

NORTH AMERICAN
REGIONAL

VOICE

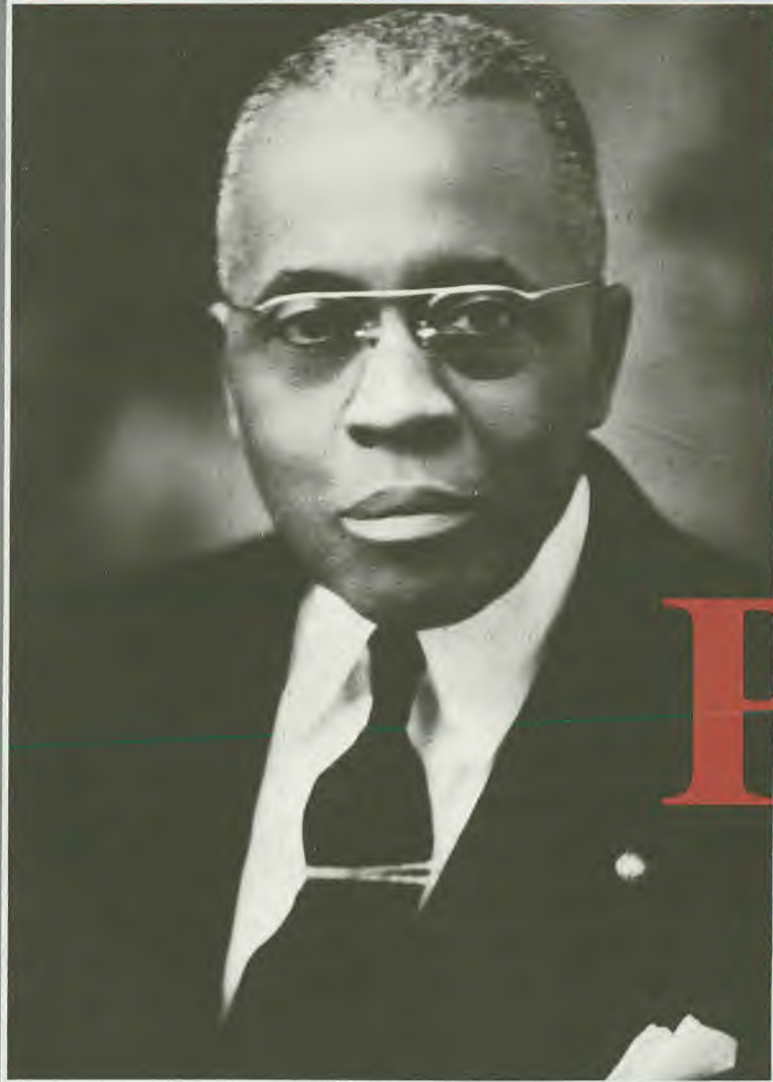


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of
Progress



H.R. Murphy.

GEORGE EDWARD PETERS SUCCESSFUL EVANGELIST— EMINENT CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

by H.R. Murphy

"George Edward Peters may justly be called a pioneer among the Seventh-day Adventist clergy of color in North America. His personal history touched two centuries and he had an experimental knowledge of what social, religious, economical and community living was like in two generations.

"He won no college laurels; but because of his inquisitive mind to know, and his extensive research in things divine, his thirst for knowledge and understanding, and the goading passion for masterful performance, he became the companion of scholars, the admiration of students, the colleague of wise leaders, a wielder of the pen as a ready writer, and best of all, a powerful preacher in the pulpit.

"He was too big of soul to be claimed by any group. Therefore, I say he never belonged to Florida, Alabama, Tennessee, Carolina, Georgia, Illinois, New York, or even Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was too big—too busily absorbed with a world-message of redeeming grace, and too concerned over the spiritual needs of men everywhere to be so geographically circumscribed." These were the words spoken of Elder Peters by Frank L. Peterson, former president of Oakwood College and a Vice President of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists during the eulogy he delivered at his funeral services on February 4, 1965.

Elder Peters was born in Antigua, British West Indies and was reared in a very religious home. His father, Henry Peters,

served as a minister of the Moravian Church, and was also principal of the Moravian Parochial School. As a child, before he ever learned to read, he was taught a scripture text each morning which he was required to recite at family worship. At the age of thirteen he accepted Adventism and was baptized into the church.

After his father's death he journeyed to Trinidad and resided there for several years, before moving to Panama where he worked and earned funds in order to attend Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, where he prepared himself for the ministry. While in Panama, he met and married Miss Ethel Espeut, who was of valuable help during his entire ministry.

He began his ministerial work in the Southern States. Before leaving that territory he was elected Union Conference Evangelist. In this capacity he held major evangelistic tent meetings: In Tampa, Florida he baptized over two hundred fifty souls, gave birth to four new churches in the Carolinas, the largest being in Charlotte.

A note from a program printed by the Berean Church of Atlanta, Georgia, giving its history from its beginning in 1903 stated: "In the summer of 1920, Elder G.E. Peters conducted a very successful evangelistic crusade in Atlanta. At the end of the crusade over 200 precious souls were baptized. The church grew rapidly during the short time Elder Peters served as pastor."

Elder Peters' evangelistic meetings in the southland were not without trials and opposition. He told me of a tent meeting he conducted in a small city in Southern Alabama, which after he had presented the Sabbath, the chief of police met him on a downtown street, told him to get out of the city, and knocked him down in the street with his fist.

After twelve years of successful evangelistic leadership in that part of the country, he was called to the pastorate of the church in Chicago, Illinois, 1922. He built the Shiloh Church, and as a result of three tent efforts in the 'Windy City', under God he added over 500 members to the congregation. The laying of the corner stone took place on Sunday, August 16, 1925. Louis B. Reynolds in his book, *WE HAVE TOMORROW* states, "Under his leadership, the Adventist faith in Chicago and around the Great Lakes enjoyed considerable favor as churches multiplied, and the mustard seed grew into a great tree."

In the November 30, 1929 issue of the Shiloh Church Bulletin, the editor, Joan C.

Snowden with words of praise regarding the impact of Elder Peters' seven year pastorate there and his work in the community at large wrote, "He will soon be launching full force into the new work allotted him—that of the Secretary of the Negro Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist."

His stay in the General Conference was very brief. He expressed his burden to return to evangelism, and asked to be relieved of his responsibility. He was immediately called to labor in New York City, where he ministered for 9 years and was responsible for the beginning of the largest black church in North America among Adventists, which he named Ephesus. During his ministry there he added more than eight hundred members to the church.

Upon leaving the pastorate of the Ephesus church he pastored the Ebenezer Church in Philadelphia for two and one half years. Elder Reynolds again comments that "Peters was a successful evangelist with deep, sure knowledge of his calling, but he was at his best in the intricacies and technicalities of church government." Because of this, no doubt, he was called again in 1941 to serve as Secretary of the General Conference Negro Department now known as the Regional Department. Peters had some definite objectives in mind he hoped to accomplish for the black work among which were: (1) More employment opportunities open to blacks other than preaching and teaching. He wanted to see them employed as conference officers, departmental directors and office secretaries. He demanded and received a black woman as his office secretary in the General Conference.

2) He wanted the opportunity to missions service, especially in Africa, opened to blacks. This he was able to realize during his tenure of office as several black families were sent to different countries of Africa.

3) He was successful in getting a black editor for the Message Magazine, L.B. Reynolds. The previous ones were white. Peters fought hard to get the newly elected editor an office space in the publishing house building and a black secretary. He accomplished his goal.

4) The Review and Herald Publishing Association adjacent to the GC Headquarters operated a cafeteria for its employees and the GC staff. Elder Peters discerned upon taking up duties at the GC that blacks were barred from eating there. He consistently fought to breakdown this color bar-

rier and finally succeeded in getting discrimination eliminated from this facility.

5) He was a champion of the right of minority students to enroll at our various colleges. There were many restrictive practices and policies in our white schools which barred blacks from these institutions. Even those who were permitted to enter were faced with segregated practices within the schools. Elder Peters fought to breakdown this color line in our colleges which discriminated against employing qualified instructors.

6) One of the sore spots in church race relations was related to the practice of some of our sanitarium and hospitals refusing to admit or serve black people. A very embarrassing confrontation surfaced in Washington, D.C. when a gravely ill black woman of fair skin was admitted to Washington Sanitarium and Hospital and upon discovery of her racial identity was forced to leave without examination and treatment to another non-denominational hospital and later died of pneumonia.

This incident sparked the organization of the National Association for the Advancement of Worldwide Work Among Colored Seventh-day Adventists. Joseph Dodson served as chairman assisted by Alma J. Scott. This group along with clergy and other laymen of the black constituency various parts of the country gave support to Elder Peters in his constant urging of the GC to foster the reorganization of the black work. His premise called for the forming of black conferences directed by black officers and committees to control and operate the work in North America among black people.

It is important to note that during this era there was legal segregation in the South and defacto segregation in the North. Because some of our white leaders accepted this national attitude it was very necessary for the colored work to become under the complete control of blacks in order to effectively carry the gospel and build up the work.

Elder Peters' strong positive leadership in these days has resulted in much of the progress we witness today. Black conference leaders, church pastors and lay members across the nation feel indebted to him for his work and leadership.

7) One item which weighed heavily on Elder Peters heart was the development of medical work for blacks. This is proven by his loyal support of the Riverside Sanitarium and Hospital, Nashville, Tennessee. Nellie Druillard had given this beautiful property on the banks of the Cumberland



G.E. Peters, evangelist, minister and church administrator. Before his death he was the Field Secretary for the GC.

River for the development of a sanitarium for blacks to train as medical workers.

The progress of this institution was hampered by the fact that the underground water supply gave only sulphur water. Elder Peters plead with the GC to construct a water pipeline from the city of Nashville to the sanitarium. At considerable expense this goal was accomplished. Next on the agenda was the construction of the hospital building which was completed in the mid-40's. It was the writer's privilege to be a member of the board of trustee and building committee. In addition to serving as a part-time, non-salaried director of public relations for a number of years.

As Elder Peters had visualized this institution became a very powerful force. Not only were black SDA professionals able to practice their medical skills, but influential blacks not of our faith came for treatment at the sanitarium.

The turn of events at Riverside form a very dark chapter in the response of the Church to the needs of the black SDA medical work. The multi-million dollar Advent-

ist Health System (the system whose virtues and accomplishments we read so much about in the Adventist Review and Union Conference periodicals) with the consent and approval of the GC permitted this only black medical institution to be sold to a non-denominational organization.

Why did this one "ewe lamb" have to be sacrificed and sold? Could not the great multi-million dollar Adventist Health System and the GC find some way to help this one black "ewe lamb" survive?

Elder Peters was in attendance, representing the GC, at the organization of each of the Regional Conferences. He gave counsel relating to the selection of officers, departmental leaders and executive committees. His constant encouragement and counsel during these early years of the Regional Conferences greatly helped them to get a good foundation. We who have lived beyond his years owe to him a great debt of gratitude for his work and foresight.

Elder H.R. Murphy is a former conference president and union departmental director.

GOD HAS LED IN A MIGHTY WAY

This special issue of the Voice focuses on the history and progress of the Regional conferences. We felt it most fitting on the fortieth anniversary to record and commemorate, for ourselves and our children, the blessings God has bestowed upon us. The following pages will attest that God has led His people in a mighty way.

The growth of the Black work did not experience phenomenal growth until Regional or Black conferences were organized. In the 1890s there were an estimated 50 Black members. When the Colored Department was organized by the GC in 1909, there were 900 members.

When the Colored Department appointed its first Black director, W.H. Green, the membership stood at 3,500; by 1930 it was 8,000. When Regional conferences were organized in 1944, operations began in 1945 and 1946, there were 233 churches and 17,891 members.

Lake Region was the first Black conference organized, September 26, 1944. Followed by: Northeastern, Allegheny, South Atlantic, South Central, Southwest Region and Central States. The west coast chose not to form Black conferences.

Dr. C.E. Dudley, President of South Central, reports: in the "1950s the membership had passed 40,000 and the tithe reached the million dollar mark. By the end of the 60s the membership was 70,003. Tithe income increased from \$3,300,000 in 1960 to \$9,516,428.68 in 1969."

A decade later the membership was "119,958* in 1979 or twenty five percent of North America's membership. There were 69,128 baptisms—a number larger than all two unions in the division.

"During the seventies the Black membership in America paid into the Church a total of \$166,998,709.72*—more than ten percent of the tithe income in North America."

In 1980 there were "550 churches, 120,000 members, 66 elementary schools, four academies—one boarding, one hospital, 360 licensed and ordained ministers."

Presently, there are nine Regional conferences, 133,689** members and 622 churches. When we reflect on the great contribution Blacks have made to the Church, we must give all the glory and honor to God. He has richly blessed our feeble efforts.

L.A. Paschal

*This figure includes Pacific Union

**This figure does not include Pacific Union.

The Editor's Desk



C.M. Kinney, first Black adventist minister ordained (1889).



W.H. Green, elected at the 1918 General Conference as secretary of the G.C. Colored Department.



J.H. Laurence, early evangelist.



F.L. Peterson, the first black to serve as Vice-President of the GC.

SUNSET CALENDAR

	Nov. 1	8	15	22
Boston, Mass.	4:38	4:30	4:23	4:17
New York City	4:49	4:41	4:34	4:29
Buffalo, N.Y.	5:08	4:59	4:52	4:46
Atlanta, Ga.	5:46	5:40	5:35	5:32
Miami, Fla.	5:39	5:35	5:32	5:30
Charlotte, N.C.	5:29	5:23	5:18	5:14
Birmingham, Ala.	4:55	4:49	4:44	4:41
Jackson, Miss.	5:11	5:05	5:01	4:58
Memphis, Tenn.	5:06	5:00	4:55	4:51
Louisville, Ky.	5:44	5:37	5:31	5:27
Detroit, Mich.	5:27	5:19	5:12	5:07
Chicago, Ill.	4:45	4:37	4:30	4:25
South Bend, Indiana	5:40	5:31	5:25	5:20
Minneapolis, Minn.	5:02	4:53	4:45	4:39
St. Louis, Mo.	5:01	4:54	4:48	4:43
Kansas City, Mo.	5:18	5:10	5:04	5:00
Denver, Co.	4:58	4:50	4:45	4:40
Little Rock, Ark.	5:15	5:09	5:04	5:00
Dallas, Texas	5:37	5:31	5:26	5:23
New Orleans, La.	5:13	5:06	5:01	4:57
Albuquerque, N.M.	5:14	5:08	5:04	5:02
Oklahoma City, Okla.	5:36	5:30	5:24	5:20

Add one minute for each 13 miles west; subtract one minute for each 13 miles east.

ALLEGHENY EAST



W.L. Cheatham, left, with W.S. Banfield, Sr. and Mrs. Banfield. Elder Cheatham was the second president and Elder Banfield, the second treasurer of Allegheny Conference.



When the Allegheny Conference moved its headquarters from its first office on Irving Street in Northeast Washington, it built this office at Pine Forge.

GOD HAS GREATLY BLESSED:

The Allegheny East Conference began as the Allegheny Conference in January, 1945.

It was a period of labor unrest, war and strife. It was a period of social unrest. The ugly doors of segregation were beginning to crack just enough to reveal that there was another side to life.

The United States armed forces had received orders from President Harry S. Truman to integrate their ranks.

Somewhere in the United States, the Defense Department was making and testing an awesome atomic bomb which would usher mankind into a new age with a force of power and destruction never before seen in the existence of man.

Yet, amidst all of the happenings of the World War II era, God was preparing a most exciting event in the expansion of the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. That being the birth of Black Seventh-day Adventist Conferences, known to all as "Colored Conferences."

On November 18, 1944, at the Columbia Union Conference office in Takoma Park, Maryland, the Columbia Union Conference Committee voted to "look with favor upon the organization of a 'Colored Conference' in the Columbia Union taking in the entire Union territory."

On December 17, 1944 at the Ebenezer Church, 15th and Christian Streets, in

Philadelphia, 283 delegates to the organization voted to establish the Allegheny Conference.

The first officers and departmental secretaries were President J.H. Wagner, Sr.; Secretary-Treasurer and Book and Bible House Manager, J.L. Moran; Publishing Secretary, H.D. Warner; Educational and M.V. Secretary, M.A. Burgess; Home Missionary and Sabbath School Secretary, W.R. Robinson.

At the time of its inception, the newly formed Allegheny Conference had approximately 4,000 members. It had an annual tithe income of \$216,019.57. It also had leaders with skill and determination in the likes of J.H. Wagner, Sr., J.L. Moran, F.L. Bland and W.L. Cheatham. It had a dedicated force of workers. Finally, it had the blessing of God.



Elder J.H. Wagner was the first to serve as president of the new Allegheny Conference.

The new conference opened an office at 1218 Irving Street in Northwest Washington, D.C. This location soon changed, however, when on September 25, 1945, the Allegheny Conference Committee voted to establish a boarding academy for the youth of the conference. On December 12, 1945, the Conference Committee voted to purchase land at Pine Forge, Pennsylvania for the erection of the academy.

Feeling that it would serve the best interest of the conference, the Conference Committee voted on August 20, 1946 to move the conference office to Pine Forge, Pennsylvania.

The Irving Street property was sold in October, 1946.

During the building period, the Allegheny Conference office was relocated in the building behind Old North Hall at Pine Forge Institute, which used to serve as a dog kennel.

The work of the conference progressed with the blessings of God. On two occasions, the Conference Committee considered actions to divide the conference into two sections; the Eastern and Western. This occurred in January and March of 1952.

On January 14, 1954, the leadership mantle passed from J.H. Wagner, Sr., who accepted a call to become president of the South Atlantic Conference, to W. L. Cheatham.

A division of the conference did come. The constituents of the Allegheny Conference meeting in Baltimore on May 1, 1966 voted to divide the conference.

At the time of the division, the membership was 11,084. There were seventy-four (74) churches. Tithe income was \$1.2 million. W.A. Thompson became the first



An early Literature Evangelist Meeting held at Pine Forge brought together a large group of individuals whose efforts and influence helped to make Allegheny and Allegheny East Conference, a leader in literature sales.



In 1949, the Allegheny and Northeastern Conferences combined to have Junior Camp at Pine Forge. Pictured are the counselors who served that summer.



The first Allegheny Conference Teachers' Meeting was held in Baltimore Maryland. Natelka Burrell stands in the center front. Other pioneers pictured include A.V. Pinkney, J.H. Wagner, Sr., W.L. Cheatham and H.D. Warner.

president of the Allegheny East Conference. He was followed by Edward Dorsey, L.R. Palmer and M.C. Van Putten, who is presently serving as president.

The membership of the Allegheny East Conference has grown from 6,745 in 1966 when the division took place to 17,341. The Allegheny East Conference has 75 churches today wherein it had 44 churches at the time of the division. The Allegheny East Conference title income is \$5,809,735.63 wherein it was \$1,364,096.19 at the time of the division.

History has been good to the Allegheny East Conference and it continues to hold its leadership role among Black Conferences. To God Be The Glory!

Robert L. Booker, Director
Communication Department

ALLEGHENY WEST



W.M. Starks first president of the Allegheny West Conference.

WE'VE COME THIS FAR BY FAITH: A HISTORY OF THE ALLEGHENY WEST CONFERENCE

By 1966 the Allegheny Conference, organized in 1945, had experienced unprecedented growth. The membership stood at 11,084, there were 74 churches and a tithe income of \$1.2 million.

Due to these factors the constituents felt they could be better served if the conference was divided. After a feasibility study conducted by the Columbia Union; two constituency meetings held in Columbus, Ohio on November 13, 1966 and in Baltimore on November 20, 1966 it was voted to create two separate conferences.

The Allegheny West Conference was organized in 1967. The conference covers Ohio, West Virginia, western Pennsylvania, part of Maryland and part of Virginia.

Walter Starks, stewardship director of the Allegheny Conference, was elected president and Aaron Brogden as secretary-treasurer. Departmental directors elected to serve were: Henry Freeman, publishing secretary; N.K. Jenkins, Associate Secretary, publishing department; D.B. Simon, lay activities and Sabbath school director, A.T. Westney, education and M.V. department.

Starks' period of service was brief, 1966-1967, because he was called to the new stewardship department in the General Conference. Donald B. Simons succeeded W.M. Starks. He served from 1967-1972; followed by H.L. Cleveland, 1972-1983.

"Membership in 1982 was 8,703 in forty-four congregations, served by twenty-four ministers, two Bible Instructors, thirteen

teachers, and forty-seven literature evangelists. Tithe reported for 1981 was \$2,438,905, and for that year there were 540 baptisms."—L.B. Reynolds, "We Have Tomorrow", p. 309.

The current president is H.M. Wright. W.J. Lewis is the secretary and Johny J. Mack is treasurer. Departmental directors are: Barbara Lewis, education; Carl R. Rogers, youth and temperance, J.O. Best, personal ministries and ministerial; W.L. Wright, communications; R.C. Lewis, publishing; J.C. Smith, Sabbath School and religious liberty and W.J. Lewis, stewardship.

In 1985 the membership stood at 9,275 with 44 churches.



Elder Aaron Brogden, First Sect.-Treas. Allegheny West Conference.

SOUTH ATLANTIC



Elder H.D. Singleton, the first president of the South Atlantic Conference.

SOUTH ATLANTIC — LAND OF PROGRESS

South Atlantic Conference was organized in December, 1945, and started to operate as an autonomous organization January 1, 1946. Its territory was North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida with

a total membership in all four states of black Seventh-day Adventists of 3,523. At the end of the first year, 1946, the membership had grown to 4,049—an increase of 1½%. At the same time, the membership of the entire Southern Union had grown from 22,741 to 23,934—an increase of 5.2%. The conference at the end of the first year had 17% of the membership of the Southern Union.

In the area of finance, the total tithe income was \$141,372.00. The Southern Union had a tithe income of only \$1,499,656.00. South Atlantic contributed 9% of it.

By 1980 the Southern Union membership had grown to 99,186, while the South Atlantic Conference membership had grown to 20,423, which was 20% of the membership of the Union. During this same period, the tithe of the Southern Union had reached \$33,636,150.00 while South Atlantic Conference raised \$4,003,907.00. This was 12% of the tithe of the Union.

By this time, because of the vastness of the territory, it was observed that administratively, it was best to divide the Conference. The machinery to divide was placed in motion according to established procedures.

On August 9, 1979, the Commission to Study the Division voted to divide the Conference, and on June 19, 1980, the constituency voted to accept the Union's recommendation. The target date for the two conferences to start their operations was January 1, 1981.

South Atlantic Conference now had its New Beginning Phase I, as the president designated it with a membership of 13,448. Baptism for the first year was 1,210, bringing the net membership to 14,087.

The four administrative phases from 1981-1984 were: New Beginning Phase I & II, and New Horizons Phase I & II. They ended December, 1984, with 5,286 baptisms, and a membership of 16,628. At the same time period, the treasurer reported a total tithe of \$11,734,642.00.

The progress of souls and finance are not the only areas that show the leadership and inspiration which the leaders of South Atlantic Conference have generated. It started with H.D. Singleton, the first president. John H. Wagner followed with similar insights. The third was W.S. Banfield, with the energy of youth and many years building upon the foundation of his predecessors. R.L. Woodfork, the fourth whose deliberate actions left such

monuments behind which many feared that there was not hardly anything left to do, but here comes R.B. Hairston with little or no fear like the Bumble Bee.

The following are some of the very important and even momentous breakthroughs and signs of progress during the New Beginnings and New Horizons:

1. There is a high spirit of love, loyalty and cooperation coming from both the workers and the laity alike which definitely is inspired by the administration.

2. Because of the foresight and tenacity of President Hairston and the leading of the Holy Trinity, he, as the leader, was able to convince the conference to purchase a 106 acre tract of land in Orangeburg, South Carolina—a spot which is almost in the center of the conference. Almost immediately after the closing in 1983, the youth department was ready to use it. The development of the campgrounds was so fast that everybody was left aghast.



J.L. Follette, first Secretary-Treasurer of the South Atlantic Conference.



The first conference office of the South Atlantic Conference.

CENTRAL STATES



T.M. Rowe, first president of Central States Conference.

HITHERTO GOD HAS HELPED US: HISTORY OF CENTRAL STATES CONFERENCE*

On October 12, 1885, C.M. Kinney (Kinny), who later became the first black ordained minister in the denomination, began work in Topeka and Emporia. In May, 1886, he reported in the *Review and Herald* that since October he had made 648 visits, had distributed 16,525 tracts, and as a result five women in Emporia professed to keep the Sabbath and two heads of families were much interested. He began canvassing November 11, 1887, with *The Great Controversy*, by Ellen G. White, in Kansas City, Kansas, and in Atchison, Hannibal, and St. Joseph, Missouri. A number of ministers bought his books and he preached several times. In 1889 he spent six months canvassing in St. Louis. No churches were organized, but no doubt many of the converts attended services in the white churches.

In 1901 the black members in Kansas City, Kansas, requested that they have their own meeting place and Sabbath school. In 1902, after meetings held by Sidney Scott and S.S. Ryles had added 7 converts, a church of 19 was organized. After renting church space and meeting in halls for two years, the congregation built a church (completed January 24, 1904) with the help of the Kansas Conference. The Kansas City, Kansas, church pioneered the church school work. The Kansas City, Missouri, group at first met in a rented hall, then bought the lot and building vacated by a branch of the Pacific Press when it left Kansas City in 1926. In 1943 the Beacon Light SDA church was erected on that lot. Elizabeth Hands, later

married to H.J. Miller, of this church, was the first full-time Negro Bible instructor in the Central Union Conference.

William North led in building a tabernacle in Pueblo, dedicated January 11, 1903, which was probably the first SDA church building for a black congregation in the Central States area. This building, which was used for a mission, burned down in 1904.

In St. Louis, Missouri, before U.S. Willis was sent as a permanent worker in 1909, a layman, M.E. George, had worked among the black people for years, and through his efforts a company of 13 had been organized in 1904, which grew into the Berean SDA church, at the corner of Cook and Sarah Avenues. On September 29, 1927, a tornado laid waste about six square miles of St. Louis, causing damages of \$50 million and killing 87 persons. It completely demolished the Berean church with the exception of the bell tower and church sign. The next Sabbath the congregation worshipped in an undertaker's parlor and after services went out visiting the 17 members whose homes had been entirely or partially destroyed. Later (1953) a church seating 700 was purchased.



James Jones, first sec.-treas. Central States Conference.

The year 1912 marked a real milepost in the history of the work, when, under the leadership of J.W. Allison, the first camp meeting was held for the black membership of the Central Union Conference, at Lawrence, Kansas, August 29 to September 8. The next 15 years were marked by a steady growth of churches. Dan Coats and his wife moved from Clinton to Sedalia, Missouri, and opened a Sabbath school in their home; Ella Jackson, a Bible instructor, worked there as well. As a result, a church at Sedalia was organized in 1913. They met in homes and in an improvised storefront hall until 1935, when a frame church, known as the Sharon Chapel was erected.



Workers Meeting featuring some of the outstanding workers in the Regional work. Among the workers are: E.E. Cleveland, W. Scales, W.W. Fordham, Richard Barron, and E.F. Carter.



Central States Conference Home Office Building.

In 1946 the leaders among the black people in the United States asked that they be allowed to form their own church-governing bodies, in harmony with the new policy of forming Regional conferences. On January 1, 1947, in the Jefferson Hotel in St. Louis, the Central States Mission was organized, with the Negro members of the Central Union Conference (a membership of 789) forming the constituency. T.M. Rowe was elected president, and J.H. Jones, secretary-treasurer. The headquarters of the mission were at 2528 Benton Boulevard, Kansas City, Missouri. Mrs. M.M. Fitch was employed

as a fulltime Bible worker. In five years' time the mission had a membership increase of 76 percent. Membership rose to 2,326 by the close of 1961, and was the second largest in North America. The conference office moved its headquarters in 1970 to its present location at 5737 Swope Parkway, where a new building valued at over \$150,000 was erected during the administration of W.S. Lee, President, and J.E. Merideth, Secretary-Treasurer.

Under the new administration of S.D. Meyers, elected president in June of 1974, and J.A. Simons, elected secretary-treasurer

in October of 1973, many improvements have been made at Camp Shady Hill.

The new administration brought to God's vineyard additional workers and the erection of new church buildings. In 1979, the conference extended a call to Elder S.H. Cox, to serve as its seventh president. The conference experienced continued growth under his leadership. In 1985, the constituents once again, sensing the need for a change in the direction of the work, extended a call to Elder J. Paul Monk, Jr., to serve as president. Under his leadership it is hoped that God will continue to bless.

LAKE REGION



J. Gershom Dasent, the first president of the Lake Region Conference, 1945-1949.

FORTY YEARS OF PROGRESS

Lake Region Conference is a unit of the Seventh-day Adventist Church organization comprising the territory of Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota.

This conference was organized as a result of a General Conference decision to designate the spring of 1944 as the time for a reassessment of the denomination's organizational structure for its work among the black population. So it was at the Spring Council held in Chicago at the Steven's Hotel, April 8-19, that black departmental leaders and pastors of large

churches from New York to California came together to discuss the organizational structure for the black work.

Two workers, Joseph T. Dodson and Addison V. Pinkney, who represented the Committee for the Advancement of Worldwide Work Among Colored Seventh-day Adventists, came to the meeting with an agenda that had been widely distributed to committee members prior to the meeting. The agenda was an eight-page pamphlet entitled "Shall the Four Freedoms Function Among Seventh-day Adventists?" Although the late Frank L. Peterson, who at the time was pastoring in California, had urged that these two men ought to be allowed to stay in the meeting, they were not permitted to remain with the delegates or to take part in the discussions.

The agenda was carefully studied by J.L. McElhane, who was then the president of the General Conference, and the ideas which were presented seemed to establish clearly the need for regional conferences to supervise the work of the church for the black membership. The final decision, however, would be made by the General Conference Committee.

On April 10, 1944, following a persuasive speech by Jay J. Nethery, president of the Lake Union Conference, the Spring Council voted to recommend separate conferences for the black constituents. This decision was to be put into effect "in unions where the colored constituency was considered by the union conference committee to be sufficiently large, and where the financial income and territory would warrant, colored conferences be organized."

The Lake Union Conference led the way in North America by voting on July 17, 1944, to adopt the recommendation of the General Conference. On September 26, 1944, the regional constituency was called together for a special meeting at the Shiloh Church in Chicago. This delegation elected J. Gershom Dasent to the post of president for the newly formed Lake Region Conference. Lake Region was so named because this one conference encompassed the whole region of the Lake Union Conference. The Lake Region Conference which included Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and Wisconsin, began to function as a conference on January 1, 1945. Minnesota was added to the Lake Region Conference in May, 1972.

Other officers and departmental men of this newly formed conference included Fred N. Crowe, elected secretary-treasurer; Walter J. Kissack, Missionary Volunteer and educational secretary; Virgil Gibbons, publishing secretary; and L.B. Baker, Book and Bible House manager.

The prospects of growth and development in this new conference looked good. There was excitement among the ministers and laity as Elder Dasent and other conference personnel began to make plans for the fledgling organization. Dasent envisioned great tent meetings, a youth camp, possibly a boarding academy at Cassopolis, Michigan.

The establishment of a separate conference to direct the work of the black membership had been an accommodation, of course, but it has led to a rapid growth in church membership among the black and Hispanic population. At this writing the



First camp meeting: F. Crowe, 1st Treasurer (seated 3rd from right); T.M. Fountain, 2nd President (seated 4th from left).



THE HARTFORD AVENUE CHURCH STUDY GROUP, Detroit, Michigan. Ms. E. Van Nockay Smith, the Instructor, is the last person on the third row right. Ms. Elizabeth Harley, recently retired Bible Instructor for the conference, is second from the left on the third row.

membership in the Lake Region Conference stands at 18,823. These members hold church membership in seventy-three churches throughout the Great Lakes area.

During the school year of 1984-1985, 647 students were enrolled in the elementary schools and 174 students were enrolled on the secondary levels. There are eight schools in the Lake Region Conference. This number includes two academies, Shiloh in Chicago and Peterson-Warren in Detroit. Forty-five dedicated teachers are hired by the conference to take part in the education of Lake Region's most prized possession. In addition to the teaching personnel, Lake Region Conference can boast of its forty-one ordained ministers and sixteen licensed ministers. Working very closely with the ministers are five dedicated Bible instructors.

Since the organization of the Lake Region Conference in 1945, the constituency has known six presidents:

J. Gershom Dasent	1945-1949
T.M. Fountain	1949-1951
Harvey W. Kibble	1951-1961
Charles E. Bradford	1961-1970
Jessie R. Wagner	1970-1977
Charles D. Joseph	1977-

On this fortieth anniversary commemorating the organization of the Lake Region Conference, let the ministers and laity alike be determined that by God's grace the work in this area of His vineyard will continue to grow.

Historical data adapted from *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia Vol. 10* and *We Have Tomorrow* by Louis B. Reynolds.



Elder and Mrs. J.D. Allison. Elder Allison pastored Capitol Avenue now Capitol City of Indianapolis, Indiana — and Hartford Avenue now known as City Temple SDA Church of Detroit, Michigan.



Pastor and Mrs. Lindsay and C.E. Bradford, 4th President (right).



Mrs. Thelma Kibble, former teacher at Shiloh Academy.

NORTHEASTERN



L.H. Bland, the first President of Northeastern Conference, 1945-1954.

Northeastern Conference Organized

October 3, 1944 the Atlantic Union Conference held a constituency meeting at City Temple Church, 526 W. 150th Street, New York City to organize the Northeastern Conference.

The territories included: New York, Maine, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire and Massachusetts. The officers elected to serve were: L.H. Bland, President; L.O. Irons, Treasurer; J.E. Roache, Education and MV; J.J. North, Home Missionary and Sabbath School; Louis Preston, Publishing and Mary Morrison, Assistant Publishing Secretary.

With 15 churches and 2,028 members the conference was temporarily housed on W. 127 Street later permanent quarters were found on W. 150 Street.

Elder Bland died in 1954 and was succeeded by Elder H.D. Singleton. The latter served until 1962, when called to the General Conference to head the Regional Department. During this time V.L. Roberts and F.L. Jones served as Secretary/Treasurer.

During this time Northeastern grew and developed into a strong conference. At the close of 1945 the membership stood "at 1,648, with a working force of 21 plus 27 colporteurs; at the close of 1961 it was 7,179, with a working force of approximately 45. In 1973 there were 1,437." The period 1963-1973, the conference doubled its membership from 8,097 to 16,328."—*SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 995.

Elder Singleton was succeeded by R.T. Hudson, pastor, evangelist, administrator who had a gift to minister to the influential.

While pastor of the Ephesus Church he invited U.N. diplomat to address the congregation.

Due to his untimely death in 1966 he was succeeded by G.R. Earle. Robert Carter, S.W. Stovall and H.W. Baptiste served as Secretary. The latter still serves in this capacity. S.H. Brooks became treasurer in 1968.



Elder L.O. Irons, first Secretary-Treasurer of the Northeastern Conference.

NOT BY MIGHT, NOT BY POWER: THE HISTORY OF NORTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

The Northeastern Conference can trace its roots back to the Advent Awakening of the 1830s and 40s when free Blacks attended William Miller's meetings throughout New England. At least two Blacks: Father Bowles and John W. Lewis were Millerite ministers.

William Ellis Foy, a Black man from Augustus, Maine was given the prophetic gift while Ellen White was still a girl. He received the first of three visions in 1842 relating to the Disappointment.

Several prominent Blacks were stirred by the Advent message. William Grant Still of the Underground Railroad looked forward to the second coming of Christ, "Though there is no record of Still joining the Adventists, his grandniece, Josephine Roberts, became a member, and her husband, Vincent L. Roberts, was a minister," treasurer of Northeastern Conference, "president of Southwest Region Conference and treasurer of the Southwestern Union Conference."—Louis B. Reynolds, *We Have Tomorrow*, p. 24.

Frederick Douglass witnessed the falling of the stars and saw in it the "omen of the coming of Christ." Although Douglass

never joined the Adventists his daughter, Rosetta Douglass Sprague became a member of the First Seventh-day Adventist Church, Washington, D.C.

Sojourner Truth, women's right advocate and abolitionist, in later life became a member of the SDA Church.

When the first SDA Church was organized in 1862 at Washington, New Hampshire Blacks were chartered members. During this time the U.S. had plunged into a Civil War which would result in the emancipation of the slaves. Now the Church was faced with a real challenge to propagate the gospel among the freedmen. The Church was slow to respond but in the 1890s James Edson White began his mission to Black America.

The first record of the gospel reaching the Blacks in the East occurred in New York City, 1902. "Two groups including a few who had attended the white church, began to hold meetings in a home. A layman, J.H. Carroll, himself a recent convert from the Catholic faith, was encouraged by the conference to begin meetings.

"Contacts were made among Methodist and Baptist churches, and one of his converts was J.K. Humphrey, an ordained Baptist minister."



Elder James K. Humphrey, President, U.S.D.A. Conference.

"Meantime company No. 2, under the leadership of J.C. Hennessey as local elder, was growing, but because of his illness it did not develop as rapidly as church No. 1. This second group was formally organized as a church of 12 members in 1904, and J.H. Carroll was made leader. They met on 134th Street in Harlem."—*SDA Encyclopedia*, p. 994.



Students and faculty members of the Ephesus Jr. Academy, New York City, c. 1941.

J.K. Humphrey was chosen to lead church No. 1, under his stewardship the membership increased to 600 members and became known as the First Harlem SDA Church, 131 Street and Lenox Avenue. Humphrey was a gifted man — organizer, scholar and musician — who has a burden to help his people.

Humphrey along with other leading Black ministers urged the Church to establish Black conferences. Undoubtedly, Humphrey and his fellow ministers were seized with the zeitgeist — the spirit of the times. Since the beginning of the 20th century Blacks had begun to shed Booker T. Washington's policy of accommodation and adopt a more militant stance. In the 1920s and 30s they began an active struggle to gain dignity and freedom.

Change Comes through Tragedy

After Spring Council, 1929, J.K. Humphrey returned to New York despondent, the G.C. Committee had once again refused to adopt Black conferences. So, Humphrey decided to establish a program to help his people. He began to formulate a benevolent organization, Utopia Park, which would provide health, educational, recreational facilities and a senior citizens home.

This independent action resulted in Humphrey losing his ministerial credentials and members of the First Harlem Church being disfellowshipped. Fourteen years would pass before Black conferences became a reality.

In 1943, a tragic death occurred in Takoma Park, Maryland, that forced the Church to establish Black conferences.

Lucy Byard, a terribly ill woman and long-time SDA from Brooklyn came to Washington Missionary Hospital (now Washington Adventist Hospital) seeking treatment. "Fair skinned, at first she was admitted, but later when admittance forms were scrutinized and her racial identity discovered, she was told a mistake had been made. Without examination or treatment she was wheeled out into the corridor" and sent by cab to Freedmen's Hospital where she later died of pneumonia.—Reynolds, pp. 293, 294.

When the Black constituents in Washington heard of this tragic incident they demanded total integration. Church leaders refused instead they voted to adopt Black conferences at the Spring Council held at Chicago's Steven Hotel, 1944.

Elder Earle has guided the conference to unparalleled heights of achievement. The membership now stands at 27,102 and 86 churches, making it the largest Black conference and the fourth largest conference in the North American Division.

Under Elder Earle's leadership the conference has acquired an Academy building, constructed the conference office in Queens, established the Northeastern Community Service Center, made major improvements at Victory Lake Camp and recently built Northeastern Towers—a senior citizen complex.

The laymen have certainly contributed to the upbuilding of the conference. They are responsible for establishing at least half of the churches in the conference. In 1985 they gave close to 10 million dollars in tithe.

The conference has a multi-cultural and linguistic membership with 1 Korean, 10 Hispanic and 9 French-speaking churches.

In July 1985, Elder Earle decided not to seek reelection, the mantle of leadership fell to L.G. Newton whose spiritual vision and strength promises to lead Northeastern to greater heights.

When one examines the way in which God has led, one realizes, "not by might, not by power, but by my spirit saith the Lord of host" has been the key to Northeastern growth and development.

Stephanie D. Johnson

CORRECTION

The August 1985 issue of RV, "George R. Earle, A Leader Among Leaders," written by Stephanie D. Johnson was placed out of sequence by the Printers.



Northeastern Conference Office Building.

SOUTH CENTRAL



H.R. Murphy, first president of South Central Conference.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD: THE HISTORY OF SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE

When the SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE was organized, December 5, 6, 1945, in Birmingham, Alabama, it had some 40 churches with some 2,300 members and was to begin operation January 1, 1946. The conference was comprised of the black membership of Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and the northwestern part of Florida.

Herman R. Murphy was the first president and Vongoethe G. Lindsay was the first secretary-treasurer. There were 13 church schools and 23 teachers.

At the close of its first year, the conference membership had risen to 2,456. By 1950 there were 42 churches and six companies with 2,767 members. By 1960 there were 4,011 members. In 1970 there were 6,849 members. The next ten years saw the membership double to 13,698. The membership has reached 17,556 and is still growing in 117 churches. To God be the glory.

In the January 1946 *Southern Tidings*, in an article titled "Two New Conferences Organized," E.F. Hackman, then Southern Union president, said, "The South Central Conference will have in it 40 churches with 2,300 members. The following workers were chosen for the various offices: President, H.R. Murphy; Secretary-Treasurer, V. Lindsay; Book and Bible House Manager, V. Lindsay, Education and M.V. Secretary, Charles Dickerson; Home Mis-

sionary and Religious Liberty Secretary, H.R. Murphy; Publishing Department Secretary, W.E. Adams; Associate Secretaries, B.H. Ewing, E. Brantley; Sabbath School and Temperance Secretary to be supplied later; Executive Committee, H.R. Murphy, V. Lindsay, B.W. Abney, C.A. Lynes, J.G. Thomas, I.H. Hudson."

The same article in the *Southern Tidings* gave a brief history of the 1944 Spring Council actions. "It was finally recommended that in union conferences where finances permitted and there was a large membership of colored believers, local conferences be organized." The article tells of the survey committee made up of representatives from both white and black departments of the Southern Union; J.L. McElhany, then president of the General Conference; W.J. Williams, undertreasurer of the General Conference; H.J. Elliott, associate secretary of the General Conference; and G.E. Peters, secretary of the Colored Department of the North American Division. The committee recommended that the colored conferences in the Southern Union be organized in 1945 and begin operation January 1, 1946.

From the beginning of the conference in 1946 until 1962 there were three presidents: H.R. Murphy, W.W. Fordham, F.L. Bland. In August of 1962, Dr. C.E. Dudley was elected as president and has served as president for the past 23 years. There are now 117 churches and some 15 churches are without buildings. The other 102 churches have buildings. Only seven have old buildings or buildings that were here when Dudley took over in 1962.



F.L. Bland, South Central President, 1959-1962.

Ninety-five (95) buildings have been constructed or bought under Dudley's leadership.

The South Central Conference operates five housing projects for the disadvantaged in several locations with a total of 560 units. The senior citizen complex now under construction in Huntsville, AL will be the sixth (6th) project sponsored by the conference, but the only one under the supervision and management of a local church, First Church of Huntsville. Its 76 units will make a total of 636 units sponsored by the conference.

Although there were a few small groups of black Adventist believers scattered throughout the south, the records indicate that the first black Adventist church was



R.H. Peirson, G.C. President views site of first Black adventist church.

organized at Edgefield Junction, Tennessee (outskirt of Nashville, Tennessee) on November 9, 1886, with a membership of 10. The second black Adventist church was organized in Louisville, Kentucky in 1890, and the third in Bowling Green, Kentucky in 1891.

A number of prominent black leaders of the Adventist movement can trace their heritage back to the early history of the South Central Conference territory where the J.H. Allison family was baptized, with two sons and a grandson becoming ministers. Others whose history goes back to the South Central Territory are G.E. Peters, J.H. Laurence, W.H. Sebastian, M.C. Strachan, F.W. Warnick, Thomas Murphy, C.E. Bradford, G.J. Millet. And there was N.G., John, Richard, Donald, and Raymond Simons. There was also T.T. Frazier, T.M. Fountain, J.S. Green, William, E.E., and Harold Cleveland, H.W. Kibble, C.E. Moseley, F.L. Peterson, and O.B. Edwards.

In 40 years of operation this conference has had only four presidents: H.R. Murphy 1946-1954; Walter W. Fordham, 1954-1959; Frank L. Bland, 1959-1962; Charles E. Dudley 1962-.

During the forty years of operation, this conference has had only five Secretary-Treasurers: V. Lindsay, L. Ford, J. Simons, and D. Walker. At the last election in 1984, the office was divided and F.N. Crowe was elected as Treasurer and J.W. McCoy was elected to serve as Secretary.

James Edson White, son of Ellen G. White, made a 72-foot steam boat, the Morning Star, to evangelize the blacks along the Mississippi River 1894-1905. As a result, some 16 churches were organized in Mississippi.



O.W. Mackey (kneeling front center) and publishing leaders, L-R S.C. Robinson, T.J. Jackson, T. Smith. Standing, other leaders and colporteurs.

The South Central Publishing Department under the direction of Elder O.W. Mackey trained outstanding Publishing Department leaders as Robert Smith now in the General Conference Publishing Department, S.C. Robinson now in the Review & Herald Publishing Association as the vice president, T.R. Smith now in the Southern Union Publishing Department and Robert LaGrone now in the Columbia Union Publishing Department

and others who are in local conference publishing departments.

The South Central Conference has six TV programs and 20 radio programs conducted by local pastors.

The South Central Conference, under Earl Moore launched the EMERGENCY WELFARE VAN SERVICE and the Inner City Service which other conferences are now practicing.



C.E. Dudley and Elder R. Pierson, former president of G.C. listen to Mrs. W. Grant, a 98 years old member in Jackson, Mississippi as she reflects on the way in which the Lord has blessed the church through the years.



Oldest Church — Yazoo City, Mississippi.



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SOUTHWEST REGION



In 1932 a Black Department was organized and continued until December 16, 1946, when the Southwestern Mission was born. On January 1, 1947, this new unit, comparable to a conference began its work. Its first officers were: W.W. Fordham, president; V.L. Roberts, secretary-treasurer and home missionary leader; J.H. Jones, publishing; and Helen Wiggins Beckett, Sabbath school secretary. After two years the mission membership was 1,939, with a total net worth of \$35,824.85. The first Biennial Session of the Southwestern Mission was held January 17, 1950, at the Friendship Baptist church in Dallas, TX, where it voted to change the organizational status from a mission to a conference following its outstanding record of achievement. The personnel consisted of W.W. Fordham, president and religious liberty; V.L. Roberts, secretary-treasurer, Book & Bible House and press secretary; C.C. Cunningham, M.V. and Sabbath School; O. Dunn, publishing. (Pictured Elder & Mrs. W.W. Fordham, President 1946-1954. They are being honored at campmeeting Lone Star Camp in 1982 by W.C. Jones.)

LAUNCHING OUT INTO THE DEEP THE BEGINNINGS OF SOUTHWEST REGION

As early as 1876, blacks were exposed to the teachings to the Advent message in the area comprising the Southwest Region Conference (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas). In Texas a young Caucasian convert, Eddie Capman, conducted a night school three times weekly for blacks. According to a report by D.M. Canright, this school, conducted for young and old alike, was in progress

during his visit to Texas in May, 1876. Later that year Parson Medlin, who had attended Capman's classes, went to a black community of 700 at Mansfield and preached the three angels' messages.

The first black church in the Southwest Region was organized at New Orleans, LA, on June 4, 1892. It is fitting that the last church to be added to the sisterhood of churches during 1976 was the second church of New Orleans. The first Ephesus was formed as the result of a pioneer worker, C.M. Kinney, who started with the six black members in New Orleans when he arrived in October, 1891. This is also reported to be the fourth black church in the denomination.

The report of a black minister Sydney Scott tell of a group of converts in Catcher, Arkansas, and of the conversion of the entire congregation of another church known only as the Monarch church. In 1901 a group was also organized into a company in Houston, Texas, through the efforts of two laymen, a Mrs. Pack and a Mrs. Dysart. There were many ministers and lay persons who helped pioneer the work in addition to those already mentioned: M.G. Nunez, W.S. North, J.H. Laurence, J.G. Dasent, F.S. Keitts, T.H. Coopwood, J.H. Williams and A.R. Carethers. From these beginnings men of God equipped by divine power organized companies and churches to the glory of God throughout this vast field.

Doris Jones, Reporter



V.L. Roberts served with distinction for 13 years from 1956-1969.



Church Buildings — From 1976-1985 31 churches completed and 22 more on the drawing board. (Pictured Tulsa, Oklahoma Church 1st church purchased in 1976.)



W.C. Jones President 1976.

UPDATED STATISTICAL REPORT

YEAR	MEMBERSHIP	TITHE
1976	7,333	\$ 900,000
1985	11,002	\$3,000,000
	81 — Churches	
	6 — Missions	
	10 — Church Schools Enrollment 517	
	33 — Ordained Ministers	
	8 — Licensed	
	21 — Infiltration	



LONE STAR CAMP - Purchased 1977 — 268 acres — \$450,000.00 Debt Free.

SOUTHEASTERN

NEWEST CONFERENCE UNDER THE SON: THE HISTORY OF THE SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

Six years have passed since South Atlantic was divided into two conferences. When South Atlantic began in December 1945 it had a total membership of 3,614 and 62 churches.

In 1979 the membership stood at 20,291 making it the second largest Black conference. After much study it was approved on October 14, 1979 at Annual Council to divide the conference "because of the large membership and conference extending over such a vast geographical territory (from the northern tip of North Carolina to Key West, Florida) it was considered in the best interest of continued rapid growth to divide the territory into separate conferences."

The northern portion retained the name South Atlantic with headquarters in Atlanta. The southern portion became known as Southeastern Conference with headquarters in Altamonte Springs, Florida, a suburb of Orlando.

The Southeastern Conference began operating on January 1, 1981. The territories assigned included most of Florida and part of Georgia. Officers elected to serve were: J.A. Edgecombe, President; D.A. Walker, Secretary/Treasurer; I.L. Harrell, Sabbath School and personal ministries; Keith Dennis, education and youth; Roy Brown, Communications and stewardship; Robert Smith, serving both South Atlantic and Southeastern Conferences as Publishing Director.

At the beginning of 1982 the membership stood at 9,112 and tithe for 1981 was \$2,549,010.

In May 1985, J.A. Edgecombe was re-elected President; D.A. Walker, reelected Treasurer and R.R. Brown was elected Executive Secretary and Communications. The departmental staff remained intact except for R.R. Brown's appointment and Dennis Ross, Jr. as Ministerial, Stewardship, Development and Trust Services.

From 1982-85 there were 3,153 baptisms. The net gain in membership was 2,610. Presently the membership stands at 11,722 with 52 churches.

The tithe reported for this period was \$9,021,868.25. The conference gained \$1,221,990.99 in tithes and \$27,347.46 in

missions. God has richly blessed the newest conference under the SON.

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE—FROM PAST TO PRESENT

The Southeastern Conference is a part of the Seventh-day Adventist church organization comprising the territory of Florida and South Georgia.

This conference came into being on January 1, 1981 with approximately 8,500 members, 51 churches, 20 pastors, 5 church schools with 24 teachers, 12 literature evangelists, and 2 associate publishing secretaries.

It was the constituency of the South Atlantic Conference that requested a study be given to the division of the South Atlantic Conference territory into two conferences. A fact-finding committee was established to develop the facts, and a larger committee to review and make recommendations. Representatives for both committees included Marvin Brown, K.A. Dennis, Kenneth Moore, R.A. Sloan, J.W. Dorsett, Mrs. Julia Jackson, Mrs. W. Waldon, Alpheus Forbes, O.H. Paul, William Winston, R. Patterson, R.B. Hairston, and R.L. Woodfork from South Atlantic. Southern Union Conference representatives were: H.H. Schmidt, H.F. Roll, T.W. Cantrell, and J.H. Whitehead; and from the General Conference, F.L. Jones.

The study encompassed:

- a. division of the conference—North & South geographical lines, districts and schools, personnel
- b. projected budget of income and expense
- c. capital needs
- d. pre-opening expense
- e. cash needs

The resolution for the division of the South Atlantic Conference was due to the fact that the growth of the black work would be enhanced, that the two conferences could operate with financial soundness, that the north conference would have North and South Carolina and Georgia except for the southerly portion, that the south conference would experience faster growth as shown by the past progress, that the north conference would remain in Atlanta and the south should construct its headquarters in the Orlando area, geographic center of the proposed territory. See Exhibit A.

It was voted to recommend the formation of the conferences to the South Atlantic Conference membership, the Southern

Union Conference, and the General Conference, to begin January 1, 1981 and to request financial assistance to bring about the division of the following. See Exhibit B.

It was S.E. Gooden who said in January, 1981 "when the amoeba outgrows itself and divides, each portion as an autonomous entity goes its own way and never meets again". The South Atlantic Conference outgrew itself and life was given to the Southeastern Conference. We have never forgotten our roots but have remained the valiant battle for survival.

Elder J.A. Edgecombe, who was pastor of the Miami-Bethany SDA Church, was called in a constituency meeting held June 22, 1980 to give leadership as the first conference president. D.A. Walker, Secretary-Treasurer, from South Central Conference, was called to carry the same responsibilities in the newly formed conference.

Full-time departmental directors were G.W. Timpson and I.L. Harrell. T.R. Smith, publishing director and Olice Brown, ABC Manager served both the South Atlantic and Southeastern Conferences. Since those early beginnings, the office staff has expanded and now President, J.A. Edgecombe, Secretary-R.R. Brown, Treasurer-D.A. Walker, Assistant Treasurers-Patricia Allen and Eugene Mason, Departmental Directors-I.L. Harrell, Dennis Ross, Jr., K.A. Dennis, O.H. Paul; Secretaries-Winifred Rivers-Allen, Melinda Sewer, Valerie Price, Myra Richardson, and Janet Oston comprise the Southeastern Conference office staff with headquarters in Orlando, Florida.

For 35 years the South Atlantic Conference carefully guarded North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. The division would take its toll mentally on the constituency, but the objectives of evangelism, etc. would soon erase the trauma. The prospects for growth, development, and expansion created an excitement among ministers, teachers, and laity that has skyrocketed the Southeastern Conference into new orbits.

President J.A. Edgecombe said at the genesis of the Southeastern Conference that "evangelism would be a major undertaking". The growth, evangelistically, has been divided among the Hispanics, the French, and the English. At the time of writing this story, the Southeastern Conference membership stands at 11,930. We have 68 churches and companies, 40 pastors, 7 church schools with 34 teachers, and 3 associate publishing secretaries. See Exhibit C.

After almost 5 years of operation, it is gratifying to see what God has wrought.

IN THE NEWS



First Master Guide Investiture in Southeastern.



First Executive Committee of Southeastern. Looking left to right: First Row: R.R. Brown, I.L. Harrell, J.A. Edgecombe, D.A. Walker, K.A. Dennis, W.C. Byrd. Second Row: W. Taylor, E. Young, H. Davis, T. Campbell, J. Brown, G. Mitchell, and O.H. Paul.



D.A. Walker.

Elder D.A. Walker will be leaving South Central Conference to take his duties as Treasurer at the new Southeastern Conference in Orlando, FL.

James A. Edgecombe, president elect of the newly organized South Conference, at the opening dedication of the Archie Hamlin Multipurpose Center in Tampa.



Southeastern Conference office staff at its beginning. Looking left to right: First Row: Martha Walker, Eugene Mason, Winifred Rivers-Allen. Second Row: Valerie Price, Doris Pitts, and Janet Oston.



THE NORTH AMERICAN REGIONAL VOICE

NORTH AMERICAN REGIONAL VOICE

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