone expected them to do.

Wanting desperately to put some distance between myself and them, I muttered something about "how dare those thugs come into church." I had

expected at least a murmur of approval. What I got was a stern, but gentle reprimand from John Lewis. He looked me straight in the eye and said, "Don't call them thugs. You have no right to do that. They are human beings just like you and me." For the first time I understood clearly what it meant to accept nonviolence as a way of life.

Later that spring, John became national chairman of SNCC. He was in and out of jail constantly over the next few years, and was beaten badly at the Edmund Pettus bridge in the first attempted Selma to Montgomery march. Yet, I never saw his commitment to nonviolence waver.

For the early civil-rights movement, indigenously Southern, and deeply rooted in the black church, the philosophy of nonviolence and the Christian ethic were totally complementary. In the following interview, John talks about that early Movement, its deep commitment to the philosophy of nonviolence and its integral ties with the Christian faith.

John Lewis is now the Director of the Voter Education Project in Atlanta, an organization that has continued the work of registering black voters in the South. For John it is a continuation of the work he started in the early '60s, a Movement that has progressed from lunch counter sit-ins to the attainment of black political power.

— Sue Thrasher

We didn't hear much discussion about civil rights. It was strictly two separate worlds, one black and one white.

I'm the third child in a family of ten. I grew up on a farm near Troy, Alabama. When I was four years old, we moved from where we worked as tenant farmers to a new farm about a half a mile away. My father had saved enough money in 1944 to buy 102 acres of land for a little more than \$300; they still live there today.

When we got settled at this new house on the swamp, it became my responsibility to raise the chickens. At the same time, I had a growing interest in religion and going to church so I

started playing church with the chickens. This is the truth — I tried to baptize the chickens, and in the process, one of them drowned. I felt very bad about it, but it did not discourage me. I did not lose my great interest in raising chickens, in a sense, my love for them.

I really don't know where my interest in religion came from. It could be my family; we all went to a Baptist church — my mother, my father, most of my first cousins. My grandfather was a deacon. See, in rural Alabama, we only had church once a month. So every third Sunday we would go to a regular church service; that's when the preacher came. When he wasn't there, we went to a Methodist church that was right down the hill below our

house.

During that period, when I had a belief in Santa Claus, one of my uncles had Santa Claus bring me a Bible for Christmas. It had an impact. And somewhere along the way I grew up with the idea of wanting to be a minister. It was well known in the family. One of my aunties would call me preacher.

I have six brothers and a host of first cousins about my same age; we all sort of grew up together. It was like a big fellowship — really an extended family. When we went to Sunday school and church it was the whole family, not just the immediate family.

Religion, the whole idea, played a tremendous role in my family. We all had to learn a verse of the Bible at an



photo by Frank Empson/The Tennessean

John Lewis leads sit-in march in shadow of Tennessee State Capitol.

early age. We *had* to do that. Before meals we had to say grace and then we all had to recite a verse; it's still done even today. On special occasions like Thanksgiving or New Year's or Christmas, my mother or my father or one of us had to lead a prayer.

My interest in the chickens and my interest in the church sort of came together. In addition to helping my family raise the chickens because we needed eggs — it was a necessity, being poor in rural Alabama — the chickens became part of an experiment. I would preach to the chickens each night when they would go into their coop, or what we called the hen house. It was my way of communicating to them. When a chicken would die, we would have a funeral. My younger sisters and brothers and first cousins would be the mourners. We had a chicken cemetery where we buried them and had flowers and everything. I recall a large pecan tree that's still there today; we had a swing and benches under it, and we would gather there to have the services. People would line up like they were in church. The service would dismiss, and we would march off to the cemetery below the house.

The grade school that I attended for the first three years was in the Methodist Church, just below our house. It was a public school, but they used the church building. Next door, there was another one-room school where we went to the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. After the sixth grade, we took a bus to a little town called Banks, Alabama; I took junior high school in Banks. The high school was located in Brundidge, going on down toward Ozark. We passed the white school on our way. We had this old, broken-down bus. Many of the black families in this area owned their own land, and the county actually skipped parts of the road — the area where blacks owned land was not paved. So, some mornings when there was a lot of rain, the bus would run in a ditch and we would get to school late. Or coming from school, the bus would get stuck in the red mud coming up a hill, and we wouldn't get home til late at night. That happened on several occasions.

We were very, very poor, like most

of the black people in that area. And I wanted to go to school. I wanted to get an education. On the other hand, we had to stay out of school to work in the field, to pick cotton or pull corn, or what we called "shake the peanuts." From time to time, I would get up early enough in the morning to hide. On two or three occasions I actually went under the house and waited until I heard the bus coming; then I ran out and got on the bus, so I could make it to school rather than work. My parents used to say I was lazy, because I didn't want to stay out and go to the field. But I saw the need and I wanted to go to school. That was particularly true during my junior high and high school years.

We didn't hear much discussion about civil rights. It was strictly two separate worlds, one black and one white. When we'd go into the town of Troy, we saw signs, "Colored only," "White only." The water fountain in the five and ten store. At the courthouse. Couldn't use the county library. I don't recall hearing anybody speak out against it. The closest thing was to hear the minister say something like, "We are all brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ." Or through the Sunday school lesson, particularly those lessons based on the New Testament, it came through: "In Jesus we are one." That had an effect. That influenced me, no question about it.

In 1955, at the beginning of the Montgomery bus boycott, when I started taking note of what was happening there, we didn't have a subscription to the Montgomery paper. But my grandfather had one, and after he read his paper, we got it two or three days later, so we could keep up with what was going on.

We didn't have electricity during those early years. We didn't get it until much later. We had a large radio, one with these huge batteries, the kind that have to be knocked open with a hammer when they decay. There was a local station in Montgomery, a soul station, black-oriented, but I don't think it was black owned. Every Sunday morning a local minister in Montgomery would preach, and one Sunday I heard Martin Luther King. Now this was before the bus boycott. The name of the sermon was some-

thing like "Paul's Letter to American Christians." He made it very relevant to the particular issues and concerns of the day. That had an impact. I also heard other ministers on the station. Our own minister was very aware and talked about different things.

The bus boycott had a tremendous impact on my life. It just sort of lifted me, gave me a sense of hope. I had a resentment of the dual system, of segregation. Because I saw it. You could clearly see the clean new buses that the white children had that were going to Banks Junior High and the buses that were taking white children to Pike County High School. You see, in the state of Alabama, most of the black high schools were called training schools. So in Brundidge, my high school was called Pike County Training School, and the white school was called Pike County High School. That was true of most of the counties in Alabama at that time. In Montgomery, they were saying something about that dual system.

I remember in '54, the Supreme Court Decision, I felt maybe in a year or so we would have desegregated schools. But nothing happened. Then Montgomery came in 1955. It was like a light. I saw a guy like Martin Luther King, a young, well-educated, Baptist minister, who was really using religion. The boycott lasted more than 300 days; it had a tremendous effect.

During that period, I think it was February of 1956, I preached my first sermon. I must have been about a week short of being sixteen. I told my minister I felt I had been "called" — in the Baptist church, you hear the "call" — and that I wanted to preach a sermon. And I preached. I don't remember the verse, but it was from First Samuel. My subject was a praying mother, the story about Hannah, who wanted a child. I've never forgotten it — the response. I got up, took the text, gave my subject, and delivered a sermon. The response of the congregation was just unbelievable! I was really overcome by it all.

From that time on, I kept preaching at different churches, Methodist and Baptist churches in the rural areas of Pike County. Churches in Troy would also invite me to come to preach. I continued to do that until I graduated from high school in May, 1957. In the meantime I had been ordained by my local church.



photo by Jimmy Ellis/The Tennessean

Bernard Lafayette at lunch counter sit-in, Nashville.

That was my first time to leave Alabama for any period of time ... I knew I'd left something and was going to something new.

My greatest desire at that time was to go to school — to get an education, to study religion and philosophy. Somehow, I knew that this was the direction I must travel in order to become a prepared minister and to be a good religious leader.

I had a fantastic urge to go to Morehouse College. I'd heard of Morehouse, and I knew that Dr. King had gone there. I had my homeroom teacher get a catalogue and an application from Morehouse. But there was no way. I did not know anybody. I didn't have any money. It was just impossible. So this was a dream that was never fulfilled.

My mother had been doing some work for a white lady as a domestic, and one day she brought home a paper. It was something like the *Baptist Home Mission*, a Southern Baptist publica-

tion. In this paper, I saw a little notice for American Baptist Theological Seminary (ABT). It was the first time I had heard anything about the school. I'm not sure if it said for blacks or for Negroes or what, but it said, "no tuition, room and board." And I wrote away. I got an application, filled it out, had my transcript sent up, and got accepted.

So in September, 1957, I went away to Nashville. That was my first time to leave Alabama for any period of time. I was seventeen years old. I'll never forget that trip, getting on that Greyhound bus; it was my first time to travel alone. Nashville was altogether different from rural Pike County, Alabama. It was just another world. I didn't know what to believe. I knew I'd left something and was going to something new.

They had a work program at ABT, and I got a job in the kitchen washing pots and pans. I was paid something like \$45 or \$46, and \$42.50 was taken out for room and board. The school is jointly owned by the Southern Baptist Convention and the National Baptist

Convention. It's primarily the financial burden of the Southern Baptists, a missionary school, in a sense, from the whites to the blacks. It was started in 1924, primarily to keep black Baptists from going to the white seminary in Louisville.

I was pulled into a sort of interracial setting. They had white professors on the staff, and white Baptist ministers from the city would come in for chapel. There would be visiting professors from time to time. It was just an eye-opener to go to Fisk to, say, a Christmas concert, and see the interracial climate. I think my resentment toward the dual system of segregation and racial discrimination — probably the tempo of my resentment — increased at that time. Then traveling from Nashville to Troy and from Troy back to Nashville, we were forced to go to a segregated waiting room, to sit in the back of the bus, and all that.

At that time, Little Rock was going on, September of '57. There were many things happening, and because it was an everyday occurrence, I became

very conscious of it. I spent a great deal of time during this period preaching what some people call the social gospel. I just felt that the ministry and religion should be a little more relevant. Some of my classmates would tease me about that.

Even people like James Bevel would tease me. He was a classmate of mine, a semester ahead of me. And Bernard Lafayette, who was a year behind me. We became very good friends, the three of us.*

Most of the other guys were going to some church out in the country on Sunday mornings to preach because they got a little money. When a minister would invite you to preach, they'd take up a special collection. I didn't do much of that, but Bevel was one of these guys who would always go out and preach somewhere. In the black Baptist church, there's a certain type of minister that is described as a "whooper." Bevel was known as a whooper. It's the tone of voice. Evangelist! Shouting! Some people refer to Aretha Franklin's father C. L. Franklin as a great whooper. These guys can put music in their voice, can turn people on. Bevel went out and did a great deal of this. He was called to a little church in Dayton, Tennessee, and he would invite us to go up, and we

would preach for him. And the people would fix a good meal.

During the summer of 1958, I met Dr. King for the first time. It was in Montgomery. I had an interest in withdrawing from ABT. When I look back on it — and I've thought about it from time to time — it was not just for the sake of desegregating Troy State University. I wanted to be closer to my family, my parents, and my younger brothers and sisters. I could stay at home and go to Troy. I got an application and had my high school transcript and my first year of study at ABT sent there. I didn't hear anything, so I sent a letter to Dr. King, and he invited me to come to Montgomery. I took a bus from Troy to Montgomery one Saturday morning. I met with Fred Gray,† Dr. King, and Rev. Abernathy and told them of my interest in enrolling at Troy State University. They couldn't believe it. They thought I was crazy! But they were interested. They wanted to pursue the whole idea, and we had a good discussion.

I had written the letter to Troy State on my own without talking it over with my parents. I just did it really, didn't contemplate it at all, just sent it

in and applied. Later, Fred Gray sent a registered letter to Troy State saying that we hadn't heard anything. We never got any return correspondence. Then the question came up of whether a suit should be filed against the State Board of Education, the Governor and the University. At that time, it would have involved my parents signing that suit, and they didn't want to do it. So we had to drop the whole idea.

...it was like being involved in a Holy Crusade. I really felt that what we were doing was so in keeping with the Christian faith.

I went back to American Baptist in the fall and continued my studies. And then I started attending mass meetings sponsored by the NAACP. In

*Bernard Lafayette and Jim Bevel, participants in the Nashville sit-ins, later went to work for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

†Fred Gray was the attorney for Mrs. Rosa Parks, whose arrest triggered the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955 and sparked the organization of the Montgomery Improvement Association. Rev. Ralph Abernathy was then the minister of the Ripley Street Baptist Church.



M.L. King, Jr.'s Dexter Avenue Baptist Church near the state capitol in Montgomery

photo by Penny Weaver

Nashville, there was an organization at that time called the Nashville Christian Leadership Council (NCLC), which was a chapter of SCLC. They started sponsoring some meetings on Sunday night at Kelly's* church downtown.

Later, under the direction of Jim Lawson,† a divinity student at Vanderbilt, NCLC started nonviolent workshops every Tuesday night. For a long period of time, I was the only student from ABT that attended. It was like a class; we would go and study the philosophy and discipline of nonviolence. There was very little discussion during the early workshops about segregation or racial discrimination or about the possibility of being involved in a sit-in or freedom ride. It was more or less a discussion about the history of nonviolence. I did sense that it was going to lead to something; we got into socio-drama — “If something happened to you, what would you do?” — the whole question of civil disobedience. And we dealt a great deal with the teachings of Jesus, not just the teaching of Ghandi, but also what Jesus had to say about love and nonviolence and the relationship between individuals, both on a personal and group basis, and even the relationship between nations.

I remember we had the first test sit-in in Nashville at two of the large department stores, Cain-Sloan's and Harvey's. It was an interracial, international really, group of students. We just walked in as a group and occupied the stools in one area and went to the restaurant, I think, at Harvey's. They said that we couldn't be served, and we got up and left, just like that. It was to establish the fact that they refused to serve an interracial group, or refused to serve blacks. We did one in November of '59 and one in December.

During the Christmas holidays, Bernard Lafayette and I took a bus

*Kelly Miller Smith is the pastor of the First Baptist Church in downtown Nashville. He was President of the Nashville Christian Leadership Council (NCLC), an affiliate of the SCLC in the early '60s.

†Jim Lawson gained national prominence in 1959 when he was expelled from Vanderbilt Divinity School for leading non-violent training workshops. He later became the pastor of Centenary Methodist Church in Memphis, Tennessee, and played an active role in the 1968 Memphis garbage workers' strike where King was shot.



photo by Bill Preston/The Tennessean

home from Nashville. Bernard lives in Tampa, so he took a bus as far as Troy with me. I'll never forget it! We got on the bus in Nashville and got near the front. The driver told us we had to move and we refused. He just rammed his seat back, so we were in the front seat right behind the driver all the way and nothing happened. I think when we got to Birmingham, we decided to move. It was a testing period. I don't know why we did it; it was not part of a plan or anything like that.

When we got back after the holidays, we started attending the non-violent workshops again. At that time, Bernard started attending on a regular basis. On February first, after the sit-ins in Greensboro, Jim Lawson received a call from the campus minister for one of the black colleges in North Carolina. He said, “What can the students in Nashville do to support the students in North Carolina?” Jim

just passed the information on.

That call didn't really come to us in a vacuum; we were already involved in a workshop and preparing eventually for a similar action. So, in a matter of days, we called a mass meeting of students on Fisk University campus, and about 500 students showed up. That's when we outlined the plan. It must have been a Monday night. We said on this Tuesday, or that Thursday — we tried to pick T-days since most of the students had light classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays — we would meet at Kelly's church, First Baptist downtown and we would sit-in. We told them that we'd been going to the nonviolent workshop and went through it with them. The people who had been attending the workshops were to be the leaders, the spokesmen in charge of the different groups. We went down and sat in at Woolworth's and Kresge's and other 5-and-10s and drugstores like Walgreen's that had

lunch counters. It was a quiet day for the most part. That went on for a period of time.

Sometimes we'd sit for two or three hours. We'd have our books and we'd just sit quietly, doing our homework. Someone might walk up and hit us or spit on us or do something, but it was very quiet. The Movement during that period, in my estimation, was the finest example, if you want to refer to it, of Christian love. It was highly disciplined. When I look back on that particular period in Nashville, the discipline, the dedication, and the commitment to nonviolence was unbelievable.

Two or three times a week we would go and sit in. And then one particular day – it must have been Leap Year, because I think it was February 29, 1960, a Saturday morning. We met in Kelly's church, and Will Campbell* came to the meeting to tell us he had received information that the police officials would have us arrested and would let all type of violence occur. Kelly came to the church and warned there would be violence. But we said we had to go. We were afraid, but we felt that we had to bear witness. So Jim Lawson and some of the others were very sympathetic and felt that if we wanted to go that we should.

It was my responsibility to print some rules, some "do's and don'ts," what people were supposed to do and what they were not supposed to do: sit up straight, don't look back, if someone hits you, smile, things like that. I got some paper . . . you see, I had worked for two years in the kitchen at ABT; my last two years I worked as a janitor cleaning the Administration building so I had access to office supplies. We got a secretary to type it and we used a mimeograph machine. Several of us engaged in a conspiracy to get the paper and get the rules distributed. At the end it said something like, "Remember the teachings of Jesus Christ, Ghandi, and Martin Luther King: May God be with you." We gave them to all those people that Saturday morning.

Woolworth's was where the first violence occurred. A young student at Fisk, Maxine Walker, and an ex-

change student named Paul LePrad were sitting at the counter at Woolworth's. This young white man came up and hit Paul and knocked him down and hit the young lady. Then all type of violence started. Pulling people, pushing people over the counter, throwing things, grinding out cigarettes on people, pouring ketchup in their hair, that type of thing. Then the cops moved in and started arresting people.

That was my first time, the first time for most of us, to be arrested. I just felt . . . that it was like being involved in a Holy Crusade. I really felt that what we were doing was so in keeping with the Christian faith. You know, we didn't welcome arrest. We didn't want to go to jail. But it became . . . a moving spirit. Something just sort of came over us and consumed us. And we started singing "We Shall Overcome," and later, while we were in jail we started singing "Paul and Silas, bound in jail, had no money for their bail . . ." It became a religious ceremony that took place in jail. I remember that very, very well, that first arrest.

Even after we were taken to jail, there was a spirit there, something you witness, I guess, during a Southern Baptist revival. People talk about being born again or their faith being renewed. I think our faith was renewed. Jail in a sense became the way toward conversion, was the act of baptism, was the process of baptism.

Then hundreds of students heard about the arrest. We all went to jail and hundreds of others came downtown and sat in. At the end of the day, they had arrested 98 people. During that Saturday night, lawyers and professors and the president of Fisk and other schools came down to try to get us out of jail, but we refused. We said that we would stay in jail, that we felt we hadn't committed any wrong. They wanted to put up the bond. It was not a tremendous amount per person, but altogether it would have been up to several thousand dollars. Finally late that night or early that Sunday morning, the judge made a decision to let us out in the custody of the president of Fisk. And we all came out.

We went to trial the following Monday. The judge wanted the trials separately, but the lawyers objected. They wanted us tried as a group. They tried one case, and the guy was fined fifty dollars or thirty days in jail. At that time, we made a conscious decision that we wouldn't pay the fine, that we would go to jail and serve our term. So we all went back to jail. The next day, Jim Bevel took a group of around 60 to the Trailways Bus Station and they all got arrested. So that was more people in jail. That process kept going on for some time.

I think the older ministers in the community – C. T. Vivian, Metz Rollins,* and Kelly Miller Smith, saw themselves in an advisory role.



Nashville Sit-in Demonstration, 1960

*Will Campbell was then working with the National Council of Churches in Nashville.

They were leaders of the NCLC in charge of setting up the mass meetings. If we needed something, if there were funds needed to pay a fine or get someone out of jail, we could get money from them. For a place, we used Kelly's church and Rev. Alexander Anderson's church,† Clark Memorial. They also had contacts. When we needed cars, Kelly would call some of his members to have their car at Fisk or Tennessee State in time to pick up students and bring them to his church. We depended on them for support. They were a resource.

We also got support from the United Church Women and the lady who directed the Tennessee Council on Human Relations, Katherine Jones. A group from the United Church Women would always be on the scene. A lot of times when we were involved in a demonstration in the city, we didn't know that in the store or in the picket line, there were observers from the United Church Women. But they were there, and they

*C. T. Vivian was minister of a local church in Nashville and active in the Nashville Christian Leadership Council. He later joined the staff of the SCLC. J. Metz Rollins was a staff member of the Division of Race and Society for the Presbyterian Church, and advisor to the local SNCC chapter.

†Rev. Alexander Anderson was active in the Nashville Christian Leadership Council.

were supportive. They came to the courtroom during the trial. They wrote letters and met with the merchants to try to get them to desegregate.

I took a seat in the very front behind the driver....For almost four years I had traveled that way from Montgomery to Birmingham. This time we didn't see anyone.

I once described the early civil rights movement as a religious phenomenon. And I still believe that. I think in order for people to do what they did, and to go into places where it was like going into hell fire, you needed something to go on. It was like guerrilla warfare in some communities, some of the things people did. And I'm not just talking about the students, but the community people, indigenous people. It had to be based on some strong conviction, or, I think, religious conviction.

I remember on the Freedom Rides . . . personally, I thought it was the end. It was like death; you know, death itself might have been a welcome pleasure. Just to see and witness the type of violence . . . the people that were identified with us

were just acting on that strong, abiding element of faith.

In Birmingham, we stayed in the bus station all night with a mob, the Klan, on the outside. On the day we arrived, Bull Connor literally took us off the bus and put us in protective custody in the Birmingham City Jail. We were in the jail Wednesday night, all day Thursday and Thursday night. On Friday morning, around one o'clock he took us out of jail and took us back to the Alabama - Tennessee state line and dropped us off. There were seven of us, an all-black group. He dropped us off and said, "You can make it back to Nashville, there's a bus station around here somewhere." That's what he said. And just left us there! I have never been so frightened in my life.

We located a house where an old black family lived. They must have been in their seventies. We told them who we were and they let us in. They'd heard about the Freedom Rides and they were frightened. They didn't want to do it, but they let us in and we stayed there. The old man got in his old pick-up truck when the stores opened and went and got some food. You see, we had been on a hunger strike and hadn't had anything to eat. He went to two or three different places and got bologna, bread and viennas — all that sort of junk food, and milk and stuff. And we ate.

We talked to Diane Nash* in Nashville, and she said that "other packages had been shipped by other means," meaning that students had left Nashville on the way to Birmingham to join the Freedom Ride by private car and by train. We just assumed the telephone lines were always tapped. She sent a car to pick us up, and we returned to Birmingham and went straight to Rev. Shuttlesworth's† home to meet the new people. More students from Fisk, ABT, and Tennessee State had joined the ride as well as two white students from Peabody. The total number was about 21.

*Diane Nash was one of the most prominent leaders of the Nashville sit-in movement. She later married Jim Bevel and worked on the staff of the SCLC.

†Rev. J. Fred Shuttlesworth, a Birmingham minister, was active in the SCLC, and president for many years of the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF).



photo by Jimmy Holt

At 5:30 we tried to get a bus from Birmingham to Montgomery, and — I'll never forget it — this bus driver said, "I only have one life to give, and I'm not going to give it to CORE or the NAACP." This was after the burning of the bus at Anniston and after the beating of the CORE riders on Mother's Day. So we stayed in the bus station. At 8:30 another bus was supposed to leave, and that bus wouldn't go either. We just stayed there all that night. Early the next morning Herb Kaplow, then a reporter for NBC, who's now with ABC, came to tell us he understood Bobby Kennedy had been talking with the Greyhound people and apparently we would be able to get a bus later. So we got on the bus about 8:30 Saturday morning. The arrangement that Kennedy had made was that every fifteen miles or so there would be a state trooper on the highway and a plane would fly over the bus, to take us into Montgomery. An official of Greyhound was supposed to be on the bus also, but I don't actually recall that there was one.

I took a seat in the very front behind the driver along with Jim Zwerg.* On the way to Montgomery we saw no sign of the state trooper cars or the plane. It was a strange feeling. For almost four years I had traveled that way from Montgomery to Birmingham. This time, we didn't see anyone. It was the eeriest feeling of my life. When we reached Montgomery, we didn't even see anyone outside the bus station. We started stepping off, and the media people began gathering around. Then just out of the blue, hundreds of people started to converge on the bus station. They started beating the camera people; they literally beat them down. I remember one guy took a huge camera away from a photographer and knocked him down with it.

People started running in different directions. The two white female students tried to get in a cab, and the black driver told them he couldn't take white people and just drove off. They just started running down the street, and John Seigenthaler got between them and the mob. Another part of the mob turned on us, mostly black fellows. We had no choice but to

just stand there. I was hit over the head with a crate, one of these wooden soda crates. The last thing I remember was the Attorney General of Alabama, serving me with an injunction prohibiting interracial groups from using public transportation in the state of Alabama while I was still lying on the ground. Yes, I was afraid. I was afraid.

The underlying philosophy was the whole idea of redemptive suffering — suffering that in itself might redeem the larger society.

Jim Zwerg was one of the most committed people, and I definitely believe it was not out of any social, "do-good" kind of feeling. It was out of his deep religious conviction. There were others who felt the same; people just felt something was wrong. You know during the workshops in Nashville we never thought or heard that much about what would happen to us personally or individually. And we never really directed our feelings of hostility toward the opposition. I think most of the people that came through those early days saw the opposition and saw ourselves, really, the participants in the Movement, as victims of the system. And we wanted to change the system.

The underlying philosophy was the whole idea of redemptive suffering — suffering that in itself might help to redeem the larger society. We talked in terms of our goal, our dream, being the beloved community, the open society, the society that is at peace with itself, where you forget about race and color and see people as human beings. We dealt a great deal with the question of the means and ends. If we wanted to create the beloved community, then the methods must be those of love and peace. So somehow the end must be caught up in the means. And I think people understood that.

In the black church, ministers have a tendency to compare the plight of black people with the children of Israel. So, I think we saw ourselves as being caught up in some type of holy crusade, with the music and the mass meetings, with nothing on our side but

a dream and just daring faith. . . . I tell you the truth, I really felt that I was part of a crusade. There was something righteous about it.

I really felt that the people who were in the Movement — and this may be short-sighted and biased on my part — were the only truly integrated society and, in a sense, the only true church in America. Because you had a community of believers, people who *really believed*. They were committed to a faith.

I was wrong, I think, to feel that way, because you shouldn't become so definitive as to believe that you have an edge on the truth. I think you have to stay open. But, you know, in the process of growing and developing, people go through different experiences.

The Movement — its strange to say this in 1976 — but the Movement later became much more secular. The people that made up the leadership of the Southern sit-in movement during 1960 were ministerial students, or someone who came from a strong religious background. SCLC was founded primarily by ministers in the basement of Ebenezer Baptist Church.

The change toward secularization could have something to do with the Movement becoming an "in thing." It became glamorized. It was no longer a group of disciplined students sitting down in Nashville, or a group of people traveling into the heart of Mississippi on the Freedom Rides. I think the media had something to do with it; the publicity started attracting many different types of people.

I think the Movement lost something because during the '60s, it affirmed for us, and instilled in us, a sense of hope that change was possible. The whole idea of forgiving — I think we lost some of that. In 1961, we were not just using the non-violent principle as a tactic; it became a philosophy, a way of life. It was not just the way we treated each other, and not just for public demonstrations. It became a way. We have lost some of that "soul" — soul in the way that black people refer to soul — the meaning, the heart, the experiencing.

I think that a great deal had to do with the influx of people from the North, black and white, who had very

*Jim Zwerg was an exchange student at Fisk. When the Freedom Riders reached Montgomery, he was badly beaten and left lying in the street.



photo by Archie Allen

John Lewis discusses voter registration with Louisiana sugar cane workers

little relationship, or any real kinship to religious foundations, or to any Southern experience. Most of the people from the South, even those that were not totally committed for religious reasons, had a deep appreciation for the role of religion and the black church. The people who came down, particularly in late '63 and '64, just didn't have any appreciation for it.

There is something very special and very peculiar about the South itself; then there is also something very special and peculiar about black religious life. The church is a special place in a small town or rural community. For a lot of people in the urban centers, it is the heart of the community. It's the only place where people can go sometimes for fellowship and worship with their friends and neighbors. But more than that, it's a place where people can come together and sort of lay everything else aside — maybe it is the *only* place. And they can identify with it, and they can appreciate it.

One reason I think the Movement itself was so successful — and Dr. King as leader, as a symbol — in mobilizing so many people was that it built on strong and solid religious ground. In a sense Dr. King used the black church, and the emotionalism within the black church, as an instrument to move people toward their own freedom. People believed there must be something right about the Movement when its mass meetings were held in the church.

**We have lost that sense of ethic,
that sense of morality — that
you do something because
it is right.**

I still consider myself a very hopeful and optimistic person in spite of all the bad things that happened since 1960. . . the assassinations. Sometimes I look back on all those funerals that I went to, people that I knew and loved, the war and all, but I'm still hopeful. You know, Dr. King used to say when you lose hope, it is like being dead. You have to have that element of faith and hope; you have to be based and grounded in something.

I do not hide or try to get away from the fact that I am a licensed, ordained Baptist minister; I am a minister. But on the other hand, I don't see myself going to a pulpit every Sunday morning and preaching; I just don't see that as my role. I feel I can make a greater contribution and do the greatest good by doing what I am doing now. When I go out and tell people to register and vote, I tell people that they should have some control over their lives, that they should organize if they want to get a sewage system, or if they want to get food stamps or want to do something about welfare. Or if they think this man is doing them wrong, they should come together and get someone else.

I see what I am doing now as a continuation of the early Movement, and based on the same principles. One of the things I say to black elected officials and white elected officials is that

what we need to do from top to bottom in this country is to inject a sense of morality into a viable politics. I think that is what is missing in the political arena and to some degree, I guess, in what is remaining of the Movement. We have lost that sense of ethic, that sense of morality — that you do something because it is right.

You know, I stopped going to church for a while; I did. Not out of . . . I don't know, I just stopped going for quite a few years. But these days I find myself going back.

I think the churches today are still relevant; I think there is a need for the institution. On the other hand, I think the church, black and white, is far, far behind. The leadership of the church is out of step. I do feel that in this country, particularly in the urban centers, if we continue to get property and build these fantastic buildings, that the day may well come when the next struggle will not be directed toward the secular institutions, but toward the church.

And the church may well deserve that. You have churches with a great deal of wealth; individual churches and religious bodies that own tremendous amounts of land and resources when all around them there is poverty and hunger. The churches are far, far behind.

I think the white church and the black church will remain apart for years to come. The leadership of the black church is perhaps much more socially conscious, much more politi-



photo by Joe Holloway

cal, much more involved in the life of the community. They really don't separate the condition around them from the church; for the most part, that is an exception. I think the black church could do more, but I think the black church is much farther down the road than the white church. Black ministers have been leaders; they have been taking the initiative, whether it is in politics, or trying to make the economic conditions better. When you

look around the South, at places like Mississippi and south Georgia, and the number of black churches that were bombed and burned down during the early '60s, it is a testimonial. Something was happening there.

In another sense, particularly in the black Baptist church, I think religion is much more personal. It dominates the lives of people. The whole concept of Jesus, as a brother or king, is much more personal. Whether people are

working in the kitchen, or the field or whatever, religion takes on a personal quality.

I don't see a great marriage anytime in the near future between the white church and the black church. You know people say eleven o'clock on Sunday morning is the most segregated hour of the week, and it still is. I think that will be true for years and years to come.

Yeh. It's strange. The history of it is really strange.

THE CALL

by Will Campbell

Thad Garner was, I suppose, the most profane man I have ever met. And, in a way, he was also the most profound. Whatever he was, he made a deep impression on me at the time. He was a preacher down the road from where I was a preacher. He had been there for a long time when I got there and he sort of took me under his wing.

Both of us were Southern Baptist preachers. When we first met it seemed easy for me to think of him as a Southern Baptist preacher. He was older, had a much larger church, held lots of revival or protracted meetings, was popular with the young people, played a small harmonica in his nose while playing a larger one in his mouth, played golf, was an ardent hunter and Chaplain of the Volunteer Fire Department, had been a professional boxer, had been to the Holy Land, attended the Baptist Seminary in Louisville, spent two years at Yale, and had recently hosted the state annual meeting of the WTCU.

I did not do any of those things and was just out of a liberal Yankee divinity school. Not only was I younger than Thad, I wore white buck shoes and a tweed cap—even in hot Louisiana summers—smoked a calabash pipe, committed sermons to manuscript, had never held a revival, conducted a building campaign, or spoken to a Sweetheart banquet. I had not been to the seminary in Louisville, a sort of union card in those days, and did not even have a map of the Holy Land.

Then I discovered that Thad had once worn white bucks and a tweed cap, still smoked a pipe, conducted revival meetings for money, had gone to the Holy Land only because his congregation had lifted a surprise love offering for that purpose, and had bought in the Tel Aviv Airport the set of color slides he brought back to show to youth groups around the state. He also disliked teenagers, drank a lot of wine—though he only had one kidney and couldn't handle it very well—and cussed a lot.

Learning these things made it easy for me to think of myself as a Southern Baptist preacher and increasingly difficult to think of Thad as one. I believed some rather definite things about Jesus

and the Faith while Thad would not admit to believing anything. Yet, somehow, I never got the feeling that I was in the presence of a fraudulent or deceitful person. He did not remind me of Elmer Gantry. Marjoe was barely born at the time and he wouldn't have come to mind anyway. I was totally fascinated; I had simply not met anyone quite like this before.

Sometimes I would go hunting or fishing with him. I was not really a hunter but he taught me how to shoot and how to avoid copperheads and quicksand, taking full advantage of the opportunity to compare both those enemies to various aspects of the pastorate.

On one occasion we were about to conclude an all day, totally unproductive bird hunt. The dogs had pointed at everything from rabbits to starlings but not one quail had been flushed. Thad had excused them by saying the weather was too dry, and he had maligned them as stupid, useless mutts. He had pampered and cajoled them, and had dragged one of them by the tail across a barbed wire fence as punishment for pointing a brown thrasher. Finally the three of them were frozen in a hard-point position at what was sure to be the biggest covey of quail in the parish. At least that was what Thad allowed. And when the flush signal was given, that proved to be the case. Even when I am expecting it, even when I have seen the movement of the little critters through the underbrush, I am always startled by the sudden fluttering of quail wings, lifting their fat bellies like giant bumble bees from the earth and away from their pursuer. Consequently, I seldom got a shot before they were well out of range. This time Thad got off three quick shots, each BOOM! blending with and echoing the last. As his last

Will Campbell is a preacher from Amite County, Mississippi. He now lives in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee where he is the Director of the Committee of Southern Churchmen, publishers of Katallagate, a quarterly journal of religion. He is the author of Race and Renewal of the Church, and co-author with James Holloway of Up to Our Steeples in Politics. This selection is taken from his forthcoming book Brother to a Dragon Fly.

shot was dying away I jerked the trigger and waited for the jolt against my shoulder and the ringing in my ears. But nothing happened. The thing was not even loaded. Despite the three volleys in such rapid succession nothing lay dead for the dogs to retrieve. Thad had missed as surely as I had with an empty gun. (Or "piece", as he liked to call any weapon.) Though I had not led what one would call a sheltered existence during the past several years and my own language did not always measure up to garden-party standards, I was not familiar with some of the words my friend could spit out. For a full sixty seconds the big Louisiana field was filled with his expletives. At the dogs, at the birds, at me, at the gun, at the manufacturer of the shells, at the Almighty—all

were profaned and reviled because of this misfortune. When he had quieted down, he sank backward onto an eroded levee. I sat on the ground not far away. It was an occasion for a question I had wanted to ask him for some time.

"Thad, why did you ever decide to be a Baptist preacher?" He looked puzzled and not just a little hurt. He pondered my question for a long time, sighting and squinting down the barrel of his shotgun. Finally he looked me straight in the eye and answered my question: "Cause I was *called*, you goddam fool!"

And who's to say? I have met a lot of preachers since then. But none of them could preach with such assuring certainty, claim to believe so little, or be as convinced that he was indeed *called* to do exactly what he was doing.

Thad had a lot of notches on his Bible. He called it "drawing the net," or "gettin' em ready for the waters." He made fun of every organization in the church but promoted and organized as if his very life depended upon their success. (And maybe it did.) When I called him a hypocrite for making the rounds of country churches, preaching his fundamentalist brand of religion because he knew what would sell, he countered that I was the real hypocrite because if I really believed all that I said I believed about Jesus and the Gospel I would not be working for one of those rich edifices masquerading as the house of the Lord.

I am not so sure now that I was right about Thad. But I am very sure now that he was right about me. When I castigated him for taking money to preach something he didn't believe, his answer was that a man had to make a living for his family.

But he always added something else. "Don't watch me in the church house, boy. Watch me on the street." I guess that he was telling me that his Sunday antics were a tent-making operation, and had nothing to do with his professed vocation, his call. And I guess he was telling me that if we really believed in grace then the chief sinner might well be the preacher. And apparently St. Paul would have concurred. And whether he was telling me or not, I was learning from him that the Gospel does not depend for its efficacy upon the personal habits of the preacher.

Privately, Thad called himself his congregation's mascot. "They feed me well. They even love me. They pat me on the head and brag about me. They show me off before the other teams. There's only one thing wrong with being a mascot. Just one little inconvenience. They keep you on a leash. Otherwise, it's a great life."

There was one term that always sent him into a rage quicker than any other. A pet name for the



photo courtesy of Baptist Home Mission Board

minister who was liked and approved was "the little preacher." "We just love our little preacher," he would say mockingly. "We have the cutest little preacher." He had a comic routine about the term which began with a guy who was six feet four, weighed nearly three hundred pounds, was a weight lifter in the Olympics, and still his congregation called him "our little preacher." The routine ended with Mary Magdalene running up to old man Zebedee after the crucifixion exclaiming, "Did Jimmy tell you what they've done to our little preacher?" And sometimes he would launch into a discourse about a college somewhere that had a fine registered dog for a mascot. A neighboring school stole him one night, bred him to a mongrel bitch, kept him until the puppies were born and then returned him to the campus with his mate and whelps. He never explained his story, but the way he would shrug and wink his eye the listener was led to believe that it meant that even a mascot can't be controlled absolutely, that once in awhile the Lord will steal him away, get him involved with what the world calls common and use him to mess up their pretty system.

Anyway, after a time I learned to watch him on the streets and not in the pulpit.

Once it was a bond issue before the voters of Granny White to build a swimming pool for the children. Since this was long before civil rights days, the matter of whose children would get to use the pool and whose would not never came up. Nor would Thad bring it up. At least not directly. "I operate like a rubber band," he liked to say. "I stretch things just so far and when it's about to break, I let it snap back in place. Only every time I stretch it, it's a little weaker." Thad was, of course, very active in the Lion's Club International, the most influential civic club in Granny White. Clown that he was, it was only natural that he should hold the office of Taitwister. That's the one who cuts off ten dollar neckties of a member who comes in late, makes a shy guy sing a solo for not joining in Club sing-songs, and playful little things like that.

On this day the Club was discussing whether or not to make an all-out effort on behalf of the bond issue for the swimming pool. The sentiment was strongly in favor of doing so. Most everybody had said his piece. Then Brother Thad takes the floor, tells a few stories — like the one about the airline stewardess on a transoceanic flight who kept *insisting* that he have a drink, not knowing that he was of the cloth. "In complete disgust and annoyance I said, 'Lady, I'm a dry alcoholic. If I had one little drink I would rip this whole airplane apart and send it diving into the sea if you wouldn't

*Thad called himself
his congregation's mascot....*

*"They pat me on the head
and brag about me. They show
me off before the other teams."*

give me every drop on board.'" (This was very funny to the Club because just the thought of anyone pulling a social error like offering a Baptist preacher a drink was hilarious.)

And I believe that was the occasion when he told about the "ole colored preacher" who went to a church for a trial sermon and at the dinner table of the head deacon passed his glass instead of his plate when the good sister asked if he wanted more corn. And things like that.

Then the last throat was cleared and the last chortle faded because everyone knew that Brother Garner had some little something serious he wanted to say. "Brethren," he said, "I want us to have a swimming pool. I have two little boys as all of you know and they want a swimming pool. And they asked me at the breakfast table just this morning if I was going to vote to have one. And I told them what I'm fixing to tell you. 'I just can't vote for water for my own children to swim in when there are children in this town who don't have water to drink.'" And he sat down.

Now there were a few more throats cleared and the president fondled his gavel. But no one wanted to get into a discussion of that. Everybody present knew that two years earlier a bond issue had been defeated which would have extended water lines into a part of the black community where dozens of families still got water by hand from a single hand-dug well.

Going back to the house I chided him about the propriety of telling "ole colored preacher" jokes. "That's the trouble with you shithook liberals, Willie. You had rather see a hundred children die of dehydration than have the sound of nigger heard from your lips. Whether I say nigger don't matter a damn. If one of those young'uns die of thirst, he ain't nothing but one more dead nigger, whether I say the word or not, or whether I go to hell for saying it or not. But if he lives to get grown maybe he can lead his people out of this godawful Egypt and there won't be no more niggers." I sort of just changed the subject to something else.

On another occasion it was a papermill strike in a small town more than a hundred miles away. The president of the company, who lived in Jacksonville,



photo by Betty Ann Shelfer

Florida, said that weekends were the only time he could be present for negotiation sessions. When the union said they would be glad to go to the table on weekends, the president said he couldn't come on Sunday either because he had to teach his Sunday School class. This had made the local press and for me it seemed a perfect springboard for a Labor Day sermon — straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel, whited sepulchres, and all that. But Thad took another approach. There had been a lot of violence accompanying the lengthy strike. Almost every night a gas line leading to the plant would be dynamited far out in the swamps. The union version was that armadillos were stealing dynamite in the mill, burrowing under the fence and storing it under the gas pipes and accidentally igniting it with their teeth. Management did not quite buy that explanation. On the same Sunday I was preaching my Matthew 23 sermon, Thad mounted his pulpit and delivered a stinging indictment against violence. And it was against every form of violence — war (we weren't in one at the time), racial floggings, fist fights between children (always throw something in for the kids), cock fights (there hadn't been one within a hundred miles of Granny White for thirty years) and of course, destruction of private property. All the rest

was lagniappe, a redundancy heard by no one. Everyone knew that the sermon was directed at union violence. And everyone approved.

Next morning he called to compare notes. After I accused him again of hypocrisy, dishonesty and moral inconsistency, he asked me if I wanted to go down to Oakville with him that night, the scene of the strike. Of course I did.

There was a giant Labor Day rally of all the strikers and their families. The country high school auditorium was filled beyond capacity. Thad was introduced as a courageous prophet, long known as a fearless friend of organized labor, his body bearing the scars of battle. As I wondered about the scars, he proceeded to preach a sermon the delivery of which would have made Billy Sunday blush with envy. And the words he spoke would have convinced Diogenes to blow out his lamp. Taking his text from Exodus 14, over and over again he pounded home his point, comparing Moses' looking back to see the Egyptians lying dead on the seashore to contemporary labor leaders' looking back at the sinister mill owners, lying rotting on a sea of decadence and injustice. Pharaoh became Robert Taft, the Israelites were the rank and file of working people, and Moses was the president of the State Labor Council. He was so convincing

that it was reported by one of the organizers that two company "spies" sent from the scab ranks had expressed keen interest in joining the union. At the end of his homiletical excursion, he exorcised the demons from the ranks of management, then lapsed into a long and pious prayer that God forgive them all for they did not know what they did.

When we left neither of us spoke for twenty miles. He insisted that I drive while he sat on the back seat of his Chrysler blowing gales of smoke over my shoulder from a cigar he had fished from a glass container looking like a test tube. "Willie," he bellowed above the noise of the motor, "Do you know what the church of Jesus Christ is?" I said I sort of thought I did. "Well, I'm going to tell you anyway. The Church is one cat in one ditch and one nobody-of-a-son-of-a-bitch trying to pull him out." When I acknowledged that I had no serious disagreement with that, he continued.

"Yesterday was to pay the rent for tonight. If your integrity was giving you trouble, well then maybe your sermon did something for it. But I don't have any trouble with my integrity 'cause I ain't got none. And yours is probably an idol. I didn't push anybody in the ditch with my little sermonette yesterday. And I didn't pull anybody out. Everybody broke even. But tonight!!"

He slapped the back of the seat with one hand and knocked my cap into the windshield with the other. "But tonight!! Man, the ditch was full." By now he was screaming at the top of his voice. "The ditch was full! And I sat 'em on *my* ass and took them to town!" He waited for me to respond. When I didn't he started again, this time in a much lower and slower tone. "And if you don't believe it was *my* ass, then just wait til my people find out I was down there and you'll see whose ass it's going to be." He began to laugh and make funny noises in his throat, beating both knees with both his fists until it seemed one or the other would break. Stopping this, he reached in his pocket and dug out a little bottle of pills, swallowed two of them dry. Then he pulled a bottle of Mogen David wine from under the seat, took several long and noisy gulps, finally gargling his throat with the last swallow. Feigning drunkenness he slurred, "Man, if I didn't have milltowns and Mogen David to prop up Jesus Christ, I never would make it."

Again there were miles of silence. He was down. Finally he reached over the seat into the glove compartment for his harmonicas, the tiny one for his nostril and the larger chromatic one to be played in the usual way. Beginning with "Amazing Grace," he played us on into Granny White, stopping only once to say, "Yea, Wee Willie, the Church is one cat in one ditch, and one nobody-of-a-son-of-a-bitch to pull him out."

Despite his seemingly simplistic definition of the

Church, the study of church history was an obsession with him. He knew the dates and outcome of every council from the beginning, the issues of every controversy, the reasons for every split, the ground of every new denomination. And sometimes he would speak nostalgically and even sympathetically of "the old whore." And on occasion he would vow to restore her to some imagined day of purity and glory. But generally his ambivalence listed in the direction of hostility and revenge.

He came one day with a grandiose scheme for church renewal. It was complete with charts, budget, timetables, and a written foundation proposal. "Willie, what's the biggest wasted manpower resource in the world?" I said I didn't know. "Well, I'm going to tell you. The greatest wasted manpower resource in the world is preachers." He explained at some length that as a professional group we were better educated, more sensitive to human needs, had more insights into what the world is all about, were better organizers, and a lot of other things I don't remember that we were supposed to be.

"And the world thinks we are a bunch of eunuchs. They tried to make us eunuchs. But they didn't pull it off. At least not with most of us. We have something to offer this world, but we'll never be able to do it as long as we're in this box. Now, here's what I'm gonna do."

And then he outlined the most detailed scheme of how he was going to renew the Church and at the same time make it possible for preachers to be ministers to the world. First he would hire a staff which for two years would go to industry, agencies, business, and everybody who employed people. He would convince them that the biggest single wasted manpower resource was waiting at their doorsteps. Then he would get a commitment from them as to how many they would hire and in what capacity and at what starting salary. All this would be filed away until he had seventy-five thousand jobs available for preachers. All this would be done in secret.

When that job was complete he would hold a press conference with the announcement that he had the biggest religious story since Wittenburg. "It'll get the coverage. Don't worry about that. Religion is big news in this country. Christianity ain't! But religion is. And as soon as the news hits that any preacher who wants out of the cage has a job waiting for him, security for his family, and a chance to really *be* the Church, man! They'll jump out like martins to their gourds. I'll empty two-thirds of the pulpits in a month."

"And then what, Thad?"

"And then what? You stupid fool! Then we'll have some ministers abroad in the land. Folks making a living because they have to and doing

what they are called to do because they want to. And then those dead souls who have been sitting in those rich pews for fifty years with their mascots minding their altar fires and tea parties will have to start asking some questions. Then you'll see some church renewal. Then you'll hear some folks singing the Psalms for the first time in their lives. Then you'll see some idiot church bureaucrats from Nashville and Chicago and Atlanta and New York and wherever they hang their fat hats beating their ecclesiastical swords into plowshares if they have any degree of humanity left in their bones — which most of them don't — and then you'll see Jesus Christ get a fair shake in this world for the first time in a long while. That's 'and then what!'"

There was the usual long silence when one of us came out with something the other thought too far out to merit discussion. And as usual, it was he who broke it.

*"There's only one thing
wrong with being a mascot.
Just one little inconvenience.
They keep you on a leash."*

"Man, it's got the Armageddon idea beat all to hell." And then another long period with only the sound of his foot and mine tapping out a brotherly cadence upon the ground.

"Naw, Wee Willie, you're right. Yea, you're right. It wouldn't work. As long as they're rich, they'll get the technicians. It's just too good a deal for a fellow to give up. Aw, we'd empty some pulpits. But they would see it as the providence of God, getting rid of the uncommitted riff-raff. They would turn the whole damn thing right around on us and rip out our emeralds. Yea, *they* would call it church renewal — getting rid of all the false prophets in their midst. Man, ain't it a bitch!" I allowed as how it was and we went on to something else. But after awhile he came back to it. But not for long. "You know, Wee Willie, I don't hate anybody. 'Cause the Bible says it's a sin to hate. But there are some folks I hope dies of cancer of the tonsils." Thad had a way of putting things.

It wasn't long after that that he showed up at the door one morning too early for anybody to be stirring. In fact, it wasn't even four o'clock. Sometimes he would do that if he wanted to harangue

me into going hunting with him. But it was clear that he wasn't dressed for hunting. It was Monday morning and he still had on his preaching suit, a garment of which he always divested himself as soon as he reached the parsonage. There was a sort of confused look in his eyes, and when I beckoned him inside he didn't move. Usually he walked in without even a knock. He was whimpering softly, like a small baby coming off a long crying trip. I was so baffled and frightened that I joined him outside in my underwear, not even noticing the cold. As I did he turned and buried his face in the crook of his arm, leaning forward into a giant, sweet gum tree. His whimpering became loud, uncontrollable sobs. I had never seen him cry before and didn't know what to do. (Women can cry together but men have not yet attained that freedom.) I slipped my arm around his waist and he turned quickly around, my shoulder replacing the tree. He kept muttering something I couldn't understand and his tears were not quick in stopping. His body shook and trembled. But then suddenly he stopped, placed one thumb and then the other against each nostril and blew his nose, kicked the ground lightly over the droppings. We went inside.

Now he was well composed, steady and seemingly calm. "Willie, I'm quitting." "Quitting what?" "Quitting it all. I'm tired. I'm tired of lying. I'm tired of being a whore. I just want to be a human being. I'm tired, Brother. And I'm sick."

The courses in Pastoral Psychology, Counseling and all that had not been among my best or my favorites. But it took no Menninger to know that he was, for a fact, sick. He slumped down in a big arm chair and began to roll out a self-analysis — the things one new to the couch might think it necessary to blurt out in his first session. Conversion at an early age, growing up in a round of revival meetings, church camps, "surrendering to preach" (he always said when one *decided* to preach under a modern-day steeple, he was for a fact surrendering) at the age of twelve under the urging of a fast-talking, high-powered return missionary, life with father, life with mother, life with brother and no sisters — all the things I suppose one talks about to his therapist. But I was not a therapist. I had no way of evaluating what he was saying, only the good sense to bring him coffee.

It was a long day. There was the secret call to a good mutual friend, a parishioner of his who was a doctor in Granny White. There was the doctor's visit to Thad's wife and their secret call to an analyst in New Orleans and finally their arrival to take my friend, brother and mentor away.

But there was no problem. He was more than willing to go. He helped with the quick decisions

which had to be made. He agreed that he was having what they call a real, old-fashioned nervous breakdown. And he knew that it would take some time and a lot of money to get over it.

Guns, camping equipment, insurance policies, a piece of retirement land, furniture, the big Chrysler — all of it would be turned into enough money to make the move and begin paying the doctor. (A bit of the old Thad returned as he grinned with devilish delight when he was told that the analyst was a woman.) The doctor friend would resign for him on Wednesday night at the Church's business meeting, with dignity and in good taste. He would ask for six months full salary for Thad.

At six that evening they drove away, Thad crying softly in the back seat as he said good-bye, the strong wife at the wheel, the doctor at his professional best.

It was a long time before I saw him again. I heard that he and his family moved in with his mother, that he was in a hospital for three weeks, and then settled in for two years of unemployment and a complete analysis.

When he surfaced again it was as chaplain of a large metropolitan hospital. I saw him by accident while visiting a relative. It was as if we had been together the day before. "This is it, Willie. Yea, man, this is where it's at. I've found it and I've found myself. Ain't it a bitch. I'm a counselor, a natural born counselor. That's what I am and always was. Tell the boys ole Thad is back on the yard." And there was no doubt that he was back, and higher than ever.

Not only was he back on the yard, he was back in the fields, the swamps, the forest, wherever there was game to be stalked and killed. Nothing got him as excited as hunting or just talking about hunting. "Yea, Wee Willie, I'm a killer. A born killer. 'Course, everybody is a killer. Me, I just kill animals. Not people."

On one occasion one of our friends was in his office when he was about to leave on one of his island safaris with two of his rich planter friends. Everyone was dressed in camouflaged denims, rubber boots, wide gun belts around their shoulders and waists, each one trying to look the most like Ernest Hemingway, or Humphrey Bogart in *African Queen*. Thad was in complete charge, telling the funniest jokes, the biggest lies, and getting all the laughs. Going down in the elevator Thad was still talking, still entertaining in anxious preparation and anticipation of the hunt. An elderly black man was sitting in a wheel chair. A young, well dressed, collegiate looking black man was standing behind the chair. Thad noticed the pair and looked down at the old man. "Well, Uncle, so you're going home today. I know you'll be mighty proud to get home."

The old man grunted and nodded in the affirmative. The young man pounced as if he had been waiting since May 17, 1954, for this moment. Feigning a dialect which obviously came hard for him, he moved a bit closer to Thad in the elevator.

"He yo uncle? Why, he my uncle, too. That done make me an you cuzzins." Then, looking around the elevator, he addressed everyone there. "Hey, everybody. I wants y'all to meet my cuzzin, Chaplain Garner. What you know 'bout dat! Me an' the Chaplain cuzzins. Ain't dat sumpin'!"

The warts and moles on Thad's nose and face



photo by Jim Thompson

seemed almost to disappear against the redness of his skin. The laughter of his two friends was uncontrollable. Thad made a feeble comeback by patting the old man's shoulder and telling him he hoped he wouldn't get sick again for a long time. The old man had not changed expressions and again nodded in the affirmative. As they left the elevator, the young man was guffawing like Gildersleeve, slapping his thigh in hambone fashion, stomping a light buck and wing before rolling his own Uncle down the hall.

Out of sight, Thad was even more humiliated.

He knew better than to call the old man "Uncle," but he knew better still than to try to explain it in the presence of his rich planter friends. As they left for cigarettes our friend said, "Looks like somebody in one family or the other has been messing around."

"That smart aleck son-of-a-bitch. After all I've done for the Negroes. He knows who I am and what I stand for. What did he have to do that for?"

"Because you called a black man, 'Uncle,' Thad."

"Well, hell. I call *all* old men 'Uncle.'"

"Naw, Thad, you call all old *black* men, 'Uncle,' in the presence of rich white folks who take you on all expense paid hunting trips."

"Well, he's still a smart aleck son-of-a-bitch."

Then never to be outdone, he started to laugh and turned the whole incident into one more funny and entertaining story, kidding the friend about his knee-jerk liberal embarrassment, adding it to his vast repertoire.

He stayed four years as a counselor. He was too active politically for the hospital board, and serious disillusionment had set in quite early in this phase of his institutional journey.

The next time I saw him, he was some kind of a college administrator. He had just received a letter from his seminary informing him that his Bachelor of Divinity degree could be traded in for a Master of Divinity degree with no additional work. He was highly indignant. "Now that's their contribution to the social crisis. A stupid war going on, prisons running over with our brothers and sisters, millions of people starving to death, black people no better off than they ever were, a nut in the White House and their response to the Gospel is to rename a crock-of-shit diploma." Suddenly all institutions of theological learning were a giant punching bag and he danced and sparred around, jabbing all over like he used to do as a boxer. He held the letter in his hand, all crumpled up in a tiny wad. Students stole quick glances at us as they went to and from classes.

He began to laugh. "Willie, we got took. You know that! They never should have called our degree Bachelor of Divinity. It should have been a Bachelor of Sophistication. They took our country asses up there and filled us up with New England culture, sent us back playing Bach Fugues on hundred thousand dollar pipe organs, smoking calabash pipes, wearing tweed caps and white bucks. Man they did it to us. They gave us the treatment." He began to make jokes about the way you could tell where a professor had done his graduate studies by his campus manner. "Now if he went to Edinburgh he always wore a tweed jacket, complete with coat of arms. And smoked a big

pipe and had a yachting cap or braided tam. If he rode a three-speed Raleigh bicycle to school, you could bet he was an Oxford or Cambridge man. He generally wore a tweed cap, too. And carried his books around in a sack with a neck strap on it. If he studied in Germany he had returned with a Volkswagen. That was before *everybody* drove Volkswagens. And they all, no matter where they went, would eat with the fork in the left hand, pushing their food onto the upside-down fork



photo by Al Clayton

Will Campbell

with the knife. And sometimes they would forget and drive on the left side of the road. Man, what a crock."

He began to rave again. "Willie, the whole screwed-up world is going to hell in a bucket and this is their commentary. Jesus Christ! Where's your nervous breakdown?"

I said I was just waiting around.

GRANNY REED

A Testimony

interview by Paul Gillespie and Keith Head



photo courtesy of Foxfire

I have been acquainted with Granny Reed, as she is best known, for quite a while. I remember, as a young child, going with my family to the Assemblies of God camp meeting at Cullasaja, North Carolina. There in the old sawdust-floored tabernacle nestled near the slow, lazy Cullasaja River, the rafters would seem to swell as the people offered their prayers, praises, and the "songs of Zion" unto God. At some point during the service, "testimonies" would be given. Voluntarily, people would stand and publicly tell what God had done for them. Then Granny Reed would get slowly to her feet and as all eyes focused on her, she'd begin, "Children, I've been walking with the Lord many a year now. . . ." When she finished, there were few dry eyes and even fewer sad hearts in the congregation.

Granny Reed is ninety years old. For a long time she was a Baptist, but now she is a proud member of the Church of God in western North Carolina. The Church of God is one of several churches in the Pentecostal movement. Each believes in the gift of the Holy Spirit as another definite Work of Grace, with "speaking in tongues" as the initial evidence of this gift (Acts 2:1-4). Generally, the Pentecostal churches differ only in minor points of doctrine or church organization.

Those who have come to know Granny Reed love her simply because of the love she shows toward them. I have never seen her without being greeted with a warm hug, and hearing her say, "God bless you." Granny Reed is a testimony and a credit for both the Church of God and Christianity.

— Keith Head

This interview with Granny Reed is excerpted from a forthcoming publication by Foxfire Magazine on religious experiences in the mountains, edited by Keith Head and Paul Gillespie. Keith Head was a member of the Foxfire staff while a student at Rabun Gap Nachoochee School in north Georgia. He is currently a freshman at Mars Hill College. Paul Gillespie is also a Foxfire alumnus. He rejoined the Foxfire staff in 1975 after graduation from the University of Virginia.

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Born Again

I have been a Christian about seventy-eight years. I'm ninety now. I was converted when I was twelve years old. It's been a long time. Then it wasn't like it is now. We didn't know anything about the deep things of God. We just knew the born-again experience. And we really did have a born-again experience in those days.

I never had thought about being a sinner. I never had thought about it. I was going along a little

barefooted girl. We always went barefooted until we were in the teens in those days. I was going along and kicking up sand and playing, you know.

My daddy said "huh" like that. When he said that, I knew he wanted to say something. I said "What is it, Dad?"

He said, "You're old enough to know what you're going to church for, instead of playing along like that."

I stopped and I thought, "Well, does Daddy think I'm a sinner?" I began to study about it. I thought, "Well, him and Momma pray for me every night and I'm a child of God surely." I stood there and waited until he got in front of me and I dropped in behind him and started on toward the church.

I cried till I thought I couldn't cry. I thought, "Oh, dear God, I'm a sinner and I'll be left here. Mother and Daddy goes to heaven and I'll be left." It troubled me to death. These days, children don't pay any attention to things like that. But, oh, it broke my heart. I went on into church. I had a little cousin; her daddy was my mother's brother and he was a preacher. He was preaching. I went in and scooped down beside of her and said, "Zadie, if you was to die, would you go to hell?" Me and her was the same age.

She said, "I don't know, Rosie. Papaw prays for us every night and I never thought nothing about it."

I said, "Daddy thinks we're sinners. He thinks we're old enough to know what to do."

She said, "I guess we are. We're twelve years old."

We sat there a while and I said, "I'm going to the altar when they call. I ain't gonna risk it another night, for Jesus might come tonight."

She said, "They'll make fun of us and us barefooted."

I said, "I don't care. I'd rather be made fun of than to go to hell."

She said, "If you go, I will."

So whenever they had the altar call, we went and just knelt and cried. We didn't know how to pray or nothing. In a little while, they broke up (the meeting) and we didn't get saved. Oh, how bad I was troubled. I went to the church door and I said, "Uncle Issac, do you care if me and Zadie don't go home for dinner?"

They had two services a day. They never did have a service of a night in those days. It was just two services a day and you went home for lunch. I said, "Do you care if we stay and not go home? I don't want any dinner."

He laid both of his hands on our heads and said, "God bless you, children. Stay if you want to."

So when they all got out of sight, me and Zadie (we was right by the river at the old Brush Creek

Church) went up the river to an old sheltering rock and we walked in between them rocks. I looked at her and said, "Zadie, do you know how to pray?"

She said, "No, I don't. Papaw does the praying."

I said, "I don't know how. For Daddy and Mother both prays. And I don't."

We stood and looked at each other for a while and she said, "Well, we could say 'God, be merciful to us a sinner' for we're sinners."

We knelt and prayed and cried. We didn't know what to say except "God, be merciful to us sinners." We cried and cried and when they came back to the church, we ran down to the river and washed our faces and pushed our hair and went on into the church. I never heard anything the preacher said, I was so anxious to get to the altar to get saved before dark, because I didn't want to risk it after dark. Jesus might come. I might die, and oh, I couldn't stand it. I never heard anything said. And the minute they called the altar call, we went. We went and we prayed and we prayed. I was praying so hard and Zadie was too. After a while she jumped up and came flying to me and said, "Oh, I'm saved, and God's going to save you."

Well, I thought I was the vilest sinner on earth. He's saved Zadie and he ain't saved me. That made me worse than ever. I liked to cried my heart out. I said, "God, if you don't save me now, I'm going to die. I've done everything I know how to do and I don't know anything else to do." When I said that, an awful feeling came over me. I was mashed down low and lower. I couldn't hear them singing or nothin. I felt like I was going through the floor. All at once, it begun to come up like that. And when it come up, there I was standing in the floor. Everything was as bright as sunshine. I jumped just as high as I could. I jumped and grabbed Uncle Issac and hugged him. My daddy was just parting the people trying to get to me. Well, I thought they was the prettiest people I'd ever seen in all my life. Never after that did I doubt my experience. I know I was born again.

Well, I was determined to live in His steps. All my life I've wanted to live in His steps. And when anyone asks me to go to a show or a ballgame or place of music, I would just say, "Now would Jesus go there if He was here?" No, He wouldn't be there. He'd be somewhere else, praying or reading or doing some good to people. I never have been to a ballgame or a theatre in my life. I've just tried to follow in the steps of Jesus.

The Light of Holiness

As quick as the light of Holiness came into this country, I was there. The Lord spoke to me and told me to go or I wouldn't have gone, because I didn't know what kind of people they was and I

was afraid of them. But you know, I was almost dead. I was sick. I was awfully bad off. I had an abscess in my side and I'd been operated on, but it didn't do any good. I was going to die. I knew I was. I had my family, two boys and a little girl. I said, "Lord, I hate to die so early and leave my family. My little girl needs me so bad, she's so sick all the time."

You know, whenever I told the Lord that, I just laid there a little while and he spoke to me in an audible voice and said, "Go down to the Holiness tent meeting and I'll heal you."

I didn't know it was the voice of the Lord. It scared me so bad. I looked all over the room. He'd never spoke to me in an audible voice before. I looked everywhere and there was no one around. I lay there just a-trembling.

I stayed till the next morning, laid there studying about it. Next morning, I said, "That didn't sound like a wicked voice. It must have been the Lord."

But why would He ask me to go to that place — a Holiness place? They're wicked people (for I thought they were). I'd been taught that! All at once it came again, "Go down to the Holiness tent meeting and I'll heal you."

I said, "Lord, I ain't able." I couldn't raise up without fainting. I was awful bad off.

He said, "I'll make you able." And that was the last I heard.

I thought to myself, "If that's Jesus, I'll put my feet down on the floor and try it and see and if I don't faint, I'll know that it's Him." Well, I got out on the side of the bed and I turned myself this and that a-way. I didn't feel like I was going to faint, and I said, "Now, Lord, if it's you that's leading me in this way, let me walk in the living room there and sit by the fire." I got up and walked, but I was stiff and sore. I walked in there and sat down.

My mother-in-law, Mother Reed, was waiting on me in there. She looked in and saw me and said, "How come you ain't in bed? Who brought you in here?" She knew I couldn't walk.

I said, "The Lord." When I said that, she thought I was out of my head. She run out and called my husband. He come in and I told him about the Lord speaking to me.

He led me right on in and he said, "Well, go to the Holiness church. We'll go down there if He promised to heal you."

And I said, "Yes, we'll go." I was still afraid to, nearly, but I went. That's where I got into the light of Holiness; it's been about fifty years. I never got healed until I got the baptism of the Holy Ghost for I didn't ask to be. [The preacher] just had his healing services on Friday night. After I went down there on Friday, I thought I was going to get healed that day. They had cards to give out and the ones that had cards went up to give them to him and



photo by Rob Amberg

stood in line. I didn't have one and I didn't go. Oh, I was disappointed so bad. When he got through praying for the sick, I could just feel the power of God go through my body, and I'd feel down there to see if I was healed, and I'd say, "No, I'm not healed. It's still there – that sore place." I studied about it.

When he got through, he said, "Everybody that's sick and afflicted, hold up your hand." Well, I held up my hand real high. I was afraid to let it down; afraid he'd miss seeing me. He came to me and handed me a little card and bowed and went back.

Well, I had to go home with that. I didn't know nothing else to do. When I got home I read that card. "Are you saved? Have you been baptized with the Holy Ghost? How long have you been sick? Do you believe God can heal you? Will you read your Bible and pray daily?"

I said to my husband, "I don't know how to answer this card. I can answer every one but there's a distinction here between 'Have you been saved?' and 'Have you been baptized with the Holy Ghost?' There's something else to it some way. I reckon I have been baptized in the Holy Ghost. I was baptized in the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost."

He said, "No, Rosie. There's something else to it. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll take you down there Monday morning and let you stay with your Aunt Minnie (she lived right there by the tent) till you find out something about it before next Friday." Next Friday was the healing night.

Sunday morning I was so heartsick about everything, I couldn't eat a bite. I said, "I don't want nothing to eat." I went on to my aunt's and told her not to fix anything for me to eat. I wanted to know something about the Lord before I eat anything more. I just got convicted to death! I never eat a bite for three days and nights. The first night of the revival he preached about the baptism of the Holy Ghost and I've never in my life had my eyes opened so. It just struck me that I'd die or have that gift.

I said, "Lord, here I am. Been a Christian all these years and thought I was walking in the steps of Jesus and I ain't even halfway started!" I felt awful about it. I went on fasting and praying and on Tuesday night – that was three days and nights that I had fasted – I went in there and told the Lord that now I was ready for the baptism and I said, "Now you give it to me. I'm setting way back here in the tent and nobody won't know that I'm wanting it."

Well, it came down just like a shower of rain. It was like a funnel in the tent just r-o-o-a-a-r-r-i-i-n-n-g. I fell over on the bench and my lips felt like they

were an inch thick. I said, "I won't disturb." And when I said that, it just left me like that. Then I sat there a little while and I said, "Lord, did I imagine all of that?" I never had such feelings in all my life. I said, "You didn't get mad at Gideon for putting out a fleece twice. If I ask You to send it one more time, then I'll know it's You." And it come again.

Right then the preacher was saying to everyone that wanted the baptism to go into the prayer room. Well, I said to the entire congregation, "Come on, children, this is of God. I done asked Him."

I went in there. There wasn't no room at the benches. They was all lined up. I just knelt down right in the middle of the floor and received it.

Walking By Myself

Oh, yes, Honey. They turned me out of the church and wouldn't have a thing to do with me. My own people wouldn't ask me home with them. First time I went to my own church, I thought I'd be the greatest help to them in the world, and they just turned their backs on me. They wouldn't dare listen at me or ask me home or nothing. [Before] they'd always thought I was the only one at church. They was so good to me.

I went up through the old field. I was walking by myself, all alone. My daddy was against me; everybody was against me. I went on to the top of the mountain and looked back over the mountain at the settlement. I got on top of the mountain and I said, "Lord, if nobody in this earth speaks to me anymore, my daddy nor nobody, I'll walk these hills alone with You. I'll never turn back." I'd cried all the way up the mountain. I was heart-broken because they had treated me so dirty, and I hadn't got to where I didn't have a lot of feelings, then.

When I said that, the glory of the Lord came down on me and just wrapped around me a sheet of love. Oh, how happy it made me. I shouted all the way down. I never cried anymore about my church. He took it away. But they turned me out.

They didn't know any better. My poor old daddy said I'd sure land up in the asylum – I'd gone plumb crazy. Yeah, he thought he'd have to send me to the asylum.

But my mother just accepted it every bit and got the baptism in my house. Oh, she was like me, she wanted all the Lord had for her. My daddy was good, but he was scared to death; he thought it was

some kind of strange doctrine. But before he died, he said he saw the light. He said he knewed it was right.

I was brought up in a good Christian home. They had their family prayer, and they made us go to church and never thought of nothing but doing right. I never heard my mother nor my dad say a dirty word in my life nor never seen nothing wrong out of them. They was good people. My daddy thought that the only religion in the world was the Baptist. He just thought that was it. But mother could see a little further in the distance.

I said one day, "Mother, what does it take to be holy? I don't do nothing wrong." I thought the Holiness people didn't eat meat back then. So I said, "I don't care about meat. I can do without that. Why can't I be holy?"

Mother said, "Honey, there's something to it I don't understand, but if we keep reading and praying and trusting God, one of these days we'll find out what Holiness is." She knew we should be holy. But my daddy thought it was holy enough to be Baptists.

[The Holiness] didn't indulge in the worldly things of life. They didn't think it was right, and I don't yet. I don't think we can be two people. I think we either have to belong to God or not at all. I think we have to turn loose of the things of the world that's got any foolishness in it at all, because the Bible says that all that is not good is bad. If you don't find any good in something, there isn't any use to partake of it.

Divine Healing

There was a little girl, and sandbones had eaten her backbone out to where she was in a steel brace, and she hadn't put her feet on the floor to stand up for seventeen months. She was sitting in a wheelchair with her steel brace on.

They drove the car up to the tent and raised up the tent close to where the preacher was preaching where she could listen at him preach on divine healing. Well, the preacher was boarding at their house, and he went on home that night. When they came back and started to carry her out of the car, the preacher said, "Just let her alone. She's going to walk to the house tonight."

And he went around and laid his hand on her and prayed a few words – he didn't ever pray but just a few words – and she leaped out of that car and ran to the house! She run in and she ran upstairs and jerked that steel brace off and put on her clothes. She went into every one of the bedrooms of her brothers and woke them up and told

them what God had done for her. She's still alive yet!

Oh, I don't know of the healings that took place up there. They brought one woman from the hospital that they'd given up to die, and the preacher went out to the car and prayed for her and she was healed perfectly. There's been lots of healings since.

I've prayed for people and they was healed time and time again. But it seems like these days that it's harder to get through to victory. I don't know why. I went to a little baby that was dying of diphtheria and its little head was swelled up and its eyes was rolled back in its head. They was going to take it to the hospital, and they had to wait for the train to run before they got there. They thought the baby was going to die before the train got there, so they called for me. I never had seen the people. I ran down there and I asked the Lord as I went on, did He want me to pray for it secret or out loud. I said, "If You want me to pray in secret. You cause the woman to ask me to lay my hands on it. I know You're going to heal it, Lord, but I want to know how to pray about it."

So when I went in, she was holding it. The baby was about two years old and you couldn't see nothing but the whites of its eyes and it was gasping, trying to breathe – couldn't breathe hardly at all.

And the mother said, "Lay your hand on its little neck and see how hard it is. It's like a rock." And I knew then so I just lay my hand on its neck and began to rub and say, "Thank you, Jesus" in my heart. Every drop of that swelling just oozed out and the fever left. That little thing popped its eyes open and looked at me and laughed. It jumped down out of its mother's lap and run into the kitchen, got a stick of stove wood, and it came back pecking on the stove and looking at me and laughing. It hadn't seen me before but it was tickled to death. It knew something had happened! It was well from that day on.

The man come in and he said, "What in the world happened?" The baby was just playing and laughing and running around me.

Mrs. Blair said, "Miss Reed just laid her hand on its neck and it got well in a few minutes!"

And he said, "Well, there ain't no use to go to the hospital, is there?"

I said, "No, your baby's all right, Mr. Blair. It's all right."

I never told them what happened and next morning, I felt condemned about it. I didn't know what to do so I went back and asked her if she knew what made the baby well. And she said, "You prayed for it."

I said, "Yes, Jesus healed it." Then I told her how God did work through people.

“To Be Prophetic”

interviews by Jim Sessions, Sue Thrasher and Bill Troy

Black Ministers Speak Out on the Black Church



photo by Robert Ballard

To understand the Southern movement for social and political justice, it is necessary to understand the black church. Throughout the civil rights movement of the '50s and '60s, it served as the nurturing institution for the new mass movement. Its structures were used for meetings, freedom schools, voter registration drives and community centers. Its members were often the foundation upon which local movements were built and sustained.

*Nor is it a recent phenomenon. Since the time black people were brought to this country under slavery, the church has been the one institution they have controlled and used as a tool for their own liberation. W.E.B. DuBois, writing in *The Souls of Black Folk* described a "First Baptist" congregation in Virginia during the post-reconstruction period: "Various organizations met here — the church proper, the Sunday school, two or three insurance societies, women's societies, secret societies, and mass meetings of different kinds. Entertainments, suppers, and lectures are held beside the five or six regular religious services. Considerable sums of money are collected and expended here, employment is disseminated and charity distributed. At the same time, this social, intellectual, and economic centre is a religious centre of great power."*

In the following pages, three ministers talk about the vitality of the black religious experience. One theme emerges again and again: That the black religious experience is based on the "totality" of life, the melding of the physical and the spiritual in a way that has forged an institutional expression altogether different than its white counterpart. It has been a place where the political and social needs of the community could find collective expression and where the personal anguish of an earthly existence could find spiritual release, a place where personhood was affirmed rather than denied, where hope and faith in the future found solid expression in the here and now.

“Right Here On Earth”

We found Rev. James Corder on his tractor at the far end of an Alabama cotton field. It was the first day without rain for quite a while, but anxious as he was to get the earth turned, he graciously spent two hours talking with us about his life in Pickens County.

Rev. Corder pastors four Primitive Baptist churches within a fifty-mile radius of his home near Aliceville, Alabama. Moved by the events of Selma in 1965, he became an active member in the Selma Project, a state-wide civil rights organization.

Selma, Albany, Jackson, Montgomery, Birmingham, Atlanta, and Nashville were all well known for the drama of the civil rights struggles. Aliceville, Alabama, and numerous other small towns across the region were hardly noticed, and sometimes their very isolation made the struggle much more dangerous.

The most blatant forms of discrimination are no longer as apparent as they once were in Aliceville, Alabama, thanks to Rev. Corder and his organization of sinners. As we left, however, we got the impression that the good Reverend was keeping a watchful eye.

At the time of the Selma March, it was quite dangerous to organize because Pickens County hadn't had no type of demonstration, and they was doing things that was keeping people from taking a part or standing up talking to anybody that appeared to identify themselves in a civil rights way. Therefore I used strategy. I organized under the name of Rural Farm and Development Council. I let them know that they just had to stand up and take some chances, that some of us might get hurt, but even getting hurt was going to help somebody. And if I was brave enough to stand there and tell them what was necessary to be done, and not begging nobody not to tell it, they ought to be brave enough to be a member of the organization 'cause it was good for everybody.



photo by Bill Troy

After I got that organized, I got a group together and we decided that we would group around the city hall of Aliceville. I knew if I could get a group standing to hear what I had to say, I would get the message over to the administrators of the town. Course they all came with billy clubs and shotguns and everything. I let them know that we was tired of the way that the county and the elected officers was taking all the taxpayers money and turning all the evil against the black and protecting the white. I pointed out that whenever a big day come, any officer that had any lawful rights at all would be out on the road stopping all the blacks and waving to whites to pass. I said that if they had any reason to be checking, we would be very interested in their checking everybody or nobody. We won't have it no more! And I didn't go into detail to say what would be the results, and really I hadn't figured out what would be the results, but it was just in me to say. There wasn't no fear there.

When we started off, most people that was religious at all was altogether agin it. I had one friend. We're

in different fields—when I say fields, I mean different denominations—he's a Missionary and I'm a Primitive. But we works together.

The people that belonged to the church were set in their ways—just old religious practices that they got out from under the slave master was all they would accept. The type of activity that went on in the black church was about the type of activity that the slave masters would allow them to practice.

See, church work is like any other kind of work; what people were trained to think was church work, that is all they would accept for church work. But if they don't fight against wrong, who will? And so I started, and we had a church fight. That's one of the biggest fights I believe I had. The deacons at the church would get so mad, they would want to put me out. I just kept approaching it in many ways until I got some to see what I was talking about—that justice has got to come from a person that has justice in him. When a person who is not just, do just, he do something that he didn't aim to do.

And I reached the conclusion that

that was one of the chief reasons for Christ setting up a church here on earth—to establish His will, to change the minds of wicked people into righteousness. And it was going to take the preachers to do it, and if he wasn't going to do that, he wasn't a preacher for God, he was the devil's preacher. You know, the devil's got some good preachers, too. Sure! Any man who fights against the cause of God and thinks how to prevent the will of God, he is working for the devil.

I preached that for six or eight years as much or more than I did anything 'cause that was more on my mind than anything. It was more urgently current that I had to show the people. I couldn't show them heaven and couldn't show them the way out of trouble here. I be like the man who was preaching and tore his pants, and he had a habit when he got in his high keys of hold-

*Here is sweetmilk and honey
— cows giving milk, and
bees making honey — why am I
going to wait till heaven to get it*

— Rev. James Corder

ing his hands high and pointing to heaven and mentioning to the people about heaven. And a little boy was there and he said he couldn't see heaven for looking at Africa.

What I am saying is, if I couldn't show the people what was right here, I don't believe I could do a good job showing them something

that was out of sight. And if I couldn't change them to benefit themselves to do something right here, why point them to heaven? Here is sweetmilk and honey—cows giving milk, and bees making honey—and why am I going to wait till heaven to get it? When God told Moses to lead the people into a land that flowed with milk and honey, he wasn't talking about heaven no-way. He was talking about a land of plenty, and that land is right here on earth. He was leading them out from under their slave master to a land where they would be free and a land that produced.

Finally, the members of my church, they didn't join the organization, but they gave me the privilege of holding the meeting in the church. And I built the organization more out of sinners, people that didn't belong to the church. I had them acting more religious than the people that belonged to the church.

“A Free Platform”

Rev. Joseph L. Roberts, Jr., is the minister of the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church on Atlanta's Auburn Avenue. It is a symbol of the movement for black equality and of its most powerful, respected, and charismatic leader. Older church members remember holding Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on their knee when he was a child. It was in the basement at Ebenezer that he helped form the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and it was here that his body was brought home for the final time in 1968. Today, Ebenezer still serves its local Atlanta congregation, but it has also become a shrine to thousands of tourists who visit each year. It stands now within the new complex of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Social Change.

Joe Roberts is excited by the possibilities and the challenges of his ministry at Ebenezer. He feels that precisely because of its historically prophetic role, the black church can remain the “focal point where political, social, economic, and theological issues can be discussed.”

I graduated from seminary in 1960 when integration was still big. I was the pastor of two integrated churches—trying to help people live together as Christians—and almost denigrating the black experience in so doing, compromising by allowing the church service to be what I had learned in seminary: a modern version of the English Puritan worship of the 17th and 18th century. And then sort of disavowing who I was as a black person.

When Stokely Carmichael and others broke forth — Dr. King did it, but Stokely did it more dramatically because he said we've got to liberate the turf we occupy—that made me wonder what I was doing in a predominantly white denomination. Was I really selling my services to perpetuate a basically racist system, or was I in a ministry with which black people could identify? To be honest, it caught me. It resonated with something that was deep in all of us, and I think we were able to sort of move on from there.

When I was pastoring in New Jersey, I was involved in the denominational hierarchy in New York as a volunteer on a number of boards and agencies actively involved in church and race. The cities were going up in smoke; Stokely had given the black power sign in '66, and the National Committee of Black Churchmen had met in New York to sanction the validity of the black experiment. I think the black church, at that point, was trying to put some religious sanction on blacks calling for separate black power—before they integrated—believing that it was impossible to integrate an elephant with a mouse. I was in the business of trying to interpret to conservative black congregations why the whole business of black identity was a valid pursuit and how it wasn't antithetical to the Christian gospel.

In 1970, I was called to do Church and Society for the Presbyterian Church, South, and I decided to give it a try. It is a church where one half of one percent of its constituency is black, and I was the highest

black bureaucrat; naturally I had the church and race portfolio. I insisted when I came that I have some money to do some social change strategies.

We were right in the sweep of all the stuff that Nixon was talking about when he tried to get the Department of Commerce to push black capitalism. I had some feeling of satisfaction because I was in the train of James Forman (author of the Black Manifesto, demanding reparations from the white church). We were getting white people's money and giving it to black folks. I have some real questions about that now. In the first place, we did not have enough money to make black entrepreneurs successful. But I think the basic tragedy was that we never questioned the assumption of capitalism. We just said we are going to replace white entrepreneurs with black entrepreneurs and never did deal with the moral issue.

I

I traveled for the church in 16 states; I would be off maybe once or twice a month. A mutual friend

introduced me to Dr. King, Sr.; he was getting older, and said, "I need a little help now and then. Can you help me?" I said, "It would be an honor to preach at Ebenezer." And that's how I started. I preached for about a year when I could and just got close to the congregation. One evening he just got up in a church meeting and resigned and told them, "I know who you should choose for your successor," and put my name forward. They unanimously elected me.

I feel it is an honor for me to come here, and then I also feel, not being overly modest, uniquely prepared for the ecumenical thrusts that are needed now. I wouldn't have come here if it were just another local church. I felt this was a chance to give some personification to the ecumenical movement; I mean what difference does it ultimately make—all this noise about denominations? I saw it also as an attempt to speak out on some international issues that are very close to me, involving the violation of human rights in Latin America and Africa in particular. Those two places concern me. I knew here I would be able to have a platform to

actually say something and do something.

Because this is a tourist spot, I have the opportunity to make it more than a tourist spot, to heighten the consciousness of a lot of people about the problems of Third World folks, and get them to see how they might affect those problems. We had 1,400,000 tourists last year. From April through October, they came by reservation. I would say easily a third of the congregation are tourists in the summer.

Then, to a very real extent, this place will always be something of a shrine to black people and it is very important for us not to let it die with Dr. King, but to at least make it the place where the issues are looked at and where folks can gather to do something about them.

Now I haven't romanticized the position. I don't plan to lead anybody down the street. I am not Dr. King, and I do not presume to be. I respect him for who he is and realize that he comes along once in a millennium. But there are still a lot of things to be done. Ninety percent of all black Protestants in this country are in Baptist or Methodist



photo by David Jenkins

churches. The black church still has what the white church has seldom had because it didn't need it—the reputation of being the focal point where political, social, and economic as well as theological issues can be discussed openly. Here I have a free platform. We lay out Angola; we criticize the state legislature for cutting welfare, and with no apologies. In the Presbyterian Church you had to tip softly on some very, very fragile egg shells because some of the folks had the misconception that all welfare folks are lazy and black. But you don't have that here.

I think the black church has been far more political and theological, even when it did not realize it. The spirituals had theological as well as political overtones. "Let us break bread together on our knees." That had to do with when a meeting was going to be held for taking off; the line "when I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun," meant "in the morning, on the west side of the river is where we are going to take off." The old spiritual "Wade in the Water" had to do with slaves escaping and hitting the water to kill the scent when the dogs came after them.

Always there was this feeling that another message was being carried. What the black preacher was trying to do was deal with the fact that black people had no place where they were called sane, or no place where they had any dignity. I've got women in my congregation who go out five days a week wearing white uniforms, which says they are nobody, but when they dress on Sunday morning and come to Ebenezer, they are dressed to kill, naturally. This is the only place where a nobody can be somebody. It doesn't matter to the people where they work who they are, and the uniform is a sign that they do not belong in that community, that they are only there to serve it. But when they come here, it means something altogether different.

How do you get your dignity? That is what black folks talk about; white folks didn't need to talk about that because, for better or worse, by whatever means necessary, they were able to get some power, and that was power over somebody else. But the struggle of black folks is how to get equality. And that is where *this* church

has been very meaningful, from the time King supported the bus boycott and Rosa Parks.

II

I basically think the white Protestant Southern church serves a constituency that is interested in maintaining the status quo, and therefore is far more guarded and far more ambivalent than the black church. In contrast, the black church is not afraid of being prophetic because it's been on the bottom. In this congregation, people will applaud a strong statement for justice, will break out in a round of applause. If I said the same things in a white church, I would be fired. If I talked about multi-national corporations, if I talked about ITT and Chile, if I talked about Brazil and the heinous things going on there and, as I

...the white Protestant church serves a constituency that is interested in maintaining the status quo.... In contrast, the black church is not afraid of being prophetic...

— Rev. Joseph Roberts

did, call for missionaries to leave because they were really perpetuating a bad system, I would just be out on my ear. That is the real difference; the white congregation is too tied in with the white power structure to be critical of it. The danger for black people is that they are tempted to pick up some of those same values.

The black church has always been willing to admit that a person is not only cerebral but visceral. The white church has not. From the Greeks on, the white church has made a bifurcation between mind and body, so that everything that didn't fit into western, rational, logical categories could not be dealt with. So, how do you deal with a feeling? The white church just isn't able to deal with that. The psychiatrist is, and so you get psychiatry and religion as twin ministries. A person goes to a white church and

stays for one hour on Sunday morning bleeding inside and then beats it to the analyst that afternoon or all the next week to try to get it together. The black church always was able — sort of in the Hebraic concept — to keep body and mind together. For example, I had one guy who just said one Sunday morning, "In spite of everything that has happened to us, I'm so glad trouble doesn't last always," which is from an old spiritual. There were people who screamed, literally screamed, screamed as an act of jubilation because that was an affirmation of the faith. Now a white preacher would have said, "Rest assured that ultimately in the eschaton, there will be the assurance that the resurrection will be affirmed." You know, I don't know what that does for somebody whose kid got ready to jump off the roof, or spit in their face, or someone who had a fight with his wife. The black church has always been able to identify with the idiom of the people; it's known its people pretty well, and has had to deal with the underside of its people. The white church has always come, not to hear that stuff, but to seek some religious sanction for what it was.

I do think there is a psychology of poverty and oppression that is pervasive and transcends racial barriers. There has always been a fairly good relationship between poor whites and poor blacks in the South, because they were thrown together. They all lived in the same kind of shanties; they had relationships, albeit covert, on all sorts of dynamic lines. There has always been an attempt on the part of those who were in power to keep those two groups from coming together, to pit them against one another. Wallace plays to a mentality that itself is powerless; its only claim to fame is whiteness, so there must be a tenacious holding on to that in order to say I am better than the only person I see under me, who is black.

III

I don't see any revolution that was sustained by mass movements. You get to the point where you have got to take advantage of the gains that have been made, and then implement them into a new system. It is much easier when you have a tangible goal to go after and you knock it down. But that

is always a means to an end and not an end in and of itself. I am unapologetic about saying that we don't have anything to pull people into — King would not have had. In Memphis, he was trying to take on the economic power in this nation and say that poor folks have to be organized to get what they want. It is the same thing that Caesar Chavez said, and that is the reason Mrs. King supported him; she could see the farmworker's struggle as a follow-through on what her husband was doing in Memphis with the garbage strikers. But he would have had to change tactics.

The '70s are a time when we have to figure out the new Easter egg hunt. When you take kids on an Easter egg hunt, you hide all the eggs. The next Easter, the kids go back to the same spots, but if you're slick, you hide them in a different spot. Well, what this nation does is hide all the eggs, and you learn where they are, and then the next year they are somewhere else. That is what Nixon and Ford have done. OEO money has either been cut out or shifted to HEW. It's no longer Selma, it is Washington. Or it's the state capitol where they do three cuts on welfare recipients! It's any issue that pertains to old folks. That is the new Easter egg hunt. The eggs aren't on the Selma bridge anymore; they are just not there. You can go anywhere you want to in Selma. You can eat at any restaurant. That is irrelevant. That has nothing to do with poor folks who get cut off of medical assistance. That has nothing to do with welfare mothers who get cut.

The point is that you go and find the eggs this Easter, and then because history is dynamic, you have got to find out what the new scheme is. You know, they are going to shift it to maintain power, and the job of those folk who have a social conscience is to find out where they are and deal with it everytime it comes up. You know, we are out of Vietnam, so now it is Angola. We're out of Angola, so now it is Rhodesia. But it's the same thing, the exploitation of poor folks in the interests of those that have vested interests in multi-national corporations.

I see a high correlation between domestic and international problems, and I don't think America is ever going to be serious about helping poor folks as long as it is pouring any money into

Angola. If we can cut the poverty program yet continue high military expenditures, when part of that money might be used in Angola or Rhodesia, that has a direct correlation to black folks. When Roy Innis tries to get black Vietnam veterans to go fight in Angola, that is no longer simply an international issue because I have black Vietnam veterans in this church

the black church is actually doing. If they can continue to subject workers in the Republic of South Africa to low wages, that means that black folks in this country are still in trouble, because those same corporations will refuse to hire people here as long as they can exploit people somewhere else. So, I have got to stop exploitation over there so that the man cannot run away



photo by Joe Holloway

Easter, 1958, State Capitol, Montgomery, Alabama

who do not have work because they are a part of that eight-and-a-half million unemployed. So, that is a very critical, domestic, international issue. I say, "Hell no, you don't go over there and fight black folks. We will feed you first before you start destroying your own people."

I wax warm on these things, because I think they are critical to what

and leave me starving here.

IV

I think the problem with the '60s was that people didn't face the fact, when you get involved with social change you have to deal with failure and death. That is what Kent State taught the white community. You see,

white folks didn't believe when they saw the dogs and the hoses in Birmingham; but when they shot those kids at Kent State, that revealed a lot. They were then able to see that it was true what black folks were saying, that you cannot just stand up as if there is "freedom of speech" and say you do or do not believe something, because they will get you. They really will. Now, that's enough to throw people off and leave them disillusioned for a long time.

But the whole history of the black experience has been a history of having to deal daily with failure and death, so we didn't get that sure. We didn't have to go into transcendental meditation or anything like that. The very essence of the Christian experience had already incorporated that.

See, we didn't have any psychiatrists to go to. We had to deal with death and failure and "I am not a man" and they will shoot you and burn down your house whenever they want. So, I think we could make the transition much more easily than those who had invested too much in the American dream.

White people have always been used to winning. We just don't have a good, practical theology of winning. That's the history of American imperialism. So, how do you deal with the fact that kids get shot at Kent State? That was a mind-blowing thing; that shook me.

When you look at the '60s, we paid the price. The two Kennedys and King are gone. The hope that we all had for this nation — and black people

had that hope too when they looked at Kennedy — you really saw that you could get a good guy up there and they would kill him. Somebody would kill him. And that just says, what the hell, why should I care, why should I get involved? What's in it for me other than dying? And it's just better to survive.

Black folks have always known that when you can't eat steak, you eat fatback. Fatback might be working for a full employment bill; fatback might be pushing for national health insurance. Black folks have always been more practical in their politics.

So, I'm trying to pull some things together. This is a great church to be in. It gives me an opportunity to see if I can shape the ways some things are going. I'm excited about what could happen.

“Mind, Body, and Soul”

Dr. Cecil W. Cone grew up in the small town of Bearden, Arkansas, and started preaching at the tender age of 13. He has been a pastor, an administrator, and a professor of theology. He is now the Dean of Turner Theological Seminary in Atlanta, and was recently a candidate

for Bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He is the author of The Identity Crisis in Black Theology (AME Press, Nashville) in which he argues that the point of departure for black theology must be the black religious experience.

We found our conversation with

Dr. Cone to be both engaging and disconcerting. He is charismatic and at times overwhelming, with an intellect that is far ranging and probing. He has a sense of play in his thoughts, but is deadly serious in the main points he wishes to make. The following excerpt is only an indication of his provocative analysis of the black religious experience.

Most people believe there is little distinction between a black Methodist church and a white Methodist church, a black Presbyterian church and a white Presbyterian church. Organizationally, they belong to the same institution, but there is a definite distinction. They approach Christian religion in a different way, and the result is a different phenomenon altogether.

Black Christianity is the only mode of experience in America that is consistent with the revelation of God as expressed in the Exodus event of the Old Testament and the Christ event of the New Testament, which is to say that black Christianity is the *only* Christianity that is Christian. White Christianity is not Christian. It does not grow out of the Old and New Testament concepts of what the Christian religion, or the Christian way of life, is. White Christianity should not



photo by David Massey

be called Christian.

The difference is in the way each looks at life; it has to do with the Greek and Hebraic world views. The tradition of Christianity got messed up when it moved into the Graeco-Roman world. It left behind its Hebraic understanding and approach to life. Instead of approaching God and life in a Hebraic way, the Greek way became dominant.

Black religion has a world view that is closely related to the Hebraic way of looking at life. It also has to do with the African tradition. There is an element of divine understanding and truth that can only come to people who are at the bottom, people who are oppressed, people who cannot look to any earthly reality for their salvation. They become open to the divine revelation in a way that people who can depend on the political order cannot.

When black people were brought to this country, they had no rights and no hope within the structure of society, and they could not free themselves from this predicament. As a result, they were open to God in a way that they could not have been had their approach been Greek and rationalistic. It would have been absurd to talk about hope in a situation where the impact of your whole being is directed against the stone wall of slavery, and not only does it not come crumbling down, it does not even crack. Because of their African understanding of life, black people opened themselves up to a reality that was beyond rationality, and they were therefore able to get an insight into a divine reality even they had not been aware of before. If they thought that slavery was something, they soon discovered that this Almighty Sovereign God was something else! As a result of encountering him and embracing him and giving their total lives to him, they became free because they knew he was far more powerful and awesome than the structure of slavery itself.

Now, it's true that as a result of this freedom they were not oblivious to the fact that they still had to do what the man told them to do. They were in the same predicament, but now as different persons, free beings with hope in a situation where hope was not even possible. They began to create a new kind of religious experience and way of life that was made possible both by their world view and their encounter with this Almighty Sovereign God in

the midst of slavery. For some, it meant the creation of spirituals where you could sing, shout, and talk about God and freedom. It created a community and brought them together and made life possible.

This African-Hebraic tradition includes the *total* life — the spiritual, the economic, the social. There are political implications, but the starting point is not political. It is political because that is part of the total way of life. Within the white religious experience, the spiritual, economic, social and political are all separate. That reflects their Greek heritage which separates the mind from the body, the rational from the spiritual. For black people, life is a *total way of being*. It isn't just science, a strictly rationalistic process. Notice a black baseball player, how he approaches life; he approaches it mind, body and soul, which is very Hebraic. Football, O.J. Simpson doesn't just run; he *RUNS!* In singing the blues,

There is an element of divine understanding and truth that can only come to people who are at the bottom

— Rev. Cecil Cone

Aretha Franklin doesn't just sing, she *SINGS* — her mind, body and soul.

When you examine the black experience as black religious scholars are now doing, you see a way of life and a religious experience that was far superior to what existed in the white community. Black people were dealing with the Bible and the Christian religion in a more creative way than the folks who were supposed to be trained in theology and the Christian tradition.

I would not say that everything within the Western tradition has no connection whatsoever with the Hebraic tradition or the African tradition. But for Western Christianity to fully incorporate this tradition, white folks would have to be converted. The situation is analogous to the one Jesus confronted when the Syro-Phoenician woman came to him for her daughter to be healed. She went to Peter and the disciples and said, "Look, tell Jesus I have a daughter I want him to heal."

So Peter went up to Jesus, touched him, and said, "This woman is out here." Jesus merely turned his back

and continued to deal with black folk. She was persistent, so Peter went back to Jesus and said, "You talk to the woman; I can't deal with her." So Jesus said, "I have come for the lost sheep of the House of Israel and furthermore, you don't take bread out of the mouth of black folk and give it to white folk; you don't take bread out of the mouth of children to give to the dogs." Then the Syro-Phoenician woman got on her knees and said, "Yes, Lord, but the dogs will receive the crumbs that fall from the table."

Jesus looked at this white woman and said, "My God, I haven't seen faith like this among black folk. As long as you stay in that position, go your way; your daughter is healed." I say that because if white people want to become a part of the African-Hebraic tradition, they must have the right attitude, the attitude of being on bended knee to be taught.

I don't see white folk willing to embrace black religion in this way. I see white folk who are interested, but there is still an unwillingness to be circumcised, an unwillingness to embrace a whole new way of looking at life, even if that means the only way of being Christian. I still hear white folk saying, "Well now, Lord, I'm going to follow you, but on my own terms." White people have to come to the point where they say, "I am lost, I know not which way to go unless you tell me." There's a refusal to admit that one is totally lost, and unless someone provides the means for that light, it will not come. I think the Lord has his way of eventually bringing that about. I don't know whether that is in the near future or the far future, but I think eventually it will come, and I think black religion will be the main instrument to bring it about.

That is the reason that black religion has not become anti-white. It hasn't because there is always that universal appeal within the black community, even at times when there were groups within the church who wanted to institute a "no whites allowed" policy. You can't get that across in the black church; the black church won't hear of it. Now, they won't allow white folks to come in and take over, but at the same time, there will be no strict "anti" sentiment throughout the black church against white folks. That just can't be. There is always that universal appeal of saying, "Well, maybe white folks will change."

People's Institute of Applied Religion



photo by Bill Troy

by Bill Troy with Claude Williams

"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Joseph?" Well, if he was a carpenter, he knew what it was to have horny hands and patched clothing. Because you couldn't do the kind of work he was, felling trees and dragging them to the house to make ox yokes and carts, without tearing your trousers. He was a carpenter. He knew what it was to work long hours with little pay. He was born and reared in a

worker's home. He knew what it was to dwell in a shack, because carpenters even today don't build mansions for themselves but for other people!"

That's the voice of Rev. Claude Williams, speaking much as he did 35 years ago to groups of sharecroppers in the Arkansas Delta and shopworkers in the war defense plants of Detroit. Standing now in the close quarters of his Alabama trailer-home office, the preacher's voice rings as it did those many years ago, when conferences of workaday preachers and Sunday

school teachers would meet for days in churches and union halls to consider the Biblical teaching: "the meek will inherit the earth when they become sassy enough to take it!"

Hanging on the wall before him is one of Claude's unique visual education charts. It is a large affair, three by four feet in dimension. At the top, it bears the legend, "The Galilean and the Common People." In circles and rectangles covering the chart is a succession of modern, simple drawings, each depicting scenes from the life

of the Son of Man.

Waving his homemade coat-hanger pointer at the chart, Claude refers to each drawing in turn as he recounts how Moses called the first strike down in Egypt, how Jeremiah spoke out fearlessly in the name of true religion against the rulers and priests of ancient Israel, and how the Son of Man was reared in this tradition by a poor family who belonged to a movement seeking to bring about the Kingdom of God in their own time and place.

This is the kind of talk that went on in the People's Institute of Applied Religion (PIAR), surely one of the most remarkable expressions of religion ever to appear in the South. The PIAR was created in 1940 as an independent means of training the grassroots religious leaders of the cotton belt in the principles of labor unionism. For its principal founders, Claude and Joyce Williams, it represented the unique melding of religious and political convictions that had grown in them over a long period.

I

Claude and Joyce Williams came by their religion honestly. Both were born into fundamentalist homes, Joyce to a farming family in Missouri and Claude to tenant farmers in West Tennessee. They met and married in the early 1920s at Bethel College, a conservative Tennessee seminary of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. But their re-

This article is the result of many hours of taped conversations and research in the papers of Claude and Joyce Williams at their home in Alabaster, Alabama. All quotations are by Claude Williams, unless otherwise noted. For additional information about the South during the Depression, especially about the Southern Tenant Farmers Union (STFU), readers are encouraged to see Mark Naison's excellent article on the Williams published in the "No More Moanin" issue of Southern Exposure (Winter, 1974).

As we were going to press, we learned that Joyce Williams, in her 80's, had just died in Birmingham, Alabama. We extend to Claude our warmest regards and salute Joyce for her untiring commitment to the struggle for justice and equality.

ligious views gradually began to change as they pastored their first Presbyterian charge near Nashville. Partly, as in the case of their increasing unease with racial segregation, the change was based on seeing the contradictions in their culture between Biblical teaching about justice and actual social practice. At the same time, avid reading led them to discover the refreshing vitality of modern religious social thought represented in Harry Emerson Fosdick's *The Modern Use of the Bible*.

The turning point came in 1927 when Claude enrolled in a series of summer seminars at Vanderbilt University taught by Dr. Alva W. Taylor, a Southerner, member of the Socialist Party and prominent exponent of the social gospel. He recalls that Taylor "had a way of removing the theological debris from the Son of Man under which he's been buried for all these centuries and making him appear human." Claude found it impossible, after this experience, to continue working in a conventional church ministry.

In 1930, the Williams moved to Paris, Arkansas, to serve a small Presbyterian mission church. Located in the center of the state's mining district, Paris offered more opportunities to practice their new religious ideas than they could have ever imagined. Their first real working acquaintance with political action came with their involvement in the miners' efforts to organize a union and join the UMWA. With characteristic energy, they opened the church, their home and their family life to this movement. They participated in strategy discussions, helped raise money, and Claude wrote many of the necessary documents and position papers. Their participation clearly grew out of their religion, and they learned that the warm response of the miners and their families was due, in part, to their interpretation that the union fight was completely consistent with Biblical teaching.

The Williams also began in Paris a program of study and learning that became a cornerstone of their long ministry. The Sunday evening "Philosopher's Club," held in their home, was a regular feature of church life. These meetings involved open and wide-ranging discussion of religion as well as the multitude of political and cultural ideas sweeping the country

during these Depression years. They encouraged the young people to read, opening their own library for use at the church. Moreover, Claude was much in demand as a speaker throughout the coal fields. He traveled thousands of miles, addressing meetings of miners on behalf of the union, and from these contacts, "socio-Christian forums" grew in several west Arkansas towns. Through all these experiences, Claude was developing his own way of preaching/teaching, emphasizing exhortation and emotion, but likewise encouraging objective analysis and collective action.

Chiefly because of the Williams' work with the miners and the young people of Paris, the church elders eventually brought successful action within the presbytery to have Claude removed from the pulpit. In 1935, they were forced to move to nearby Fort Smith. They quickly became active with the organization of unemployed workers, and Claude was jailed for three months for participating in a demonstration. They moved again, this time to the relative safety of Little Rock, and were soon giving full time to workers' education and organizing with one of the most significant political movements to sweep the Depression South -- the Southern Tenant Farmers Union (STFU).

By this time, having endured many difficult experiences and met a number of Marxist activists along the way, their political and religious views had become more radical. Likewise, their views about taking seriously the people's religion were taking concrete form.

They knew from their own backgrounds that working with poor people in the South, both black and white, meant working with people whose view of the world was strongly conditioned by religion. Everything that it means to be good, to live honorably, to find support through life's trials and hope in the future -- these are the profound personal and social questions that poor Southerners have answered in religious ways for generations. The Bible is the book that points the way. For many, it was the only book they ever read. The church was the strongest institution in their lives; unlike most other things in life, it was theirs. It was a place where their own forms of community relationships took shape and where their

own leaders found legitimacy. The Williams knew well the other-worldly and apolitical dynamics of this religion, but they also learned from experience how important it was to relate to church leaders if the union was to succeed.

"As we spoke with the sharecroppers, we were obliged to meet in churches, both black and white. Most of the churches we met in, of course, were black churches. And it developed, especially with the black churches, that the pastor usually was present and chaired the meetings. Unless he said 'Amen' with that certain inflection which got the people to saying 'Amen' and rumbling their feet, we might as well go home."

The first big opportunity to test this view came in 1936 when a number of radical organizations in Little Rock, recognizing Claude's organizing ability, encouraged him to set up a school to train grassroots organizers for the STFU. In essential ways, the New Era School of Social Action and Prophetic Religion prefigured the People's Institute.

"In December, 1936, we held this first school for the sharecroppers. Nine whites and ten blacks. J. R. Butler (president of the STFU) got the students and I raised the funds. I wrote J.R. Butler from New York that we were gonna have the best school ever conducted in that land of ours 'South of God, decency and democracy.' Well, we did.

"We went through every phase of union organizing. It was a ten day school, night and day, solid. We didn't have any charts then, but we discussed the union problems. Then we'd assign someone to go down and organize the people in this county, or this neighborhood. Well, they'd have to study that and then make speeches as though these people were the local people. Then, after we'd done that, we had them go through organizing, setting up a local. Then we went into negotiation, getting a contract. The next to the last night, we had a group of Workers' Alliance people come into the meeting as planters with clubs to break it up. And it was so realistic. One very dynamic woman, whether it was spontaneous to the occasion or whether she just sensed, she jumped right out in the middle of the floor and began to sing: 'We shall not, we shall

not be moved. We shall not, we shall not be moved.' . . . Well, they came around."

For the next three years, the Williams were deeply involved in STFU activity. Claude was one of the union's most skillful organizers and a member of the governing board. In 1938, when he became director of Arkansas' famous labor school, Commonwealth College, he made his work with the sharecroppers the field program of the institution. When sectarian conflict within the union's leadership led to his expulsion from the STFU board and his subsequent resignation from Commonwealth, it was natural that Claude would turn to what he did best. The People's Institute of Applied Religion became the vehicle which made use of the Williams' experience in religious workers' education.

II

By the time the PIAR came into being, the Williams had refined their approach into a more conscious and systematic religious form. The purpose was to work with the natural leadership of the South's poor, always in an interracial setting; to engage them on their own terms, in light of their own experience and their own religious world view; to translate their religious perspective into the need for collective struggle for economic justice; and to develop concrete leadership skills in union organizing. The work was always done on behalf of existing labor organizations.

The three to ten day institute was the chief form of the PIAR's work. Roughly fifty people, equally divided between black and white, men and women, worked through morning, afternoon and evening in intense sessions. "These were people who had some tendency toward leadership," recalls Claude. "They were preachers or preacherettes or Sunday School superintendents or Sunday School teachers." Following the custom among rural churches, each participant often represented a number of communities; at one institute in Evansville, over one hundred churches were represented.

The interracial nature of the institutes was a matter of principle and, in itself, constituted one of the most significant parts of the ex-

perience.

"It was the first time some of them had ever been together in a meeting. Most, if not all of them, had never sat down to a meal together, and most of them thought they never would — especially the whites. The blacks never thought they'd have the opportunity. A black man got up and wept and talked when Winifred Chappell called him 'brother.' He never thought he'd ever live to see the day when a white woman said 'brother' to him."

Even though they depended a great deal on spontaneity and inspiration, the meetings were carefully structured around the people's religious mindset and how it might be approached.

"We were realistic, or we tried to be. We discovered that the fact that the people believed the Bible literally could be used to an advantage. For instance, if we read a passage from the Book which related to some issue of which they were aware, although it contradicted what they had interpreted some other passage to mean, they had to also include this. Being so-called fundamentalists, accepting the Bible verbatim, had nothing whatever to do with the person's understanding of the issues that related to bread and meat, raiment, shelter, jobs and civil liberties. Therefore, our approach was not an attempt to supplant their present mindset, but to supplement it with a more horizontal frame of reference. And we found that supplementing and supplanting turned out to be one and the same thing.

"We learned we had to contact these people at their consciousness of their need. We recognized that what the social scientist or the social worker saw as the need of the people and what the victim felt were two entirely different things."

Meetings always opened with a song, scripture and prayer, a ritual still practiced in many grassroots political meetings throughout the South. Then:

"When we had them together at the opening session, we would say, 'Now, we have come here to talk about our problems, the problems we meet every day of our lives. We want to start and let everyone tell

us what the problems are that he or she meets, as it relates to food and clothes and shelter and health and freedom."

"Well, as long as this person would talk, we'd let him talk. If it took an entire day, we let everyone talk. Well, they were ready to talk, you know, after it got started, talking about the things that was close to them. With the result, after these meetings, they would sit down that evening to a meal together. And I never heard a murmur, they felt such a oneness."

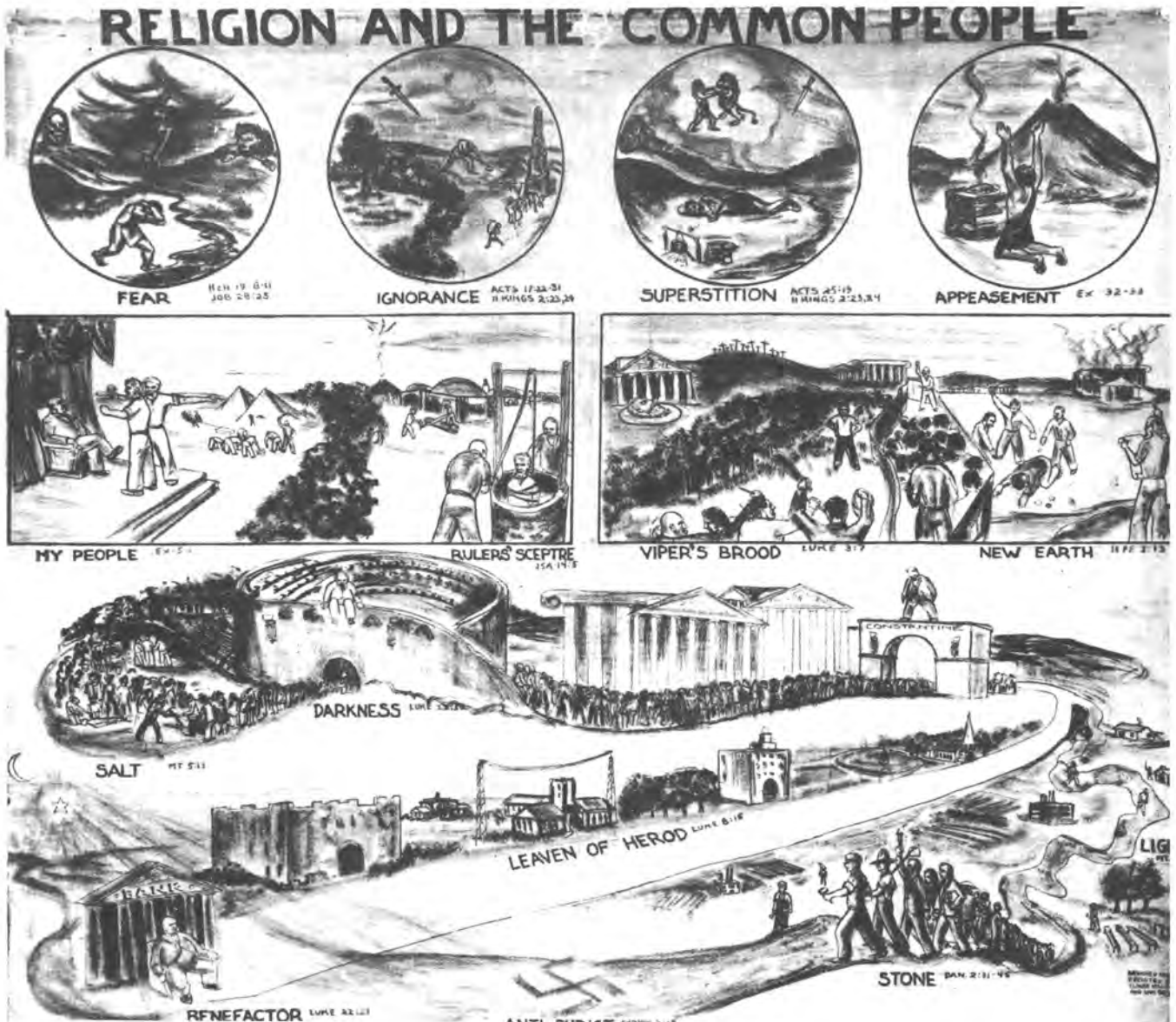
Following these sharing sessions, either Claude or another workshop leader would begin with the first orientation chart. Claude realized that much of the written material distributed by political organizations

was totally inappropriate for the sharecroppers. Those who could read were not prepared to wade through the typical political tract. They needed something visual, something more symbolic than literal, something that would suggest concepts based on the story people were already familiar with—the Bible. So shortly before he left Commonwealth, Claude worked out four basic charts for orienting people to the "positive content" of the gospel. A young artist at Commonwealth named Dan Genin made the drawings.

These charts were used throughout the history of the PIAR, and include "The Galilean and the Common People." Another, called "Religion and the Common People," recounts the origins of religion in superstition,

the ways religion has been used by rulers to subject people, and the emergence of people's religion in the Old Testament. A third, entitled "Religion and Progress," illustrates how civil values like equality, freedom and justice support true democracy. A fourth chart, "Anti-Semitism, Racism and Democracy," counters the evils used during the Depression and World War II to create disunity among working people.

Over the years Claude introduced other charts, more diagrammatic than pictorial, but still employing the same simplicity. One, entitled "The New Earth," employs the equation FAITH + VICTORY - WORLD = RIGHTEOUSNESS (WORLD refers to "the present world system"). Another chart, called "Anti-Christ's"





The NEW EARTH



SCRIPTURE : REV. 21:1-8

TEXT : ... A NEW EARTH, WHEREIN DWELLETH RIGHTEOUSNESS - 2 PETER 3:13

F	F-ELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER (1 JOHN 1:7)	V	V-ISION - A PEOPLE'S VISION (PROV. 29:18)	W	W-ARS OF AGGRESSION (LUKE 9:1,3)	R	R-EIGN OF THE PEOPLE (DAN. 7:26,27)
A	A-DMONISHING ONE ANOTHER (ROM. 15:14)	I	I-NSIGHT - DISCERNING THE TIMES (LUKE 12:54-56)	O	O-RGANIZED TYRANNY (LUKE 23:11,12)		I
I	+ the	C	C-OURAGE - FROM UNITY IN ACTION (ISA. 41:10,7)	}	}	H	H-GOOD WILL TOWARD ALL MEN (LUKE 2:13,14)
T		T	T-RUTH - TRUTH THAT FREES (JOHN 8:32)			O	O-PPORTUNITIES FOR ALL (ACTS 2:17-20)
H	H-ELPING ONE ANOTHER (MATT. 6:2-5)	T	T-RUTH - TRUTH THAT FREES (JOHN 8:32)	R	R-RANK HYPOCRISY (MATT. 23:8)	O	O-PPORTUNITIES FOR ALL (ACTS 2:17-20)
		O	O-RGANIZATION - ALL FOR EACH (JOHN 15:1-8)	L	L-AND MONOPOLY (LUKE 12:16-21)	P	P-L-NITY OF ALL (ACTS 17:26)
		R	R-E-SOURCEFULNESS (JAMES 2:5) (1 COR. 1:26-28)	D	D-OLLAR DIPLOMACY (JOHN 19:30)	S	S-O-CIALISM of JESUS and the PROPHETS (MATT. 23:35-36)
		Y	Y-IELDING - EACH TO ALL (MATT. 20-25:28)			S	S-ECURITY FOR ALL THE DISABLED (LUKE 14:10-15)
						S	S-E-RVICE TO ALL THE MOTIVE OF ALL (MATT. 23:10-12)

deals with the forces of evil in the world, especially the Ku Klux Klan. Through these almost simplistic devices, Biblical concepts were translated into contemporary content and people were drawn into the learning process.

Usually, each session dealt with one chart, sometimes only sections of a chart, depending on what participants expressed as pressing needs and problems. The presentations were delivered in sermon fashion, full of the emotion and speaking style which people expected from somebody who had a deep conviction to impart. It was through the charts, more than anything else in the institutes, that the supplementing, supplanting process took place, for what people heard were the old familiar events from the Bible, buttressed by chapter and verse, but told in a way they never expected. They exclaimed, "We never heard it on this order!" and at the same time they said, "It makes sense to our minds."

The same spirit of involvement marked other sessions where participants used mimeographed worksheets

to study particular problems such as peonage on the plantations, the poll tax and the lack of educational opportunities. Music also played an important part in the Institute's, as it did in the participants' churches. Not surprisingly, singing became part of the learning experience. In fact, out of the institutes (and the previous training schools in Arkansas) came some of today's best known freedom songs.

"One time in this ten day meeting in Memphis, about the third morning someone began to sing:

*What is that I see yonder coming,
What is that I see yonder coming,
What is that I see yonder coming,
Get on board, get on board!*

As she sung that through, the way she sung it, I could hear the drums of Africa! I said, my God, we've got to do something with that song. When she had finished, I got up. I referred to the songs we had sung in Arkansas. There's always one verse in the songs that's related to the people. Like (singing):

I'm going down to the river of Jordan

I'm going down to the river of Jordan one of these days, hallelujah!

I'm going to walk on the freedom highway. . . .

I'm going to eat at the welcome table. . . .

Well, we changed the 'I' to 'we' and we sang:

We're going to walk on the people's highway. . . .

Well, when I sat back down there in Memphis, this woman got up and began in the same deliberate cadence:

*What is that I see yonder coming,
What is that I see yonder coming,
What is that I see yonder coming,
CIO, CIO!*

*It is one great big union,
It is one great big union,
It is one great big union. . . .*

"It has freed many a thousand. . . . Well, I went to New York and went to Lee Hayes, Pete Seeger and Millard Lampell and the Almanack Singers. I repeated this and told them what happened. They took it to Paul

Robeson. Paul Robeson said, "That's our song. We've got to use it. That's the basis of 'The Union Train,' been sung now around the world. And Miss Hattie Walls must be given credit for it. She's the one who first sang it."

The last hour of the institute was something like a praise meeting, full of singing and prayer and testimony about what the experience had meant to people.

"We thank you, for we are beginning to see the light."

"Where there's hate, there's separation; where there's separation, there's weakness. Let's stand together."

"Jesus meant for us to have economic freedom. Let's not expect God to fill our mouths when we open them."

"We want to thank you for the things we heard that we did not know. We thank Thee for unity. Break down every wall of partition. We pray for those in distress in body and mind. We realize Thy will can be done only in our bodies. Heavenly Father, take charge of every one of us."

Then they went home to organize the union.

III

In its initial years, the Institute worked closely with the sharecropper movement and developing CIO activities in the South. A PIAR report for the fall of 1941 describes a number of institutes held in cotton belt places like the Missco, Arkansas, federal farm; Longview, Texas; Hayti, Missouri; Osceola and Carson Lake, Arkansas. The meetings encountered increasing harassment and threats of violence from local planters, law enforcement officials and hired thugs.

At the Missco institute, fifty vigilantes appeared, and the leadership could not leave the project for fear of their lives. Because of the intimidation, several institutes were held on the periphery of the cotton belt where sharecroppers could be transported away from terror. In March, 1941, some fifty cotton belt church folks gathered in Evansville, Indiana, for an institute, and in late April another was conducted in St. Louis.

The work of arranging these institutes was carried out by the Williams and a band of colleagues who joined the Institute soon after its formation. Some were cotton field preachers who

had worked with the STFU and remained active after the union joined the CIO's United Cannery, Agricultural, Packinghouse and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA). Chief among them was Rev. Owen H. Whitfield, a black Missouri preacher, one of the strongest leaders to emerge from the sharecropper movement. Whitfield was a co-director of PIAR, and he and his wife Zella participated in many institutes. Other friends from STFU days took state responsibilities, including Rev. W.L. Blackstone in Missouri and Leon Turner in Arkansas. Claude's brother Dan, himself a preacher and sharecropper, was active in Missouri and helped arrange an institute in that state which was broken up by planters.

One of the Institute's most amazing recruits was the Rev. A.L. Campbell, a white preacher from Arkansas. Campbell worked on the 60,000-acre Lee Wilson plantation and attended the Evansville institute as a spy for the Ku Klux Klan. But the message he heard, particularly the frontal assault on Ku Kluxism, "converted" him, and thereafter he was one of the Institute's most single-minded and effective leaders.

Others helped. Don West, who had studied with Claude under Alva Taylor at Vanderbilt, took responsibility for Georgia. Harry and Grace Koger were also deeply involved. Harry, a former YMCA executive, was the regional organizer for UCAPAWA in Memphis. And Winifred Chappell, a co-worker with Dr. Harry F. Ward in the Methodist Federation for Social Action, was a co-founder and co-director of PIAR. She had been a prominent supporter of the textile strike in Gastonia, N.C., in 1929, and worked with Claude and Joyce in Paris, Little Rock, and later in Detroit.

These people formed a network throughout the South, continually traveling, speaking, organizing meetings, corresponding, leading and recruiting people for the union and the institutes. Each was trained in the institute methodology and the use of the charts; each brought to the task their own distinctive personalities and interpretations.

They were supported by a network of PIAR chapters and friends in northern urban centers, including many well-known progressives from labor and civil-rights organizations, along with professionals from religion,

education, medicine and even a few businessmen. Claude, Winifred Chappell and others established and sustained these committees through frequent travel. The network provided the financial support necessary for the work in the South. For Claude and Joyce and the others working in the nation's poorest region, eating was always a catch-as-catch-can proposition. Their ability to stay alive and to underwrite the Institute's activities depended in large measure on outside support. So, at certain times, did their legitimacy and their safety. More than once these groups came to the aid of people, including PIAR staff, who were in jail or under threat of terror.

In the summer of 1941, the PIAR conducted its most controversial, dangerous and significant meeting in the South. At the time, Memphis was one of the most brutal urban strongholds in America, totally controlled by the violent and racist machine of Boss Ed Crump. When the CIO began to organize in Memphis, Don Henderson of UCAPAWA asked Claude and the Institute to hold a labor school, cautioning that he didn't want "any of that new wine in old bottles stuff." Claude and Joyce, the Kogers and Owen Whitfield, ignoring that instruction, used the charts in all classes, and Whitfield and Koger used them quietly at union meetings. Their work culminated in a ten-day institute that included packinghouse workers from Memphis and sharecroppers from as far away as Texas.

The conference was one of the most spirited and thorough ever conducted by the Institute, and it had more far-reaching effects. Memphis' considerable repressive establishment had been conducting a terror campaign against the CIO for months, and when word of the institute hit the newspapers, the forces of reaction struck swiftly. Harry Koger was jailed for questioning and a few days later Claude was taken to police headquarters and interrogated for two days. The "big union" had come to stay, however. Within months the CIO had dug a foothold into several Memphis industries and within a few years the Crump machine itself would fall. Encouraged to leave town for their own safety, Claude and Joyce once again moved the family and PIAR headquarters, this time to Evansville, Indiana.

During the war years, the Institute



remained active throughout the cotton belt. The Williams did not stay in Evansville long, for in early 1942, Claude accepted the invitation of the Presbyterian churches in Detroit to establish a labor ministry there. Detroit was the center of national war production, and new migrants were streaming into the city from the South at an unprecedented rate. Racial tensions ran high, encouraged by an army of reactionary religious demagogues like Gerald L.K. Smith, Father Coughlin and J. Frank Norris. Aided financially by the lords of industry, these "apostles of hatred" preached a divisive message of racial purity and anti-unionism quite familiar to the Williams from their years in the South.

The program they established represented the continuation of the PIAR. With the cooperation of the new United Auto Workers, shop committees of working preachers were set up to use the charts and preach "realistic religion" in the plants at lunchtime. An interracial "Brotherhood Squadron" of speakers and singers appeared in churches. In 1943, Claude authored a scathing expose of the right-wing religious leaders; and Philip Adler, reporter for the *Detroit News*, wrote a series of favorable articles on Claude based on the report. Liberal church forces, along with other professional and civil-rights organizations, were enlisted to help combat the tremendous forces of reaction in the city, and the PIAR leadership played a crucial role in negotiations to end Detroit's second major war-time race riot in June, 1943.

As the war ended, the churches who sponsored the Williams' work bowed to the concerted counterattack

on Claude by Smith, Norris, Carl McIntyre, and the House Un-American Activities Committee. Charges of heresy were brought against a Presbyterian minister for the first time in over one hundred years. (The inevitable guilty verdict came down in 1954.) The PIAR continued for several more years, but like all progressive forces during the McCarthy years, found the going rough. In a ceremony at St. Paul's Chapel in Brooklyn on July 20, 1948, the PIAR brought its formal history to a close, all members vowing to continue as volunteers of the Way of Righteousness.

IV

Underlying and informing the Williams' work throughout the years has been a concept of religion which, at the least, is out of the ordinary. Those who came in contact with the People's Institute of Applied Religion heard its application to the problems of their own time and place. Only a few are familiar with its basic assumptions and the great detail in which the Biblical story is spelled out. There is space here only to indicate its outlines.

There are several things that religion is not. It is not a belief in anything supernatural. It is not a belief in a divine force outside human life which directs events. Assuredly, it is not the church or the practice of any organized religion. Nor is it theology, an intellectual discipline which assumes a fundamental distance between God and people. Rather, Biblical religion is a way of comprehending reality that "deals solely with the intangible facts of existence and

communicates these facts by a symbolic language, by legend, by myth, miracle, parable and allegory." Religion does not pretend to be science or history. But it does insist that the intangible facts of existence are as real as the tangible, and that the intangible, in fact, gives "warmth and feeling and meaning" to the objective world.

Certain key words are important for understanding the nature of the intangible. One is the word "qualitative," which implies that the nature of reality is personal, that it has to do essentially with human beings and their welfare.

"I believe God is a symbol of the qualitative unity of reality. I don't believe God is a person like we think of a person. But I think personality, communication, thought, things like that are inherent in the universe. I don't believe I'm alone. I believe there is a qualitative essence in the universe of which I am an integral part, and to which I must be loyal to attain my greatest potential. So, I am religious, but I don't believe in supernaturalism as such."

Another descriptive word is "comprehensive." All things are one; life is not defined by any dualism, Greek or otherwise. The physical, rational and emotional in people are distinct from one another, but they are not separate. They comprise a totality, and to treat people as though they can be fragmented into parts violates the intangible reality of life.

Likewise, people are not separate from one another. They are not isolated individuals but social beings who are inevitably bound to one another. They do not live in a world where the spiritual and the material are separate. The intangible meanings of life are to be found here and now, in our daily activity. The Kingdom of God is a goal to be achieved continually in this world. It is a collective struggle for the good, which is itself comprehensive. The good implies living and working together in a society where everyone has food and clothing and shelter, where everyone is encouraged to learn and imagine and create, and where people care for the natural world around them. For the good to be realized, belief and action can not be separated. In the words of the Son of Man, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of

my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

The source of this understanding is the Bible. Of course, the way Claude and Joyce understand the Bible has changed a great deal over the years. During the 1930s, a friend gave Claude a copy of Lenin's *State and Revolution*, and he declared it "the most revealing commentary on the Bible I had ever seen." As he pondered how the Bible would read in light of this new perspective, he tried an experiment which he later described in a 1947 publication of the PIAR entitled *Religion: Barrier or Bridge to a People's World*:

"In order to bring out in bold relief the class lines of the Bible, take the following simple steps. Write down what any intelligent person knows — that the issues of today demand racial, economic and political justice for all people. Then take the Bible and underline with a red pencil all passages which support these ends. With a black pencil, mark the passages which defeat these ends, by escapism or confusion.

"The simplest reader will see Abraham, Moses, the prophets, John the Baptist, the Nazarene, Peter, Stephen, James and others as leaders of the people and at one with them in their fight. He will see Ahab, Jezebel and other robber-murderers; Pharaoh with his taskmasters, magicians and soothsayers; the landlords with their winter and summer houses; church religion with its false prophets, high priests, priests of the second order; the Baals, Caesars, Herods and Pilates — all these as spoilers of unity, oppressors of the people and enemies of justice.

"Here is the foundation of a people's interpretation of the Bible."

Over the years, this "people's interpretation of the Bible" has crystallized into a systematic account of a people's movement that Claude calls "The Way of Righteousness." It is the story of a self-conscious movement of poor and oppressed people beginning with Abraham, a movement that waxed and waned on the basis of political circumstances throughout Old Testament times and always couched its class dynamic in religious terms. Its contours first take dramatic form in the Exodus, when a number of Semitic tribes enslaved by the pharaohs of Egypt unite and rebel. It continues through the time of the kings of Israel, when a prophetic opposition per-

sonified in Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah and Isaiah — protests the oppression of the common people by Israel's corrupt rulers, enduring death and persecution for its efforts. It traces the beginnings of class internationalism in the writings of Isaiah, Elisha and Elijah, and in the story of Jonah.

Then, the account relates how the Way, which for many years after the Prophets had existed underground, goes public again when Rome unites the world's poor in a common condition by declaring a universal tax. Spoken for by the Son of Man and John the Baptist, who were born into families of the Way and trained for leadership, the movement becomes so successful that John is beheaded and the Son of Man barely escapes execution.

After resurfacing at Pentecost under the leadership of Peter and James, the movement prospers and spreads throughout the Roman Empire, despite the efforts of the Pharisee Paul to deflect its revolutionary content into an other-worldly theological individualism which is always deferential to the Roman establishment. Finally, the movement becomes so serious that, three hundred years after the Son of Man, the emperor Constantine becomes a Christian himself, thereby absorbing the movement into the Roman establishment and leaving it for a much later day for the spirit of the Way of Righteousness to re-emerge.

The methods of the underground are drawn in great detail. All activities of the Way are collective. Thus, while Moses or Jeremiah or the Son of Man or Peter may appear in the scripture as spokesmen, behind them is an organized movement working in intricate ways to carry out its goals. The "multitudes" who gather to hear the Son of Man do not appear magically but are the product of hard organizational work. The Way is shrewd enough to cultivate friends in strategic high places, such as Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the ruling Jewish Sanhedrin, and the several centurions of the Roman occupying army mentioned in the New Testament.

The Way is organized secretly, as would be necessary for any underground movement, and is required to speak in indirect and symbolic language. Thus, "houses" (e.g. Mary and Martha) are centers of underground activity and entrance is gained only by

password; "angels" are underground messengers; the "wilderness" usually refers to conferences of the underground, where strategies are considered and decided; and "cleansing unclean spirits" actually refers to encounters with people who are dissuaded from liberal reform, nationalism, adventurous violence and other prevalent ideologies among those who imperfectly oppose Rome.

Those familiar with the "theology of liberation" are aware that the "Way of Righteousness" closely resembles several contemporary theologies which also identify the struggle of poor against rich as the basic theme of the Bible. Unlike some, the Way is not a document written by a professional theologian and published for discussion in the seminaries. Like others, it is something that must be done. And true to its own perspective, it bears the marks of a particular historical experience.

The work of the People's Institute of Applied Religion was based on the important notion that political movements need to meet people with an openness to the positive convictions and yearnings they express within their own frame of reference. The PIAR began by taking this approach to the religious rural poor of the South. In the interaction the Institute learned some important things about the people and their religion, and in its own unique way the Institute offered these lessons to the broader radical movement of the time.

From the whites, they learned that otherworldliness and fierce moralism are essentially a protest against, an escape from, conditions which starve and torment and rob people who have no effective way to resist. From black people, they learned that religion is all these things and more. It is also a way of looking at the world which embraces life's misery yet finds joy in the present and hope in the future, and which is willing to move politically when the realistic opportunity arises. The willingness of both groups to join an interracial movement for economic justice under the most threatening conditions, and to do so within their religious faith, gave witness to the Institute's perceptiveness. It was these people, hundreds of poor black and white believers, who joined with the Williams and the PIAR to write a new chapter in the "Way of Righteousness."

A Place of Their Own

by Thelma Stevens

In 1895, at the age of 80, Elizabeth Cady Stanton published *The Woman's Bible*, a critique of woman's role and image in the Bible. Pointing out that the scripture itself was a source of women's subjugation and dismissing the story of Adam's rib as a "petty surgical operation," *The Woman's Bible* was considered scandalous and sacrilegious, arousing protest from clergy as well as women suffragists.

For centuries, the theological view of woman which undergirds the policies and structures of the church has followed a strictly conservative interpretation of the Bible. Consequently, no other institution in society has more overtly and more consistently kept women in their "place" than the church. Whenever women attempted to become involved in the social movements of their day, they met swift and harsh response from the clergy.

A pastoral letter from the Council of Congregationalist Ministers of Massachusetts is typical of the reaction to women's involvement in the Abolitionist Movement:

The appropriate duties and influence of woman are clearly stated in the New Testament The power of woman is her dependence, flowing from the consciousness of that weakness which God has given her for her protection When she assumes the place and tone of man as a public reformer. . . she yields the power which God has given her . . . and her character becomes unnatural."

The Women abolitionists persisted, however, and were soon drawing their own parallels about liberation. South Carolinian Sarah Grimke was among the most outspoken:

All history attests that man has subjugated woman to his will, used her as a means to promote his selfish . . . pleasure . . . but never has he desired to elevate her to the rank she was created to fill. He has done all he could to enslave and debase her mind . . . and says the being he has thus injured is his inferior. . . I ask no favors for my sex . . . All I ask of our brethren is that they take their feet off our neck and permit us to stand upright on the ground which God designed us to occupy."

Forced to beg, and occasionally demand their rights, first as professional workers, then as laity, and lastly as clergy, church women have consistently been in the position of having to do battle for their own rights in order to carry out their moral concern for the rights of others. In the course of these struggles, women began to discover their own capabilities as well as the restrictions they faced. Though they were able to operate effectively through separate "women's work" organizations such as the ladies aid and missionary societies, they continued to find themselves in the position of the powerless and the petitioner in regard to official church policy.

Methodist women in the South have long played a leading role in this fight to gain a position within the church from which they could express and implement their own concerns. At the Methodist General Conference in 1880, Frances Willard, newly elected national president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), requested ten minutes to bring greetings to the body. A two-hour debate on the request followed. One delegate threatened to use all parliamentary measures to block her appearance even after two-thirds of the delegates voted to hear her speak. Finally, she sent a note "to her Honored Brethren" saying that she declined

Thelma Stevens, originally from Mississippi, has been a "full-time church worker" all of her adult life. While a student at Hattiesburg State Teachers College in the late '20s, she became involved in the YWCA and organized interracial meetings between the students from the college and black school-teachers in the town. The meetings had to stop when she was ordered by the college president to "stop building a climate for training yankee school-teachers." After graduation from Scarritt College, she became the director of the Bethlehem Center in Augusta, Georgia. When the various branches of Methodism united in 1939, she became the executive director of Christian Social Relations for the newly created Women's Division of Christian Service and remained in that position until her retirement in the early '70s.

the ten minutes they had been so kind to allow her.

Eight years later, Frances Willard returned to the General Conference as one of five elected women delegates. The Committee on Eligibility voted eleven to six against seating women, stating that the vote to permit lay participation had referred only to men. The ensuing floor debate continued for one week, and the women eventually lost by 39 votes. The gentlemanly delegates then voted to pay their travel expenses.

Attempts to become a part of the larger church structure continued unsuccessfully, despite the fact that women continued to carry the weight of the Methodist Church's local programs and missions. Their community work went practically unnoticed in the larger picture; records of the participation of women in church history are as scarce as hen's teeth.

But participate they did — funnelling their energies into separate women's organizations that became vital to the church as a whole. At first, men viewed the Ladies Aid Societies as a welcome right arm, a "service arm" of the church, functioning at the behest of the male pastor, with no share in making church policies. But under the effective leadership of women like Belle Harris Bennett and

Lucinda and Mary Helm, local women's mission societies, which had sprung up all over the South, were united in a region-wide Woman's Home Mission Society. Autonomous and democratically organized, this new structure gave Southern women an unprecedented opportunity to gain administrative skills, self-confidence and experience in running their own affairs. Under its auspices, Methodist women introduced the settlement house movement to the South and sought to implement the concerns of the social gospel.

Feeling the need for full-time workers, the Woman's Home Mission Society petitioned the general conference in 1902 to create the office of deaconess, thus providing recognition for a new breed of professional women church workers. When the request was presented to the conference, the delegates feared that such official recognition would lead to women aspiring to the ministry; others thought it would replace the minister entirely. One man simply said, "this is heresy."

In order to allay their suspicions, Mary Helm wrote an article in *Our Homes* magazine (the official publication of the Home Missionary Society) explaining in part that a deaconess is *not* a preacher and *not* ordained. She also felt compelled to explain further that a deaconess does not wear a



photo by Baldwin-Watriss

nun's habit and is not a begger. Typically each new gain was won only against the bitter opposition of those who feared that women's work in the church might serve as a dangerous foothold for feminism.

The movement for laity rights for women in the Southern Methodist Church was given impetus by an attack on the hard-won autonomy of the Women's Home Mission Society. Without consulting the women, the Board of Missions combined the Society with the more conservative Foreign Mission Society and subordinated both under its male-dominated administrative structure. Without a voice in church policy, women leaders had no choice but to submit or resign. In response, they launched a campaign for laity rights which paralleled the larger, secular movement for woman suffrage. After winning the right to serve as voting delegates to the General Conference in 1918, Southern women began the long struggle for ordination.

When the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, convened with the Methodist Episcopal Church, North, and the Methodist Protestant Church in a unifying conference in 1939, women were still bat-

tling for the rights of clerical ordination. The 1938 General Conference of the Southern Methodists had left intact its church policy that "Our church does not recognize women as preachers, with authority to occupy the pulpit, to read the Holy Scriptures, and to preach as ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ; nor does it authorize a preacher in charge to invite a woman claiming to be a minister . . . to occupy our pulpit to expound the scriptures as a preacher. Such invitations and services are against the authority and order of the church."

Following the union of the three branches, the newly created Women's Division of Christian Service included within its structure a standing committee on the role and status of women, with similar committees on all organizational levels. One of its major objectives was to secure full clergy rights for women. It was seventeen years later, in 1956, after extensive debate, that clergy rights were finally granted. The General Conference that year had little alternative — it had received some 20,000 resolutions from women's groups across the country.

The organization of the Women's Division provided a valuable and effective channel for women's full participation in the church structure. The Division became one of the most powerful and

The strength of our organization is in the power of the volunteers. If we have 36,000 societies, that means we have 36,000 presidents. If we have 600 districts, we have 600 district presidents with officers in the district. There are 73 conferences with 73 conference presidents and all the conference officers of that region. So, you see, if there's any strength at all in the program that we create, it comes from the fact that you've got alert, trained volunteers at all the steps of the organization.

This is one of the reasons why Methodist women work effectively many times — not always, I'm sorry to say — but many times, more times than not. It's because they've got a channel of communication, you see, step by step. And the most important is the local, when the news gets home, gets down to the local church.

Over the years some very wonderful policies have been set by the Women's Division, and we've taken action on things that upset the apple cart a lot of times.

People were awfully troubled and upset about it. But, in due time, it worked out.

I remember the first annual meeting we had after I moved to New York. Two of the recommendations that our department brought to the Women's Division were these. One was that we work for Social Security for domestic workers. The other was that we demand a union label on all the printed material of the Women's Division. Now, those two recommendations, in December of 1941, really rocked the building. You just can't imagine it.

We had one old lady, about ninety years old, the outgoing president of the Woman's Home Missionary Society, that had merged, you see, with the Division. And she was on the board on a temporary basis for the transition. Well, she just had forty-eleven fits about the recommendation for union labels. But she was all for the payment of Social Security to domestic workers. Another older woman from Kentucky, who was also there for the transition quadren-

active arms of the United Methodist Church, particularly in the realm of Christian social concern.

It is in the area of racial justice that the Women's Division has perhaps had the most impact. A Commission of Race Relations was created as early as 1920 in the Southern church, at the urging of Belle H. Bennett. The Commission helped lay the groundwork for women's involvement in the interracial movement after World War I. In the '30s, Methodist women were active in the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching, founded by Jessie Daniel Ames, a Texas Methodist.

Following World War II, the Division organized "demobilization workshops" across the country. Among other things their goals were to develop strategies for transforming defense industries into peacetime industries, to conserve gains achieved for minorities and women in job opportunities, and to insure the continuation of integration efforts.

In the late '40s, Dorothy Tilly of Atlanta was the moving force in initiating and promoting an organization known as The Fellowship of the Concerned, an ecumenical and inter-religious group with members from 13 Southern states. The Fellowship was primarily concerned with achieving justice in the courts, and later, with mobilizing support for the 1954 Supreme Court decision on school integra-

tion. Mrs. Tilly, who served as jurisdiction secretary of Christian Social Relations in the Woman's Society of Methodist Women in the southeastern region, had a ready-made base of many hundreds of Methodist women who played a major role in the organization.

When Truman created the Commission on Civil Rights, Mrs. Tilly was among its nine members. The Commission released its report in 1947; in December of that year, she reported its findings to the annual meeting of the Women's Division. As a result of her report, a special study on human rights was initiated for Methodist women in 1948-49 to help prepare Methodist women for the changes coming in the '50s.

As the decade of the '40s drew to a close, the nation was beset with McCarthy's witchhunts and Communist labels. The Women's Division, sensing the need for an informed and concerned electorate, authorized a National Roll Call for Methodist Women urging their political participation at all levels. The call that went forth stated in part:

I have set before you life and death . . . choose life . . . World peace, freedom, justice for all mankind are not achieved by apathetic, indifferent Christians. Conflicts in ideology are not resolved by failure to face controversial issues. Community practices are not

nium, she stood up and said, well, she didn't know that she minded union labels, but she couldn't bear the thought of paying Social Security to domestic workers. So that body of some sixty women had one big discussion. Finally they tabled both recommendations.

After the session adjourned, I was in my office. I knew they wouldn't accept them, but you see, it was an education to bring up the recommendations, and have them discussed. This woman from Kentucky came into my office. She stood in front of my desk and said, "Thelma, I know you think I'm awful."

"No, I don't," I said.

"Well, I'll tell you what I came in here for. I want you to give me some material to read on this Social Security for domestic workers." She said, "I'm not just plumb down on it, but I just don't know anything about it. I don't think I like it, but I want to know what it's all about. And I'll be honest. If I find out I think it's all right,

then I'll come back and tell you, and I'll vote for it."

Well, nearly a year later she came in and said, "Well, I've got something to tell you. I want you to bring that recommendation back in on Social Security for domestic workers, because I want to speak for it." And sure enough we did.

We brought the union label one back too and we got it passed, years later, modified. The only thing they would be willing to say was that the Christian Social Relations Department could have its materials with a union label on it. So we did, from that day on. We had all our materials that were published specifically for the department, with union labels. We had to have all our materials printed outside the Methodist publishing house.

The above recollections of the Women's Division of Christian Service are excerpted from an interview with Thelma Stevens conducted by Jacquelyn Hall, director of the Southern Oral History Program, University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill.

changed by worshippers of tradition — born too late. Good laws are not enacted and enforced by citizens who fail to vote. The rights to food, a home, a good life will not be guaranteed the children of the world by a society geared to materialism and personal profits. The UN will not be strengthened by people with no knowledge of its achievements nor of the issues confronting it.

In 1951, the Women's Division published an 800-page volume of *State Laws on Race and Color*. This marked the first time any effort had been made to collate the state and local laws of the nation in regard to race. The vast resource was compiled by Dr. Pauli Murray, a young, black woman lawyer from North Carolina. Following the 1954 Supreme Court decision, Dr. Murray prepared a "Five Year Supplement." Her distinguished work was hailed as an important landmark in providing factual data about such laws. For Methodist women it provided needed information about their own state laws and local ordinances.

The Women's Division adopted in 1952 its first "Charter of Racial Policies," a commitment to full and equal participation that was later ratified by all the participating conferences. When the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court was announced, the

Methodist women, who were in session at their Quadrennial assembly, immediately adopted a resolution of gratitude and support, and called for Methodist women throughout the country to work for its implementation.

The civil rights movement of the '60s was also a time of involvement for Methodist women, calling forth a nationwide upsurge of support as well as a groundswell of fear, violence, and opposition. Women of the church played important roles on both sides. Great numbers marched, raised bail money, and wrote letters in support of civil rights legislation. Others supported violence, and the philosophy of racial segregation.

As the Women's Division moved into the decade of the '70s, it renewed its emphasis for the full and complete integration of women into positions of lay and clergy on all levels. The 1972 General Conference created a Commission on the Status and Role of Women, mandated to work with all the agencies of the church to build structures that provide equal participation and responsibility of women in every part of the church's life. The Division has also established new channels for encouraging women, both lay and clergy, to develop and utilize their skills for effecting change in the present male-oriented church and society.



photo by Sue Thrasher

The Meeting

for Aunt Neva

by Lee Howard

Lord Gal
you have no idea
what meeting meant to me
Why I'd walk these seven miles
to Burning Springs School
ever' day of this world
and ever' 6 months of this world
there'd be a revival
starting sundown
and going til either
all the souls had been saved
or the preacher grew hoarse
whichever came first
So I'd come home
and eat supper
and then a whole big gang of us
would walk Fogertown Road
up to where Burning Springs Church of God
is still yet standing
And to tell you the truth
I could not tell you a word the preacher said
All the fun was in the coming and the going
Well there was one night
that we were all there
and about the time
that the preacher had worked himself into a fever
and the people were shouting Glory
and shaking full of the Lord
Troy Estridge came stumbling drunk
into the churchhouse
and set himself pretty as you please
right between me and your Aunt Lucy
Well he went to talking right big and out loud
and I was ashamed
and told him to go outside
if he was going to carry on like that
Well sure enough he up and left
and then we heard a scuffle
He and David Turner had got into a fight
over David's sister, Lena
See David didn't believe
Troy was good enough for her
and soon enough there was a knife
in David's stomach
Well I reckon all hell broke loose
and soon there was fire cracking
from guns swinging in drunk men's hands
in the vestibule of the church
And I can assure you

that it is a better woman than me
who can tell
which was in the worser condition
David or the gun
Whatever the reason
his aim was less than straight
and he caught Dennis Thompson right in the chin
while trying to find his target in Troy
Well the preacher opened a window
and in the midst of more screaming
than a mid-wife would hear in a lifetime
we began to crawl out the back of the church
The crowd was pushing and shoving
as Lucy and me inched our way along
and when we got to the altar
Old Sis Hogg Jones was there on her knees
paying no more mind to us
than if we were a flock of chickens
squeezing into the henhouse at feeding time
And then she caught my eye
and stopped her praying long enough to say
"Neva, why do you worry
we are in the Lord's house
and whatever could happen to us here?
Why this is just a sign of what's to come
And you may well believe
I for one am not surprised
Now just kneel down here
and pray with me
for these poor souls
the devil has marked for sure to die"
I said "Thank you kindly Sister Hogg
but I believe I'll just go along here for the ride"
So out the window I went
along with all the others
And bye the bye
the shooting stopped
and David was taken to Daddy Doc's
who assured us
it was only due to his belt buckle
that he was still alive
And we all went home
with stories
and more excitement
than three revivals could generally raise
And next evening
you can be sure
I was at the meeting
though I could not tell you
a thing the preacher had to say

Lee Howard grew up in rural eastern Kentucky; she now lives in Washington, D.C. A collection of her poems will be featured in the forthcoming special issue of Southern Exposure on women in the South.

“We believed in the family and The Old Regular Baptist Church”

by Ron Short



photo by David Massey

When I was nineteen years old, I joined the Air Force, mainly because my one year of college had been less than satisfying and I had absolutely no idea of what else to do. The education that I gained during the next four years changed my attitudes about a great many things. In truth, it was my first extended encounter with the world outside the mountains of Appalachia. I found quickly that my life had been very different from my fellow

airmen.

It was the first time I was ever offended by the use of the word “hillbilly.” At least I was not alone. A friend from high school had joined with me, and even though they probably didn’t deserve it, two other young men were labeled hillbillies because they were from Arkansas.

When you join the Air Force, they issue identification tags that you are expected to keep on your person at all

times until you leave the service. I thought the process of obtaining “dog tags” would be the easiest thing I had thus far encountered during my brief military career. A young sergeant sat behind a metal stamping machine, a complicated version of the bus station model. I handed him a piece of paper with my name, newly-assigned serial number, blood type and religious preference – the latter two are required in case you are wounded and

need blood, a minister, or both. We had no trouble until we got to religious preference.

"Old Regular Baptist."

"What's this?"

"Sir?"

"What the hell is this Old Regular Baptist?"

"It's the church I go to, sir."

"Where the hell are you from, boy?"

"Southwest Virginia."

"Oh, West Virginia."

"No sir, Virginia, the southwestern part."

"If you're from Virginia, then say you're from Virginia and if you're a Baptist, then say you're a Baptist. Don't give me all this crap about southwest and Old Regular. Are you a Baptist or not?"

"Yes sir, I guess I am."

I rationalized the encounter by feeling sorry for a man who had to spend his days sitting behind a machine stamping out little metal tags. Still, I was disturbed by his attitude, and was immediately defensive. The Old Regular Baptist Church was the only church I had ever known.

After several weeks, it was decided that we would all go to church on Sunday. It was, in fact, part of our training schedule; we were divided by denomination and marched off to church. By that time, I had been further defined out of the general category of Baptist and into the much broader category of Protestant. Even my Arkansas friends knew when to stand and when to sit, when to repeat lines or when to be silent. I bobbed up and down, mumbled words and followed as closely as possible the actions of everyone else. The closest I came to prayer was my fervent wish for the service to end.

It was a confusing time for me. One of the more disturbing aspects of the experience, however, hinged on an area that was somewhat of a surprise. Although I had always attended church, I had never considered myself a religious person. Only once before had I seriously questioned my feelings about the matter. While lying in bed with a pillow tucked up under my side

Ron Short grew up in the Old Regular Baptist Church in southwest Virginia. He is on the staff of the Highlander Research and Education Center and is editor of Highlander Reports.

to relieve the pain of a brand new appendectomy, I had been easily cornered by an evangelical preacher who wanted to know if I were a Christian. When I answered an honest "no," according to my own definition, he immediately promised I was bound for hell. Since I thought I was going to die anyway, I did some thinking about my religious convictions. Two days later, however, these thoughts had subsided with the pain.

Now I was discovering that this

minister was not the only one who had no way of knowing what I meant by being a Christian.

The Old Regular Baptist Church was once the center of Appalachian community life. Stressing the need to establish unity and cooperation among its own members and to act as a working example of harmony, its influence extended into the broader

*Wintertime in the mountains,
And the snow is fallin' down;
Daddy's loadin' the pickup truck,
To haul the "bakker" into town;
There'll be new shoes for me and Sara,
And for Momma a new gown;
Peppermint sticks and orange slices,
When Christmas rolls around.*

Chorus

*We believed in the family,
And the Old Regular Baptist Church;
And we believed in John L. for a while,
Till things couldn't get much worse;
They tell me times was harder then,
And I remember that for a while;
But, I remember the way my Daddy laughed,
And the way my Momma smiled.*

*My Daddy would come home from workin' in the mines,
With his shirt frozen to his arms;
And ever'time my Momma would cry,
He'd laugh and say, "It won't do me no harm;
You know a man's got to work for a livin' today,
And come spring I want to build a new barn;
But a man can't raise a family no more,
On a rocky hillside farm."*

Chorus

*July meetin' on a hillside,
For family that's passed away;
The preacher talks of their lives,
And prays for a brighter day;
Brothers and Sisters shoutin',
Oh Lord, how they could sing;
Raisin' their voices to the sky,
They made the mountains ring.*

Chorus

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community. Today, the church still clings tenaciously to its religious traditions and to its own view of the spirit of Christianity and the Word of God. Yet in an age of massive cultural and technological advancement, it is often viewed as a unique sect of backwoods Christians with neither the mentality nor the spirit to survive. But to me, this church, which embodies the spirit of unity, cooperation, harmony and fellowship, is the very essence of Christianity.

The denomination traces its history back to the internal splits between the

Arminians, the Calvinists, and Revivalists. There is no national organization and no one designated spokesman. Each church is separate and independent. Churches in a several county area form their own association and annually elect one elder as moderator, the religious and spiritual leader of the entire association.

Although I had always attended the Old Regular Baptist Church, I was never a member. Only those people who have been baptized are considered members; the rest of the community is the congregation. Church seats are

arranged accordingly. Covering nearly a third of the floor space is a raised platform for preachers and members. The congregation sits behind and below them on a long bench seats arranged in typical church fashion. Women and men sit separately.

The Old Regulars' belief in the great magnitude and responsibility of being a church member and the importance of the individual's decision to receive God into his total life outweighs their desire to swell the ranks of the church. There is no pressure from church members to stimulate others in the community to join. There are no revivals and no membership drives; no undue influence is brought on family and friends. My great grandfather, J. C. Swindall, was moderator of the Union Association of southwest Virginia and East Kentucky for 42 years, yet only three of his nine children joined the church and they did so only after they were married with families of their own.

After each meeting, the closing minister opens the church for new members. Any person who has reached the "age of accountability," usually 14 or 15, may come forward and express their desire to join the church. Usually the prospective member will relate how he or she has come to this decision. It is obvious that the deliberation has been careful and long and, in many cases, related to a personal religious experience.

Any dissent from a church member can keep the prospective member from being received into the church. However, the person who raised the question must be prepared to defend his reservations with church doctrine. There is usually no question of acceptance, and a time and place is set for baptism.

The Old Regulars baptize by total immersion, usually in a stream or river near a church. One of the more interesting by-products of stripmining in Appalachia is the difficulty the church now has in finding unpolluted streams or rivers for their baptisms.

Baptism is one immersion in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. As the new member wades from the water into the arms of family and other church members, he is greeted by glorious shouting and singing.

Members retain lifetime membership in the church where they are bap-

Tracing Back the Old Regular Baptist Church

- 1 The Apostle John was with Christ on the Mount where the church was established.
- 2 Polycarp was baptized by John on the 25th of December, 95 A.D.
- 3 Polycarp organized the Partus Church at the foot of the Tiber, 150 A.D. and Tortullon was a member of that body.
- 4 Tortullon from the Partus Church organized the Turan Church at Turan, Italy, 237 A.D.
- 5 Telesman, a member of the Partus Church, organized the Pontifossi Church at the foot of the Alps in France, 398 A.D.
- 6 Adromicus came from the Pontifossi Church and organized the Darethea Church in Asia Minor, 671 A.D.
- 7 Archer Flavin from the Darethea Church organized the Timto Church, 738 A.D.
- 8 Balcola, from the Timto Church in Asia Minor, organized the Lima Piedmont Church, 812 A.D.
- 9 Aaron Arlington was ordained in 940 A.D. by the Lima Piedmont Church.
- 10 Aaron Arlington organized the Hillcliff Church, 987 A.D.
- 11 The Hillcliff Church, located in Wales, shows in its records that members of the Church came to America and later became members of the Philadelphia Association.
- 12 Dr. John Clark, from the Church of Wales, came to America with four others and organized the first Baptist Church in this country at Newport, Rhode Island, 1638 A.D.
- 13 The Church of Rhode Island helped organize the first Baptist Association, the Philadelphia Association, in 1707.
- 14 The Philadelphia Association organized the Katocton Association in Virginia in 1766.
- 15 The Katocton Association organized the Hosten Association in North Carolina in 1783.
- 16 The Hosten Association organized the South Elkhorn Association in Kentucky in 1784.
- 17 The South Elkhorn Association organized the South Kentucky Association in 1787, which became the South District and North District of United Baptist in 1801.
- 18 The North District organized the Burning Springs Association in 1813.
- 19 The Burning Springs Association organized the New Salem Association in 1825 and the Paint Union in 1837. These too were called United Baptist.
- 20 The New Salem Association, mother church of The Old Regular Baptists, organized the Mate's Creek Association in 1849 and the Union Association in 1859. The Union Association played a crucial role in the final evolution of the Old Regular Church.
- 21 The Old Regular Churches today trace their development from the New Salem and Union Associations. The Doctrine that was established in 1894 is maintained relatively intact today with very few changes in the "old style" of worship.

tized, but may transfer without rebaptism to a new church with a letter of recognition from the old. Any member of another denomination must be rebaptized into the old Regular. "Backsliders," as my granny called them, can re-establish church membership if they show proper signs of repentance for their wayward actions and upon examination can convince the other members of their desire to return to church.

Church services follow closely the schedules of the old days when preachers were scarce in a community, and services were held on alternate weekends.

The furnishings of the church are bare necessities. The front wall usually contains pictures of beloved elders who have contributed their life to the church; inspirational pictures and wall plaques may hang there as well. There is a communal water bucket and dipper. Children often wander from the lap of a relative on the stand to the parent who sits with the congregation and anyone may come and go at will during the service. This is in no way considered a breach of etiquette. Only the very new churches have indoor toilets and many still do not have central heating. Air conditioners are almost non-existent, so many local businessmen still pass out fans with a picture of Jesus on one side and an advertisement on the other.

Each church has an Elder who serves as Moderator and primary preacher, although any preacher in full fellowship may preach also. Elders in the Church are treated with great respect. They are not trained and educated for the ministry, but are "called," their abilities derived from the power of God.

New elders must be baptized church members and must receive sanction from other preachers within his church to take on the role. After a trial period to test speaking ability and knowledge of the Scriptures, which may last from a few months to a year, a special presbytery of church members is appointed to further question the candidate. If all members of the group are in agreement, an elder then "lays" hands upon the Brother and ordains him. Elders receive no pay

and, unless they are retired, work at a regular job, assuming all costs of their ministerial duties.

Although some have inferred that the preachers' sermons are random rambling loosely based on the Bible, specific biblical texts are chosen and carried through to conclusion. Since several preachers may preach on any given day and the order is determined just prior to the beginning of service, an idea may be abandoned if another minister delivers his sermon on that text. Sermons are not written and the Old Regular minister must rely heavily

on his knowledge of the Bible and "a double portion of the Sweet Spirit" to get him through. It is not uncommon for a preacher who flounders to be "sung down" by the members. They may also be sung down if they tend toward long-windedness, for Old Regular services are uncommonly long even in normal circumstances.

There is no way to relate the emotional impact of Old Regular Baptist singing. There is no music but the



photo from Photographic Archives/Alice Lloyd College

voice. The songs are “lined,” sung by one person and then repeated by the group. This practice comes from a time when there was a shortage of songbooks and from the fact that the melodies, which do not follow standard notation, have depended on the oral tradition for their continuation. The melodies are closely “modal” and are hard to follow using the standard scale of music. Without drastic changes they cannot be translated for musical accompaniment. Although there are now abundant songbooks, they contain only words, no music.

The songs maintain the “long meter” tradition with great emphasis on feeling rather than rhythm. To some, the sound is melancholy and mournful; for others, it is a glimpse into the very soul of man. Some people, in their uneasiness, try to deal with it by laughing or total silence, but no one can ignore it.

It is common for people who like to sing to exchange songs they learned in church, and I am often asked to sing some of mine. Though I understand their interest, I cannot bring myself to do it. In many cases, the words are familiar because the Old Regulars sim-

ply adopt any song they like. The delivery, however, is a different matter. The first time I heard “Amazing Grace” outside of church, I believed it to be a popularized rendition of an Old Regular Baptist hymn. It is deeply satisfying to sing these songs, but at the same time, it calls for deep reflection in order to approach their true quality.

In their practice of the sacraments, the Old Regular Baptists interpret literally the words of the Bible. The bread is unleavened, usually baked by the wife of the deacon. The wine may be real or it may be grape juice. Women partake of the bread and wine separately from the men. Each takes a small bite and a swallow of wine and passes it to the next person until all have shared.

As the singing continues, the deacons and usually their wives prepare basins of water and towels for the foot washing. One by one the Brethren and Sisters kneel and wash each other’s feet, drying them with a towel which hangs from the waist. Here, vanity is cast aside, and their faces reflect the great joy in the humbleness of this

act.

Memorial services are scheduled on a yearly basis. In my memory this date has never changed. I know that wherever I am, on the third Saturday and Sunday of July, memorial services for my great-grandfather and other members of my family and community will be held.

Memorial services were the first church services I ever attended. My mother and father took me to the graveyard where we sat in an open shed built of skinned poles and a tin roof. The structure was built on the slope of a hillside and the seats, made of rough boards nailed to small poles, rose gradually with the hill, so that everyone could look down upon the platform in front which serves as a stand for the preachers and members. Many structures such as this are still used yearly in Appalachia.

Memorial services are a time of great excitement and joy as well as remembrance. For some, it serves as an annual reunion. Hospitality and community spirit run high; cooking may go on for weeks prior to the meeting.

Saturday is a warm-up day, with



photo by Rob Amberg

services at the church. On Sunday, everyone gathers on the hillside, dressed in their finest, be it a new pair of overalls or black patent slippers. As the last prayer ends, the somber air is instantly transformed with shouts of "Ever'body who'll go home with me is welcome." People from the community, especially families of the deceased, are expected to ask everyone in sight.

I had a great-uncle whose name was Columbus, though everyone called him "Burrhead." It was said that he sold moonshine, and memorial time was about the only time he attended church. His wife had been dead for many years and he lived a bare existence. Yet each year his voice was first and loudest, "Ever'body who'll go home with me is welcome." Everyone knew that it was doubtful he had anything prepared, but everyone also knew he would share whatever he had.

I remember a conversation my Dad had with him which was repeated almost yearly by someone. "Why don't you come on down to the house and eat with us. You can save your food and eat it next week. It'll keep."

"Well, I believe you've talked me right into it," he said with a laugh.

Though there have been drastic

changes in the life styles of many Appalachian communities, the Church still plays an important role in the attitudes of the people. In their efforts to exemplify the teachings of Christ, members and Elders lend strength and assurance to those around them. Their deep personal commitment is felt but never intrudes.

As long as I can remember, there have been black preachers and members in the Old Regulars. I think it is important to point out that while this country has labored under the burden of continued racial strife, this Church has maintained the equality of people as a natural part of the Christian ethic, not as defined by the legal limits of a person's civil rights.

The Old Regulars also believe that the church must exist with total harmony among members. Each person must carefully search his heart and mind and there must be full harmony for the services to begin. Any dissent must be voiced with the full recognition that the unity of the church is broken, the most grievous state which can exist; but to stifle a question one feels should be asked is just as harmful.

Even today, there is a cooperative spirit among people in the communities of Appalachia that has its roots deep in the historical development of the region and, I believe, in the development of the Church.

As long as there are people who have taken part in the Old Regular Baptist experience, it will never die. I will most surely carry a part of it with me for as long as I live. With the great Appalachian out-migration, the church has now spread from the hills of east Kentucky and southwest Virginia to the cities of the North. Like me, many younger people are confronted with the dilemma of being part of two worlds. I call on my mountain roots for strength and security, but I live in a society that demands a more complex attitude for survival. I am still surprised at the effect the Old Regular Baptist church has on my attitudes, and the intensity with which I recall the things I saw and heard at church services. The memories may be clouded with childhood innocence, but my intellectual attitude cannot break my emotional ties. A part of me refuses to be totally swept up by a culture that has long forgotten the values that I have taken for granted most of my life.



photo by David Massey

photo courtesy of Baptist Home Mission Board



There is a time of late afternoon that is special for me, a time when all things fall together. Lines collapse. The edges of objects fade into each other. Smells and sounds mingle together. It is often a time for nostalgia though certainly not of the cheap, destructive sort. It is a time when memory chains are set off by something random and things follow one another in the logic of soft but accurate arguments. It is an important time for me, one when I reassure myself that things are good, that the children will be home soon or are enjoying their play a few houses down the street, that the people around me are not malicious, but are working out their lives in special and kindly ways even when they are, like me, confused.

Lately, I find myself whistling old hymn tunes during this time; not in a self-conscious, show-offy way, as I sometimes do when flaunting my Southern differences before slightly patronizing "general American" audiences. Rather I have found the tunes to be meaningful and real, powerful additions making the time itself still more important. These are the same tunes that are "folk songs" to a younger generation whose experiences have been limited in ways different from mine. They hum and sway as their favorite singers render "Showers of Blessing" and "What A Friend We Have In Jesus" and "Throw Out The Lifeline," believing that the tunes and words emerged from the depths of a cultural unconscious. They know nothing of such old friends as P.P. Bliss, Fanny J. Crosby, or B. B. McKinney, the people who wrote songs out of need and conviction.

When you know something by heart, you know it so well that it sings itself, without thought or examination. I often sing verse after verse of the old songs in this manner without a hymn book. And though my memory is now poor from disuse, there was a time when I could easily list the books of the Bible in order and recite lengthy passages of scripture. I could locate, on command, any verse of scripture in a matter of seconds in an exercise known as the Sword Drill ("...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Ephesians 6:17).

Accepted doctrine, approved dogma, and supportive apologetics were abundant, surrounding and comforting. They were couched in the

Being Southern Baptist on the Northern Fringe

by Horace Newcomb

highly structured ritual of informality that defines behavior in Southern Baptist life. The four Sunday services, two study and two worship; the Wednesday night "prayer meetings" consisting mostly of brief devotional talks; the Daily Bible Reading program which plotted the course of shared study and assured everyone of reading the Bible through every five years. All these things made it easily possible to know the proper words "by heart" without having to think much about their meaning or their application to daily life, which is *not* to say that they were not applied. Because almost everyone knew the same doctrines, the same words, the same rituals and hymns, "proper" behavior could be carried out in familiar and relaxing contexts, rarely questioned, seldom changed.

Such a system functions well and protects the people within it as long as it is not critically questioned. But like many other young people, I was unwilling to take it without question;

my questions led to anger and I left.

There is another meaning to knowing something "by heart," a meaning that might be phrased more accurately as knowing "with the heart," for it speaks to the process by which we know something deeply and surely, know it as right in a sense that transcends cultural and social rightness. I have begun to go to church again on Wednesday nights. In my present congregation, we do not call it "prayer meeting," though it would not bother me if we did. We speak of it as our "family night," and that, too, is a

Horace Newcomb is a graduate of Mississippi College and the University of Chicago. He teaches American Studies at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and this year is a fellow of the National Humanities Institute at the University of Chicago. He is the author of TV - The Most Popular Art (Doubleday/Anchor) and edited Television - The Critical View (Oxford University Press).

good name. A small group of young families attends, but most of the people are older. I look out at them some evenings, a sea of gray heads, some of them feeble, some twinkling, some in roisterous laughter, and see that they really are part of my family. I am glad that I can share this night with them and that my children can sense the importance of being here. I want to be a part of this group.

One of the things I want to share is the fact, the knowledge, that they have had great troubles and trials and peace and joy, and that they now know (if they have not always known) a great, powerful portion of their lives "by heart." I am knowing it, too, as best I can. I've made my way back to the Southern Baptist Church, a journey I once thought I could never make in good conscience. Strangely enough, I've about decided it is the only way I could come back, that it offers me a path that demands good hard thought and work and "heart" tasks, and is worth the effort.

I

That I, or anyone like me, should return to the church is really not difficult to understand. You do not easily root out of your life a set of behaviors that has filled as many hours, consumed energy on such a scale, and roused emotions to the degree that religion has for me. I cannot remember not going to church. I was accompanied there by my parents who were quite active in it on all levels. Later, it was the place where I met most of my friends and where activities were planned for us that covered the spectrum of our social activity and taught us proper social behavior.

The church provided a huge portion of my education that went far beyond religion in the narrow sense and into ancient history, politics, ethics and even sociology. I have always been convinced, too, that my ease in dealing with imaginative literature stems from daily reading of the King James version of the Bible. I have been directly involved in the processes of literary interpretation since the age of six. That words have deeper meaning, that groups of words lead to unusual conclusions is a mystery to many of my students, but never to me. When the lawyer asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" and He replied with a par-

able, that was only the first step. In lesson after lesson, sermon upon sermon, that parable was interpreted, applied, explicated and examined for me and by me.

Beyond this extended intellectual activity, the church educated me in matters of sex, social custom, parental relationships, attitudes toward civil authority and countless other areas. Sometimes the answers were swift, abrupt, and explicit: "Don't Do It." In other cases, there was a fearful sort of ambiguity: "Every Date Is A Potential Mate." "Love Your Neighbor" was especially tricky because of racial questions. A similar difficulty could be wandered into by taking too literally the text that "Man looketh on the outward appearance, while the Lord looketh upon the heart." In spite of this, we always dressed up for church.

It is essential to understand that this teaching was not catechistic. There was no list of rules to memorize and recite other than the Ten Commandments and their New Testament versions. There were no classes in which we formally demonstrated mastery in a specific body of man-made rules or interpretations that were agreed upon in council. Rather we were instructed to turn to the Bible as our single source for proper action and were admonished to behave as Jesus would behave in a similar circumstance. Our image of Jesus, if not austere and remote, was surely properly Southern Baptist.

The suggestion that one look to the Bible for practical instruction is not, I think, a bad one. It is a rich, tough book. The difficulty arises in the knotty area of interpretation. While admitting that the Bible states that women are not supposed to cut their hair, or men to trim their beards, or groups to use musical instruments in church, Baptists have ways out of such problems. Other groups have ways in and out of their own doctrinal mazes, and, as everyone knows, Protestantism is a giant maze of mazes that leads easily into controversy and rancor. Differing interpretations could cause problems if it were not for the fact that almost everyone in the deep South is Baptist.

As a result, Baptists define the cultural norms. It would, of course, be inaccurate to identify Southern Baptist belief and behavior with Southernness. I do not think, however, that it is too

far off the mark to say that Baptists are at the very center of the culture. It is with that realization that many of us have broken in anger our ties with this powerful, enveloping, life-consuming institution, for such an identification makes it impossible for the church to call out the major weaknesses, the sins, of the culture.

Often the break has come because of racism. For many years the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), like the ballast in a ship, has steadied the course of Southern racism, sometimes with specific doctrinal "evidence" of racial distinctions but more often by perpetuating and making comfortable the dominant values. Those few individuals and congregations who have chosen to oppose racism as their Christian duty have often been condemned and ostracized for their views. They became theologically suspect and were labelled "liberal," that basic slur which shifts easily from socio-political to theological application.

The church's stand on racism is part of a larger opinion that sees "social" issues as beyond the appropriate realm of a religious group. Intent on the cultivation of personal salvation as expressed in the moment of individual conversion, much Baptist doctrine is meant to protect the church from the impurity of social gospel issues. Selective application of the doctrine, however, permits large numbers of ministers to descend on state capitols to lobby against liberalized liquor laws. By contrast, to condemn the Viet Nam war would have been wildly out of bounds, for it would have countered the cultural context in which the church has its being.

Others have broken with the church because of its emotionalism. Its emphasis on individual commitment is used to justify highly charged manipulative techniques. The old traditions of revivalism, exhortative preaching, browbeating and guilt-tripping are all too often brought to bear on the very young. Church rolls are filled with small children because it is quite clear to them that they are expected to make their commitments between the ages of six and twelve.

I, for example, was seven or eight years old when I made my "public profession of faith." I walked down the aisle during a Sunday night service, quite sure that God had told me to do so. (Indeed, I'm still pretty sure that's

what happened. At least it was not overly premeditated and was the result of a deep emotional response on my part.) When I took the outstretched hand of our pastor, who was a good friend, he asked me if I felt that Jesus had forgiven me for all my sins. Now that's a strange question for an eight year old, even when he knows the answer. I knew that I was supposed to say "yes," though I doubt that my sense of sin was up to the standards of that particular preacher. He once found me playing ball with his son in the sanctuary of our church, took the ball from us and said that it would have to be burned. We felt bad about the whole thing, but what it really indicates is that the Southern Baptist line emphasizing the necessity of a child-like faith is not the same as being an adult and *choosing* a child-like faith. The latter is an act that demands great intellectual and theological sophistication.

Closely allied to this criticism is the view that the SBC is generally anti-intellectual, that it denies much that we know about Biblical history, about the nature of Biblical texts, and so on. But it is not merely in the realm of scholarship that the intellect is missing. Probing sermons, especially those read from notes, are suspect, and heaven help the minister who expresses his own doubts. Too often, emotionalism becomes a disturbing substitute for the kind of deeper exploration which might actually lead to deeper Christian growth.

A third allied criticism is that the Baptist Church lacks proper respect for the aesthetic qualities of worship. Gatherings are generally informal and the buzz of friendly conversation preceding the church service annoys those who wish for a quieter, more respectful atmosphere. The old hymns with their reliance on the imagery of crucifixion have come to be known as the "slaughter-house hymns," and the more sensitive worshippers object to being asked whether or not they have been "washed in the blood of the lamb."

Underlying these critical observations is a more nagging concern for the overarching pride and self-righteousness of the whole enterprise. There is, in the Convention, little sense of penitence. Indeed, the answer goes, why should there be. Southern Baptists have been, as they would say, richly

blessed. Their numbers continue to grow. Their programs flourish and move to new regions. As individuals, they are among the more prominent citizens in their communities, and they share common roots with their cousins in the farms and pasturelands of the South. The Lord has allowed them to prosper, to create a system of wealth and religious power that continues to be internally defined and that has changed little in over a hundred years.

This pride, it seems to the critic, is sinful. So the critic, especially the young one, becomes the rebel and then the outcast. The critic leaves the church and with it a great portion of his or her personal history. A gap is left in the mind. It may be replaced with political fervor for social justice, with the intellectualism that was found to be missing, with an aesthetic religious experience in a "more formal" church, with an easy humanism, or with a fervent plunge into the cults of humanistic psychology. But it cannot remain empty. Too much psychic stress pulls at the edges. In some cases, like my own, it is filled with a journey back, with an exploration of what it has meant to be Baptist at other times and places, with a reinterpretation of the old symbols. In my experience the journey back does not mean an end to criticism. If anything it means a far more vigilant attempt to make the system responsible. On arrival in the old territory I find there is much worth preserving and a potential for exceptional strength in a time of cultural flabbiness. It is not at all difficult for me to identify myself now as a Southern Baptist, but it still requires explanation.

II

The explanation must begin with the particular congregation of which I am now a part. Any Southern Baptist will certainly understand the importance of that observation, and for non-Southern Baptists it provides the best beginning for explanation. Formally, doctrinally, there is no ecclesiastical hierarchy in the Southern Baptist Convention. No one, no agency, no group, no administrator can tell an individual Southern Baptist church what to do. In practice, of course, there is not a great deal of difference among churches.

They look the same, and if asked to define their beliefs, they will sound much the same. It is important for them to affirm liberty while strongly insisting that one can't believe "just anything" and still be Southern Baptist. Basic doctrines such as the Virgin Birth, the Fatherhood of God, and the fact of the Trinity are accepted easily while exploration of the highly complex nature of such doctrines is not encouraged.

Moreover, the Southern Baptist Convention, the democratic political governing organization, wields a great deal of power and influence in the life of every affiliated congregation. Meeting annually as a group of messengers from each congregation, upwards of 12,000 individuals take care of the issues for the rest of the millions of individuals at home. Most believe that the Convention is the best way to do business. Though there are continual minor controversies over shades of liberalism and conservatism, most individual members favor the maintenance of conservative positions and are quick to criticize the more liberal agencies such as the Christian Life Commission which is charged with comment and education in the realm of social ministries.

Paradoxically, all this voting and dividing and governing has great influence in the life of the individual congregation, and no influence. The money contributed at home is spent by boards whose actions gain their final approval at Convention meetings. The Convention passes resolutions on every issue from abortion to homosexuality to votes of thanks to the host city. Yet any individual can say "this is not what I believe about abortion or homosexuality and besides I think that Norfolk was a lousy place to have the meeting." The problem, obviously, is that the individual's voice, ultimately, has little to do with the "big image" of the Southern Baptist Convention. Nevertheless it has a great deal to do with the home congregation, which is also run as a participatory democracy.

A good example of this local autonomy is my own church. Much has been said about the lack of aesthetic sophistication in Southern Baptist Churches, the missing ritual that serves to focus our devotions, tune our minds and direct appropriate actions. Yet, our preacher wears

a pulpit robe, an act that would be unacceptable in many churches. An acolyte, also robed, lights candles before each service in our church sanctuary. The choir processes formally into the church, through the congregation and into the choir loft. They sing complex music, the classics of the church, ancient and contemporary. In keeping with their excellence, paid soloists head each choir section, a practice directly counter to the Baptist tradition of volunteerism in such matters. The hymns sung by the congregation are often hymns from the Anglican tradition. The minister preaches with a stated awareness of current theological questions, often referring to contemporary theologians and popular non-sectarian apologists.

In short, to many Southern Baptists we would be too fancy, too formal, too much the up-town church to satisfy their stereotyped version of what it is to be Baptist. It would be assumed, incorrectly, that we are a "cold" church, for that goes hand-in-hand with the "formal" tag. It might also be assumed, correctly, that the church is wealthy and intellectually oriented. But in no way would these differences enable others to say that we are *not* Southern Baptists, for this is merely the way in which we choose to worship. We are tolerated by many and praised by some.

Still, the matter of music and clerical robes are surface issues. Perhaps a more indicative example would be the baptism ritual. Baptism by total immersion is one of the most important of the "Baptist distinctives" separating the church from other denominations. Indeed, this image of persons being lowered beneath the surface of water in a baptismal pool or a rural stream is surely the one which non-Baptists, particularly in the deep South, are most conscious of. I was recently asked by a former Tennessee Episcopalian, "Do you still dunk 'em?"

While Southern Baptists do not believe that the ritual of baptism, in this form or any other, contributes one whit to an individual's salvation, they are convinced that this is the "correct" manner in which the ritual should be observed. It is especially crucial that the symbolism of total immersion—death, burial, resurrec-

tion—be applied to persons of other traditions who affiliate with Southern Baptist congregations. This implies, of course, that one is not saved until one joins the proper tradition, a translation which most Baptists would feel very uneasy with, but which is under the surface nevertheless.

Many people in my congregation are uncomfortable with this requirement. They say that it is presumptuous, that it is doctrinaire in the worst sense, and that it opens us to the accusation of sinful pride. On a number of occasions there have been moves to change the requirement. Most recently, the church went through a lengthy process of study and self-examination. The minister prepared a series of learned lectures on the history of baptismal rites. Discussion and study continued over a period of a year, turning up some interesting facts. The early church, for example, was guided more by

gregation affirmed the more conservative position. That fact is indeed important, for it measures the depth of an attitude toward tradition, toward the distinctive historical factor of being Baptist. It was doubly important for this highly diverse group.

Not so obvious is the importance of considering the issue in the first place. There is some possibility that the congregation, had it relaxed the requirement, would have found itself severed from the fellowship of its local Baptist Association, a group consisting of all local churches affiliated with the SBC. That would have meant little, other than strained personal feelings, for it is quite unlikely that the Southern Baptist Convention would have taken any action on that scale. It has not done so over other issues nor on this one in the few churches that have changed their baptismal requirements. It *cannot* do so under the strict terms of what

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expediency than by doctrine or by the meanings of words. Original languages clearly imply total immersion, yet early churches resorted to pouring or sprinkling when necessary. And so the practice has changed and been changed throughout the history of the church. Even Baptists have been inconsistent in the form of the ritual, and have not always baptized by immersion.

Armed with all this knowledge, all the discussion and prayer on the part of individuals and groups, and all the leadership from men, women and spiritual sources, this congregation, noted for its intellectual image and liberal attitudes, voted. It voted, by narrow margin, to retain the requirement of immersion for all new members, regardless of their previous confession of faith.

There are several points to this example. Most obvious to someone not involved is the fact that the con-

Baptists believe because the belief in the autonomy of the local congregation is ultimately stronger than the belief in baptismal form.

Of greatest importance, however, is the fact that the congregation sensed that this discussion was right and that it should proceed. Those members who knew at the beginning that their views would not change realized that for others this was a matter of conscience. Consequently, the discussion, even when heated, was never rancorous. When it was over, there were disappointments, but no bitter recriminations, no betrayed friendships. Persons on opposite sides of the issue had remained faithful to the larger meanings of open discussion and democratic procedures. For those of us who were "defeated," there was a greater sense of victory, for we were assured that religious liberty had been maintained. No dogmatic, authoritarian rule had been enforced, nor had there been felt

any need for separation. We had had our say and could be content with the results. No doubt we would try again later.

III

The congregation was free. I had known it before, had sensed the attitude that made me comfortable. I

that here one was expected to express doubt in order to gain strength, rather than hide it in embarrassment and fear of punishment. Still, after the discussion on the baptism question, I knew that I had come home, and that I had discovered something much deeper than I had anticipated. A richer vein existed in this tradition than I had known about.

human freedom defined by an awareness of a transcendent God. Through this example we learn how to accept life and those who live it. We are free to live as we please, so long as we do not harm others, and so long as we work to liberate those who have been and are being harmed and oppressed by evil in the world.

The terrible and vital tension that exists in that sort of free responsibility is the heart of Christianity for me. With that realization, I discovered what I had so feared and rebelled against in the Southern Baptist tradition, and I learned as well what it was in that tradition that I found so necessary, so demanding and so liberating.

The deeply frightening thing about the church for me was its easy acceptance of the culture that surrounded it so that the rules of the culture, so tightly defined and so corrupt in many places, became the rules of the church. Scripture came to be interpreted through eyes of the culture rather than as commentary on that culture. Never did I know the church to rise up in wrath and condemn the culture that fed it. We had defended war and racism and violent confrontation with legal authorities. We had prohibited human development and had crippled with guilt those young people who were trying to discover who they were sexually, intellectually and socially. We were bound rather than free. We were the authorities, the law that Jesus came to fulfill and end. We were the Pharisees, the whitewashed sepulchers. There was deadness about us because we were so closely allied to the world in such insidious ways. Sam S. Hill, Jr., a scholar who has studied the Southern Baptists put it best.

Potential conflict is aroused by the fact that the Christian church demands a total loyalty, while the South as a cultural system presents itself as a nurturing and teaching agency lacking in self-critical powers. In very different ways both Christianity and Southernness lay exclusive claim upon the white people of the region....they are participants in two primary frameworks of meaning, two cultural systems. Their lives are governed by two culture-ethics, God who is society and God who is the subject of existential experience within the Christian community. Both provide



photo courtesy of Baptist Home Mission Board

had heard the sermons that were so different from the ones I had grown up with and felt for the first time that the Southern Baptist church was not somehow inherently restricted from wrestling with the meanings of texts that I had wrestled with privately. I had met individuals who felt as I did regarding social issues. I had learned

My journey had been not only a quest for what was valid in the tradition, but also a search for the answers to the theological questions that confront any professing Christian. I had worked out what it meant for me to believe in Jesus in a personal way, and concluded that in His example we have the best record of perfect

*context, identity, community, and moral constraint.*¹

If the discovery of this relationship served to explain some of the death that so many of us had experienced as Southern Baptists, it nevertheless indicated another direction. Once again the faith itself provided the symbol. For deep within the tradition that is entombed in Southern culture, there is the life of belief and meaning, a new life that united Baptist and Christian names in a union of real strength. The discussion and debate on baptism had led us into the heart of what it was to be Baptist. We rediscovered a history and a tradition for ourselves. We spoke again of what it meant to believe profoundly in the "free church." We were able to read the words of another Southern Baptist historian with pride.

*As a distinct denomination, Baptists first began in seventeenth-century England. Label the religious parties of that period and here is what you come up with: Anglicans (English Episcopalians) are the "conservatives"; Puritans are the "liberals"; Quakers, Congregationalists, and Baptists are the "radicals"! Think of that! Baptists were not among the conservatives, wanting to maintain the status quo. They were not even among the avant-garde liberals who wanted to tamper with the status quo and change it a little. They were among the radicals who wanted to reverse the religious establishment. That, reader friend, is a heady heritage! One that many Baptists have never learned. Or else it is one they learned and conveniently forgot. Either way, it is a tragic misuse of history.*²

This sort of historical realization, and the strength it brings, can lead to a diminution of the pride so often found in Southern Baptist Churches. It is a strength that allows us not only to criticize the denomination itself, but to separate it from the un-Christian aspects of the culture that support it. If the church can stand apart from the culture, then it can get on with the business of calling the world to judgment in the name of the Lord. This task is impossible as long as the world and the church remain identical; but it is essential for Christianity to be truly radical, to cut to the roots of

evil, to transform the world with transformed men and women. Christians can speak with authority once again and do so in the best, but often hidden, Baptist tradition.

Perhaps the perspective from the Northern fringe allows me to make this sort of synthesis. We are in a minority here, even in a border state, and things look different. Still, I hope it is not merely an individual matter or even a matter of this particular church. I hear that there are other churches like this one I have discovered and that not all of them are outside the deep South. Perhaps this feeling that we must look more closely at the contradictions that seem so prevalent in our lives is shared by increasing numbers of Southern Baptists. Like ours, they may find themselves embroiled in controversy from time to time. Yet I suspect that one hears little talk of "split" congregations, for there is strength in recognizing free responsibility to one another that is not found in appeals to authoritarian leadership or in easy acceptance of the "old ways."

Strangely, for me, this discovery of new perspective has had an ironic twist. Now that I can affirm the name and have found a deep worth in being Baptist, I find that I would like to hold on to more of the cultural tradition as well. The identification of culture and theology might not be healthy for theology, but it is probably very good for culture. It legitimizes certain factors and enables them to maintain validity in a time of great shift and change and uncertainty. It anchors experience. The Southern churches, for all their problems, offer individuals, and most importantly, offer families, a center of life. People support one another there. They care about the sick and dying. They love the children of their neighbors in specific ways rather than with a soft concern for the "world." They grieve when personal problems arise in other homes.

Personally this means that I have, in some ways, become one of the conservatives in my congregation. I constantly remind myself of Brother Will Campbell's words: "Whenever a church moves out of a brush arbor it loses something." Translated into my experience, this means that I call for us to spend more time together in church, perhaps even reinstitute the Sunday evening services. I sometimes

long for the old hymns during our "high church" worship. I even wish, at times, for a stronger emotional sense in our appeals for personal commitment rather than the carefully controlled sequences in which the sermons are separated from the decisions made by individuals with offering collection and special music. Having suffered from one sort of imbalance — lacking in intellect — I do not wish for any simple reversal that slights or abandons the emotional life of Christian fellowship.

In all of this, I feel old urges rising, urges to call out for change and reform. But when I feel impatient now I know two important things. First, I know that my brothers and sisters here will listen with love and care to the suggestions that I or anyone else wishes to make, though they might not go along with us in the end. There will be no charges of heresy, no denunciations of character. Secondly, I know that my family and friends can look forward to those nights when we go and have dinner with the older people and share thoughts and songs and prayers. We will share our lives. There I find myself part of a community of truly common belief that transcends the forms in which we express ourselves. Being Christian is more important than anything else in my life, certainly more important than being Baptist. But being Baptist makes it possible to be most Christian. It is a personal matter rather than a theological one now. It puts part of my life back into place and fills an empty space that nagged for too many years.

Those evenings of shared experience, the days of controversy and resolution, the peace of worship all contribute new resonances to that quiet time of day. That time has now become a richer metaphor for me. It expresses best what I understand by a scriptural phrase, "the fullness of time." It is in that time that the Lord chooses to do things in the lives of men and women who can then do things in the world. I am more and more comfortable with that phrase. No less impatient in my need for reform, I have learned to be far more patient with people. I am not alone. Leaving the church, then, is not an alternative. I must simply wait for a while.

1. "The South's Two Cultures," in *Religion and the Solid South*, ed. Hill, et. al. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972, pp. 46-47.

2. Walter B. Shurden, *Not a Silent People*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1972, p. 12.

The Jewish kids played in the pasture, a sister and brother in an Alabama town. Soon the sun would set and Chanukah begin. The dry field grass scratched her legs when, Indian wrestling, she rolled on the ground to break a fall. The incredible blue sky, sunless, chilled the sweat that sank salt into new wounds.

The wrestling became a spat and he left victorious. The girl played on alone, a new game. She pretended the holiday was not her own. She was neuter, no, a Christian, a Gulliver pinned by Jew hammers, Jew strings, and Jew nails, changed for a night to a Jew.

Her parents explained that it wasn't so bad. She had eight days of Christmas, not a sickly one. Eight times the joy! Eight times the gifts! Except she was ten, and she would only have one gift this year. And eight times the void on the other nights.

"Why is this night different from all others?" She didn't know what to say to the boy who came through the field with a cow. Bovine both, she was terrified. What if he asked another unanswerable question? Like "How come you're not saved?" She lacked the gifts to make herself understood and ran away mutely, leaving him laughing at the shit on her shoes.

Better stay near the house now. The sky was red.

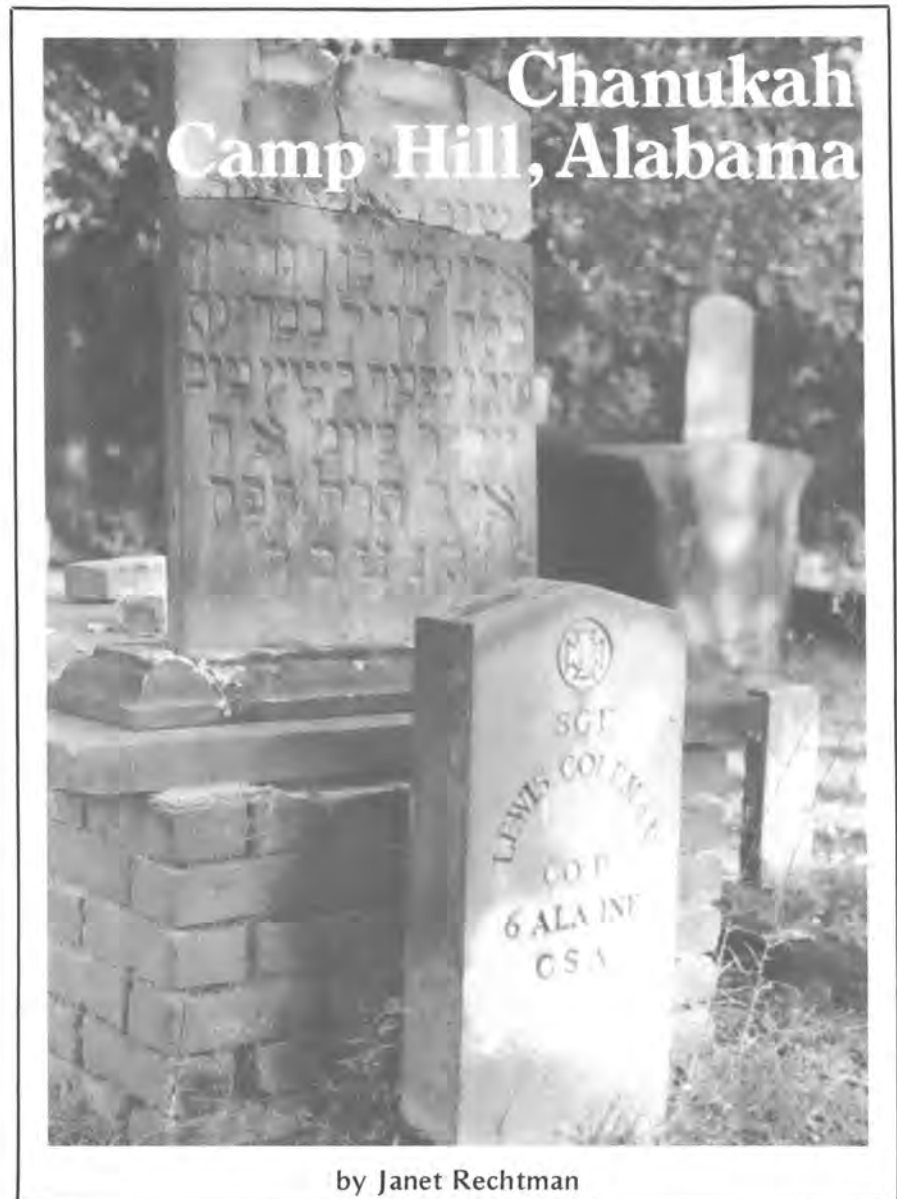
Her little sisters played store in the back yard. They still had eight days — she'd seen the tiny oven that was the first of this year's potlatch. On the back stoop she watched them imitate a mother and friend: they did not ask her to join in. Impatient she found a stick and cleaned her shoes.

Sundown was close. Where should she be when they called?

She ran to the front yard, to the pecan tree with the rounded crotch that was her favorite perch when she was little. Tonight she was grown up, though. A more dignified spot was required. In the orchard down by the wild plums perhaps — but she'd eaten the fruit already and she'd only get dirty on the red clay bank.

She was running to the grape arbor when she heard the call.

Eldest, she lit first, a pink shamas and a green spiralled taper, and read prayers from the paper that came with the candles. The two lights flickered in the silver menorah. She wanted to touch the flame, but was afraid.



by Janet Rechtman

photo by Marie Morris and John Speaks

"Boruch atoy adonay." She wondered at the ancient violence and longed for the prince of peace, for the easy tunes of Christmas instead of the tortured cadence she now sang. "Rock of ages let our song, vast thy saving power. Thou amidst the raging foe wast our sheltering tower."

They brought out the gifts, unwrapped as always. The first of eight for the others, one alone for her. A doll. Her friends had dolls and she'd wanted one too — but not like this, a lady doll with embarrassing breasts, red lips and bouffant hair. She hated it, but acted pleased so no one would say she was childish.

Seven nights she brought the doll woman out, the badge of her growing up. Seven days she hid it in her room. On the eighth morning her brother

found it and drew nipples on its breasts and a moustache of pubic hair between its legs.

That afternoon she went out to see what her friends had under their Christmas trees: skates, baby dolls, chemistry sets, BB guns, footballs and bikes. They were all laughing as they played, joking about how hard it was to be good all year.

The girl ran home crying. She cried because of the doll. She cried because she was captive, imprisoned where she did not belong. She cried because her parents had lied when they said there was no Santa Claus.

Janet Rechtman is a poet and writer from Atlanta, Georgia. She occasionally writes for the Atlanta Gazette.

Aiken, South Carolina, has a long tradition of combining strange cultural forces. Esteemed as a health resort by virtue of its dry, pine-scented air, by the late 1800s, it had become a winter season gathering place for the very rich. The W. R. Graces and the Ambrose Clarks, the Goodyears and the Vanderbilts maintained palatial "cottages" there. Every year they arrived with their stables of polo ponies and thoroughbred riding horses and train loads of servants to encamp for six weeks of gala partying, riding to hounds and competing with each other in horse shows before drifting on to Palm Beach or back to Long Island. Most of these "winter people" were Roman Catholic.

There was also a small and thriving population of local Catholics, black and white. I was one of these and my father, following a long tradition of Catholicism in his family, raised us as devout Catholics with, I believe, the best of intentions. The construction of the Savannah River nuclear power plant in 1950 deposited more Catholic Northerners in the town.

The Catholic community was large enough to support a parish church with the size and sweep of a small cathedral. St. Mary Help of Christians church was set on spacious grounds which it shared with a delicate chapel, a national wonder among church architects. St. Mary's boasted Byzantine gilt ceilings, wooden pews with brass plates for family name cards, several large marble statues of saints and a formidable marble altar. The Monsignor of the parish, the son of a wealthy Northern family, rode to hounds with the winter people and was included in all their social events.

There were few poor Catholics. The very poor attended a smaller mission church in "the valley," Horse Creek valley, a textile mill community not far from Aiken.

St. Mary's parish supported a Catholic grade school and a high school attended by local Catholics and boarding students. The Dominican order of nuns who taught in the grade school lived in a winter resort home on some acreage.

Black Catholics rarely came to Mass at St. Mary's church; none attended St. Mary's school. St.

Growing Up Catholic

by Pam Durban

Jerome's church and school had been built especially for them and an order of black nuns taught there. I remember one time when a group of concerned white mothers held a hurried conference with the St. Mary's principal because they had heard she was going to invite students from St. Jerome's for a get-together. They never came.

I don't think it crossed my mind then how curious it was for there to be an entirely separate group of black Catholics. We didn't think about race: concern for racial equality paled beside our utter absorption in the church.

In those days, being Catholic in Aiken meant that I had few friends outside the church. Opportunities for interaction were few, and the mutual mistrust between "us" and "them," between Catholic and Protestant, was deep. The mother of my best non-Catholic friend discouraged religious conversation between us and forbade her to go with me where there were more than two Catholics gathered together. Likewise, I did not attend activities sponsored by another church. My mother was Presbyterian but had signed papers before she married, vowing to raise her children as Catholics. Her religion prompted occasional, deep torment in me since I believed with a child's devoutness that "outside the Catholic church there is no salvation."

Our lives were further segregated from our peers because we spent so much time at church. We went to Mass every Friday and Sunday; during Lent, we went every day and were expected to receive Holy Communion. If we didn't, a nun would take us aside after Mass and ask leading questions about the state of

grace in our souls. The true test of friendship between girls (the only acceptable friendships) was the frequency with which you knelt together and received communion. We confessed frequently, starting at the age of seven.

Beginning in first grade, we studied our catechism fervently, first period every morning. It must have sounded odd to hear small children discussing transubstantiation and consecration understanding the definition as well as the nuances of each term. Even now, I am amazed and somewhat frightened that I can reel off catechism responses almost automatically though I haven't been to church in years. The Dominican nuns were a teaching order and their zealous dogmatism was matched by their unflagging intellectualism. When I entered public school in ninth grade, I was intellectually quicker but emotionally more infantile than my classmates. I was extremely naive, a perspective I carried through years of dirty jokes and to the bitter end of my first love affair. He was a Baptist and we separated, finally, when I balked, horrified, at his suggestion that we commit the serious sin of French kissing.

My sense of propriety was shared by my Catholic friends and in all of us it was balanced, fortunately, by our flair for the dramatic. We got this ability to intensify any situation, I believe, from years of being steeped in the exotic medieval rituals which punctuated the liturgical year.

Christmas Eve midnight Mass was the climax of the church year; St. Mary's church really pulled out the stops at Christmas. The church glowed with hundreds of candles flickering against a background of fresh greens and banked poinsettias. The Knights of Columbus, a men's fraternal order,

formed a double line from the door of the church to the altar. Dressed in black capes and tall plumed hats, they drew their swords simultaneously to form a silver arch under which the Monsignor walked. Accompanying him were a dozen altar boys swinging decorative incense pots; one carried the gold chalice for communion on a purple velvet pillow.

Everyone, Catholic and Protestant, it seemed, came to midnight Mass for this amazing pageant. Many were drunk. People fainted and left suddenly, and the woozy smell of gin rose with the incense. It was also one of the few times I saw black Catholics at church.

I suppose the biggest, most obvious, difference between me and my non-Catholic contemporaries was the high visibility of our religious fervor. We wore school uniforms year round,

miserable shirts, jumpers and skirts of a distasteful color approaching turquoise blue (the Virgin Mary's color) and so flimsy that the winter wind cut right through. We wore medals of devotion to our patron saints around our necks or pinned to our identical gray sweaters. At the beginning of each Lenten season we could be seen with ashes marking our foreheads. We refused meat on Fridays. Girls went to extremes, shunning sleeveless shirts, low-cut shoes, pull-over sweaters or non-devotional jewelry as affronts to virgin modesty. Movies were checked against the approved list posted beside the confession booth. We murmured our prayers and sang long, atonal chants. We were noticeably subdued during the 40 days of Lent while we did penance and meditated on the crucifixion. I usually gave up ice cream and candy for Lent and ate candy and

ice cream on Easter Sunday until I got sick.

If this had been my only life, I would by now be certifiably insane. But I had another life outside the church, a life just as extreme in its own way, which gave me valuable balance. I was deeply pious, but my time outside the church was spent running wild through the woods just behind my house. Every afternoon and weekend I would disappear into these woods, alone or with friends, and play great fantasy games with my herds of wild horses.

Pam Durban is on the staff of The Patch in Atlanta, Georgia, and has written for the Great Speckled Bird and the Atlanta Gazette. She recently edited a collection of interviews and recipes called Cabbagetown Women, Cabbagetown Food.



photo by Larry Erb

BILLY GRAHAM SUPERSTAR

by Bob Arnold

Back at the turn of the century, when hundreds of itinerant preachers worked "the sawdust trail" to standing-room only crowds, evangelism meant miraculous healings and mass conversions in tent-meetings. Hell-fire and brimstone oratory poured forth from an army of men and women mobilized to beat the devil. As a result of their insatiable appetite for publicity, evangelists soon acquired a reputation as Bible-thumping, hysteria-prone, super salesmen for God.

Many years have passed, and the number of communities able to point to a successful tent-meeting in recent memory is small indeed and getting smaller. But the image has prevailed. Until recently. One man, and a Southerner at that, has done more than any other single individual or organization to recast that image in a form more acceptable to modern American culture. Though firmly rooted in the hell-fire and damnation school of Southern fundamentalism, William Franklin (Billy) Graham Jr. has exchanged the shirtsleeves and histrionics of the 'Hot Gospeler' for the tailored business suit and toned-down eloquence of a religious moderate and political conservative.

Yet Billy Graham has hardly renounced his heritage. In fact, the organizational techniques and sophisticated public relations methods employed by Graham and the association that bears his name (The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association) stand as proof of the huge debt which he owes to the rich legacy of the evangelists and evangelism of an earlier age.

Mass revivalism on a national and international scale was a highly de-

veloped exercise by the time Graham had spiritually come of age. Even before he was born, Reuben A. Torrey, successor to noted evangelist D.L. Moody, had successfully concluded a four-year campaign which packed the largest public facilities available in China, Australia, India, and the British Isles, and netted 102,000 converts to Christianity in the process.

One of the most significant features of Torrey's approach was his adroit use of community leaders. In each of the cities targeted for a crusade, the evangelist established "executive committees" of socially prominent laymen. The committees raised money for the evangelistic campaign and used the status of their members to gain free coverage from the press and enthusiastic endorsements from sympathetic pulpits.

In Chicago, Henry P. Crowell, president of the Quaker Oats Company and a trustee of the Moody Bible Institute, organized The Layman's Evangelistic Council to lead the Torrey crusade. At the top of the stationery used by the committee, Crowell had printed the explanatory note, "A Businessman's Movement." The Council had charge of everything connected with the crusade, save the actual delivery of the sermon. Graham learned from later revivalists that a full-time staff was more dependable, but he still relies heavily on wealthy, powerful businessmen to provide the financial and moral support so necessary to his crusades. As we shall see, under Graham evangelism continues to be "a businessman's movement."

Eventually, Torrey became concerned about the growing commercial-

ization of the crusades; Charles Alexander, his soloist and chorister, was making a mint from sales of his songbooks (selling songbooks, records, and books by Billy Graham continues to be a regular feature of his crusades) and the different approaches to finances led to the end of the Torrey/Alexander team in 1908. Alexander immediately joined John Wilbur Chapman and the Chapman Simultaneous Evangelistic Campaign.

Chapman spent 10 years mastering the technique and enjoyed varying degrees of success. But soon Chapman's crusade no longer drew the large crowds or prestigious invitations. A new star had appeared on the horizon, young and more dynamic than any who had gone before him, the man whose name was to dominate evangelism for the next fifteen years — Billy Sunday.

Sunday's style was remarkably similar to Billy Graham's early "windmill preaching." Sunday would run up and down the stage, telling Bible stories in popular language with a hoarse, rasping voice, challenging members of his largely lower-middle-class audience to "be a true patriot" or a "manly man" and make a decision for Christ.

And like Graham, Sunday tried to keep the emotional pitch of his audience at a manageable level. He discouraged people from yelling even simple 'Hallelujahs' or 'Amen's' and instructed his ushers to remove those who insisted on continuing these relatively mild emotional indulgences. Sunday was evangelism's top showman and he didn't want any competition — not even from his own audience.

At the heart of Sunday's revival corporation was the Sunday Party, a corps of more than 20 experts, each of whom specialized in some aspect of revivalism. The members of this Party were called directors, and most of them had assistants. Many of these directors and assistants were in charge of organizing delegations from various constituencies in the community and bringing them to the crusade. Sunday's staff and volunteer canvassers would grant blocks of reserved seats for any group that requested them in advance, and the staff made sure there were plenty of requests. Every night of the

Bob Arnold is on the editorial staff of Southern Exposure.



photo by Carter Tomassi

crusade there would be as many as 50 delegations on hand, some as large as 3,000. Homer A. Rodeheaver, Sunday's chorister, would warmly welcome each delegation and would then have them compete against each other during the singing program. By the end of the service, when Sunday appealed to each delegation to step forward, entire delegations often made the trip up the center aisle. The same delegation system is still used very effectively by Billy Graham.

Sunday gradually lost touch with his audience as his attacks against the 'decadence' of the Roaring '20s became more irrational and extreme. By the end of his career, Sunday's message had degenerated into pessimistic resignation and a conviction that the Second Coming of Christ was the only hope for the human race. His constituency dwindled, and he was reduced to working one-church revival services in small rural towns like his birthplace of Ames, Iowa.

Anointed to Preach

Graham gave his life to Christ at a revival led by Mordecai Fowler Ham, a fire and brimstone evangelist who had made his reputation in the South during the Depression. Graham's father, a strict Presbyterian, had helped organize the revival on some farmland just outside of Charlotte, N.C., Graham's birthplace.

The story of his conversion is important in understanding the way he structures his services today. In an interview with Myran Blyth in *Family Circle*, she described the incident: "There's a great big sinner in the church tonight!" (said Ham). The boy blushed, ducked behind a woman in a big hat and thought, "Omigosh, my mother must have told him I was coming."¹ At the end of the service, Graham, moved as much by feelings of guilt and shame as by his love for Christ, went forward to give his life to God.

Like Billy Sunday, Graham's conversion experience was fairly calm; not a single tear was shed by the sixteen year old when he went forward that night. And like Sunday, he re-creates his conversion experience at his crusades today, relying on a message that is often riddled with remarks that Graham has consciously chosen to make the *individual* sinner in the audience

feel his or her burden so heavily that they must come forward and have it lifted. The atmosphere is solemn, heavy with the "presence of God"; though the emotionalism isn't as theatrical as Billy Sunday's, the effect is just as powerful.

Graham graduated from high school in 1936 with no particular career ambitions. He had seriously considered attending the University of North Carolina, but his mother, a deeply religious woman, had decided that he should go to Bob Jones College in Cleveland, Tennessee (now Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina).

The summer before Graham left for Bob Jones, he joined the summer sales staff of the Fuller Brush Company. His experience selling door-to-door had a tremendous impact on his career. Before that summer, he had considered himself a bit shy with strangers and was uncertain of his speaking abilities. But when he broke all sales records for his area, he found new confidence in his general personality and presence. Many years later, that same sales ability exerted for the Lord's gospel instead of Fuller's brushes, prompted the Sales Executive Club of New York to dub Graham "Salesman of the Year."

Disturbed by the lack of athletic facilities and the constraints upon independent thought and lifestyle, Graham left Bob Jones after only one semester, and transferred to Florida Bible Institute (now Trinity College), where he had the freedom to mature at his own pace with individual guidance and counseling from faculty and staff. He changed from a happy-go-lucky, gangly boy to a young man determined to be "an ambassador for God." And he met evangelicals like Homer Rodeheaver (Sunday's enterprising musician), Gypsy Smith, and W. B. Riley. John Pollack, Graham's official biographer, describes Graham's meeting with these leaders as an anointing: "These old stalwarts who had seen the fires die down had one theme: we need a prophet. We need a man to call America back to God."² Under new tutelage, Graham began to preach everywhere he could — on street corners, in small churches, or to the stumps and alligators at a nearby swamp. He would often preach seven or eight times in one day, coming home thoroughly exhausted. He pur-

sued his studies seriously, determined to get a firm grounding in the Bible.

The Florida Bible Institute was a small school and, in his new passion for knowledge, Graham soon exhausted its resources. Consequently, when he was offered a free year's room, board and tuition at Wheaton College in Illinois, he decided to move north. But before leaving the South, he became, with his parents' approval, an ordained Southern Baptist minister.

During his stay at Wheaton, Graham met Ruth Bell (daughter of Dr. Nelson Bell), who was to have a moderating influence on Graham's religious beliefs. As Pollack notes, "Ruth and her family, loyal Presbyterians, eased Billy Graham from his unspoken conviction that a vigorous Scriptural faith could not dwell within the great denominations." Graham's most important lesson from Wheaton and the Bells was "that any minister who was a strong evangelical should focus his vision on the entire horizon of American Christianity." It was 1943, the year Youth for Christ International was founded. Graham had abandoned doctrinistic fundamentalism, but still retained his earlier style.

He plunged into his evangelistic career with the same energy and dedication he showed his studies. Torrey M. Johnson, another Wheaton graduate, gave his popular Chicago radio ministry, "Songs in the Night," to Graham and his Village Church. Graham convinced George Beverly Shea, a well-known Christian soloist and broadcaster to assist him and the show soon became popular enough to pay for itself.

At the invitation of George M. Wilson (now executive vice-president of the BGEA), Graham began to work with the Youth for Christ movement. For three years, he gained valuable experience as field representative for Youth for Christ, organizing and speaking to rallies ranging from 3,000 to 5,000, traveling to Europe, and meeting the leaders of the National Evangelistic Association, which strongly supported Youth for Christ.

Then, W.B. Riley, a frequent visitor to Florida Bible Institute, asked Graham to accept the presidency of Minneapolis-based Northwestern Bible School. Riley had found his prophet. Graham had reservations about becoming associated with the orthodox fundamentalist but took the offer any-

way. However, Graham rarely spent his energy exercising the presidential duties. He left the school in the hands of George Wilson and others while he continued to devote most of his time to evangelism.

In spite of all this activity, Graham still didn't have a regional following, much less a national audience. He had long thought of himself as a poorly-educated Southerner, lacking poise and sophistication, and felt that this placed definite limits on the potential effectiveness of his ministry. At times, he seemed almost resigned to the mediocrity seemingly imposed by his "indifferent background." But, after his 1949 Los Angeles crusade, he never had to think about that again.

The Big Crusade

The Los Angeles Crusade had run for three weeks and though it was time to fold the tent, many of the staff protested, citing the rising attendance and interest. Graham decided to wait for a "sign" from God, a "fleece" that would convince him that it was God's

will that the tent revival continue. The sign came from Stuart Hamblen, a famous singing cowboy, but it would be hard to call it a miracle.

Graham met Hamblen before the revival started at a meeting of the Hollywood Christian Group. Graham was attracted to Hamblen and because Graham was a Southerner, Hamblen took a liking to the earnest young evangelist, inviting him to appear on his radio show, and encouraging people to attend the crusade, saying, "I'll be there, too."

Hamblen attended with regularity, but soon began to feel defensive about the content of Graham's sermon. Hamblen believed the evangelist's sermon, his standard fare about the sinner in disguise, was aimed straight at him. At the last night of the crusade, as Graham said, "There is a person here tonight who is a phony," Hamblen shook his fist at his erstwhile friend, and stalked out of the tent. But the power of Graham's method was clearly evident in the events which followed. In a sudden reversal, the singing cowboy called

Graham at two o'clock the next morning and came over to his apartment. By 5 a.m., Hamblen had given his life to Christ.

The effect was sensational. Hamblen told his radio audience that he had given up smoking, drinking, and horse racing, that he had given Christ control of his life, and that at the invitation he was going to "hit the sawdust trail."

Jim Vaus, a high ranking accomplice of underworld czar Mickey Cohen heard Hamblen on the radio and decided to stop by the tent and see just who this Graham fellow was. Vaus accepted the invitation the first time he attended, providing Graham with more free publicity.

Louis Zamperini, a 1936 Olympic star who had since become a penniless, heavy drinker, attended the revival at the request of his Christian wife and went forward at the invitation.

In addition to individual guilt, Graham preached a message that took advantage of the Cold War sentiment in his California audience: "Russia has

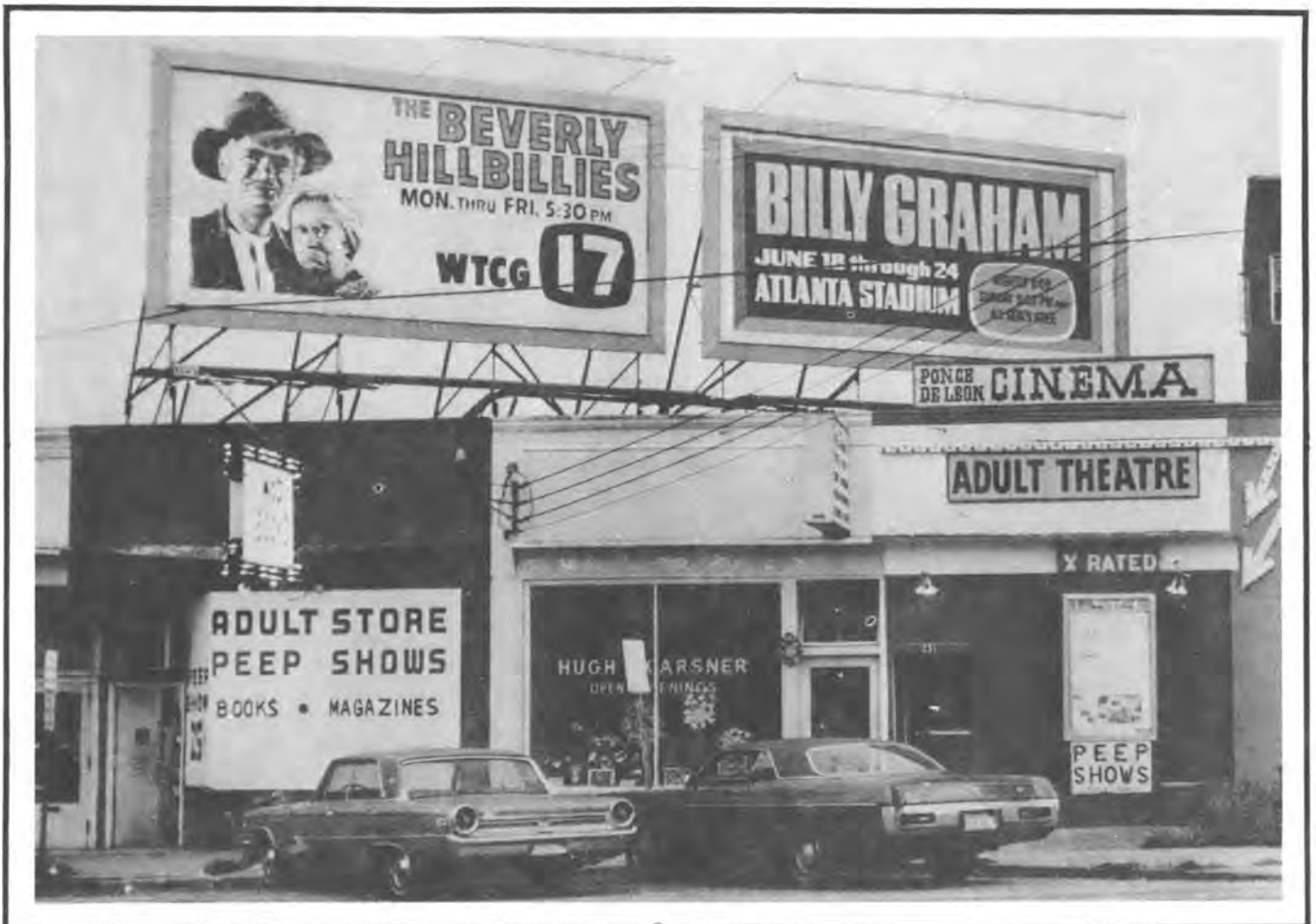


photo by David Massey

now exploded an atom bomb. Do you know the area that is marked out for the enemy's first atomic bomb? New York! Secondly, Chicago; and thirdly, the city of Los Angeles. Do you know that the Fifth Columnists, called Communists, are more rampant in Los Angeles than any other city in America? We need a revival."

William Randolph Hearst heard about the famous converts and Graham's warnings and sent a telegram to the editors of all Hearst newspapers ordering them to "Puff Graham." Henry Luce, the publisher of *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune*, was so impressed with the message, according to a Graham aid, that he "pledged the cooperation of his magazines to support subsequent Graham campaigns in other cities." The Graham crusade was becoming a national media phenomenon.

The next five years were a dynamic period for the North Carolina native. He started his Hour of Decision radio program, founded the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, held successful tours all over the country and was publicly seen and photographed with some of the most famous people in the United States. The lesson of Los Angeles had not been lost.

But Graham still hadn't matured as an evangelist. Stanley High, another biographer, described his early preaching style as "pretty much in the tradition of the 'Hot Gospeler.' His voice was strident. He inclined to rant. The same sound effects in politics would, in most places, be called demagoguery."

Indeed, Graham's sermons of that period often smacked strongly of demagoguery. In a 1953 radio sermon on "Labor, Christ, and the Cross," he said, in an obvious reference to McCarthy, "I thank God for men who in the force of public denouncement and ridicule go loyally on in their work of exposing the pinks, the lavenders, and the reds who have sought refuge beneath the wings of the American Eagle and from that vantage point try in every subtle, undercover way to bring comfort and help to the greatest enemy we have ever known — Communism."

Willis G. Haymaker, an advance man for Gypsy Smith, Bob Jones and Billy Sunday, had been with the Team since 1950 and introduced many changes in the Team operations. He

organized prayer meetings before crusades, coordinated publicity, and taught the basic facts of organization.

According to William McLoughlin, author of an extensive study of revivalism, Graham's image "...shifted from the Hollywoodish, flamboyant revivalist in the direction of the conservative, but fervent, Protestant minister. His crusade atmosphere became less like that of a circus and more like that of a cathedral. He... directed his associates to keep up with the best means of advertising, office efficiency, promotion, small group evangelism, and follow-up."

The real test of the Team's growing organizational expertise came in New York in 1957. In the course of the three and one-half month crusade, 61,148 inquirers came forward from an audience of 2,397,000. Follow-up work, guiding and directing people who have decided to follow Christ, became unmanageable. The Team acquired the services of former Air Force Colonel Bob Root, who eventually organized the follow-up procedure.

The success of the New York crusade, highly visible in the American media fish bowl, firmly entrenched Graham as a national religious figure and celebrity, establishing him as the friend of politicians, religious luminaries, sports stars, etc. After the New York success, the challenge was to expand and deepen his organization and public support.

The Medium of the Message

Crusades, the source of Graham's support and publicity, are masterpieces in the application of the latest techniques in public relations and organization.

Once Graham decides to accept a city's invitation to conduct a crusade (usually one to two years before the projected opening date), an advance group goes to the city and begins to mobilize every Protestant church willing to support the effort. An executive committee is established (a la Sunday) and ministers of the participating churches are appointed to a variety of committees.

In his early career, Graham, like Sunday, made sure a sum large enough to cover costs was pledged by private subscription as a guarantee should offerings during the crusade fail to bring in the needed support. Crusade

expenses have since soared to over \$1 million and now Graham supplements local offerings with television and radio appeals and direct mail solicitations.

Graham has pioneered work in follow-up of inquiries, publicity and financing — the three most controversial aspects of mass evangelism. Follow-up is done by a group of young Bible school students called the Navigators who work in a city up to six months after the crusade has ended, trying to connect "inquirers" with a local church.

Publicity has been developed to the highest possible degree, using every conceivable means. Thousands of volunteers conduct door-to-door canvassing operations, mobilizing the local church community (and involving them in the success of the crusade) and spreading the word that Billy Graham is coming to town. And when he broadcasts over television, he blacks out the local area to insure high attendance.

After successful crusades, public explanation for success is that the Spirit of the Lord, working through Graham, his Team, and the local churches provided the inspiration to reach new converts and backsliding Christians. Any reference to the importance of a highly efficient organization is saved for private interviews. But God has never taken any of the blame for those crusades which fell short of their goal.

In kind, Graham's entire crusade apparatus rivals that of any multinational corporation.

The Hour of Decision, Graham's weekly radio program, started in 1950 at the suggestion of Fred Dienert and Walter Bennett of the Walter Bennett Advertising Company. Prompted by a \$2,000 gift from two Texas friends, Graham decided to make the additional \$23,000 he needed to begin broadcasting a "fleece" for his Portland crusade, stipulating that the \$23,000 had to be raised before midnight. Graham took the regular offering, not mentioning the radio program; after the money had been collected, Graham told the audience he needed \$25,000, inviting those that wished to contribute to meet him in the office at the end of the service. The draw of meeting Graham personally probably had as much to do with the long line as the



appeal to higher Christian service. At the end of the night, Graham had \$23,500, including the \$2,000 from the sympathetic Texans. When he returned from the crusade, he found \$1,500 in pledges waiting at the hotel from people unable to stand in line, giving Graham the \$25,000 and a new radio ministry.

Due to income tax laws, Grady Wilson couldn't put the money in the bank under his name or the Billy Graham Radio Fund. George Wilson (no relation) flew from Minneapolis with articles of incorporation for a non-profit Evangelistic Association that he had drawn up over a year ago, foreseeing the need for such an organization. Billy and Ruth Graham, Grady Wilson, Cliff Barrow, and George Wilson signed the papers to create the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA). Graham asked for a radio ministry and got an institution, too.

Today the Hour of Decision is aired by over 900 stations around the world (including the one owned by the BGEA in Honolulu, Hawaii).

The Good Word is also spread through Graham's "My Answer" syndicated newspaper column appearing in 200 dailies, through purchased television broadcasts of the crusades, and through the distribution of films produced by the BGEA World Wide Pictures based in Burbank, California.

The monthly magazine of the BGEA, "Decision," now has a circula-

tion of 5,000,000 (at \$2/year)³, a sizeable increase from the initial run of 253,000 in 1960. "Decision" promotes Graham's theology, runs testimonies of the saving grace of Jesus Christ, solicits funds, sells books, and reports on the activities of Graham and the associate evangelists.

Books, phonograph records, and radio-sermon leaflets are distributed by the Grason Company, a taxable business started in 1950. The BGEA cannot legally distribute these materials, but Grason donates its profits to the Association.

Finally, there are the crusades. Graham has reached approximately 80 million people through his revivals where he peddles materials like the "Authorized and Authentic Biography of Billy Graham," "Billy Graham Songbook," and the thirteen books he has authored.

The BGEA employs over 300 people worldwide with headquarters in Minneapolis and offices in Paris, London, Hong Kong, Sidney, Winnipeg, and Atlanta. The staff has grown to seven associate ministers and five full-time musicians. The BGEA has an annual income of \$14 million controlled by Graham and a 25-member board of directors that meets four times a year (the seven person executive committee meets once every six weeks). No director receives monetary compensation. The BGEA would not divulge the names of the people on the board saying "it might create too much of a hassle for the directors to

have their names made public."⁴

The proceeds from all the "ministries" provide the bulk of the income for the Association, the rest coming from direct mail solicitation and anonymous gifts. The Association also uses this income to pay Graham's \$25,000 salary. He has always been sensitive to criticism of personal profit from preaching the gospel; consequently, he has let it be known that "I personally do not receive any money, honorarium or stipend for any of my appearances anywhere in the world. My annual income is solely from a salary paid by our corporation in Minneapolis and by royalties from my books." The royalties are no small sum: "Secret of Happiness (1955) has sold 906,357 copies; World Aflame (1967) 1,027,976, with an additional special run of over 600,000."⁵ Graham keeps a percentage of the royalties and donates the rest to the Association and other religious organizations.

He can well afford to be benevolent. The Association pays all his travel expenses; he receives free food and lodging at Hilton hotels; he often receives chauffeured cars from Ford Motor Co., and he has received gifts ranging from a jeep to a new home in the mountains of North Carolina.

Apparently the size of the organization and the comfortable affluence Graham has attained hasn't reduced his personal involvement or interest in the operation of the Association. "Billy Graham receives daily reports by telephone. Each month he runs his eye down the list of checks, large and small, paid out from every office, and asks for the detail of any he can't understand."⁶

Politics and the Preacher

Carl McIntire is more rabidly anti-communist, Bob Jones more harshly critical of liberal ministers, and Garner Ted Armstrong more apocalyptic, but Billy Graham is more influential and his politics are, essentially, as conservative as the other gentlemen above.

The recurring theme in Graham's political statements is, "Yes, do good works, but winning souls to Christ is more important." John Pollock says Graham is "'more convinced than ever before' . . . that we must change men before we can change society. . . . The task of the evangelist is not merely to

reform but to stimulate conversion, for conversion puts man in positions where God can do for him, and through him, what he is incapable of doing himself."⁷ Graham restated the same theme in *World Aflame*: "If the church went back to its main task of preaching the Gospel and getting people converted to Christ, it would have far more impact on the structure of the nation."⁸

An example of this logic comes from *Billy Graham Speaks*: "Reno can give you a quick divorce, but Christ can give you a quick transformation in your home. The tempers that have flared, the irritations that are evident, the unfaithfulness that is suspected, the monotony and boredom of existence without love can be changed and transformed in the twinkling of an eye by faith in Jesus Christ."⁹

This optimism barely surpasses his patriotism; Graham believes that "America is the key nation of the world. We were created for a spiritual mission among nations. . . . America is truly the last bulwark of Christian civilization. If America fails, Western culture will disintegrate." He strikes the same note on a personal level in his sermons: "If you would be a true patriot, then become a Christian: If you would become a loyal American, then become a loyal Christian."¹⁰

Three of the most influential social movements in the past twenty-five years have been the civil rights, anti-war, and women's movements. The first two shook the conscience, structure, and politics of the nation and the third is still being hotly debated. Graham has definite opinions on all three.

In the early and mid-50s Graham took a moral stand towards the issue of integration in his crusades. By 1953, he would not allow segregated seating, even in the South, opening himself to attacks by more close-minded evangelicals. He changed the site of the 1954 Columbia, South Carolina, crusade from the segregated statehouse grounds to federal property to have an integrated rally. Ten years later, however, he was on the conservative end of the civil rights question. He deplored boycotts, marches, and protests stating "the position he has maintained consistently: conciliate, and strike at the root of the problem, which is basically spiritual."¹¹ Graham

seems incapable of understanding the need for struggle outside of that required to become a better Christian and resist the temptations of Satan.

Graham's conviction that communism is the work of the Devil laid the foundation for his unequivocal support for the war. At a 1966 Presidential Prayer Breakfast, Graham made it clear that his Christianity helped his support for the slaughter in Southeast Asia. "There are those who have tried to reduce Christ to the level of a genial and innocuous appeaser; but Jesus said: 'You are wrong. I have come as a fire setter and a sword wielder.' He made it clear to them that His coming, far from meaning peace, meant war. . . . Those who hate tyranny and aggression will take sides when little nations suffer terror and aggression from those who seek to take their freedom from them. To preserve some things, love must destroy others." Perhaps this is why John Connally has called Billy Graham "the conscience of the nation."

Since then Graham has made the typical excuses that his stance only reflected the mood of the nation at the time, that he couldn't possibly have known Vietnam would become such a divisive, bitter, embarrassing question among Americans. But that is exactly the point. Graham keeps a wet finger to the wind of the powers that be, only mellowing his position on Vietnam when it was comfortable and acceptable for him to do so. The opportunism and lack of morals he demonstrated on this issue is one of the most graphic examples of the true role Graham plays in our society — legitimizing the war policy and ingratiating himself to its leaders.

On the question of women's rights Graham relies on a literal interpretation of the Bible. God created man and then women with a definite plan for each. "The biological assignment was basic and simple: Eve was to be the child bearer, and Adam was to be the breadwinner. Of course, there were peripheral functions for each, but these were their fundamental roles, and throughout history there has been very little deviation from the pattern."¹²

He makes it absolutely clear that he does not support the women's movement. "I believe the women's liberation movement is an echo of our overall philosophy of permissiveness."

Since Graham doesn't believe the women's movement is constructive, he points to the Bible and its three-part plan for woman in society. "Eve's biological role was to bear children — 'in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children' (Genesis 3-16). Her romantic role was to love her husband — 'Thy desire shall be to thy husband' (v. 16). Her vocational role was to be second in command — 'and he shall rule over thee.' (v. 16)" That, says Graham, is true freedom. "God frees us to be what we are created to be — each with a separate identity and purpose, but both sexes one with God. That is true liberation."

Billy Graham is not unmindful of his own special identity and the freedom that comes with courting the rich and famous. The acquisition of wealth is required by salvation because it is a powerful means of benefiting others. Private gain donated to the great crusades can lead one to believe that the exercise of private and personal virtues is the totality of public responsibility.

His roots are in Southern fundamentalism, but he has built upon that foundation a vast smooth-running corporation that adapts to the social and political climate of the American status quo. In so doing, he has gained what his evangelical forebearers never did: respectability — and a carefully calculated plan for his own organization's survival.

1. Myrna Blyth, "An Interview with Billy Graham," *Family Circle*, April, 1972, p. 72.

2. John Pollock, *Billy Graham, The Authorized Biography* (New York: McGraw-Hill), 1966, p. 16.

3. Lois and Bob Blewett, *Twenty Years Under God*, (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications), 1970, p. 127, and from an interview with Don Bailey, executive assistant with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (Atlanta office), September, 1976.

4. Interview with Don Bailey.

5. Blewett, p. 127.

6. Pollock, pp. 243-244.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 222.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Cort R. Flint, *Billy Graham Speaks* (New York: Grossett and Dunlap), 1966, p. 62.

10. "Our Bible," Sermon distributed by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

11. Pollock, p. 224.

12. Billy Graham, "Jesus and the Liberated Woman," *Ladies Home Journal*, December, 1970, p. 42.

“A Mighty Fortress...” Protestant Power and Wealth

By Jim Sessions

“A cesspool of Baptists, a miasma of Methodism, snake-charmers, phony real-estate operators and syphilitic evangelists,” was H. L. Mencken’s characterization of the South. Although notoriously unsympathetic to the region, he at least named “the big two” and touched unkindly upon a central fact of Southern religiousness: its monolithic, pervasive and complicated Protestantism.

The South was non-religious, if not downright irreligious, during the colonial period. The Presbyterians settled in first, but Baptists and Methodists soon surged dramatically ahead through great camp meetings and revivals. Today, the Baptist-Methodist syndrome overshadows all other religious families in its numerical strength. Nearly half of Southern Protestants are Baptists, and Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians taken together account for four in five Southern Protestants, and nearly three quarters of all Southerners.

This Southern mainline hegemony, in which the Disciples of Christ should also be included, is apparent in a state-by-state survey. In eight states, the Baptist percentage of the total reported religious membership exceeds 50%. In five states the proportion falls in the 40-50% range. Methodists in three states make up one-third of the reported white Protestant membership. In six states the combined Methodist and Baptist membership runs upward of 80% of the reported total. In five additional states (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee), if the Disciples and Presbyterians are figured in, the percentages are around 90%.

Thus, the fact that “religion in the South has been largely a Protestant affair” virtually requires that our investigation be focused on the predominant Protestant bodies—the Southern Baptists,



photo by Carter Tomassi

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN THE SOUTHERN STATES, 1971

State	Southern Baptist Conv.	Roman Catholic	United Methodist	Presbyter- Church US	Episco- pal	Christian & Church of God	Christian Church (Discip.)	Lutheran Church in Amer.	United Presby- USA	Missouri Synod, Lutheran	Church of God (Tenn.)	Church of the Nazarene	Baptist Mission. Assoc.	Free- Will Baptist	Amer. Baptist Conv.	Cum- berland Presby.	Pente- costal Holin.
Alabama	30.6 1,054,917	2.5 85,991	8.0 274,531	1.3 45,551	0.9 32,303	0.1 2,270	0.3 10,008	0.1 3,882	0.3 9,452	0.4 12,701	0.8 27,214	0.3 11,152	0.1 3,067	0.7 24,700	—	0.3 8,836	0.1 2,354
Arkansas	22.6 435,183	2.9 55,025	9.6 184,724	1.2 24,026	0.8 15,762	0.3 5,558	0.7 13,350	0.1 43,510	0.4 7,776	0.5 10,184	0.2 4,000	0.8 15,137	3.1 59,024	1.2 22,555	—	0.3 5,741	— 490
Florida	11.9 806,088	13.5 917,439	5.7 385,051	1.7 116,705	2.2 150,542	0.4 25,461	0.3 22,333	0.6 43,510	0.8 53,696	0.7 49,950	0.5 34,702	0.4 25,952	—	0.1 7,381	—	—	0.1 5,030
Georgia	27.8 1,276,081	2.3 103,609	8.5 390,240	2.1 94,946	1.2 54,187	0.7 30,090	0.4 16,405	0.4 17,198	0.1 3,444	0.2 7,198	0.9 43,161	0.3 11,630	—	0.3 14,806	—	—	0.1 3,183
Kentucky	25.5 826,739	10.5 339,375	6.7 214,322	0.8 27,052	0.7 23,213	2.2 69,711	2.2 72,276	0.3 10,341	0.9 27,720	0.1 4,827	0.4 12,267	0.7 24,070	—	0.5 15,572	—	0.5 16,233	— 169
Louisiana	16.6 602,687	35.2 1,280,536	3.4 125,581	1.1 39,538	1.1 41,348	0.1 3,364	0.2 5,852	0.1 2,014	—	0.6 22,401	0.1 4,063	0.1 4,823	0.3 9,212	—	—	—	—
Mississippi	30.7 679,574	3.7 83,043	9.7 214,603	2.0 44,888	0.8 17,858	0.2 3,783	0.3 6,580	0.1 1,249	0.1 1,791	0.2 3,473	0.5 10,564	0.3 6,034	1.4 30,197	0.3 6,324	—	0.1 1,960	— 682
North Carolina	24.8 1,260,919	1.4 69,133	10.5 534,607	3.9 197,669	1.3 65,665	0.4 22,733	0.9 46,310	1.5 77,656	0.3 15,461	0.3 15,704	0.6 32,140	0.2 7,795	—	0.6 29,714	0.1 5,174	—	0.5 23,334
Oklahoma	26.3 674,280	3.9 100,663	11.6 296,806	0.2 6,001	0.9 23,340	1.3 33,270	2.4 61,376	0.2 3,992	1.9 49,153	0.9 22,790	0.1 3,698	1.4 35,762	0.3 6,448	0.9 23,919	—	0.1 1,960	0.4 9,911
South Carolina	28.4 734,709	1.8 46,642	9.9 256,888	3.6 92,443	1.8 47,586	0.1 2,208	0.2 4,960	2.0 52,186	0.3 8,839	0.1 1,608	1.1 27,638	0.4 9,131	—	0.4 11,463	—	—	0.7 17,036
Tennessee	27.9 1,095,956	2.4 92,577	9.9 387,529	2.0 77,140	1.0 39,284	0.7 27,104	0.6 21,756	0.3 11,067	0.6 21,936	0.3 10,154	0.7 29,189	0.1 22,946	—	0.6 25,340	—	1.2 46,452	— 1,270
Texas	21.1 2,362,851	18.0 2,012,355	7.6 855,733	1.3 147,194	1.6 175,694	0.2 21,411	1.1 117,597	0.3 32,268	0.5 60,698	1.0 109,616	0.1 11,526	0.3 35,982	0.9 104,751	—	—	0.1 8,080	— 2,400
Virginia	13.8 642,930	5.3 244,678	10.7 497,027	3.1 144,057	2.9 136,755	0.7 33,646	1.0 48,679	1.0 46,075	0.4 16,442	0.3 12,780	0.3 12,591	0.3 11,735	—	0.2 10,007	0.1 6,491	—	0.2 11,607
West Virginia	1.3 22,792	5.7 98,808	12.5 218,312	2.1 36,489	1.1 19,620	0.8 14,690	1.0 16,954	0.7 12,320	0.1 18,354	—	0.8 13,124	1.4 25,073	—	0.6 10,066	8.3 142,963	—	0.1 2,115
TOTALS	12,469,706	5,524,894	4,835,954	1,093,699	843,157	757,673	462,376	314,951	295,244	283,455	265,877	247,222	217,773	206,797	158,733	91,781	79,606

Numbers in italics are percentage of the state's total population that belong to a given denomination. Numbers in regular type are total number of members of the denomination in the state.

United Methodists and the Presbyterian Church, U.S.—the foremost institutional embodiments of what is really a more encompassing regional church called “White Southern Protestantism.”

Southern folklore has it that “a Methodist is a Baptist who wears shoes; a Presbyterian is a Methodist who has gone to college; and an Episcopalian is a Presbyterian who lives off his investments.” In the following pages, we hope to examine that bit of doggerel with a focus on the mainline white Protestant denominations of the South: their size, wealth, and just a notion of their influence.

* * *

While the following information accounts for a lot of people and assets, it obviously leaves out great numbers of believers. A lack of centralized reporting systems makes it difficult to get an accurate picture of either black denominations or white sectarian churches. We do know that 63% of black Christians belong to the Baptist denominational family, and 23% are in the Methodist family; this accounts for almost four-fifths of church-affiliated blacks in the United States. Edwin Gaustad, the demographer of religion, guesses that white Southern sects number about the same as America’s Jewish population and more than all the Episcopalians in the country. Other approximations place two prominent sects, the Southern Churches of Christ and the Assemblies of God, at 2.4 million members *each*. Many of the small churches—Holiness, Pentecostals, and others—are strictly congregational with no organization

beyond the local church, so data is difficult if not impossible to get. Consequently, there are large numbers of believers who happen to be both Anglo-Saxon and white, but who would never be described in terms of WASP power structures. Southern white sectarianism is not a reporting system, much less an accommodated Americanism.

Though still considerably out of the mainstream, these conservative, fundamentalist denominations have been growing at a rate which exceeds the expansion of middle-class denominations or the general population as a whole. In the last 20 years the number of adults who preferred or claimed membership in one or another of the Baptist denominations (Primitive, Southern, Missionary, Hardshell, etc.) increased by more than 25 million. Those who identified themselves with the Assemblies of God grew fivefold, from two hundred thousand to one million. The Churches of God in Christ doubled from four hundred thousand to eight hundred thousand; the Church of the Nazarene increased by two thirds, from three hundred thousand to a half million. Pentecostal Assemblies grew by two hundred thousand, an increase of one-third. During the same period of time, the mainline denominations held steady or declined.

William McLoughlin estimates that 60 “fringe-sect” groups in the US, including Pentecostal and Holiness, have grown in membership by 500 to 700% over the last twenty years. While mainline church programs, colleges, membership and periodicals have faltered, conservative-fundamen-

COMPARISON OF GROWTH OF CHURCH DENOMINATIONS

CHURCH	1940	1950	1960	1970	1974
Christian Church (Disciples)	1,658,966	1,767,964	1,801,821	1,424,479	1,312,326
Church of God (Cleveland, Tn)	63,216	121,706	170,261	272,278	328,892
Church of the Nazarene	165,532	226,684	307,629	383,284	430,128
Cumberland Presbyterian	73,357	81,806	88,452	92,095	93,948
Presbyterian, US	532,135	678,206	902,849	958,195	896,203
Southern Baptist Convention	4,949,174	7,079,889	9,731,591	11,628,032	12,513,378
United Methodist	8,043,454	9,653,178	10,641,310	10,671,774	10,063,046

CHURCH	Churches		Members	
	1926	1970	1926	1970
Assemblies of God	671	8,570	47,950	626,660
Church of God in Christ	733	4,500	30,263	425,500
Church of God (Cleveland, Tn)	644	3,834	23,247	243,532
Cumberland Presbyterian	1,225	1,827	63,477	92,368
Pentecostal Holiness	252	1,355	8,099	66,790
Pentecostal Assemblies of World	126	550	7,850	45,000
Free-Will Baptists	762	2,200	54,996	200,000

Source: “Religious Bodies,” US Bureau of the Census; Yearbook of American Churches; Churches and Church Membership in the US;

PER CAPITA CONTRIBUTIONS OF SELECTED CHURCHES (full members)

Denomination	Membership	Full Membership	Total Contributions	Per Capita of Total Contributions	Per Capita of Congregational Contribut.	Per Capita of Benevolences
Christian Church (Disciples)	1,312,326	854,844	\$140,252,869	\$164.07	\$139.72	\$24.35
Church of the Nazarene	430,128	430,128	120,568,181	280.31	243.59	36.72
Cumberland Presbyterian	93,948	55,577	10,707,206	192.65	173.08	19.57
Episcopal Church	2,907,293	2,069,793	305,628,925	147.66	121.49	26.17
Free-Will Baptist	215,000	215,000	34,347,000	159.75	144.19	15.56
Presbyterian Church, US	896,203	896,203	174,875,885	195.13	156.45	38.68
Southern Baptist Convention	12,513,378	12,513,378	1,342,479,619	107.29	89.77	17.52
United Methodist Church	10,063,046	10,063,046	935,723,000	92.99	71.92	21.07

Source: Yearbook of American Churches, data for 1973 for United Methodist, 1974 for all other denominations.

talist activities and organizations have been flourishing. Billy Graham continues to head the "most admired" list. Religious publishing firms can't keep up with demand. A "Christian Embassy" has opened in Washington, D.C.; Oral Roberts University is playing big league basketball, and millions of dollars of real estate around Florida's Cape Kennedy is being transformed into a college, conference center and amusement park by Christian anti-communist Carl McIntire.

There are also centers of Catholic strength in the South, some of great duration. Far from dropping out of regional religious figures, Catholics nose out Methodists for second place in total membership. Membership, however, is heavily

concentrated in certain places, often with French, Chicano or Cuban histories. The five-and-a-half million Catholics are mainly in Florida (13.5% of total population), Louisiana (35.2%) and Texas (18%). They are not all newcomers. In 1906, Catholics made up 61% of church membership in Louisiana. By 1971, that membership had only dropped a bare two percent. Twenty-one parishes (counties) in Louisiana are over half Catholic, with that percentage reaching 91% in Lafourche Parish. In several Texas counties, like Zapata and Edinburg, 85% of the total population is Catholic. There are also several Kentucky counties that have a quarter to a third Catholic population.

As in the rest of the US, the Jewish population



photo by Phil Vaille

in the South is heavily urban. Atlanta, Dallas, Miami, Memphis, Houston, Richmond and Birmingham are such centers. The total Jewish population in the South is sparse. Only Florida ranks in the top ten states in percentage of citizens who are Jewish, and it is tenth with 2.27%. Most of Southern Judaism is Conservative rather than Reform or Orthodox.

There are many limitations and pitfalls in gathering church statistics. They are always incomplete and in flux; they pass through many hands, not all of which are exacting or objective. Church bureaucratic structures are often at variance with one another and have differing interests in reporting. Information from different denominations is often not comparable because of different definitions of membership, financial categories, reporting periods, decentralization, etc.

Nonetheless, the quantitative aspects of church life and wealth are often surprising and revealing. Clearly, the churches' impact and influence on the life of the South is not only spiritual. Its investments, property, organizational structures, communications networks, and personnel reveal a sizeable stake in the earthly security(ies) which

undergird its heavenly witness. There can be little doubt that the major denominations are Southern corporations, with economic clout as well as moral sanctions.

The purpose here is not to embarrass, downgrade or moralize, but to help get a clearer picture of the South we live in and the roles of institutions that inevitably dominate its development. It is also only a modest effort to place information in the hands of church folks, and those whom the church would serve, as they seek to relate corporate religious institutions responsibly to an increasingly complex world.

Much of the information from this section was obtained from the denominations themselves. Two sources were especially helpful with the demographic information: Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 1976, edited by Constant H. Jacquet (Abingdon Press), and Churches and Church Membership in the United States by Douglas W. Johnson, Paul R. Picard, and Bernard Quinn (Glenmary Research Center). For a full review of shareholder resolutions concerning social responsibility, contact Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, Room 556, 475 Riverside Dr., New York, New York 10027.

SELECTED CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN THE SOUTH, 1971*		THE CHURCH AS A CORPORATION COMPARATIVE SIZES, 1975†			
Denomination	Members	Corporation/Church	Assets	Sales/Revenues	Empl./Clergy
Southern Baptist Convention	12,469,706	<i>Southern Baptist Convention</i>	\$6,000,000,000	\$1,500,000,000	54,150
Roman Catholic	5,529,894	<i>United Methodist Church</i>	7,667,308,709	1,009,760,804	35,245
United Methodist Church	4,835,954	AMAX	2,480,120,000	962,090,000	13,300
Presbyterian Church, US	1,093,699	Burlington Industries	1,566,525,000	1,958,092,000	71,000
Episcopal	843,157	CBS	1,193,110,000	1,938,867,000	29,177
Christian & Church of God	757,673	Coca-Cola Co.	1,710,873,000	2,872,840,000	31,100
Christian Church (Disciples)	462,376	Dow Chemical	5,846,731,000	4,888,114,000	53,100
Lutheran Church in America	314,951	Duke Power	3,740,799,000	954,414,000	13,600
United Presbyterian, USA	295,244	Genesco	507,425,000	1,095,972,000	46,000
Missouri Synod, Lutheran	283,955	Kerr-McGee Oil Co.	1,387,882,000	1,798,580,000	10,300
Church of God (Cleveland, Tn)	265,877	Middle South Utilities	3,634,623,000	923,023,000	10,500
Church of the Nazarene	247,222	R. J. Reynolds	3,528,895,000	3,294,322,000	34,700
Baptist Missionary Assoc.	217,773	Reynolds Metal	2,204,138,000	1,679,262,000	33,400
Free-Will Baptists	206,797	Southern Co. (utility)	7,237,003,000	1,998,912,000	19,000
American Baptists Conv.	158,733	J. P. Stevens	755,586,000	1,122,974,000	44,400
Cumberland Presbyterian	91,781	Texas Instruments	941,477,000	1,367,621,000	56,700
Pentecostal Holiness	79,606	Virginia Electric & Power	3,871,808,000	1,033,336,000	7,400

*Source: Churches and Church Membership in the US, 1971 †Source: Fortune's 500; Yearbook of American Churches, 1976

Southern Baptist Convention

"Undoubtedly, there are in our Southern Churches multitudes of good Christian men and women, as good as are to be found; undoubtedly, they have multitudes of good and faithful pastors, sharing with them a common lot of poverty . . . The South is to rise, and for the resurrection Baptists should be preparing."

— *The Baptist Examiner and Chronicle, 1865*

And rise they did, And share "a common lot of poverty" they did not. At least not for very long.

From small, anti-establishment, counter-culture beginnings, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has grown to Protestantism's largest denomination, embodying virtually an entire culture. The SBC is the dominant religious group in the one region of the US where religion is still a powerful, if not the basic, ethical sanction. Its prominence in the social, political and economic life of the South is in accord with its numbers and its resources.

Government

The Southern Baptist form of church government is called congregational, as distinguished from episcopal and presbyterian. Southern Baptists believe: (1) "the governmental power is in the hands of the people"; (2) "it is the right of a majority of the members of a church to rule, in accordance with the law of Christ"; and (3) "the power of a church cannot be transferred or alienated, and that the church action is final."

Each congregation has complete local autonomy to hire and fire its minister, and to emphasize, preach, and teach as its minister and people wish. Thus, local churches have great latitude in adapting their message to fit the local situation. Coupled with their interpretation of the "priesthood of all believers" (each individual is given the responsibility to read the Bible and interpret it for himself), good Southern Baptists can hold a variety of positions and views.

The Southern Baptist Convention in the South, 1975

\$1.5 billion	annual contribution
\$4.7 billion	property value
12,469,706	members
28,500	churches
44,403	clergy

National or state convention votes have no practical effect on autonomous local congregations. This loose structure has cushioned the Southern Baptists against controversies that have wracked other denominations.

The local churches also retain power of the purse over the one and a half billion dollars they raise each year. There are no binding apportionments; churches dissatisfied with any Convention program simply exclude it from their donation. Since much depends on voluntary cooperation, only the most acceptable programs are put forward.

These local churches form the broad base of a pyramid: churches from an area the size of a county or two unite to form associations; Baptists within bounds of a single state form state conventions; and the Southern Baptist Convention, the apex of the pyramid, coordinates denominational efforts for the entire South, nation, world. A de facto hierarchy that has some subtle control over local churches has nevertheless emerged from the expansions of the huge Southern Baptist organizations dealing with missions, publishing, institutions, and other denominational programs. As one ex-Baptist put it, "The pressure for conformity is a great deal less obvious than that of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, but it is just as real and just as effective. God and his wooing spirit must play ball with the system or get out of the stadium."

In the past few years, church bodies including the Catholics and Baptists have been debating the question of economic centralization versus decentralization. The Catholic Church, which prides itself on unity in matters of dogma, deliberately strives for maximum disunity in matters of finance and administration. Because the One True Church has no one economic neck for a single sword stroke to sever, Catholicism has out-lived wounds over the centuries that would have bled dry tighter-knit organizations. Similarly, the congregational, decentralized Baptist and sectarian Protestant churches operate on a "principle of subsidiarity," so every church and agency is financially self-sufficient and autonomous. They have not only survived, they have flourished.

But decentralization also means, denominationally speaking, a dilution of authority, lack of direction and efficiency, duplication of effort, etc. Efforts to modernize finances, management practices, and investment policies have caused some unrest within the professional church.

In the Southern Baptist Convention, a highly successful fundraising device known as the Cooperative Program has been the lifeline of everything Southern Baptists have done as a denomination for almost 50 years. It raised \$35,000 in its first year in 1923, and today raises well over \$111 million for all causes annually. In 1927, an executive committee of the SBC was formed to administer the Cooperative Program and bring responsible fiscal procedures to the church. Its success over the years has made Southern Baptists, by self-description, "the mightiest force for world evangelism on the contemporary scene." But it is also gradually changing the Southern Baptist motif from autonomy to efficiency. As one Southern Baptist explains, "Unobtrusively, the flow of power is being altered to flow down from duly elected official representatives, rather than up from the individual church members." Checking centralized power and keeping it invulnerable to the church's foes is difficult because of the instinctive Baptist refusal to admit that in a "democracy" power can concentrate at the

top without anyone deliberately running for "Pope."

There are almost 11 million Southern Baptist members in the South, in 28,500 churches, served by 44,400 clergy. While their largest numbers are in Texas (almost 2.5 million), their greatest strength in proportion to the total population is in Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia and South Carolina, where a third to a half of the people in almost every county are Southern Baptists. They are weakest in West Virginia, although in the last 15 years they have more than doubled their membership and increased contributions in the state by eightfold. There are 245 Southern Baptist churches in Houston, Texas, and 152 in Dallas compared to only 65 in West Virginia. The bulk of the church's wealth is now found in the large city and suburban churches, but more than 60% of all members are still in rural churches of less than 200 members.

Property and Prosperity

Being congregationalists, *official* SBC opinions hardly exist. The difficulty of determining "the Baptist position"



photo by David Massey

on a given topic is obvious. However, because of the necessity of voluntary cooperation, all reports, resolutions, and editorials are designed to elicit favorable responses from grassroots Baptists. Indeed, the institution probably responds more amenable to social pressures than to any heavenly vision.

The Southern Baptist doctrine of property is fairly clear and traditional: a property owner is a trustee in charge of a portion of God's property; the basis of possession is the dominion over the earth which God bestowed upon man in the creation. The church itself owns property now conservatively valued at almost \$5 billion. They take good care of it, and always have. Legend has it that General Sherman, fresh from marching through Georgia, dispatched a lieutenant with a squad of soldiers to the heart of Columbia, S. C., with one order: "Destroy that Baptist church where the first secession convention was held!" Arriving at the stately but unidentifiable building, the soldiers accosted the old caretaker and demanded to know, "Is this the First Baptist Church?" The loyal caretaker pointed to another

church two blocks up the street and answered, "No, sir! No, sir! That's it up yonder!" The neighbor church was blown to bits, and the First Baptist Church, scene of the historic secession convention, stands to this day.

The Southern Baptists believe in the old Puritan idea that "righteousness has the promise of material prosperity." Since God rewards righteousness, the church has more to do with material prosperity than any other earthly agency. On the other hand, the hungry and poor are not suffering so much from a lack of proper distribution of goods, as a lack of evangelism and the willingness of Christians to share with "those less fortunate." Therefore, the need is not for new laws and social programs; the need is for *revival!*

Baptist Families

Some of the righteous Baptist laymen who have prospered and served as leaders of the church include the late millionaire-oilman, Senator Robert Kerr of Oklahoma, a chairman of the Baptist Foundation; tobacco king R.J. Reynolds, a strong bulwark of the Baptist's Wake Forest University; Owen Cooper, a president of the Southern Baptist Convention, vice-president of the Baptist World Alliance, director of the Federal Reserve Board in Atlanta, president of Coastal Chemical Corporation for 12 years, executive vice-president of Mississippi Chemical Corporation and an appropriate member of the Baptist's Missions Challenge Committee.

W. Maxey Jarman, currently the chairman of Genesco's executive committee and director of the Nashville City Bank and Trust Co. and the Mutual Life Insurance Co., is also a trustee of the Moody Bible Institute, vice-president of the American Bible Society, author of *A Businessman Looks at the Bible*, and a former vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention. W. Gordon Hobgood and Duane Geis are both trustees of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board and bankers in Dallas. John Justin of the Justin Boot Co. is a major fundraiser, and the Fleming Oil Company family is an important Baptist contributor.

The list could go on and on. Suffice it to say, this happy coincidence (blessing) of wealth and faith lies at the heart of the Convention. Witness the Norton family (G.W. Norton and Company; Eckstein Norton, president of the L & N Railroad). They were bankers, businessmen, and financiers. G.W. was the first treasurer of the SBC and the first board chairman of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. G.W. II was the second treasurer of the SBC and chairman of the building committee of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. G. W. III was the third treasurer of the SBC and a member of the Seminary's executive committee. The family contributed well over a million dollars to the Convention.

Texas Baptists have traditionally furnished financial leadership for Baptists. They emerged from the Great Depression without the loss of a single institution and with more than \$7 million in *new* assets. They increased their gifts to the Cooperative Program over the Depression and World War II from \$548,694 in 1929 to almost \$3 million in 1945, to \$19 million in 1974. Texas cattleman Christopher Slaughter prayed, "Master, give me a hand to get and a heart to give." He gave over a million to Baptist causes, paid the mortgage on *The Baptist Standard*, erased the debt on the First Baptist Church in Dallas, and became

president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas at the turn of the century. Texan George Washington Bottoms and his wife Ida made a fortune in the lumber industry. They set up a trust fund for the Home Mission Board and produced around a million dollars for work in Cuba. They also built churches in Palestine and Brazil, and supported Baptist orphanages and colleges with well over \$2 million. A director and president of the Texas Baptist Foundation for 18 years until his death, Herbert Lee Kokernot was a cattleman, business executive, organizer and director of the First National Bank of Alpine, Texas, and National Finance Credit Corporation of Ft. Worth. He gave over \$15 million to Baptist schools. John G. Hardin, Texas oilman, gave over \$6 million to Baptist schools and a large trust to be administered for Convention interests.

Imbedded in the political and economic history of the South are such leading Baptist names as Joseph E. Brown, industrialist and governor of Georgia; Leondus L. Polk, editor of *The Progressive Farmer*; Basil Manley, Jr., president of the University of Alabama; James P. Eagle, governor of Arkansas; Isaac T. Tichenor, president of Alabama Polytechnic Institute; the Broadus and Jones families of Virginia; Mercer and Cobb of Georgia; Fuller, Elliott, and Furman of South Carolina; the Loweries of Mississippi; and on and on.

Educational Institutions

Southern Baptist schools have absorbed an incredible amount of wealth to train their young. The church has 43 senior colleges and universities, ten junior colleges, four Bible schools, seven academies, and seven seminaries. Three of the seminaries — Southwestern, Southern, and New Orleans — are the largest schools belonging to the American Association of Theological Schools. Baylor and Richmond are the two largest Baptist universities with about 10,000 students each. Samford has an enrollment of over 7,000

and Wake Forest over 5,000. (Samford changed its name from Howard College when it moved to a new Birmingham campus built largely with contributions from Tennessee Coal and Iron Company (US Steel) and the Alabama Power Company.) Richmond has the largest endowment, almost \$71 million, but Wake Forest has the highest valued property, \$59 million. All told, the Southern Baptist Convention has right at one billion dollars in school endowments and property in 70 institutions, training 130,000 young people at a cost of \$250 million a year.

Investments

How is \$5 billion worth of property, almost a billion dollars in other assets, securities and stocks, and another \$1.5 billion in yearly income distributed, invested, and raised?

The local church raises most of the annual revenue to support itself, its clergy, and its particular interests. Each Baptist contributes an average of \$108 per year with \$90 going for congregational expenses and \$18 for "benevolences." Two "special" offerings are taken: the Lottie Moon offering for foreign missions, which raised over \$22 million in 1974, and the Annie Armstrong offering for national missions, which raised \$8 million in the same year. The Cooperative Program receives "benevolences" and distributes the income to various agencies. In 1974, it took in over \$96 million from the Southern states, with 61% going to foreign missions, 22% to home missions, and 1-3% to seminaries, Convention agencies and institutions.

Total receipts from all sources for Convention activities beyond the local church in 1974 was \$154 million, up \$20 million from 1973. The largest portions of that go to the Sunday School Board (\$53 million), the Foreign Mission Board (\$48 million), the Home Mission Board (\$20 million), and the Annuity Board (\$14 million). The total assets of



photo by Carter Tomassi

these agencies and programs come to \$624 million. More than half of that is in the Annuity Board (\$341 million); other large holdings are in the Foreign Mission Board (\$58 million), Home Mission Board (\$64 million), Sunday School Board (\$57 million), Southern Seminary (\$27 million), and Southwestern Seminary (\$27 million).

Among the chief financial sources outside the local church is the estate or endowment. "The preparation of a Christian will is an important matter," advises a brochure from the Southern Baptist Foundation. "Pray about it. Talk it over with your family. You may want to consult with your pastor, or your Baptist foundation." The Southern Baptist Foundation was established in 1947 "to encourage and motivate the making of gifts," for programs "fostered by the SBC." Its total investment portfolio in September, 1975, was valued at \$15 million, with earnings exceeding one million dollars a year.

The Foundation offers services to individuals, churches, and all Baptist agencies, and assists the formation of state foundations. The Texas Baptist Foundation would not respond to inquiries, but supposedly has over \$81 million in assets. In March, 1976, the Louisiana Baptist Foundation reported a total investment of \$5 million, mainly in utili-

ties, oil and gas, metals and mining, etc. The Baptist Foundation of South Carolina had assets in June, 1976, of slightly more than \$9.3 million in preferred stocks, common stocks, first-grade loans, and church real-estate loans. The Alabama Baptist Foundation reported \$6 million in assets.

These foundations liberally distribute publicity brochures and pamphlets offering their advice in estate planning, writing wills, and establishing living trusts, "designed to promote Christian stewardship." In one brochure, the Southern Baptist Foundation, referring to Cuban refugees and the African chieftains, testifies: "These people, poor as they may be, are as greedy as the man who lovingly fingers his stocks and bonds in the quiet of the bank vault . . . God gave us this tendency, but he means for us to keep it under control . . . Man's place is under God as a steward accountable to the owner . . . He calls us to responsible management over the world."

"Responsible management" apparently does not quite extend to meddling in the affairs of private corporations where large sums of Christian stewardship are invested.

By far the largest portion of Southern Baptist invested wealth is in its Annuity Board which administers the pension funds for the church's clergy and the protection of their dependents. The money is entrusted to the Board by churches, individuals, agencies, and institutions for safe-keeping and management; and the investment policies that govern its use reveal, as nothing else can, the Convention's power and philosophy. On April 30, 1975, the Annuity Board reported owning 3,217,140 shares of 164 companies, but it declined to update the value of this stock from the 1974 figure of over \$350 million. Among others, the investments are in five of the South's top 30 corporations:

Coca-Cola	18,000 shares
Burlington Industries	23,000
Genuine Parts	7,000
Knight-Ridder	13,000
Southern Railway	16,500

Other investments include holdings in 15 of the top 30 industrial corporations in America:

Exxon	29,000
General Motors	20,500
Ford	12,000
IBM	34,875
Gulf Oil	17,000
General Electric	6,000
Standard Oil of Ind.	19,800
US Steel	12,000
Continental Oil	7,000
Procter & Gamble	24,700
Union Carbide	12,200
Phillips Petroleum	28,000
Bethlehem Steel	20,000
Caterpillar Tractor	10,000
Eastman Kodak	44,500

The Annuity Board adopted guidelines in 1975 prohibiting investments, leases or loans in liquor, tobacco or motion picture industries, airlines, motels, hotels, restaurants, foreign companies, apartments, funeral homes, small businesses, rest homes, or hospitals. No leases or loans could be made to single family residences, apartment houses, day-care centers, oil and gas reserves, religious or charitable institutions, or office buildings (except to a

Baptists in the South (partial list only)*	Date of Organi- zation	Number of Churches	Members
American Baptist Assoc.	1925	3,295	790,000
Baptist Missionary Assoc. of America	1950	1,408	187,246
Christian Unity Baptist Assoc. (In Tenn. & Va.)	1934	5	345
Conservative Baptist Assoc. of America	1947	1,127	300,000
Duck River Assoc. of Bapts.		81	8,492
Evangelical Baptist Church (Free Will Baptist in NC)	1935	31	2,200
Independent Baptist Church in America	1893	2	30
Natl. Assoc. of Free-Will Bapt.	1935	2,163	186,136
National Baptist Convention of America	1895	11,398	2,668,800
National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.	1895	26,000	5,500,000
National Primitive Baptist Convention of the USA	1907	2,196	1,523,000
Pentecostal Free-Will Baptist	1855	150	13,500
Primitive Baptists	ca.1830	1,000	72,000
Progressive National Bap- tist Convention	1961	655	521,700
Regular Baptists (22 assoc.)		266	17,186
Separate Baptist in Christ	1758	84	7,496
Southern Baptist Convention	1845	34,340	11,628,032
Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predes- tinarian Baptists	ca.1826	16	201
United Baptists	1838	586	63,641
United Free-Will Baptist Church (South)	1870	836	100,000

* prepared from *A History of the Baptists* by Robert G. Torbet (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1973)

major tenant).

The guidelines go on to say that "there should be no investments in, nor loans to companies known to be non-cooperative with fair-employment practices, improvement of pollution problems, and generally recognized social, health, and other national issues." However, the Annuity Board has 6,000 shares of AMAX, one of the biggest strip-mine operators in the world and a frequent violator of water pollution standards. The Board also has 7,000 shares of Abbott Labs and 21,000 shares of Bristol Myers, both involved in proxy fights over nutritional and promotional questions about their infant formula. It has 10,000 shares of the J.P. Stevens textiles company, known as the worst labor law violator in the country. It has 24,000 shares of Avon, 40,000 shares of Gillette, 32,000 shares of Merck, and 36,000 shares of Warner Lambert—all challenged by shareholders because of their refusal to disclose Equal Employment Opportunity data. It has 19,800 shares of Standard Oil of Indiana, involved in a fight over stripmining on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, and 12,200 shares of Union Carbide, the first US company to break the UN embargo on Rhodesian chrome.

Out of a total portfolio of 237,933 shares worth over \$10 million, the Foreign Mission Board has 4,320 shares

*There can be little doubt
that the major denominations
are Southern corporations
with economic clout as
well as moral sanctions.*

of Mobil, 4,000 shares of Phillips—all receiving shareholder resolutions dealing with foreign political contributions—and another 4,000 shares of Union Carbide. It also has 9,700 shares of General Motors, where 15 different church groups have submitted shareholder resolutions regarding the rights of auto workers in Chile; and 2,684 shares of IBM, where resolutions are questioning the company's support of apartheid in South Africa.

The investments and social questions are much the same throughout Baptist portfolios, investment policies not withstanding. All of them are very big on Coca-Cola, chemicals, utilities, oil and gas.

It is small wonder that the executive secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Foundation in his 1975 annual report, writes: "[Energy] development is being hampered by ecologists who seem to over-react in their effort to save humanity from destroying itself. . . . Nuclear power — which many think will be the ultimate solution to the energy crisis — has been slowed because of the scare tactics of some of the bleeding hearts seeking headlines for their own personal gain, monetarily or otherwise. . . . The main ingredient needed today, in many people's minds, is greater confidence in their fellow man, and the system under which they work, live, and have their being. This can best be accomplished by the return of man to God through the true principles of Christianity."

United Methodist Church

"The General Rules of Methodism restrain extravagant and reckless expenses, and demand energy in work. Such a system is no less economical than it is spiritual. So the outcome is a Church that a century ago assembled the poor and outcast under spreading oaks, today brings together bankers, merchants, manufacturers, Senators and chief rulers in large temples. Methodism owns much of our bank, railroad and factory stock, government bonds, real estate and every form of legitimate wealth. Our people have been workers and savers, and great wealth has come to them. Such men as Cupples, Scruggs, Duke, Pelzer, Cole and Williams show that Southern Methodism is no hindrance to material success on the largest scale. We are going into the twentieth century with immense resources—running banks, factories, railroads, ship lines, city property and governments. For all this we are thankful."

—Methodist Bishop John C. Kilgo, 1900

In 1784, the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in Baltimore with about 60 preachers. John Wesley had insisted that his "societies" remain just that, but after the American Revolution, the Church of England could no longer function in the states, and the Bishop of London refused to ordain Wesley's preachers. No doubts of national allegiance remained when the 1784 Baltimore meeting adopted articles of religion which included the commitment, "As good patriots, the Methodists should vow allegiance to the new US government." For many Methodists, however, loyalties were torn between church and state.

Sixty years later, Bishop James Andrews of Georgia had inherited slaves which Georgia law forbade him to free. The 1844 General Conference meeting in New York City asked him to surrender his office as Bishop until he gave his slaves their liberty. The Southern Methodists rebelled and went home to organize the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

The United Methodist Church in the South, 1975

\$446 million	annual contributions
\$2.9 billion	property value
4,449,780	members
19,147	churches
11,700	clergy

At about the same time, another group of Methodists were organizing the Freedmen's Aid Society and starting a number of colleges, including Central Tennessee College in Nashville, Clark University in Atlanta, Rust College in Holly Springs, Mississippi, and Meharry Medical College in Nashville.

The Southern Church returned to the fold in 1939 after years of bitterness and negotiation. A racial compromise was struck which placed all black Methodists in a single, segregated national unit called the Central Jurisdiction (now abolished). Bishop John M. Moore, who represented the Southern Church in the 1939 plan of union, reflected on the divisive racial segregation: "This philosophy of race relations was deep-seated and stronger than any church affiliation."

Structure

The importance of structure to Methodists dates back to the church's founding. The emphasis on mission — "going out into all the world," "the world is my parish" — led John Wesley to set up the structure called the "appointive system." Ministers are sent by bishops to preach, teach, administer and raise budgets. In the early days when a person became a Methodist, he was not joining a church, he was joining a "society" in order to better his spiritual condition. The rules of the society were strict and discipline tight. Indeed, the book of rules and laws which govern the United Methodist Church is still called *The Discipline*.

Several dozen local churches, or "charges," form a district, presided over by a district superintendent. Districts are joined together into annual conferences, which in turn are grouped into five large jurisdictions. One of the five is the Southeastern. The general conference is the all-encompassing, law-making body which convenes every four years.

Methodist government is called episcopal, but it is largely governed by this series of conferences, with lay and clergy delegates elected up the ladder of charge, district, annual, jurisdictional and general conferences. In this connectional system, the annual conference is the primary "connector" — where the Presiding Bishop appoints clergy to local churches for the upcoming year, where elections and ordinations take place and clergy membership reside.

Assets

President Theodore Roosevelt once remarked that he would rather address a Methodist audience than any other in America. "You know for one thing that every one there is an American," he observed. Methodists are perhaps the country's most representative middle-class denomination. It is a national church in ways that Southern Baptists and Southern Presbyterians are not. Nevertheless, Methodists are the second largest Protestant denomination in the South and they wield great influence in the United Methodist Church at large.

Of the 39,400 United Methodist churches nationally, 19,100 are in the South, involving 4.5 million members, \$446 million in annual contributions, and almost \$3 billion worth of property. In 1975, Methodists gave a little over \$100 per member and \$23,300 per church.

In the Southeast Jurisdiction, 70% of Methodists worship in congregations of under 200 members; fewer than 1% of the churches have memberships between 1,500 and 2,000.

Nonetheless, the great temples of Methodism are Southern: The First Methodist Church of Houston has almost 11,000 members, \$8.5 million worth of property, and a pastor who is paid a salary of \$31,750, plus housing and the usual clergy dispensations. Highland Park Methodist Church in Dallas has almost \$10 million in property; its 8,374 members raised \$1.5 million last year. Dallas has 30 Methodist churches with over 1,000 members, four of which have over 5,000. Peachtree Road Methodist Church, Atlanta, has 5,000 members and owns \$4.5 million in property. Boston Avenue Methodist Church has 6,000 members, controls \$9 million worth of property and pays their preacher \$23,000 plus housing. Nashville Methodist churches utilize over \$35 million worth of property, while the figure for the Houston area is \$92 million.

In 1941, \$21 million went for new Methodist buildings and improvements nationally. By 1960, new development had snowballed to \$180 million. The value of local Methodist church and parsonage property jumped fourfold between 1940 and 1960. The clergy has been doing better, too. Bishops, who are elected for life, make \$26,500 a year with a \$6,000 housing allowance plus office expenses. The average salary of Methodist ministers in the South is \$10,000. South Carolina has the high average with \$12,118; Kentucky, the low with \$9,338.

Families

Southern Methodism has not been without its generous patrons to establish a long tradition of Methodist influence and training.

Cornelius Vanderbilt gave \$1 million to establish Methodism's Vanderbilt University, with the stipulation that his wife's first cousin's husband, Bishop Holland N. McTyeire, be named president of the board of trustees and given "the right to veto any injudicious appropriations or measures," select faculty, and purchase land. All his decisions were to be final unless reversed by a three-fourths vote of the Board. Bishop McTyeire discharged those heavy responsibilities until his death 16 years later in 1889.

In 1914, Asa Griggs Candler gave \$1 million to move Emory College from rural Oxford, Georgia, to Atlanta, and his brother, Methodist Bishop Warren Akin Candler, promptly became the school's chancellor. Asa Candler was a druggist in Atlanta when he bought a new formula for curing headaches called Coca-Cola. By 1914, he was a millionaire many times over and a steady contributor to Methodist schools. Candler College in Havana, Cuba, is named for his brother, the Bishop, as is the theological school at Emory. Bishop Candler bitterly opposed unification of the Northern and Southern churches and drew an absolute line between the mission of the church and social/political/economic involvement. He commanded his preachers to "let politics alone!"

The Duke family of North Carolina acquired the rights to the first cigarette machine in 1884 and six years later consolidated the five largest tobacco companies into the American Tobacco Co. "If John D. Rockefeller can do what he is doing in oil," Buck Duke asked, "why should I not do it in tobacco?" He forced more mergers and at one time controlled 150 factories capitalized at \$502 million before the federal government broke up his monopoly. In

1924, Buck Duke moved Trinity College to Durham and created Duke University through a trust of around \$100 million, the largest gift made to a Christian college up to that time. Since its inception, the Duke Endowment has contributed a total of about \$2 million to some 900 rural Methodist churches, \$1.5 million toward salaries of rural preachers, \$4 million to orphanages, and over \$27 million to hospitals. The elder Duke often remarked that, if he had amounted to anything in his life, it was due to the Methodist circuit riders who frequented his home and whose preaching and counsel brought out the best in him.

Joe Perkins was a Texas mine owner, rancher, banker and oil man who died in 1960. He gave about \$12 million to Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology and contributed generously to Methodist pension funds, hospitals, children's homes, assembly grounds, Southern Methodist University, and Methodist Southwestern University. He and his wife, Lois, were often delegates to annual and general conferences, and Lois was a member of the executive committee of the World Methodist Council from 1961 to 1968.

Education

Duke, SMU, and Emory are the Southern three of Methodism's seven major universities. Together, the three schools enroll 27,000 students, raise \$316 million annually,

control \$500 million in physical facilities, and manage \$250 million in endowments. They each have a seminary with a total enrollment of 1345 and annual income of around \$7 million.

Methodists have 81 senior colleges with 122,000 students; they raise \$377 million annually, own \$1 billion worth of facilities, and have endowments totaling \$366 million. Half of these schools are in the South. Fifteen of Methodism's 19 junior colleges and half its secondary schools are in the South.

In 1975, Southern Methodist churches contributed \$2 million to ministerial education and \$1.5 million to its Black College Fund.

In all, Methodist higher education has 234,000 students, over \$2 billion in buildings, \$750 million in endowments, and well over one billion dollars in annual income. In addition, there are 190 Methodist homes for the aged, 65 homes for children and youth, 78 hospitals, and 814 missionaries in 48 countries.

Investments

A recent Methodist editorial said, "When we grumble about apportionments, we rob ourselves of the joy we should feel as individual Christians participating, through our pooled resources, with other Christians in a common mission and ministry which extends across this land and throughout the world." Grumbling aside, Methodists put

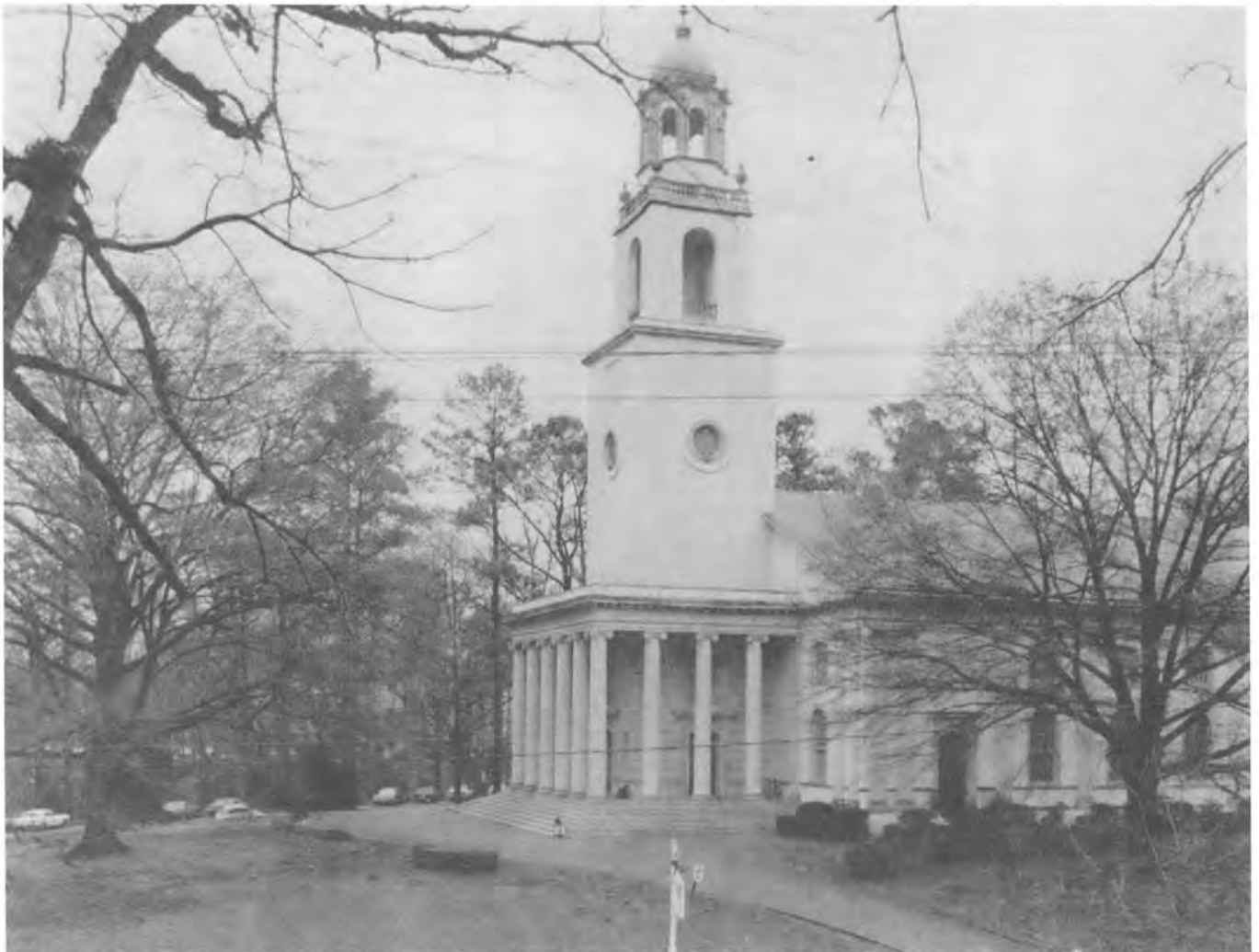


photo by David Massey

over one billion dollars in the collection plate in 1974, the most recent year for which complete statistics are available. Most of that was spent in the local church (79%). Another 16% went to district, annual conference and jurisdictional programs, and to United Methodist Women. The remaining 5% (\$55 million) went to national and international work of the church; \$12.5 million to the Board of Global Ministries, \$6 million to the Black College Fund, \$10 million to ministerial education, \$3 million to bishops, etc.

The General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) was recently given responsibility "in all matters relating to the receiving, disbursing, and reporting of general church funds." In 1975, it operated on a budget of over one million dollars. The GCFA manages the general investment fund of \$6.5 million, which is the working capital for several smaller general agencies of the church; the million dollar Episcopal-World Service Fund; and the Board of Trustees portfolio of over \$3.5 million. All of this give the GCFA a total investment of over \$11 million.

The Board of Global Ministry has investments in securities valued at \$98 million, including \$31 million in the portfolio of the Women's Division. The Board of Higher Education and Ministry holds investments of \$8.5 million in a general investment pool, \$1.5 million in a student loan fund, and endowment funds of over \$24 million. Revenues of the General Fund in 1975 came to almost \$14 million.

The Methodist Publishing House started in 1789 when the Methodist Episcopal Church was five years old; it thus became the first "connectional" agency. There were 43,262 Methodists then, and George Washington had just been inaugurated. The Southern Methodist Publishing House opened in Nashville when the 1844 division occurred, making it the first major publishing enterprise to locate south of the Mason-Dixon line. It is self-sustaining, with profits going into the Preachers' Fund — for retired Methodist preachers, their widows, and dependent children. Over the years, the publishing house and its predecessors have contributed \$21 million to the Preachers' Fund — half of that since unification in 1939. In 1975, it reported a net income of \$1.2 million on \$41 million in sales.

The Preachers' Fund is now called the General Board of Pensions. During 1975, the book value of its funds increased from \$430 million to almost \$500 million. Among the stated investment policies of the Board of Pensions is the objective that investments be made "*in those industries, companies, corporations and funds deemed likely to make positive social, moral and economic impact on society in one or more of the following ways:*

- a. *nurture climates in which human communities are maintained and strengthened for the good of every person;*
- b. *support the concepts of family and equal opportunity of life, health and sustenance of persons;*
- c. *Provide opportunities for the handicapped and for all persons irrespective of sex, age, or race;*
- d. *support the rights and opportunities of children, youth and the aging."*

However, the General Board of Pensions has \$250,000 worth of Union Carbide bonds and 60,000 shares of Union Carbide stock, while stockholder resolutions are asking for Union Carbide to stop importing chrome from Rhodesia "until such time as governmental power is transferred to

the African majority." The Board has \$500,000 in bonds of Standard Oil of California and 66,000 shares of Continental Oil. Each company faces stockholder requests for information about its involvement in undermining the Northern Cheyenne tribal government's control of its minerals in Montana. The Board also has 85,000 shares of Schering-Plough, where stockholders are asking for pricing information on generic drugs compared to brand-name drugs. At Motorola, where the Board has 70,000 shares, a stockholder resolution questions the health and working conditions at the company's Korean plants. In all, the Methodist Board of Pensions has 500,000 shares and \$3 million worth of bonds in corporations whose social responsibilities are being challenged by stockholder resolutions.

The Board of Trustees of the United Methodist Church has a similar record, with \$3.5 million in total securities heavily invested in power companies (Alabama, Arkansas, Dayton, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Niagra, Utah, West Texas, Wisconsin, etc.) and 47,300 shares in many of the same companies as the Board of Pensions: Schering-Plough, General Electric, Continental Oil, Dow Chemical, etc. The same is true of the Board of Discipleship and the Episcopal World Service Permanent Fund (1,000 shares of Continental Oil, 1,000 Schering-Plough, 500 Motorola, etc.).

It must be said that some United Methodist agencies have tried to be socially responsible in using their stockholder influence. The Women's Division of the Board of Global Ministries has led the way. In 1967, it sold bonds of a New York City bank as a protest over the bank's involvement in a financial arrangement benefiting the white-supremacist government of the Republic of South Africa. But over all there is really no contest between social responsibility and fiscal return. "Clean portfolios" seem impossible in this economy, so the "focus is on involvement," pleads the general secretary of the Board of Pensions. And the United Methodist Church is certainly involved.

* * *

The 1976 General Conference of the United Methodist Church was one of retrenchment. The Southern-based "Good News" movement had a great influence and sounded the compelling call to keep a firm grip on the status quo. There was a big evangelistic emphasis while minority constituencies continued to decrease. Oral Roberts and Billy Graham received awards from the National Association of United Methodist Evangelists. The General Conference withdrew commitment to Project Equality, an ecumenically funded affirmative action program in minority hiring and buying practices. The Methodists cut their funding from \$20,000 a year to a token \$1,000.

The Methodists have invested and consolidated those immense resources that Bishop Kilgo spoke of in 1900. Indeed, they seem to have settled back to live off the missionary advances of the free enterprise system.

Dr. Charles Allen, minister of the largest Methodist Church in the world — First Church, Houston — perhaps said it best: "25 years from now in the year 2001, I picture the United Methodist Church to be pretty much like it is today. I do believe that the church will be preserved until the end of time."

Presbyterian Church, US

"The fact is that Christian churches are guided in their business transactions by the same law of supply and demand that guides the most soulless corporation . . . The world must be improved, but it cannot be improved very rapidly, nor is there any short cut to the economic millennium."

— Presbyterian Henry Farnum, New Princeton Review, 1886

The Presbyterian Church, US (PCUS), really the Southern Presbyterian Church, is a *sectional* church — its history and outlook are clearly entwined with the history and outlook of the South. Presbyterians North and South were one denomination for 150 years before the Civil War. In Augusta, Georgia, on December 4, 1861, the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America was formed, later to change its name to the Presbyterian Church, US. *The Southern Presbyterian* declared that the Civil War had been "the occasion of untold profit to the Southern section of our country. . . . One stands amazed at the amount of good which through Providence has grown out of the war."

The new Southern Church started with 850 clergy, 1,309 churches, and 80,532 members. Among the 38 ruling elders at the opening assembly were 15 planters, 12 lawyers (including four judges), four merchants, three doctors, two teachers, one banker, and one mechanic. It has remained a predominantly upper-middle-class church with high educational standards for its clergy. The adherence to rigid formal education for its ministers and to a strict interpretation of its Westminster Confession placed Presbyterians in an unfavorable position to compete with the Baptists' and Methodists' huge evangelistic campaigns. While the Baptists and Methodists grew almost without plan, the Presbyterians stuck to their doctrines and ecclesiastical traditions. In the 1880s when sectarian churches began to replace both Baptists and Methodists as the churches of the poor, Presbyterians still made little or no appeal to this large portion of the Southern population. Nevertheless, it has maintained its third place ranking in Southern mainline Protestantism and strong influence in the country's politics and economics due largely to its long history and middle-class base. The Virginia and North

Carolina Presbyteries called for American independence from England long before the Boston rebellions, and the Mecklenburg (NC) Presbytery was the first church body in the colonies to approve the Declaration of Independence. Today Presbyterians pervade the South, but only in three North Carolina counties, Mecklenburg, Hoke and Scotland, are they a numerical force.

Church Government

Each congregation has its own local "session." Churches in a limited area are grouped in presbyteries. The synod supervises the presbyteries of a larger geographical area. The highest judiciary is the annual general assembly, made up of clergy and lay delegates elected by the presbyteries on a proportional basis. The officers of the general assembly are the stated clerk, elected for five years, and the moderator, chosen annually to preside.

In 18 Southern states there are presently 880,000 Presbyterians (410,000 are female) in 4,000 churches with 5,000 clergy. The PCUS claims four seminaries, 15 colleges, five junior colleges, four secondary schools, seven mission schools, one school of religious education, 18 childrens' homes, and 20 homes for the aged. The mission force for what the Presbyterians call "the overseas battle" was reduced in 1974 to 352 and will decline to 309 by the end of 1976. The church publishes 29 periodicals and owns the John Knox Press.

Three-fourths of PCUS churches have fewer than 250 members. Of its 4,000 churches, 113 have over 1,000 members, but 463 have fewer than 25 members. Some of the larger churches are Highland Park in Dallas with 6,443 members and \$1.5 million raised annually; First Church, Greensboro, with 3,892 members and \$809,000 in total contributions; Memorial Drive in Houston with 4,580 members and \$911,000 contributed each year; Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., 3,583 members and over \$1 million raised; First Church, Charleston, W. Va., 3,303 members and \$506,000 raised; Peachtree in Atlanta, 3,220 members and \$636,000 in total contributions. The Atlanta Presbytery has a high membership with over 40,000 and is a high contributor, raising almost \$10 million a year.

Property and Prosperity

The Presbyterian Church has a history of controversy over capital and labor. From its fairly privileged position in the society, it claims that property and wealth entrusted to it are "matters of evangelism and mission," which imply both an individualism and a social concern. The Church's General Executive Board recently stated as policy: "God will not forget or forsake the poor or the needy; he demands economic justice for the poor, the exploited, the defenseless, the weak, the alien. . . ." On the other hand, "Biblical faith has refused to affirm that wealth is *per se* evil. . . . There is in Biblical faith no absolute human right of ownership of anything. We are stewards, not owners, of property and wealth given by God, who is its rightful owner." So Presbyterians have come to live with their Calvinist tradition of tension between a concern for stewardship of wealth, on the one hand, and a concern for more just economic relations on the other.

One of the most generous Presbyterian stewards of wealth was W.H. Belk, "the merchant prince of North

The Presbyterian Church, US in the South, 1975

\$185,275,224	annual contributions
883,185	members
4,028	churches
5,092	clergy

Carolina," who expanded Presbyterianism greatly by having every Belk-affiliated store make annual contributions to a fund for churches, thereby assisting some 335 churches in their building programs. Belk was a director of the Committee of One Hundred formed by Presbyterians in the 1920s to elect anti-evolution candidates in North Carolina. It proclaimed, "We are going to keep up the fight until we get control of the State and maybe the nation." Other prominent Presbyterians of this group were Zebulon Vance Turlington, and W. H. Sprunt. The group came to be known as the North Carolina Bible League.

Belk's sons carry on the tradition of merging economic, political, and religious interests. Irwin has been a state legislator, business executive, and Presbyterian church leader. He is the president, vice-president, or director of some 20 corporations from banks to textile mills. He is a trustee of the Presbyterian Consolidated College, and the University of North Carolina, serving on its finance committee. He represented Mecklenburg County in the state legislature two terms. He is on the home mission committee of Mecklenburg Presbytery and is chairman of its Charlotte finance committee, vice president of his Sunday school class, president of Men of the Church and its district chairman, and chairman of the executive committee of the Historical Foundation of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches.

Thomas Milburn Belk, another son of W. H., is an officer in over 400 Belk and Leggett Department Stores and director of many corporations and civic organizations. He has been chairman of his church's board of deacons, president of Men of the Church, member of the executive committee of home missions of the Synod of North Carolina, and a trustee of the Presbyterian's Montreat Association in the Smokies.

Wealthy import businessman, James Sprunt built many Presbyterian churches, maintained a mission and hospital in China, and established a lectureship at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia. The four brothers in the aluminum side of the Reynolds clan are also prominent Presbyterians; their business clout extends from Reynolds Metals to Jamaican Mines to United Virginia Bank to Eskimo Pies.

These are only some of the foremost wealthy Presbyterian givers. The list could be long. It is the same in politics. Just a sampling: five Southern Presbyterians serve on the US House Agriculture Committee alone, namely Richard Kelly of Florida, John Breckinridge of Kentucky, Charles Rose of North Carolina, Ed Jones of Tennessee, and William Wampler of Virginia.

Presbyterians own 28 educational institutions with over \$81 million in plant and endowment, and a total investment of over \$116 million. One of its prestigious schools, Davidson University, was set up with a \$40 million endowment by James Buchanan Duke of Duke Power, American Tobacco, Duke University, etc.

In 1975, the Southern Presbyterians raised \$185 million in total contributions or \$211 per capita. Of the total, \$124 million of that remained in local churches; \$30 million went to buildings and capital funds, \$12 million to presbyteries, \$6 million to synods, \$9.5 million to general assembly programs, and \$7 million to "other." While the Presbyterians lost some 13,000 members between 1974 and 1975, their collections rose by almost \$10 million.



photo by Georgia Springer

Over a third of the \$1 million Witness Season Appeal was directed to evangelistic work in Brazil; theological education in Asia received \$157,300; Zaire agricultural and community and development \$56,500; and \$85,000 went to Haiti for educational and medical work. In 1975, over \$5 million went overseas with the largest portion going to Brazil for "witness and evangelism" and missionaries' salaries.

The General Executive Board has assets of \$16 million and a staff of around 70. They have salaries mainly in the \$18,000 to \$22,000 range. The executive in charge of pensions makes \$30,000 and the Stated Clerk, \$26,000. In 1975, the GEB took in \$8,745,000, but its 1977 projected income is only \$7.5 million.

Presbyterian publications had sales of over \$3 million in 1975 with a gross profit of \$1,483,565.

The Presbyterian Foundation was set up in 1866 to "receive and manage permanent funds for the use of its

programs, homes, colleges, seminaries, synods, presbyteries, and congregations." It tries to add \$1 million in new funds each year. In 1975, it topped that by adding \$1,200,000. Its total assets at the end of 1975 were over \$12 million. One of its aims now is to gain \$250 from each church each year and thus be assured of some \$10 million or more annually. In 1974, it received a half million dollars through wills and bequests. As it says, "it is possible to perpetuate one's service."

The first life insurance company in America was called "Corporation for Relief of Poor and Distressed Presbyterian Ministers and of the Poor and Distressed Widows and Children of Presbyterian Ministers." It later was called "the Presbyterian Ministers' Fund." Now the Presbyterian Church, US, has the Board of Annuities and Relief. It had almost \$121 million in assets in 1975, up \$17 million since 1974, \$23 million of which is invested in utility companies. It has 133,700 shares worth over \$6 million of common stock in seven oil companies. Almost \$4 million is invested in banking insurance, including a million in J. P. Morgan & Co.

The Investment Policy and Guidelines of the General Executive Board states, "the church must be concerned to see that it does not by its investments, support uncritically, or without attempting to change them, institutions whose processes and products hurt more people than the church is able to help through programs supported by money earned from these investments." It, then, lists investment considerations such as: human worth and dignity in employment practices, stewardship of natural resources and environment, world hunger, and contributions toward peace.

But the GEB has \$356,000 worth of General Electric stock. Stockholders resolutions are questioning GE's involvement in the production of the mammoth B-1 bomber. The GEB has \$162,857 worth of Standard Oil of Indiana which has plans to strip mine Indian lands in Montana. Standard Oil of California, in which the GEB has \$114,000 invested, is being challenged about strip mining, support of the racist Republic of South Africa, and political payoffs. More than 15 church groups are sponsoring a stockholder resolution regarding General Motors operations in Chile. The GEB has \$353,681 in that company. A similar listing of investments and social contradictions can be made for the Presbyterian Annuities Fund which has \$17 million in power companies and utilities, over \$6 million in oil companies involved in strip mining and international intrigue, \$1.8 million in General Electric, \$2 million in Kraftco, whose marketing of processed anti-nutritional food in developing countries is being challenged. The listing could go on and on.

The Presbyterian guidelines observe that "attempts to build a 'clean portfolio' (of only 'good companies') may be highly impractical." Indeed it "may limit the possibility for the church to correct social injury," so any sale of anti-social stock "will be primarily a symbolic act."

Southern Presbyterianism's profits and its integration into the economic system are real enough, but its "symbolic acts" pale in the face of an old editorial declaration of *The Central Presbyterian* magazine: "that one class should sow seed and cultivate the growing product, while another class gathers the harvest, is a condition which a free and intelligent social order will not allow."

CASE STUDY: Coca-Cola & Methodism

by Bob Hall

From the days when John Wesley first set foot on American soil at St. Simons Island, Georgia, right up to the present, the state of Georgia has continued to play an important role in the Methodist church's history. You might say the state provides an excellent example of Methodist growth and success. Georgia Methodists were the first denomination to erect their own church in Atlanta in 1848, when that city was just beginning its role as the hub of Southern transportation. By the turn of the century, Atlanta could boast more Methodist congregations and members per capita than any other city in the New World. It underwent a burst of growth when land taken from the Creek and Cherokee tribes was opened to Virginia and South Carolina settlers.

Recognizing the need to train their young, Georgians decided to establish their own Methodist school, Emory College, in 1824 at Oxford, thus following a tradition of education in the state which extended back a century to when George Whitfield, Wesley's famous colleague, founded a school and orphanage. Most of the Atlanta church money went to develop all-white Emory College or to build even larger, more elaborate churches. That's where much of Methodist Sunday school official and Coca-Cola founder Asa G. Candler's money went. Through the years Coca-Cola wealth has financed more church and school construction (particularly Methodist) in Georgia than any other source of donor capital.

Emory College and Georgia also figure heavily in the history of Methodist controversy. It was the slave ownership of a black woman by Emory's board president, Bishop James O. Andrews, that touched off the split between the Northern and Southern Methodists in 1844, the first of several splits in Protestantism over slavery. The Bishop couldn't break the law which forbade freeing his slaves, the Southern church rationalized, so he shouldn't be faulted or asked to give up his office. Ninety-four years later, Bishop Warren A. Candler (Asa Candler's brother), a former president of Emory, presided at the meeting where the Southern church decided to rejoin the North. Bishop Candler had led the forces opposing union on the grounds that the Northern church was too rationalistic and liberal and would give too much power to black bishops.

It was also at Emory College that Professor Andrew Sledd, Bishop Candler's son-in-law, was fired in 1902 for publicizing his anti-lynching sentiments. Candler defended the young man, saying he really wasn't for Negro equality; he was just opposed to mob violence. With the sides of the controversy so astutely defined, lynching soon became one

of the biggest social issues for the church in the 1920s and '30s. Many white Methodist women in the South recognized their social position in the ideology of racism "for the protection of our women" and led the fight to end lynching, often against their Methodist brothers.

The Candler Brothers

The Candler brothers were the sons of a prominent Georgia plantation master, slaveholder and Indian fighter (an enforcer of the "Cherokee Removal – Trail of Tears" from Georgia to Oklahoma) and a fundamentalist mother. They combined the attributes of stern religious fervor, practical ingenuity and aristocratic self-righteousness to find success after the set-back of the Civil War. Warren Candler graduated from Emory College to become an editor of the Methodist *Christian Advocate*, then president of Emory in 1888. Brother Asa became a druggist in Atlanta and built up his capital to purchase the newly invented Coca-Cola. He transformed it from a local headache/hangover remedy and "lift-giver" (it contains caffeine, sugar and phosphoric acid) to the most advertised product in America in 1909 and a \$25,000,000 company in 1919. With other relatives assisting, Warren helped his brother gain markets for his drink; he also held stock in the company. In turn, Asa helped Warren finance several major religious enterprises for Methodism.

The year 1898 was critical to this joint venture. Warren became a Methodist bishop and was given charge over starting a mission in Cuba, the first territory outside North America claimed by the US as bounty for its part in the Spanish-American War of 1898. Bishop Candler aimed to fulfill the church's ambition to expand Methodism into Latin America "with bread in one hand and the Bible in the other." Brother Asa was also casting an eye on foreign markets as he told Coca-Cola stockholders (mainly relatives) the same year "that wherever there are people and soda fountains, Coca-Cola will, by its now universally recognized merit, win its way quickly to the front rank of popularity." As in the States, the brothers shared the same program: winning new territory and new converts for the greatest of America's products – Christ and Coca-Cola!

Capturing Cuba for Methodism and Coca-Cola was not, however, a simple matter. The Bishop and his American missionaries complained of the evil effect of centuries of "Romanism." They weren't referring as much to the Cuban people's poverty or lack of freedom due to colonial rule as much as they were to the inability of Cubans to read the Bible, to what Bishop Candler called their "dullness," and to their lack of Church-sanctioned marriages and funerals. Meanwhile, Coca-Cola's agent in Cuba reported his problems to Atlanta headquarters: "As a rule the average Cuban doesn't know and doesn't care what he is drinking, and the words 'hygienic,' 'pure materials,' and 'cleanliness' have no meaning to him; but when once he learns that there is a difference, that Coca-Cola has more to it than wetness or sweetness, we have secured a steady consumer and an advocate of the drink."

To the Candler brothers, overcoming these "problems" and achieving success would require that the Cubans give up their old ways and *become like Americans*. As Bishop Candler told the press: "The North American and South American continents cannot be bound together firmly by

ties of commerce alone. They will become fast friends when they *think and feel alike*. Our universities, if they are richly endowed and adequately equipped, will serve this end more effectually than all the consuls and commercial agents who have been or can be engaged to accomplish it. In this matter our commercial interests and our religious duty coincide."

The key, then, was education; but not just any kind would do. As brother Asa intoned, "it must be permeated with the type of Christianity that makes for a wholesome conservatism politically and socially and for a blessed civilization crowned with piety and peace."

And so, at the Bishop's insistence, a Methodist college was immediately begun in Havana "to implant a knowledge of the saving power of the gospel and Christian Culture in its students, and through them to make its influence felt throughout the nation." Not surprisingly, the school's "greatest benefactor" was Coca-Cola's Asa G. Candler, donor of tens of thousands before his death in 1929. Appropriately, the school took the name Candler College.

Education of youth to develop local leaders with the right attitudes and to create a favorable cultural climate was the key to commercial/religious success and the function of the college. Bishop Candler frequently axed those independently-minded Cubans he thought "unfit." Coca-Cola relied on Americans for its managers in Cuba for many years and when they did begin to change and use local leadership, they put the candidates through a rigorous screening process. "Every peg is made to fit some hole and every hole needs a peg to fit it," Asa Candler once told a group of graduating high schoolers. "The cry always in the business world is for first class pegs to fit first class holes. How shall we get first class fits? That's the great question." For Methodism and Coca-Cola in Cuba the answer was Candler College – or an education in America.

Emory University

Actually, Cuba was only one of many joint ventures tackled by Methodism and Coca-Cola. And coincidentally, the biggest, costliest, and the most gratifying to the Candler brothers was another church college: Emory University. In fact, in 1899, the same year Methodism and Coca-Cola entered Cuba, Asa Candler made his first recorded contribution to Emory College (which counted two of his sons as alumni); brother Warren was the board president and urged Asa to become a trustee. Within a year, Asa had become chairman of the board's finance committee; six years later, he was the board president.

Then in 1914, the Methodists lost control of Nashville's Vanderbilt University to an unyielding board of trustees who liked Andrew Carnegie's offer of a million dollars for a medical school more than they did church control. With a flurry of activity, the church appointed a special education commission to start a new university that they would own and control "in perpetuity." Bishop Candler became commission chairman and brother Asa the treasurer. The cards were clearly stacked. After Asa donated \$1,000,000 to the commission (at a time, the biggest gift to a Southern college made by a Southerner) and pushed Atlanta's Chamber of Commerce to commit themselves for \$500,000 more, the Commission announced that Emory College would move to Atlanta – to a 75-acre suburban plot donated by Candler –



photo by Mark Lansky

and become Emory University. Candler continued as board president until his death, and the Bishop became university chancellor.

For the next fifteen years, Asa Candler pumped money into the new campus. Emory's seminary became the Candler School of Theology in Bishop Warren's honor; nephews and in-laws, rich from Coca-Cola, financed dormitories and

other buildings; the law school building featured a bust of its principal donor, brother John S. Candler, Coca-Cola legal counsel and Georgia Supreme Court Justice; Asa gave the library which became known as Candler Library; and in a move that shocked even wealthy Atlantans, Asa transplanted Wesley Memorial Hospital, which he and brother Warren had started in downtown Atlanta, to the remote

suburban campus and financed construction of a medical school. By his death in 1929, Candler had pumped some \$8,000,000 into Emory University. His son, Charles Howard Candler, who followed him as Coca-Cola chief, also succeeded him as Emory board chairman and chipped in another \$7,000,000 before he died in 1957, not counting his wife's gift of the campus' large and prestigious Glenn Memorial Methodist Church, named for her father.

Today, Emory continues its tradition as a training ground for the South's rich — and for a number of children of Coca-Cola bottlers around the world, particularly those from Latin America. With special emphasis on its professional schools, it proudly produces more Methodist ministers than any other seminary, 60% of the doctors and 80% of the dentists in Atlanta, and over half the members of the gilt-edged Atlanta Lawyers Club.

Emory's all-white, male Protestant Board (with six Methodist Bishops) is still laced with Coca-Cola connections, including Asa's grandson, who sits on both boards, the sons of three other Coke directors, and nine directors of Coca-Cola's local bank, the Trust Company of Georgia. Emory's current money man and official "principal counselor" is Robert Winship Woodruff, son of the organizer of the 1919 sale of Coca-Cola from the Candler family to a group of New York and Georgia capitalists.

Woodruff, now 82, has been the main power behind Coca-Cola since 1923. Through his foresight, Coca-Cola expanded with another war, World War II, by following the GI around the globe at the request of General Eisenhower and others. When the war ended, Coke switched its foreign plants to civilian management with civilian markets and became a multi-national corporation overnight. Woodruff returned the favor to Eisenhower by helping his war-time friend and golf partner get nominated and elected President. Another close Woodruff friend is Billy Graham, a mass media version of the evangelists Billy Sunday and Sam Jones, who had counted Asa G. Candler among their benefactors.

Through the years, Woodruff's gifts to Emory have grown in excess of \$50,000,000, primarily to finance the Woodruff Medical Center. His foundation gave the money to build the school's super-modern Woodruff Library. Over half of Emory's \$177,000,000 endowment portfolio is tied up in Coca-Cola stock, making it one of the largest single stockholders; however, even its holdings (roughly 1 million shares) are overshadowed by Woodruff's numerous foundations and pyramiding holding companies: Coke controlling ownership is still largely a one man/family affair.

It is no accident that Coca-Cola and Methodism found a common interest in religious education. Men like Asa and Warren Candler understood (and Robert Woodruff understands today) the critical importance of disciplining minds and tastes to the values of American Protestantism and capitalism. "Religious education," Asa often pointed out, "supplies restraints" which regulate ambition, discipline greed and sanctify the status quo. In turn, the Bishop testified, their brand of Christianity made capitalism a "holy" science, for capitalism plowed its excess "fruits" into Christian enterprises to train the next generation and perpetuate the cycle.

This article was excerpted from a longer pamphlet written in 1972.

CASE STUDY: Property For Prophet

by John Gaventa

Today it is known as Music City, USA. But long before the record discs launched it to its recent music fame, Nashville was well-known for another reason. To millions of Americans, Nashville, Tennessee, has always been, and still remains, the Religious Capital of the South, if not of the USA.

Within greater Nashville alone are some 313 local churches. More importantly, Nashville is the center of religious power from which emanate policies, publications, money and missionaries that influence the lives and thoughts of Christians throughout the South and around the world.

Along Nashville's James Robertson Parkway — an area that was once a black community, but now has been "urban-renewed" into one of Nashville's prime business districts — the headquarters of the Southern Baptist Convention presides over an annual budget in excess of \$70 million and a lay membership of some 13 million. In less physical settings but nevertheless similar places of authority are the headquarters of the Methodist Board of Education, Discipleship and Communication, the Presbyterian Board of World Missions, and other smaller religion-related institutions.

Every year, Nashville produces millions upon millions of religious publications — hymnals, devotional pamphlets, study materials, bibles and magazines. The city boasts the largest religious printing plant in the nation (United Methodists), the largest religious publishing house (Southern Baptist Sunday Board), the largest Bible publisher (Thomas Nelson, Inc.) and the largest Bible distributor (Gideons International). Six denominations have publishing headquarters in the city, feeding literature to half the Protestant churches in the country. Together, these "Good Word" industries ring up close to \$100 million a year in sales and provide for approximately one-fifth of the city's total manufacturing payroll.¹

Nashville trains religious leaders, ministers and missionaries by the hundreds in institutions of religious education such as Belmont College (Baptist), David Lipscomb College (Church of Christ), Scarritt College (Methodist), Free Will Baptist Bible College, Madison College (Seventh Day Adventists), Trevecca Nazarene College (Church of the Nazarene) and Vanderbilt Divinity College. Together, the religious training schools occupy hundreds of acres of property and contribute substantially to Nashville's economy.

But it's not all give with religion in Nashville. Tourists come to the Religious Capital, not just for the country music, but for places like the Upper Room, the Methodist chapel and garden complex which last year attracted some 236,000 visitors from 50 states and 60 countries. Also to Nashville come dollars, lots and lots of dollars, collected from sales, tithes and offerings throughout the world.

In Nashville, religion, like music, is business, big business.

Nobody knows the business side of Nashville's religious institutions better than Jim Ed Clary, tax assessor of Davidson County. Church property in Davidson County, as throughout the country, is tax-exempt. In Clary's county, the exemptions take in the 313 churches, the religious headquarters, most of the publishing houses, and the religious education institutions. In fact, last time the figures were counted, 42% of the property in Nashville was tax-exempt — a higher percentage than any other city in the country except Boston.

"Basically, it's a heck of a problem," says Jim Ed, looking from his courthouse desk out over an urban landscape clearly in need of funds and services. "Not a day goes by that we do not receive an appeal for exempt property. The burden must then be shifted over to other taxable property. . . . You either have to increase the value of the property or raise the tax rate. But when you put a higher percentage on people who can't afford to pay, it hurts."

Critics of religious exemptions often say that while it may be all right for a local church to get a tax break, the sprawling religious superstructure — land, apartments, hospitals, publishing houses, etc. — should not. In Nashville, the focus of controversy has been the massive religious publishing enterprises, especially the Baptist Sunday School Board and the Methodist Publishing House. The prime critic has been Clifford Allen, president of his Methodist Sunday school class and Davidson County Tax Assessor before becoming Congressman of the fifth district. In 1969, with the advice of the Metro Legal Department, Allen and the State Board of Equalization hit the Baptist Sunday School Board with \$5,622,200 in new assessments and the Methodist Publishing House with \$4,689,400. "I believe in the freedom of religion," Allen said, "but I don't believe in giving religion a free ride."²

Like any good business, the publishing houses resisted the move. In announcing their intention to fight the matter through the courts, James Sullivan, then president of the Sunday School Board, said, "Further taxation of property devoted to religious purposes would be the start of an erosion process which would seriously impair the historic principles of separation of church and state and jeopardize religious freedom." Moreover, it was argued, the publishing houses are non-profit institutions, serving only to assist the denominations in spreading the faith.

Though legally non-profit, the religious publishing houses are assuredly money-making ventures, a fact which Allen and other non-denominational competitors in the publishing field have been quick to point out. Profits made by the Baptist Sunday School Board's sales are plowed right back into other non-paying Baptist programs. Profits from the Methodist Publishing House go to a pension fund for the "benefit of retired or disabled preachers, their wives, widows or children, or other beneficiaries." In 1975, out of \$41 million in sales, the Methodist Publishing House had

\$1.5 million in net income, from which the ministers' fund gleaned \$400,000.

After several years of legal proceedings, the Tennessee Chancery Court resolved the issue of whether the publishing houses should be exempt by ruling that the proportion of the buildings used for religious purposes should be exempt, while the proportion used for other purposes would be taxable. The publishing houses appealed the ruling to the Tennessee Supreme Court, which essentially upheld the lower court's decision. Both the Methodists and Baptists then appealed again, asking this time for clarification of exactly how the line between exempt and non-exempt portions would be drawn. In response the Supreme Court said that it was "mindful" that "certain types of governmental review could endanger concepts underlying the separation of church and state" and left the specifics essentially up to the "good faith allocations of the religious institutions." "Usually," says a lawyer in the Metro Legal Department, "their 'good faith' places the assessments at about 20% for non-religious purposes."

For now Jim Ed Clary can live with the court's decision. However, he believes that the question of the responsibilities of local churches to the local government should now be raised. He suggests that maybe in lieu of taxes the churches should pay for the services they receive from the city. "It costs just as much to pick up the church's trash as it does yours or mine," he says, still looking out at Nashville's urban landscape.

"The Good Lord's not making any more land," he adds. "When it becomes exempt, we've got to make it up *somehow*."

II

If Nashville is the Religious Capital of the South, western North Carolina is its Religious Playground. There, surrounded by the Blue Ridge and Smoky Mountains, thousands of acres of land and buildings worth millions of dollars belong to religious assembly grounds, conference centers and campgrounds.

In the middle of it all, in Asheville, N.C., at least one man shares the perspective of Jim Ed Clary back in Nashville. "You've come to the right place," said Mr. Ed McElrath, Tax Supervisor of Buncombe County, when asked about the problem of tax-exempt property. McElrath has spent most of the last two years of his life attempting to list the parcels of property in his county belonging to owners who claim tax exemptions. So far, he's counted "between seven and eight thousand," and he's still got more to go.

Even without counting the numerous smaller property owners who claim a religious purpose, McElrath's county hosts many of the major assembly grounds in western North Carolina's panoply of religious recreation spots. They include:

	acreage	attendance/yr.
Montreat (Presbyterian)	3,600	2,900
Lake Junaluska (Methodist)	2,500	not available
Ridgecrest Baptist Conference	2,200	35,000
Young Life's Windy Gap	1,700	7,600
Kanuga Conference (Episcopal)	1,200	6,000
Wild's Christian Camp, Brevard	810	3,000
Christmount Assembly (Disciples)	640	6,000

Piedmont Presbyterian Camp	462	300
Our Lady of the Hills, Hendersonville	150	11,160
Camp Burgess Glen	150	9,900

A special section of the North Carolina state code provides exemptions for religious educational assemblies and any "adjacent land reasonably necessary," as long as they are used for religious worship and instruction. But, it's clearly not simply religious education that annually attracts the multitudes to these assemblies. In the South, at least, religious instruction isn't a commodity exclusive to western North Carolina; nor does it need a posh assembly ground in which to occur. As McElrath says, religious instruction is something "a lot of people do in their homes everyday."

Those who come to the religious assembly grounds come for other obvious reasons—to enjoy the hiking, riding, swimming, recreation and sight-seeing of the mountains—much of which is conveniently located on the assemblies' "reasonably necessary adjacent land."

Brochures advertising the religious assemblies differ little, in fact, from those of any resort. A handout of the Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly, for instance, describes in vivid color the "sights, sounds and surroundings" to be found nearby — including a golf course, the Biltmore estates and the Blue Ridge Parkway. "Nestled in the forested mountains, exquisite during the flowering spring, colorful in the red autumn and crisp in the sparkling winter, the center consists of thirty buildings in an architectural blend of Southern charm and modern usefulness," the brochure reads. Not a word about religious worship or religious education.

Historically, the church institutions grabbed their property in the wake of the Northern entrepreneurs who, around the turn of the century, centered upon the Asheville area as a land that neatly combined recreational pleasure with financial returns. George Vanderbilt was perhaps the best-known of these entrepreneurs who bought up mountain land. He visited the area in the 1880s and quickly acquired over fifty farms, which he developed into country estates and hunting lodges — gentlemanly supplements to his vast holdings of forest land.

Missionaries to the region, too, saw that the land's recreational potential could be of benefit. Montreat, the oldest of the assembly grounds, began in 1897 as the Montreat Retreat Association. It was bought in 1905 by the Presbyterian Church for a summer conference ground. Ridgecrest's initial 850 acres were bought by the Baptists in 1907. Lake Junaluska, now the 2,500-acre World Methodist Center, was first purchased by a Methodist missionary movement in 1908.

In more recent years, the lush mountains of western North Carolina have again become the scene of a booming land-recreation-resort complex. Natives of the region have begun to wonder who benefits from the presence of industry — the area and its people or the owners and the affluent, urban tourists who can afford to pass through. The citizens' concerns touch also on a related question: are the vast religious holdings any different from the private corporations which exploit the area?

The manager of Ridgecrest, which annually has 35,000 visitors and a budget of \$3 million answered in a way that

gave cryptic comment to the power of the religious assemblies in the area: "I'm unaware of the question," he said. "I have not known of any negative impact. Our whole community is built on what comes in to the conference center. If we were to pull out, the community of Black Mountain wouldn't have anything left. They (the people of Black Mountain) certainly wouldn't even raise the question."

Tax Supervisor McElrath doesn't quite agree. He doesn't object to the presence of the religious assembly grounds which, he admits, help local business. But he does question their preferential tax treatment which excludes them from the responsibility of supporting local government.

"The whole system is subject to abuses," McElrath says in his quiet manner. "It's not that I'm against religion or charities, but I've got so many things that nobody knows what they are."

As an example, McElrath mentions the World Evangelical and Christian Education Fund, a group which recently bought just under 2,000 acres of land in Buncombe County for an estimated two million dollars. While he expects to receive a tax-exemption request from them, McElrath doesn't have an inkling of who the World Evangelical and Christian Education is or what it will do with the property. He suspects that maybe it's a front for "either Graham or Moon."

For McElrath, it's not just a question of who owns the land but also how it is used. He questions whether the thousands of acres of land owned adjacent to the assembly ground are necessary to their religious purpose. He wonders whether certain individuals aren't gaining unduly from the religious assembly law. He points to Deerfield, an organization chartered "to provide a comfortable and congenial home for aging members of the Protestant Episcopal Church" but which, in McElrath's view, is just a haven to provide homes for "good Episcopalians." He claims, and court records substantiate, that certain assemblies which have held land for years are now selling off lots to selected laymen or ministers for summer cottages. He describes the religious assemblies as if they were no different from real estate dealers or land speculators. "These organizations are going to defeat their purpose by abusing these laws," McElrath has decided.

"The Constitution talks about church and state," he continues. "But this defeats it.... All of these organizations are being supplied water, sewers, fire protection and the like. They're automatically tied to the state. It forces everybody to support these organizations, and the list goes on — The Elks, Moose, Eagle.... The guy out here who doesn't belong to anything is supporting them all through these exemptions."

So far, there haven't been any complicated, drawn-out law suits about religious exemptions in Buncombe County, as there have been in Nashville. To Ed McElrath, there's an easier way to deal with the problem: "I think all exemptions should be eliminated," he ventures. "That would eliminate the abuse. It would help everybody. Then the Baptists would pay for what the Baptists get and enjoy."

1. Some of this data is drawn from Richard T. White, "Bibles are Big Business," in *The South Magazine*, July/August 1976, pp. 51-53.

2. Quoted from Beverly A. Asbury, "The Southern Baptists: Between a Rock and a Hard Place," unpublished paper, 1970. Thanks to Bev Asbury for permission to use his research.

BOOK REVIEWS



photo by Georgia Springer

Book Reviewers in this Issue

Jim Branscome is a free-lance journalist living in Sevierville, Tennessee. His writing on Appalachia regularly appears in the *Mountain Eagle* and *Washington Post*.

Woody Connette attends law school at the University of North Carolina.

Cary Fowler is co-director of the Agricultural Resources Center (Box 646, Chapel Hill, NC 27514) and junior author with Frances Lappe and Joseph Collins of *Food First* to be published in the spring by Houghton-Mifflin.

Neill Herring writes a weekly column for the *Atlanta Gazette* and is completing his first novel.

Laughlin McDonald is the director of the Southern Office of the American Civil Liberties Union in Atlanta.

Deanna Morse teaches video tape in the Charleston schools for the Charleston Arts Commission.

Jim Sessions is one of the special editors for this issue of *Southern Exposure* and co-director of the Southern Appalachian Ministry in Knoxville.

Peter Wood is an associate professor of history at Duke University, the author of *Black Majority*, and a video-tape enthusiast.

Spindles and Spires, by John R. Earle, et al. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1976. \$5.95 paper.

As if the labor movement did not need more bad news, there are ominous signs rising on the Southern horizon: it appears that the Southern church is beginning—albeit in the usual cautious and stumbling fashion—to take an interest in organized labor. The latest evidence comes from Arkansas where the Catholic bishop and a handful of Baptist preachers endorsed the “rights of labor” petition to amend the state’s 32 year old “right to work” law. Earlier, a handful of high churchers lent lukewarm support to the Brookside miners’ strike, stopping cathedral blocks short, however, from calling for the exorcism of the top officers of Duke Power.

What is ominous about the interest is not that the church has managed to make a shambles of everything it has touched since the Patristic Age—though that is worthy of attention—but that whenever the church becomes involved in something, it signals the arrival of a new fad upon us. Witness the church against the bomb, circa 1955; the church for civil rights, circa 1965; the church against poverty, circa 1968; the church against the Vietnam war, circa 1970. About the only movement that could possibly save labor from this ecclesiastical intrusion is the church’s budding interest in acknowledging Caesar’s dictum that women are born into the world with the same status as men—but that recognition appears at least a decade away.

The first scholarly evidence of the fad comes in *Spindles and Spires* which updates Liston Pope’s *Millhands and Preachers* (1942). It shows, among other useful things, that the milltown church is no longer a threat to the mills and, consequently, is no longer able to get the preacher paid and the church built by the mill owners. Reading *Spindles and Spires*, one suspects that churchmen have concluded that labor unions would mean higher wages and thus higher tithing for the church pot, much as Pope demonstrated that the church fell to its knees to get the mills into the South and felt that preaching against unions was a small price to pay for a free parsonage and the monthly

salary of the pastor. Implicitly, the change must also mean the Cannons and the Burlingtons have decided the church is such a wayward and useless institution that it no longer merits the pittance of even a tax-exempt contribution. (Unfortunately, the authors of *Spindles and Spires* fail to determine if the mills' declining support of churches directly correlates with their increased contributions to North Carolina's institutions of higher learning.)

Pope's thesis that the church was an opiate peddler ready to exchange its soul for a spindle is hardly earth shattering to anyone raised in the Southern church. On re-reading, about the only thing worth note is the fact that he accepts the notion of some inherent personality traits in Southern mountaineers which makes them hostile to organized labor. Obviously, the same Scotch-Irish who caved in to the mill owners at Gastonia were the same stock—and even some of the same folk—who beat the hell out of the equally intractable coal operators further north and who had no trouble getting themselves together for unionizing even closer

at the mills at Elizabethton, Lafollette, and Knoxville. His explanation that the Communists in the 1929 Loray strike screwed up the labor movement in Gastonia forever because they could not decide if they were organizing a labor union or starting a second Russian Revolution will not suffice either. Both eastern Kentucky and West Virginia miners overcame similar Communist fiascos and built strong unions.

While the authors of the update document the North Carolina political establishment's refined techniques of repression (strikebreaking at mills and the red-baiting of Frank Porter Graham in his race for the Senate), they make no real contribution to explaining why Gaston County and the state maintain their position as the least unionized in the nation when the same forces, including the clergy, are similarly allied against labor elsewhere.

Much of *Spindles and Spires* bogs down in a brand of cautious scholarship that loves to talk about "dichotomous variables," uninteresting concepts like "a sociological overview of the ministerial role,"

and trite phrases from Hannah Arendt on the meaning of power. Nevertheless, the authors have pulled together some interesting data contrasting the feelings of black and white workers and clergy regarding labor issues in Gaston. They establish that—while few ministers are outrightly hostile to labor—their preaching and acting are still largely directed at floating downstream with the mill owners, hoping to get a nibble from their droppings.

The default of the last generation of writers in ignoring labor made Pope's narrowly focused study a classic, just as the continued absence of good writing on Southern labor makes *Spindles and Spires* necessary reading. But, taking some liberty with the authors' message, we can safely conclude that Caesar will long have repealed section 14b of Taft-Hartley and removed other barriers to labor organizing before the church's involvement means anything. Of all the temptations, taking the church seriously is the worst. Even Caesar is less fickle.

—James Branscome

All Things Are Possible, by David Edwin Harrell, Jr. Indiana University Press, 1975. 302 pp. \$10.95.

Subtitled "The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America." *All Things Are Possible* is a dispassionate, comprehensive examination of Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal revivals since 1946. Some of the figures examined, like Oral Roberts and A.A. Allen are well-known through television and radio, others are obscure, often poorly educated men whose lives have been spent in gospel tents in small towns and the outskirts of large cities.

Harrell divides his subject into two distinct periods: the healing revival which started shortly after World War II and continued until a diminution in the late 1950s, and what he calls the Neo-Pentecostal revival which commenced in the mid-'60s and is still in progress.

The healing revival traces its roots to twentieth century itinerant ministers like Aimee Semple McPherson or even the fictitious Elmer Gantry. From earlier revivalists, they took

the gospel tent, the use of advance publicity and the nightly revival format, and then added their own main event—healing.

The man who started the healing revival was William Branham, an Independent Baptist preacher from Kentucky who had been subject to visitations and prophetic dreams. Poorly educated, ungrammatical, and plain in appearance, Branham possessed a mastery in the pulpit capable of convulsing an audience of thousands. His message was a simple assertion that the Holy Spirit could and did cure ailments for those who would believe strongly enough.

Branham was followed in his healing ministry by two Oklahomans, Oral Roberts and Jack Coe, and a host of others. Initially, all were loosely linked with the various Pentecostal churches whose local ministers often sponsored their revivals. However, this base of organized support soon began to diminish because of doctrinal differences and because the churches felt that the tent shows were siphoning off too much money and faith.

Another early bond among the evangelistic healers was the magazine, *The Voice of Healing*, published by Gordon Lindsay. (Lindsay was born in the "Christian City" of Zion City, Illinois, a real estate development of an earlier revivalist, Alexander Dowie). *The Voice of Healing* promoted the work of a number of healers through its large circulation, but the more successful revivalists usually dropped away and started their own magazines once they had attained independent support.

By the late '50s, the revival began to wane due to an increasingly sophisticated audience, the higher operating costs of television and radio, the negative influence of frauds and doctrinal aberrants in the ministry, and the increasing hostility of the established Pentecostal churches. The larger operations, like those of Oral Roberts and A.A. Allen, were able to continue into the '60s, but most men and women on the tent circuit faced shrinking audiences and depleted treasuries.

Harrell calls the next revival "Neo-

Pentecostal" because its base lies in the so-called "mainline" denominations rather than the Pentecostal churches and their adherents. Besides overlapping personnel, the two revivals have in common an organization founded during the healing revival, Demos Shakarian's Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International.

Harrell traces the roots of the charismatic revival to the healing revival but shows its entirely differing impact in religion and society. Where the healing revival had moved thousands was in the basically rural, entirely credulous population of a still largely rustic America. The charismatic revival brought

Oral Roberts into the Methodist church and has even put its influence into the Roman Catholic church, hitherto unmoved by Pentecostalism of any variety. It has converted the famed former White House hatchetman Charles Colson, and its spread throughout the society continues.

While the sawdust and tent boys still perform their rituals before convulsed audiences, the influence of Pentecostalism is spreading into much more genteel quarters with unseen implications. Harrell's final paragraph is as comprehensive a statement as might be made at the present:

Divided, disorganized, haunted by

its past, bewildered by its success, threatened by respectability, the charismatic revival plunged ahead. The late editor of Logos Journal asked, "Where is the Holy Spirit leading us?" The voices of the prophets gave no sure answer. But modern charismatics remained undaunted in their faith that something greater was about to appear, something far surpassing the mighty works that earlier generations had witnessed. If one would only believe, all things were possible.

— Neill Herring



photo by Walter Smalling, Jr.

White Sects and Black Men in the Recent South, by David Edwin Harrell, Jr. Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 1971. 116 pp. \$6.50.

This book represents an earlier attempt by Harrell to open up the important, but largely unexplored world of "redneck religion." It is a sensitive and revealing treatment of the sects of the South's lower-class whites since World War II, with an emphasis on the diversity of their racial attitudes. (To-

gether, these churches have more than four million members.)

Harrell summarizes much of the sociological literature from the 1950s and 1960s on white sects, and then describes many of the groups, including the Assemblies of God, the Pentecostal Holiness Church, the Churches of Christ, the Cumberland Presbyterians, and the Church of God of Prophecy. The last three are among those that have espoused progressive social values in contrast to the stereotype of sects

being conservative, bastions of racism.

Harrell argues that "the racial views of Southern sectarianism are unquestionably class expressions." Southern poor whites "exist in an interracial society, and they do maintain with Southern blacks a personal relationship peculiar to their class." With an extensive bibliography and an introductory essay by religious demographer Edwin S. Gaustad, the book is an ideal companion to Harrell's more recent book, *All Things Are Possible*.

— Jim Sessions

Since you like **Southern Exposure** you will also like the **NATION**

The history of The NATION, founded in 1865, is closely tied to the problems of the South. Before then, the great abolitionist weekly had been William Lloyd Garrison's LIBERATOR. With emancipation realized, Garrison put his last issue to bed, leaving the rest of the battle to younger men.

First among them was Edwin L. Godkin, editor and founder of The NATION. In 1856, this Anglo-Irish journalist had become famous for his fiery dispatches to the LONDON DAILY NEWS, describing his tour of the Southern states.

Garrison's son, Wendell Phillips Garrison, became The NATION's first literary editor. Wendell's father-in-law, James Miller McKim, a Philadelphia abolitionist, provided the money to launch the new weekly.

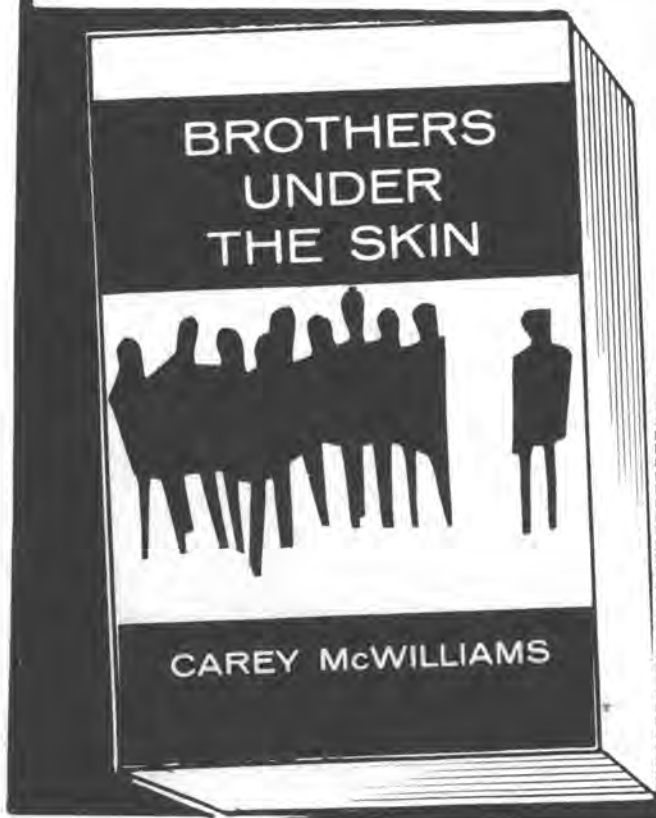
Frederick Law Olmsted was also part of the original group. A Harvard scholar and architect of New York's Central Park, he had written a series of classic reports on the ante-bellum South.

The moment the South was reopened, Godkin dispatched John R. Dennett, another Harvard scholar, to write a series of articles on "The South As It Is," a series which reads equally well today. Another young NATION writer was William Francis Allen. Also a Harvard man, he interrupted his classical studies to work in South Carolina for the education of the new freedmen. With Helen Garrison, Wendell's sister, he brought out the highly acclaimed "Slave Songs of the United States."

Years later, when Wendell died, Helen's husband, Henry Villard, became the publisher of The NATION. Their son, Oswald Garrison Villard, was editor from 1918 to 1932. Continuing his family tradition, he wrote a biography of John Brown and became a founder of the N.A.A.C.P., whose first offices were in The NATION's old quarters on Vesey St., in New York City.

The NATION continues in this freedom-loving spirit today. Its present editor, Carey McWilliams, says, "The NATION exposes racism, war, imperialism, abuse of power, political machines, demagoguery, and super-patriotism. It is constantly looking for trouble. It steps on many toes."

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The Making of An Assassin, by George McMillan. Little, Brown, 1976. 318 pp. \$8.95.

George McMillan's book about James Earl Ray is far more radical than any conspiracy theory that tries to explain how Martin Luther King was assassinated on April 4, 1968, at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. McMillan sees Ray, not as a lunatic or a witless hit-man, but as a reflection and product of American experience—its prisons which can not rehabilitate, its schools which do not educate, its churches which fail to teach respect for others, its racial bigotry, and its willingness to abstract and ignore the "lower-lower class, the poverty-stricken and their miserable periphery, the criminals, the deviants" into which James Earl Ray was born and lived.

The disturbing thing about *The Making of an Assassin* is not that it shows how different Ray is from the rest of us, but how explicable it makes the man who slew America's moral leader.

McMillan's meticulously detailed and wonderfully written book achieves its stunning best in its rendering of Ray and the Ray family. We now know more about James Earl Ray than any assassin since John Wilkes Booth. Ray was born on the eve of the Great Depression in Alton, Illinois,

in the heart of the city's sleazy vice district, a few doors away from a popular whore house. As he entered the world, two of the people who stood up for his parents at their wedding were arrested for robbing a neighborhood store, while the man for whom Ray was in part named, his uncle Earl Ray—a man whom "Jimmy" would later grow to worship and emulate—was doing time in an Illinois state prison for a felony conviction. The Ray family fortunes never improved. They got worse.

The Rays never made much sense or meaning out of their lives: Not Ned Ray, James Earl's great grandfather, who was hanged as a member of the notorious Plummer Gang in Montana during the 1870s. Not Ray's father "Speedy," who slept all day and could not hold a steady job. Not Ray's mother "Ceal" ("for whom we cannot have enough compassion," says McMillan), who became an alcoholic and drifted deeper into despair until she died of liver disease in a St. Louis hospital. Not uncle Earl, who was sent back to prison for keeps after he flung a bottle of carbolic acid into his wife's face as she was scrubbing the kitchen floor one morning. Not "Buzzy" Ray, James Earl's brother, who tried to make it in the pornographic picture business but who drowned when his car plunged into the Mississippi

River. And not brothers Jerry and Jack Ray, both of whom did time in the Illinois State Prison at Menard. The lives of the Rays, so marginal and out of control, take as their metaphor the house in which they lived in Ewing, Missouri, where "Speedy" once tried to make a living at farming. The Rays gradually took the house apart, board by board, to burn as firewood until there was no house left and they had to move.

James Earl, the first born, the "smart" Ray, was the hope of his family. He intended to redeem the Ray fortunes. He had flirted with Nazi racism before and during his service in the Army when he was stationed in Germany. He already had learned from "Speedy" to despise Negroes. "They just lay around and fuck all the time." As a boyhood friend recalls, "He was unreasonable in his hatred for niggers. He hated to see them breathe."

While serving time in the Missouri Prison at Jefferson City for an armed robbery committed after his discharge from the service for "ineptness," Jimmy refined a murderous hatred for King and devised a scheme to make a name for himself and restore political conservatism to the country. Jimmy eventually escaped from Jeff City and finally called his brother Jerry from Memphis the day before the assassination. He told him in an excited voice, "Tomorrow it will all be over...Big Nigger has had it!"

McMillan was never able to interview James Earl Ray, but he did establish intimate contact with other members of the family during the seven years in which he researched and wrote *The Making of an Assassin*. Through them he takes us into the mind of the assassin himself. McMillan had occasion during the Christmas holidays of 1975 to talk by telephone with Jerry Ray in St. Louis, Missouri. Suddenly, a recording of the voice of Martin Luther King delivering his valedictory address in Memphis boomed across the wire.

"Jerry..." I said, so stunned, saddened, that I could not say anything else.

"Why, Georgie boy," Jerry laughed loudly. "That's your friend. Sure, he's *right here*. He's not *dead*. Come on out and meet him."

I did not know what to say, exactly.

"I'll call you another time," I said, and started to hang up the phone.

"Don't hang up. Don't hang up, Georgie boy. He's right here. He's not *dead*."

But I did hang up then.

Did Ray kill King by himself as McMillan says? Nothing I have heard or read makes me doubt his premise. But the value of *The Making of an Assassin* does not depend upon whether others helped Ray in the crime to which

he pleaded guilty. Its value lies in its compassionate but brutally honest rendering of this American family, this part of American experience which we would rather not believe exists. *The Making of an Assassin* is a masterfully conceived and executed book.

— Laughlin McDonald

Moments: the Foxfire Experience, by Eliot Wigginton. Star Press (1 High Street, Kennebunk, Maine 04043), 1975. 146 pp. \$3.95

You and Aunt Arie, by Pamela Wood. Star Press, 1975. 219 pp. \$5.50.

In the spring of 1966, Eliot Wigginton, a Georgia public schoolteacher, began *Foxfire*, a magazine of community folklore and stories, with his journalism students. They had been falling asleep all year in his traditionally-taught classes; suddenly they woke up. They left the classrooms to interview some older people in their community, and discovered a richness of stories and friendship. From their interviews, the students wrote articles for their magazine on such topics as quilting and waterwitching, cabin building and moonshine distilling.

Since then, many journalism, English and history teachers across the country, inspired by *Foxfire*, have begun their own publications of local culture. These celebrate the history, crafts, folklore and people of an area and can create a very positive interaction of students with their surrounding community. In 1975 Star Press, a small Maine publishing house, produced two guides for doing it yourself.

Moments is a warm personal book, filled with the anecdotes, memories and philosophies of Eliot Wigginton. It includes the three introductions which he wrote for the collected volumes of *Foxfire*, an overview of the organization and development of *Foxfire*, some warnings to teachers of common traps (the martyr trap, ego-tripping and overwhelming concern with a product) and a collection of "moments of awakening" that happened for students during *Foxfire* projects.

The book, however, does not just present a recipe for a *Foxfire* experience. It is an attempt to describe a process, an attitude, an approach that often works in the classroom. In the

introduction, Brian Beun, the president of IDEAS, Inc. (an education-oriented group which began working with Wigginton in 1971), tries to define it: "*Foxfire* is a learning process possessing a demonstrated capability to use creatively the talents of high school-aged youth within a reality structure.... From the outset, the central thrust of *Foxfire* programs lies in a focus on cultural heritage as a motivational force for learning.... *Foxfire* is about presenting kids with a series of experiences leading to real, self-perceived moments."

One of the "moments" from the book suggests the importance of the process: "One of our worst students — a girl named Barbara Taylor, who almost dropped out in the tenth grade — had withdrawn from those around her because of constant criticism for the fact that she always wore bluejeans to school. Then we took the time to find out that she wore jeans because her mother still washed her clothes in an iron pot filled with boiling water, and jeans were the only clothing that could take that kind of punishment. We had her work on an article about washing clothes that way, and we published it, and she began to open up. As a senior, with failing grades in English in the past, she sold a story to *Seventeen* for \$400 and she walked around for days with the money in cash in her pocket — holding it."

This is a very moving book. It's so honest, so positive. It presents a clear approach for producing student publications, for allowing students to investigate their community and, most important, for making education a more exciting experience.

You and Aunt Arie by Pamela Wood is about the more practical side of publishing a *Foxfire*-type magazine. It covers all the basics, from selecting a name to marketing the product. It is

well written and illustrated, combining photographs with touching, personal stories. Seventy pages are devoted to the "how to's" of photography, tape recording, and interviewing. A series of photographs instructs the reader to the step-by-step process of developing and printing films, making contact prints, test strips, test prints, using filters and burning and dodging on the final print. It also stresses the importance of selecting images, the field of view, the expression or activity of the person being photographed. "A camera can't see what you don't let it see," writes Wood. An example is given of an old woman sitting on the porch of her mountain home. What does your photograph convey if you frame only her face? If you frame her and the porch? Or if you move back to see the woman, the porch, and part of the mountain behind her?

Most good "how-to" books offer only technical information, but this section has a good mixture of the technical and the conceptual, stressing that the photographer makes expressive choices from a number of options, and can (should!) experiment with these options at several different stages.

Already many *Foxfire*-type magazines have been established throughout the South: *Sparrowhawk* in Bibb County, Alabama; *Sweet Bess* in Caldwell County, NC; *Timberline* in Jefferson, NC; *Sea Chest* in Buxton, NC; *Clingstone* in Greer, SC; *Loblolly* in Gary, Texas; *Old Timer* in Albany, Texas; *Nanah Waiya* in Philadelphia, Mississippi. Such publications are part of an educational experience that is spreading as it becomes more widely known and understood. Students are taking education beyond the classroom and are learning values and experiences from their neighbors; they're learning to communicate by doing it. With the help of *Moments* and *You and Aunt Arie*, more similar projects should be started and existing ones improved.

— Deanna Morse

Eat Your Heart Out: Food Profiteering in America, by Jim Hightower. Crown Publishers, 1975. 294 pp. \$8.95.

A few years back, a number of public interest groups in Washington got together to launch a "Food Action Campaign" aimed at alerting citizens to the concentrated power of the food industry and its evils. The Campaign called on a few well-known people with particular credibility to travel around the country spreading information about the impact of the modern, monopolistic corporation — a Del Monte, for example. Bess Myerson had just resigned as New York City's consumer affairs director. The group decided to ask her to join them. The request went through her staff. Days passed. Finally the reply came that she would be unable to help in the campaign because (1) she didn't want to get involved in such projects at the time, and (2) she had never met anyone named "Adelle Monte." "With that," Hightower notes, "the Food Action Campaign realized that it had a long way to go to make people aware of corporate food power. Consumers were asleep at the switch."

Jim Hightower, for one, is not asleep at the switch. The former director of the Agribusiness Accountability Project and of the Fred Harris presidential campaign and the new editor of the *Texas Observer*, Hightower is one of the most effective spokespersons for the movement against the corporate takeover of our dinner table. His book reminds me of his speeches. He'll keep your belly aching from laughter and your face flushed with anger at the same time. His book is both entertaining and informative. Read it for the laughs and superb imagery if you can't think of a better reason.

Hightower's book is about "food profiteering in America" — no more, no less. It poses the question: If the free-enterprise system is working, why all the junk food and declining nutritional standards, why widespread hunger, why exorbitant profits and the insulting ads, why the decline of the family farmer? The answer in a word, is oligopoly, the term Hightower most often uses to describe the shared monopoly which dominates the food industry.

Fifty corporations now account for about 60 percent of total food manu-

facturing assets. Certain food items are under the complete control of a single corporation. Other food lines are dominated by just three or four huge conglomerates who no longer compete against each other: it's more profitable to gouge *you* than a corporate rival. United Brands and Del Monte, for instance, control 85% of the North American banana market. Four corporations (including General Mills which owns the game, "Monopoly") account for over 90 percent of the breakfast food sales. Solid oligopolies (the four largest corporations control over 50 percent of the market) constitute half of this country's food industry.

Such "competition" results in comfortable profit margins. A 1966 Federal Trade Commission study found a 7.5% average net profit for corporations operating in the competitive sectors of the food industry. Those operating in the oligopolistic enclaves banked 14.2 percent.

The giant food corporations solidify their positions with tons of advertising hype. They create markets for their goods, and their goods sell. Precious supermarket shelf space is allotted not to the product that represents sensible eating or good nutrition, but to the product that moves fast. Sales and profit, not nutrition, determine shelf space...and America's dinner. If people demand nutrition, that's extra. (*Total* cereal is nothing more than *Wheaties* with a penny's worth of vitamins added, but it costs a quarter more.)

Increasingly, this unbridled power is reaching back to the farms, where once-independent farmers are becoming hired hands for the corporations or emigrants to the cities. Approximately 78 percent of the vegetables now processed by the likes of Del Monte, Tenneco and Coke are grown under contract. The farmer agrees to produce a certain crop in a certain way according to given specifications for a stated price. If a potato farmer doesn't like Boeing's contract, for instance, he or she can look forward to a long winter of potato eating, as Hightower says, because often only one corporation will buy the produce. In 1974, A&P was found guilty of conspiring to fix prices paid to cattlemen. Safeway and Kroger were also named as defendants but had the sense to settle out of court. The federal jury found that the

supermarket chains had carved out regions in which they had agreed not to compete with each other in buying fresh meat. Many sellers — one buyer.

This is power unaffected by the inefficiencies of giantism. The corporations are notoriously inefficient at everything but turning a profit. The story's the same down on the farm. Every USDA study to date has found that the "family" farm is more efficient than the big corporate farm. Nevertheless, the government regularly rewards the corporate growers, processors, and sellers at the expense of the private citizen. Hightower likes to say that when the small farmers drive up to Washington, they're ignored; when big business drives up, they get curb service.

One of the most interesting, though not most significant, areas of government aid to big business involves research. Federally-financed research is a thinly disguised subsidy for the food corporations. When Hershey decided to decrease the size of its chocolate bar, a University of California research department bred a small almond because the regular sized almond made Hershey's bar look too small.

The University of Georgia has been at work on a featherless chicken so the big processors won't have to waste money plucking them. And then there's the famous hard tomato, star of Hightower's last book, *Hard Times, Hard Tomatoes*. Hard enough to pick mechanically, it has no (recognizable) tomato taste. Even if it's not ripe, it's red — thanks to chemicals and "de-greening rooms." And now that the University of California has isolated 70 chemicals which cause tomato taste, it's only a matter of time before they inject the flavor back in.

Monopoly power teams up with government power to spell trouble for us non-aligned citizens in still other ways. For example, ITT and Tasty Baking Company got the USDA to redefine "breakfast" for the purpose of the school meal programs to include "fortified baked product with cream filling." ITT's Hostess subsidiary then broke into the school breakfast and lunch programs with "Astrofood," a vitamin "enriched," sugar-filled cake developed under a grant from the federal government. Youngsters in Memphis, Little Rock, Atlanta and other cities can tell you what it's like. Tasty's research department came up

with "Superkake," and Tasty's sales of cakes and pies were off to a 70 percent increase. With the government's help these two corporations are turning a handsome profit and children are learning that breakfast is sugar and a brand name. In response to this trend, one Rutgers University technologist, demonstrating a dubious concern for nutrition, suggested we infuse corn and peas with sugar. "Then," he told the *New York Times*, "children will eat them like peanuts." No wonder American diets are less nutritious today than they were in 1955. Consumption of fruits, vegetables, milk, cheese and cereals has declined. They have been replaced by the rising consumption of soft drinks, candy, ice cream, potato chips and cookies.

When it comes time to talk about solutions to the problems of corporate power in the kitchen, *Eat Your Heart Out* slows down and sputters a bit. I believe the book's weakness in offering solutions stems from faults in its analysis of the problem. The problem, as Hightower sees it, is lack of competition. The answer then is to assist the small farmers in their fight for survival while trimming back the big corporations with enforcement of antitrust laws. Both courses of action are to be applauded, but both should be recognized as stop-gap measures. Like kudzu, corporations are not easily cut down. And like the pernicious weed, once cut down it's only a matter of time before they come back with a vengeance.

Serious regulation of corporations' profit-making activities is not possible within the existing economic system. Nor is it likely given our present social and political systems (which we can work to change). Unrestrained growth and rising profits are necessary to every corporation's existence and well-being. But if the corporate well-being is antithetical to our own then the question becomes not whether or how to regulate the corporations but how to wrest control of our food producing systems from this special interest group. If all people are to be adequately fed in this country, if there is such a thing as a "right to food," then we as citizens must gain control over the food we eat. We must have the power to decide what is produced, how it is produced and who produces it.

Finally, while *Eat Your Heart Out* is the best book around about the domestic activities of the food industry

giants, it completely ignores the overseas activities of these corporations — why these corporations are swarming over foreign lands, what they are doing there and how it affects the local people and ourselves. In three decades, multinational agribusiness conglomerates transformed an essentially regional "food system" into a national and international food system. Now poor people in the Third World compete in the marketplace with rich

elites in every country including their own. Will American or British agribusiness in Kenya find it more profitable to grow food for Kenyans or to grow bixa, a red dye used in lipstick? It is the international character of the food system that must be examined if we are to understand "our own" food system, not to mention the existence of and causes behind "world hunger."

—Cary Fowler



photo courtesy of Library of Congress

Hard Traveling: Migrant Farm Workers in America by Tony Dunbar and Linda Kravitz. Ballinger, 1976. 174 pp. \$13.50.

Almost forty years have lapsed since John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* first laid the migrant farm worker's plight before our eyes, but the horror of bondage to someone else's soil continues. If anything, the problem has grown even more complex as the myriad aspects of the migrant's life have been haphazardly divided among an ever-increasing array of federal and state authorities. At every meal we are inescapably nourished by the poverty of the farm workers who start the food cycle that ends at our table. The frustrated voice of a social conscience still asks, as it did forty years ago, why is nothing done, why this madness, what can we do?

Hard Traveling is the starting point

to an answer. The authors, Tony Dunbar and Linda Kravitz, traveled untold miles to be with the farm workers as they followed the harvests; their fruit is a book rich with the essence of the workers' hopes, fears and despair. As told by the migrants themselves, this story is cast against a detailed factual analysis of the political and economic battles raging behind the migrants' continued indenture.

We learn that of the 830,000 migrant workers in the country, an estimated 630,000 are illegal aliens. We learn of half-hearted attempts by the government to keep these aliens out — half-hearted because of the political pressure of the growers and agribusiness interests who know only too well that the presence of these aliens is the key factor in keeping down the wages paid to farm workers. But next to the migrant children who must grow up on the road, the predicament of the aliens themselves is the most

horrifying. "The illegal worker is, without qualification, a slave to his employer," say the authors. "His only option if he is dissatisfied with his wages or treatment is to abandon his job and hide himself because otherwise his boss may turn him over to the Border Patrol. They have no hospital insurance, no workmen's compensation, no guaranteed working conditions, no legal protection whatsoever." Their forced servitude means that they are repeatedly hired as strike breakers.

The exploitation of aliens is nothing new. Shortly after the Civil War, California growers imported hoards of Chinese laborers until their numbers brought fear to the American public and they were driven from the fields. After that, the growers turned to Greeks, Armenians, Portuguese, Italians, East Indian Hindus, and Japanese. The Japanese were a problem because they were too industrious; they started buying their own land. So the growers pressed Congress to pass the Alien Land Act of 1913 to curb their ability to purchase property. Looking back, we see a road littered with atrocities, but we cannot turn away, for the atrocities continue today.

In 1973, a typhoid epidemic that ravaged the South Dade Migrant Farm Labor Camp near Homestead, Florida, was traced to water, sewer and drainage systems that public health officials had known were severely inadequate. Dunbar and Kravitz found the "public and officials were slow to show concern for conditions at the labor camp even after the typhoid outbreak was reported. Private hospitals in the area initially *refused* to accept the impoverished victims because it was ten days before the Health Department finally labeled the spreading disease as an epidemic. In the interim, eighty-one people with diagnosed cases of typhoid were forced to remain in the contaminated labor camp.

"Dr. Eugene Tubbs, a Republican state legislator, commented that if migrants plucked tomatoes as sloppily as state health officials enforced the law, the farm workers would be fired."

The authors explore the role of crew leaders in hiring laborers for the growers, the ways they entice workers into the fields, and the substantial earnings they reap for themselves. For the workers, though, the road is a



photo by Bill Ferris/Center for Southern Folklore

continuing battle against substandard housing in chicken coops and storage sheds, harassment by local law officers, disease, and poisoning by crop pesticides and herbicides. Where they represent workers, the United Farm Workers require modest waiting periods between crop dusting and reentry of the fields by the workers. In contrast, the federal government's laggard approach to safety in the fields typifies a policy that benefits the industry at the expense of the farm worker. For example, agricultural safety is the lowest priority of OSHA, even though agriculture is second only to construction in its number of work-related accidents. And the Environmental Protection Agency, relying on tests by chemical manufacturers, has recently lifted most restrictions on

crop reentry periods. The manufacturers' tests were conducted by simply exposing the workers themselves to toxic crop dusts to see how they would react.

Hard Traveling rises above the dullness of the continuing parade of migrant worker books that tore so eloquently at our hearts. The compassion is still there, but an objective approach keeps the political and economic causes of the farm workers' plight in the forefront. Without a doubt, *Hard Traveling* is the most concise and coherent sourcebook to the multiplicity of problems endured by the migrant. This is what makes the book vital. Using it as a guide, we have no more excuses for not effectively tackling the problems of the migrant farm worker.

—Woody Connette

American Folklore Films and Videotapes: An Index, edited by Bill Ferris and Judy Peiser, compiled by Carolyn Lipson. Center for Southern Folklore, Memphis, 1976. 338 pp. \$15.00.

A weathered brick chimney standing alone in an open field — folklorist Bill Ferris photographed it almost ten years ago in his native Mississippi. In 1972, when Ferris joined with Judy Peiser to establish the Center for Southern Folklore in Memphis, this picture became their emblem, and for me it has symbolized powerfully the non-institution they are building with such care: a strong, inviting hearth and chimney (is it a forge, an oven, a kiln?) surrounded by no walls at all and open to the entire world.

Beginning on a shoestring, Ferris and Peiser have already produced eleven films and three records, earning national recognition for their sensitive and suggestive work. Now this folklife-center-without-walls has completed its most ambitious project so far, an extraordinary Whole Earth Catalogue for the world of American folklore films and videotapes.

"During the nineteenth century," Ferris writes in his introduction, "paper and pencil were basic tools for folklore research." As musicians and craftspeople performed, the folklorist transcribed their words in longhand. "Later," continues the Yale scholar, "tape recorders and still photography provided a fuller record." But today, he points out, "folklorists increasingly use film and videotape to capture the traditions with a drama which handwritten and taped interviews cannot convey." Struck by the absence of any complete guide to these new materials, the Center obtained support from both National Endowments, the Tennessee Arts Commission and the Rockefeller Foundation and began to prepare a thorough index. The result is this excellent book.

Compiler Carolyn Lipson has provided an extensive subject index followed by alphabetical annotations on all films and videotapes, giving length, format, date, producer and distributor. There is a separate list of special collections and a 37 page appendix containing the listings of each distributor and over 250 distributor addresses. The whole book, from Accordion Building to Yodeling, is handsomely illustrated with an array

of powerful and appropriate photographs in brown and white. The editors do not provide rental and purchase prices or independent critiques, so the user is left to guess exactly how expensive, simplistic, powerful or dated a given item may be. But if you like to do business in a good country store or a farmers' market, rather than in a shopping mall, this won't bother you much. Browsing in the *Index* beats thumbing through distributors' catalogues. Teachers, students, TV programmers, community discussion organizers — everyone open to the sights and sounds of America's rich folklife, no matter what their budget or interests — will find this book to be a much-needed storehouse of data and inspiration.

For those who *make* films and tapes, rather than just watching them, the *Index* is a valuable report on the state of the art. While the list offers a whole spectrum of material, from feature films at one extreme to anthropological footage at the other, it demonstrates that the field is still dominated, at least numerically by half-hour "educational" films with a predictable viewpoint and format. But it also introduces more independent work, such as the films of Appalshop or the tapes of the Charleston Commu-

nication Center (to cite only two of the excellent examples from the South). And there is room for more. The editors plan to update this 1,800-item list regularly, and the Center is already accepting references to new material, especially in the rapidly expanding and improving video category. The second edition will undoubtedly be bigger, but it could hardly be any better.

— Peter H. Wood

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIALS

1. TITLE OF PROJECT: **SOUTHERN EXPOSURE**

2. FUNDING SOURCE: **UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI**

3. PROJECT LOCATION: **111 W. Columbia St., Chapel Hill, (Orange County), N. C. 27514**

4. PROJECT PERIOD: **1976-1977**

5. PROJECT DIRECTOR: **Bill Bell**

6. PROJECT COORDINATOR: **Bill Bell**

7. PROJECT ASSISTANT: **Bill Bell**

8. PROJECT BUDGET: **\$5,000**

9. PROJECT STATUS: **Completed**

10. PROJECT DESCRIPTION: **1. A series of 12 short films and 12 audio tapes on the life and work of the people of the South. 2. A series of 12 short films and 12 audio tapes on the life and work of the people of the South. 3. A series of 12 short films and 12 audio tapes on the life and work of the people of the South.**

11. PROJECT BUDGET BREAKDOWN:

Category	Amount	Total
1. PERSONNEL	1,500	1,500
2. TRAVEL	1,000	1,000
3. MATERIALS	1,000	1,000
4. OTHER	1,500	1,500
TOTAL	5,000	5,000

12. PROJECT EVALUATION: **Excellent**

13. PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS: **None**

14. PROJECT CONTACT INFORMATION: **Bill Bell, 111 W. Columbia St., Chapel Hill, N. C. 27514**

15. PROJECT CONTACT TELEPHONE: **919/942-1111**

16. PROJECT CONTACT ADDRESS: **111 W. Columbia St., Chapel Hill, N. C. 27514**

17. PROJECT CONTACT FAX: **919/942-1111**

18. PROJECT CONTACT E-MAIL: **billbell@unc.edu**

19. PROJECT CONTACT WEBSITE: **http://www.unc.edu/~billbell**

20. PROJECT CONTACT OTHER: **None**

21. PROJECT CONTACT COMMENTS: **None**

22. PROJECT CONTACT NOTES: **None**

23. PROJECT CONTACT REFERENCES: **None**

24. PROJECT CONTACT REFERENCES: **None**

25. PROJECT CONTACT REFERENCES: **None**

26. PROJECT CONTACT REFERENCES: **None**

27. PROJECT CONTACT REFERENCES: **None**

28. PROJECT CONTACT REFERENCES: **None**

29. PROJECT CONTACT REFERENCES: **None**

30. PROJECT CONTACT REFERENCES: **None**

Writers and Editors

The Institute for Southern Studies, which publishes *Southern Exposure*, is syndicating an illustrated feature column to dozens of Southern newspapers!



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Marcus Raskin
"The System Impeached"
in *THE PROGRESSIVE*

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Sidney Lens
"Running Out of Everything"
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Books on the South

This list is comprised of works published since August, 1976. Book entries concentrate on the fall months and include new publications through January, 1977. Dissertations listed were accepted by universities for the Ph.D. degree and compiled in the Dissertation Abstracts Index during April-October, 1976.

The entries have been placed under several broad and loosely-defined categories for your convenience. Mention of a book here does not preclude its being reviewed in a future issue. Unsolicited reviews of publications concerning the South or of general interest to our readers are always welcomed. Preference is given to recently released books.

Copies of the dissertations below are available from Xerox University Microfilms, Dissertation Copies, P.O. Box 1764, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. The cost is \$7.50 for microfilm and \$15 for xerographic.

History, Politics, and Economics

"An Analysis of Selected Strategies Used By the Southern Regional Council in Effecting Social Change in the South," by Edwin L. Plowman. Dissertation. Boston University.

Arkansas in the Gilded Age, 1874-1900, by Waddy W. Moore. Rose Publishing Co., Inc., 1976. \$6.95.

Black Ballots: Voting Rights in the South 1944-1969, by Steven F. Lawson. Columbia University Press, 1976. \$20.00. paper, \$6.95.

The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925, by Herbert G. Gutman. Pantheon, 1976. \$15.95.

"The Black Lung Association: A Case Study of a Modern Social Movement," by Bennett M. Judkins. Dissertation. The University of Tennessee.

Blacks and the Populist Revolt: Ballots and Bigotry in the New South, by Gerald Gaither. University of Alabama Press, 1976. \$10.75.

A Case Study of Latin American Unionization in Austin, Texas, by

Sam F. Parigi. Arno Press, 1976. \$23.00.

"Change and Reaction in a Mississippi Delta Civil Community," by Richard D. Chestern. Dissertation. University of Mississippi.

"Charlotte-Mecklenburg Consolidation: Metrolina in Motion," by William T. Moye. Dissertation. UNC-Chapel Hill.

The City in Southern History: The Growth of Urban Civilization in the South, edited by Blaine A. Brownell and David R. Goldfield. Kennikat Press, 1976. \$13.50. paper, \$6.95.

The County in Kentucky History, by Robert M. Ireland. University Press of Kentucky, 1976. \$3.95.

"Daybreak in Alabama: Reflections and Observations on the Black Academic Experience: Alabama State University," by Gary V. Smith. Dissertation. LeHigh University.

"The Demand for Housing in Rural North Carolina," by Dennis W. Goins. Dissertation. N.C. State University.

"Economics of a Separatist State: US Blacks in Five Southern States," by Louis C. Green. Dissertation. University of California, Berkeley.

"Educating for Freedom: Northern Whites and the Origins of Black Education in the South," by Ronald E. Butchart. Dissertation. University of New York at Binghamton.

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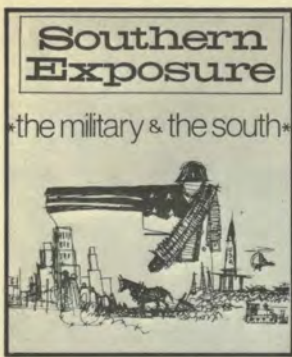
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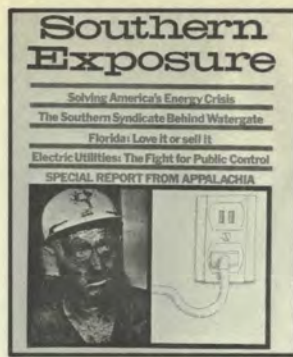
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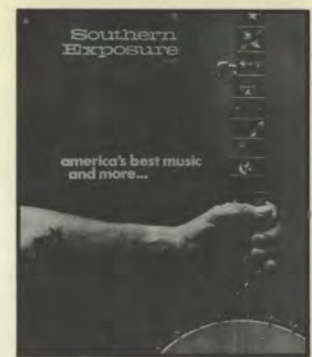
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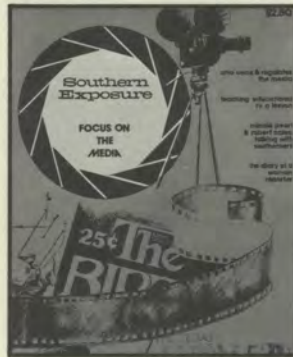
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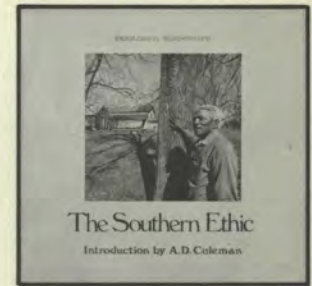
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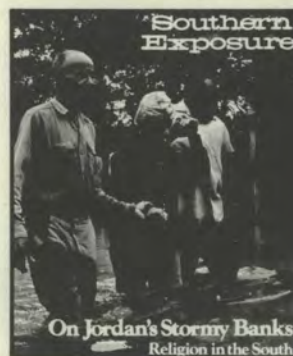
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