

# The Christian Courier

Published by the Churches of Christ Annual National Lectureship

"Literary Voice of the National Lectureship"

[www.africanamericanchurchofchristministerslegacy.org](http://www.africanamericanchurchofchristministerslegacy.org)

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## The "Historical" Churches of Christ 76th Annual National Lectureship Acknowledges the Passing of Dr. Eugene Lawton

On Friday, March 25, 2022, and Saturday, March 26, 2022, many preachers and Church leaders from across the brotherhood assembled in Newark, New Jersey, to pay respects on behalf of the late Dr. Eugene Lawton.

Dr. Lawton completed his terrestrial journey on Saturday, March 12, 2022, at the age of 85 years old. Below you will find excerpts of his celebrated life that are taken from the obituary program.

"Born [on] January 28, 1937, in the city of St. Petersburg, Florida, the internationally known Evangelist, author, and former Dean of Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas, was a legendary defender of the gospel of Christ. He set legacy and confirmed that there can be no greatness without vision, commitment, and a willingness to give of oneself for the eternal good of others.

"Dr. Lawton was baptized into Christ in 1951 by the late S. J. Dudley and began preaching the gospel while a student at Southwestern where he graduated valedictorian in 1956. He went on to Pepperdine University in [Los Angeles] California, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree as well as a Master of Arts degree. He then completed advanced work at Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey

and earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Trinity Seminary in Indiana.

"In 1963, Dr. Lawton married Diane Trone, daughter of the late, great Minister O. L. Trone of Detroit, Michigan, and together they had three children: Eugene, Cedric, and Kathleen.

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*Dr. Lawton was baptized into Christ in 1951 by the late S. J. Dudley and began preaching the gospel while a student at Southwestern where he graduated valedictorian in 1956.*

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"Dr. Lawton was the founder and principal architect of the Northeastern Youth Conference and received many awards for his tireless service in the Lord's vineyard. In 2009, he received the Living Legend Award [held] at the Ministers' Institute Conference in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; The Minister of Tenure Award at the Northeastern Lectureship at New York's famed Apollo Theater; and The Man of Valor Award from Southwestern Christian College.

"He worked tirelessly to promote Christian education and served on the Board of Directors at SwCC raising



**In Remembrance of the Late  
Dr. Eugene Lawton (1937-2022)  
National Lectureship Advisory  
Committee Vice-Chairman**

more than a half-million dollars as an advocate for Christian education. The prolific author and commanding force for salvation wrote soul-stirring books such as: *'Fasten Your Seatbelts: Turbulence May Be Ahead'* and *'Let Me Sound My Trumpet'* to empower others through biblically-based truths in complex times.

(Continued on page 2)

**"One Lord.... One Faith... One Baptism"**

(LAWTON... Continued)

“Dr. Lawton traveled extensively on the National Lectureship circuit, attended global conferences, conducted gospel meetings, training workshops, and taught weekly Bible classes at the Newark Church of Christ in his endeavor to save souls and keep souls saved. He was a beloved figure throughout the brotherhood and among his ‘preaching sons.’

“Though he shall be greatly missed, *‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors: for their works do follow them’* (Revelation 14:13).

“He leaves in love his sons Eugene F. Lawton and Cedric B. Lawton, daughter Kathleen J. Lawton, grandchildren Sean D. Lawton-Betts, Tracey C. Betts, Vanessa Burns, Niajah Lawton, and a host of nieces, nephews, extended family, friends, and beloved members of the Newark Church of Christ as well as those throughout the brotherhood.”



#### Other Awards and Distinctions

- Presidential Award SwCC – 2021
- Living Legend Award SwCC – 2021
- Honorary LL.D. SwCC – 2010
- Image Award SwCC – 2003
- R. V. Simmons Ministerial Award – 2002
- Recognition of Service SwCC – 1997
- Salute You Award Newark CoC – 1985

#### “Let Me Sound My Trumpet”



#### Churches of Christ “Historical” National Lectureship Executive Committee Acknowledgment:

*“The Executive Committee of the Churches of Christ ‘Historical’ National Lectureship extends to the Newark Church of Christ its words of comfort in reference to the passing of Dr. Eugene Lawton. Please know that our sincere condolences go out to you at this most difficult time. Dr. Lawton was one of the most illustrious and proficient proclaimers of the gospel message among our fraternity of preachers. Needless to say, we will miss his presence and ability to ‘tell the story’ of Jesus Christ our Sovereign Savior as it is written from the pages of divine inspiration. Therefore, on behalf of the Churches of Christ ‘Historical’ National Lectureship, we pray that the great God of heaven will give you inner-peace that surpasses all human understanding. May He also provide you with serenity and strength to face the days ahead with confidence and unrelenting conviction.”*

W. F. Washington, Ph.D. – Executive Committee Chairman



**“One Lord.... One Faith... One Baptism”**

## African American Churches of Christ “Historical” National Lectureship Serving the Brotherhood Since 1945

“Preserving Our Past and Protecting Our Future”

“1945”



“2022”



**A**lthough each of the founding pioneers pictured above have been called to rest, the National Lectureship continues to serve as a vital link for our great brotherhood. The vision

has not varied and the objective is to preach sound doctrine. In each generation there have been issues among a few brethren regarding the Lectureship. Such

was the case in the era of R. N. Hogan and the same can be witnessed today. In addition, there is only ONE “Historical” National Lectureship that is “validated” among a

consensus of African American churches of Christ. With this in mind, *“Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not”* (Gal. 6:9).

“One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism”





## **\*\* Soon to be Released \*\***

### **“Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen” (Part One)**

**By W. F. Washington, Ph.D.**

**Senior Minister of New Golden Heights Church of Christ  
Fort Lauderdale, Florida**

*“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed...”*

**O**ne of the amazing and astonishing aspects of the preaching ministry is that whenever God “CALLS” a man, He always calls him “TO DO SOMETHING!” For example, When God called Moses while he was tending the flock at the mountain of Horeb, He called him “TO DO SOMETHING!”

- When God called David the “Sweet Singer of Israel,” He anointed his head with consecrated oil and He called him “TO DO SOMETHING!” When God called Gideon while he was sitting under the oak tree in Ophrah and audaciously announced “Thou mighty man of valor,” He called him “TO DO SOMETHING!”
- When God called Elijah the “Prince of Preachers” and the most romantic prophet Israel has ever produced, He called him “TO DO SOMETHING!” When God called Isaiah the “Eagle Eye Prophet” and “Dean of Messianic Prophets” in the *TaNaKh* writings, He called him “TO DO SOMETHING!”
- When God called Jeremiah the “Weeping Prophet of Judah” who was ordained and set apart in the womb of his mother, He called him “TO DO SOMETHING!” Every preacher that God has ever called “DOES SOMETHING” for the kingdom to help keep the prophetic pronouncement productive!

Such can be said in regard to the calling and preaching ministry of Dr. W. F. Washington. The information contained in this biographical account was taken from a personal interview given by Dr. Washington in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, to Dr. David C. Penn at the New Golden Heights Church of Christ in August 2012. Dr. Washington discusses his early life while growing up in Valdosta, Georgia, and his experiences at Nashville Christian Institute with Marshall Keeble in addition to Bishop College in Dallas, Texas. Furthermore, he shares with the reader his close relationship with R. N. Hogan of Los Angeles, California.

Dr. Washington was born and raised in Valdosta, Georgia, as the great-grandson son of a slave. At a young age he traveled, lodged with and was mentored by some of God’s greatest gospel preachers such as Ulysses Shields, John Henry Clay (his father in the gospel), Marshall Keeble, William Whitaker, James L. Cothron, V. E. Williamson, Willie Ray, and David Shanks. Others include R. N. Hogan, Luke Miller, S. T. W. Gibbs, Jr., Paul S. Settles, Alonza Z. Rose, J. S. Winston, and John O. Williams.

According to Dr. Washington his stated purpose in life is “to glorify God and His son Jesus Christ in the fulfillment of His mission on earth. To continue steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread and in prayer.” He is confidently awaiting the glorious appearing of our Great God and Savior Jesus.

**“One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism”**



*The W. F. Washington Theological Institute  
Ministers' Institute Conference USA  
Extends Words of Consolation and Comfort*

To the Family of the Late Evangelist Dr. Eugene Lawton  
Minister of the Newark Church of Christ – Newark, NJ  
March 26, 2022

Dr. Harvey M. Jackson, Mound Bayou, MS

National Coordinator

Regional Coordinators

Dr. Steven N. Thompson, Milwaukee, WI

Dr. David C. Penn, Chicago, IL  
Minister Leroy Butler, Valdosta, GA  
Dr. Orpheus J. Heyward, Atlanta, GA  
Minister DonBurnell Holly, Memphis, TN  
Minister Samuel Pounds, Winter Haven, FL



Dr. Luis R. Lugo, Tampa, FL  
Dr. Shelton T. W. Gibbs III, Dallas, TX  
Dr. Olu J. Shabazz, Harlem, NY  
Dr. Jeff Caruthers, Winston-Salem, NC

*W. F. Washington, Ph.D. – Institute Founder/President*



## We Celebrate the Ministry and Memory of Twenty Gospel Preachers

**T**he *Christian Courier* wishes to mention the passing of twenty Church of Christ gospel preachers that we have record of since our last in-person National Lectureship. If a preacher that you know of has been unintentionally omitted, please by all means inform us. The ministry encapsulating each of these men impacted all who knew them. We ask that you continue to pray for their respective families.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • <b>Bell, Valanderous</b><br>Sulphur Springs, TX | • <b>Jackson, Ervin</b><br>Melbourne, FL      |
| • <b>Cecil, Cloyis</b><br>Winston-Salem, NC       | • <b>Jones, William E. Sr.</b><br>Chicago, IL |
| • <b>Chapman, Roosevelt</b><br>Montgomery, AL     | • <b>Lawton, Eugene</b><br>Newark, NJ         |
| • <b>Dulin, Frank</b><br>Greensboro, NC           | • <b>Maloy, Theaster</b><br>Houston, TX       |
| • <b>Evans, N. L.</b><br>Texarkana, TX            | • <b>Moore, Zebedee</b><br>Valdosta, GA       |
| • <b>Foster, Thomas</b><br>Houston, TX            | • <b>Morrison, Woodie</b><br>Dallas, TX       |
| • <b>Harris, James, Sr.</b><br>Gulfport, MS       | • <b>Myers, Derric C.</b><br>St. Louis, MO    |
| • <b>Hubbard, Paul</b><br>Grand Rapids, MI        | • <b>Smiley, John</b><br>Buffalo, NY          |
| • <b>Jones, Amanzo</b><br>Nashville, TN           | • <b>Wooden, Larry R.</b><br>Indianapolis, IN |
| • <b>Brown, Joseph</b><br>Richmond, VA            | • <b>Cheeks, Darryl L.</b><br>Evanston, IL    |



There are many books which we need to burn today just as the Ephesians did long ago. We need to burn all books which create envy, promote sin, and encourage disobedience to the Bible which attempts to turn the truth of God into a lie.

We need to burn all books which condone and cause religious division in our world today. The world could and would function more effectively if all such books, pamphlets, papers, and magazines which endorse any of the aforementioned things were destroyed and forbidden to ever again make an appearance in publications.

Although we could devote much time discussing many such books and

articles, our central focus is to deal mainly with literature and books which claim to be guides and authority in religious matters.

We need to recognize that the Bible is the only guide one needs in religious matters which is true. Therefore, why must one subscribe to other books? Not for religious information (John 16:13; Jude 1:3). Not because the Bible is insufficient (II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1:3).

The only real reason for men to invent, create, or devise other doctrines or creeds is because they are dissatisfied with the things of God and have chosen to ignore and rebel against the Bible, the Word of God.

### “Books We Need to Burn”

By the Late Dr. Roosevelt C. Wells  
Harlem Church of Christ – New York City, NY

**T**he commission of our Lord after His death states: “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). Paul, in an effort to embrace this command, preached the gospel in Ephesus and through his efforts many obeyed the truth of God.

The power of the gospel, coupled no doubt with the power of Paul’s preaching caused many in Ephesus to separate themselves from pernicious literature which in many instances influences the life, corrupts the mind, and can lead to defilement of the body.

The Ephesians being impressed with the gospel Paul preached, and persuaded through the fear they probably experienced by the occurrences which transpired, were influenced to the extent that Luke writes: (1) the name of the Lord was magnified, (2) many believed, (3) many confessed, (4) many showed their deeds, and (5) many burned their evil books (Acts 19:17-19).

What should we do with such literature? Burn it! If we do so, in all probability the Word of the Lord will “grow mightily” as it did in the days of Paul and the first century primitive Church. ✠

Article by the late Dr. Roosevelt C. Wells is taken from the October 1989 Edition of the *Christian Echo*.



**“One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism”**

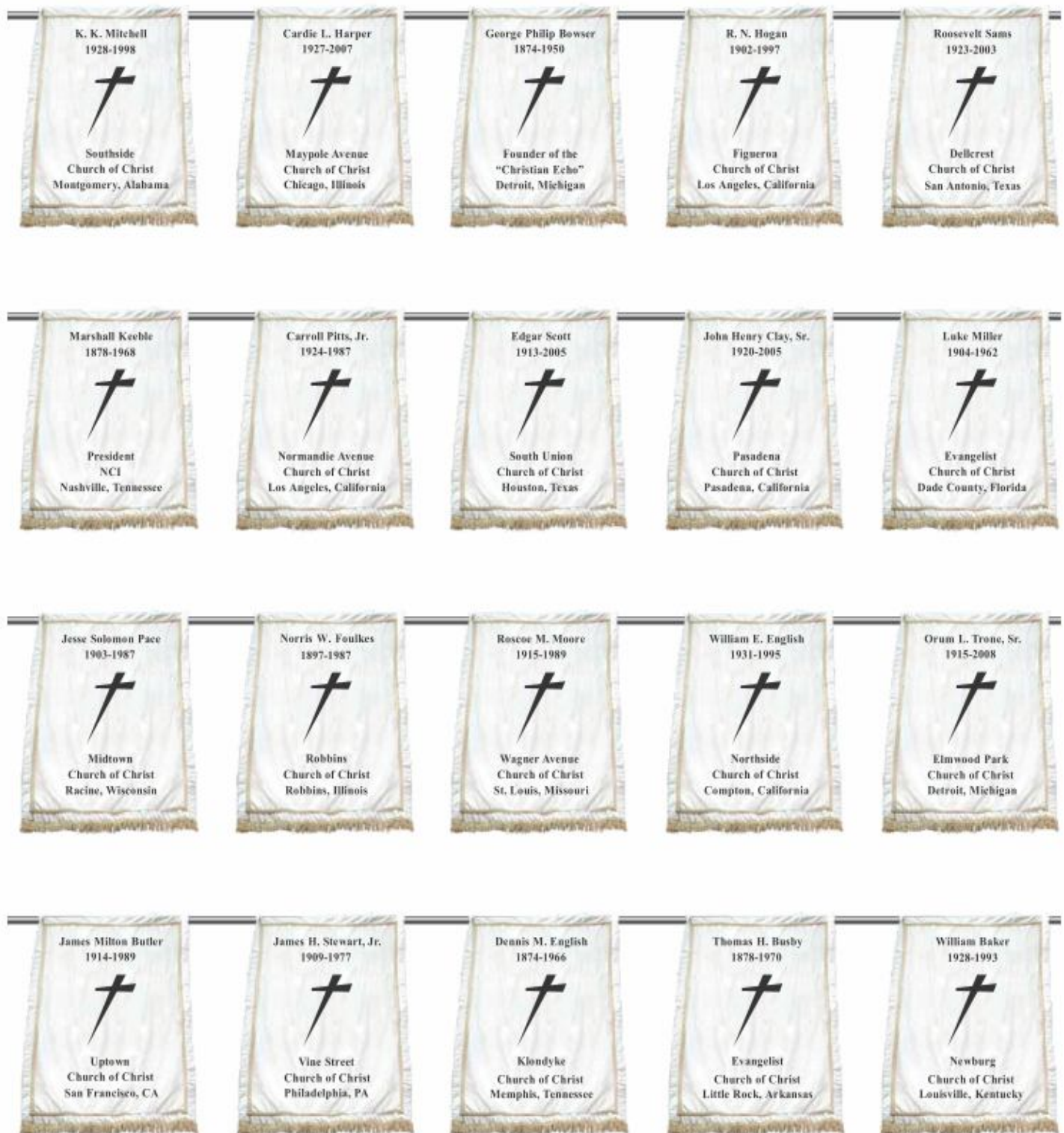
## “And How Shall They Hear Without A Preacher?”



“One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism”



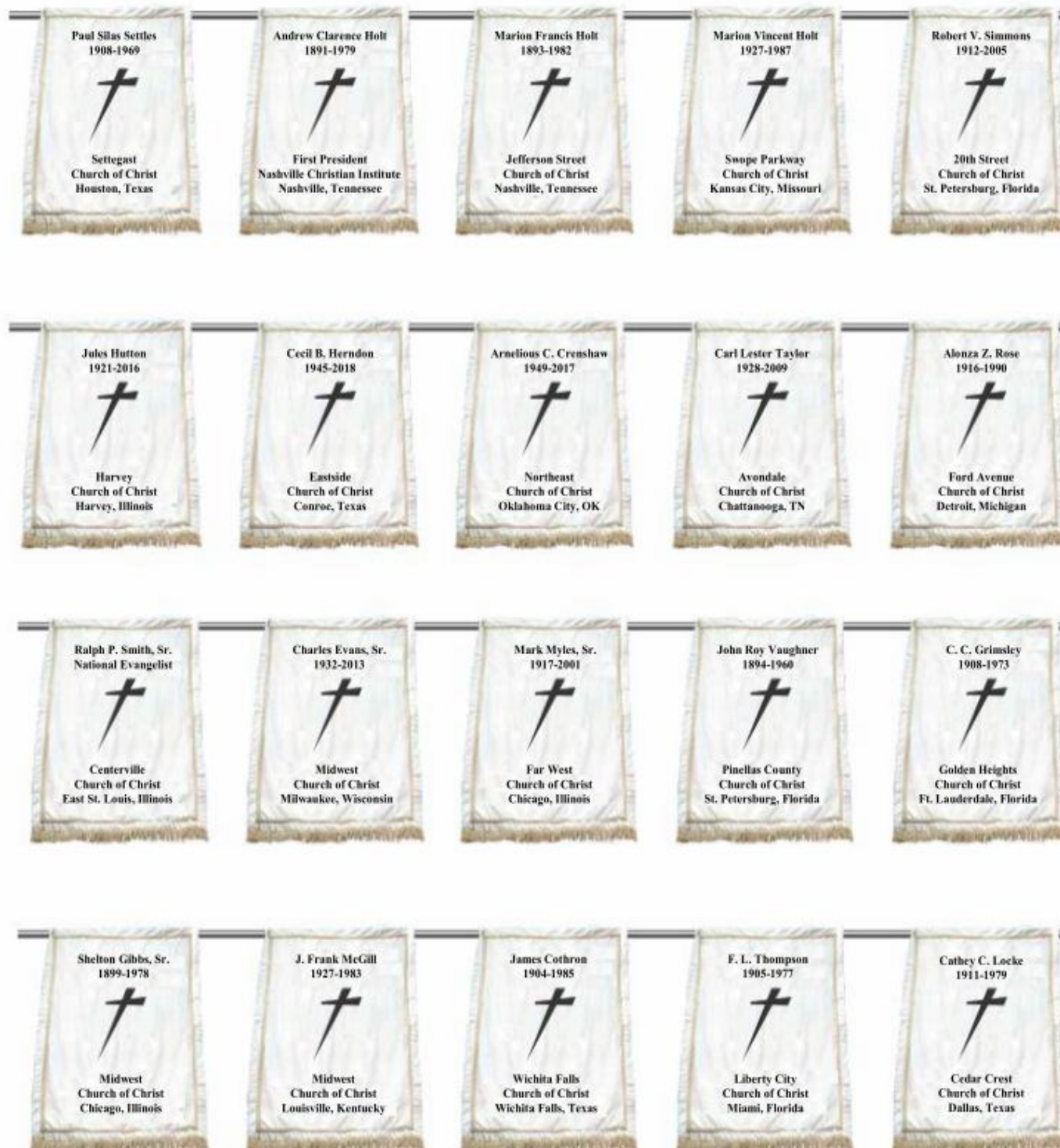
## “And How Shall They Hear Without A Preacher?”



“One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism”



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“One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism”

## “And How Shall They Hear Without A Preacher?”



“One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism”



**T**he *Christian Courier* has received notification requesting the selection of three gospel preachers to represent their geographical areas as new members of the National Lectureship Advisory Committee. These men include Anthony Fletcher of Houston, Texas; Cornelius Heyward of New York City; and Chris Turner of Burlington, New Jersey.



**Anthony Fletcher, Sr.**  
Fidelity Church of Christ  
Houston, TX

Anthony Fletcher, Sr., presently serves as Senior Minister of the Fidelity Church of Christ in Houston, Texas. He assumed the position of pulpit Minister subsequent to the passing of Evangelist Theaster Maloy. Brother Fletcher has continued to lead the Fidelity congregation in biblical truths and with sound gospel preaching. His motto is: *"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 2:5).

### **Mission and Visionary Intent of the *Christian Courier***

The *Christian Courier* is a publication established in 2012 by the Churches of Christ "Historical" National Lectureship.

The fundamental objective of the *Courier* is to share relevant information pertinent to the National Lectureship in particular and the African American Church of Christ in general.

It is the visionary intent of the *Christian Courier* to publish articles that reflect sound biblical doctrine and those which embrace New Testament Christianity.

Let it be understood that the *Courier* does not promote any policies or ideologies that conflict with the Word of God. The Bible is our only divine standard of measurement in matters relating to religious faith and practice.

Therefore, articles submitted to the *Courier* should be engaging, thought-provoking, trustworthy, and insightful. Furthermore, the *Courier* reserves the right to refuse publication of any article that does not meet its specific criteria.

To download past issues of the *Christian Courier*, please visit our website at:  
[www.africanamericanchurchofchristministerslegacy.org](http://www.africanamericanchurchofchristministerslegacy.org)

*"Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!"*  
(Psalm 150:6 – NASB)



**Cornelius Heyward**  
Far Rockaway Church of Christ  
Far Rockaway, NY

Cornelius Heyward commands attention. With an overpowering stature and stirring vocal range, he is as authoritative as they come not of his own accord, but as he says, by the command of the Holy Spirit. A new church building was constructed in downtown Far Rockaway to serve a growing congregation. Heyward became a Christian at the Roosevelt-Freeport Church of Christ. In 1990, he was ordained a Minister and has been the Senior Minister at Far Rockaway for over 30 years.



**Chris Turner**  
Sunset Road Church of Christ  
Burlington, NJ

Chris Turner serves as Senior Minister of the Sunset Road Church of Christ in Burlington, New Jersey. The Sunset Road congregation is rapidly growing in the New Jersey area. The desire of Turner is to continue ministering in a manner that is historically astute and spiritually correct. Whether by singing, teaching, preaching, or any other means, his objective is to edify, encourage, and enlighten others so they may learn to live as the Creator would have them and realize their God-given potential.

**"One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism"**



IN COLLABORATION WITH  
**The Central Florida Area Churches**  
**16th Annual**  
**NATIONAL LECTURESHIP**  
**September 24-29, 2022**

Visit Us Online [www.cocnl2022.com](http://www.cocnl2022.com)



### Registration Information

Regular Registration \$185 (Ends 8/26/22) Late Registration \$199 (8/27/22 - Onsite)  
 (This Fee includes the John O. Williams Memorial Banquet)  
 All Registration Payments are Transferable, but not refundable.

### Vendor Fee - \$250

Vendor Fee includes access to all Lectureship sessions for 1 vendor only.  
 It does not include the Banquet or Lectureship promotional items.

### Souvenir Ad Pricing

Deadline for all Ads Will be August 26th, 2022  
 Full Page: \$200.00 Half Page: \$125.00 Quarter Page: \$75.00  
 Email all Ads to [hilltopcofc@gmail.com](mailto:hilltopcofc@gmail.com). Ads should be submitted in "jpeg or pdf" format. If ads are submitted in "Word Document" then an additional \$10.00 (ten dollar) fee will be applied.

The Songfest will begin Saturday, September 24, 2022, @ 6 PM  
 The Ladies Luncheon – Wednesday, September 28, 2022 @ 12 Noon  
 The Banquet – Thursday, September 29, 2022 @ 6:30 PM

“Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and exhort, with great patience and instruction” (2 Timothy 4:2 – NASB)

The preacher must allow others to scrutinize him as he experiences what F. Scott Fitzgerald calls “The dark night of the soul where it is always three o’clock in the morning.”

**“One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism”**



## “Double-Consciousness” and the Word of God

### Special Editorial

*“One ever feels his twoness, - an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.”*

In 1903 when Dr. W. E. B. Dubois penned these words in his seminal classic entitled *“The Souls of Black Folk,”* he proposed that the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line. Dubois suggests that life behind the Veil of Race has resulted in a state of “double-consciousness” causing African Americans to look at themselves through the eyes of others.

Unfortunately, this allegory of “double-consciousness” has found its way into the twenty-first century minds of several within our precious fellowship. As a result, they have begun to question certain beliefs we have embraced and practiced according to New Testament doctrine.

Let it clearly be understood that this writer believes in the “efficacy” and “sufficiency” of the Scripture which is the inerrant Word of God. The New Testament contains all we need to know about how to worship God in the manner which He has prescribed.

There are no “deficiencies” in the Scripture that need to be suffused with extra-biblical and anti-biblical doctrines or with a “pseudo theological *eisegesis*.” There are no “new revelations,” “new anomalies,” “new developments,” or “new arguments” that have been recently discovered relative to the Sacred Text.

The fact of the matter is that a litany of gospel preachers both past

and present in the Church of Christ across ethnic and cultural lines may not have attained seminary or academic exposure; however, they have studied the Word of God incessantly for decades with integrity, fidelity, and with objectivity.

Based upon the subject before us, it appears that there are some who have been captivated by what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., described as being *“The Drum Major Instinct.”* By definition, this is an insatiable desire to be out front; a chronic desire to lead the parade; and a voracious appetite for personal importance.

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*Let it clearly be understood that this writer believes in the “efficacy” and “sufficiency” of the Scripture which is the inerrant Word of God.*

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*“The Drum Major Instinct”* is a cognitive narcissistic disorder which causes individuals to feel superior in their relationships and associations with others (Calligor, Levy, & Yeoman, 2015). It commonly results in a distorted self-appraisal and appeases one to arrogantly assume that their educational endowment has “ordained them” to be the first with supposedly “new exculpatory biblical interpretive evidence.”

The *Christian Courier* and the “Historical” Churches of Christ National Lectureship held among African Americans succinctly believe

in the “One Lord, one faith, and one baptism.” The *Christian Courier* and “Historical” Churches of Christ National Lectureship held among African Americans believe that the New Testament is the sole authority in “all matters” propitious to faith-based Christian worship precepts in the New Testament Church of Christ.

If first century commands and examples were intended only for those who lived during that generation, then by what guidelines do we propose in order to seek personal righteousness and/or worship as a New Testament body of believers?

Hardly anyone among us would suggest that we simply ignore specific biblical imperatives. But there are some today because of the “double-consciousness” malady who urge – particularly regarding apostolic example – that times have changed and therefore, what we do today should be more in tune and reflective in keeping with our present-day culture.

Have we ever stopped to consider why God caused holy men of old to record not just the life of Christ, but also the work and worship of the primitive Church? If the ultimate aim of apostolic instruction regarding the work and worship of the Church is to bring us back to God, then it becomes paramount that we follow the apostles’ authoritative lead in Christian worship practice.

Any act involving New Testament Christian (Continued on page 13)

**“One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism”**

(DOUBLE-CONSCIOUSNESS... Continued)

worship that contravenes, exceeds, or “goes beyond” the Word of God is transgression – it is going beyond the prescribed limit. The law which governs New Testament Christian worship is transgressed by any act of worship “not included in it.” The Bible says: “*Whoever transgresses, and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God*” (2 John 9 – NKJV).

*There are no “deficiencies” in the Scripture that need to be suffused with extra-biblical and anti-biblical doctrines or with a “pseudo theological eisegesis.”*

Because Scripture is given to us in the form of historical illustrations and divine imperatives, we are left with no alternative but to follow its direction in our quest to worship God. The method we use to interpret and apply Scripture did not *just* happen. It was not made up out of thin air.

*The New Testament contains all we need to know about how to worship God in the manner which He has prescribed.*

We must follow scriptural directives and precedents precisely because this is the will of God and all we have to go on. ✠

Calligor, E., Levy, K. N., & Yeomans, F. E. (2015). Narcissistic personality disorders: Diagnostic and clinical challenges. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 172(5), 415-422.

### The “Historical” National Lectureship Among African American Churches of Christ

**T**he Churches of Christ “Historical” National Lectureship is the oldest annual or biennial national event held among African Americans.

When the National Lectureship was established in 1945, the overall intended objectives were as follows:

- ◆ To synchronize and unify the speech of Ministers, teachers, and Church leaders.
- ◆ To enhance our spiritual fellowship in the areas of study and worship through the medium of joint participation.
- ◆ To offer sound doctrinal teaching against liberalism, digression, and apostasy.
- ◆ To encourage and strengthen the work of congregations in whose area the Lectureship would be held.

Although we have encountered a global pandemic which has interrupted our Lectureship gatherings for the past two years, the above stated intentions and aspirations have not changed.

Unlike other venues within our fellowship which have attempted to emulate and duplicate the National Lectureship with its programmatic structure, in addition to the onslaught of social media technology which has garnered the attention of many, the “Historical” National Lectureship will survive and abundantly thrive.

The National Lectureship has not stopped. It continues to move forward with exciting anticipation providing a vehicle of edification for every attendee.

In the recorded history of our world, pandemics, wars and other catastrophes have never halted the work of the Lord.

The heralded legacy of the “Historical” National Lectureship bequeathed to this generation by G. P. Bowser, R. N. Hogan, J. S. Winston, G. E. Steward, and Levi Kennedy, Jr., must never die. The untold sacrifices made by men such as G. P. Holt, Nokomis Yeldell, Clyde Muse, and Humphrey Foutz, must be crystallized and kept afresh.

The unabridged commitment to the “Historical” National Lectureship by stalwarts such as W. F. Washington, R. C. Wells, and Eugene Lawton, must be embedded in the minds of this contemporary millennial age and those who will follow.

*The challenges lying before us demand that we wait upon the Lord to renew our strength.*

Furthermore, in spite of the alternatives and other choices presented to our brotherhood, the “Historical” National Lectureship can and will maintain its fidelity as the centerpiece of our annual fellowship gatherings.

The challenges lying before us demand that we wait upon the Lord to renew our strength. Then shall we be equal to the task and then we shall not grow weary.

The prophetic pronouncement is accurate and the assertion is assuredly articulated:

*“Armed with the knowledge of our past, we can with confidence charter a course for our future.”*



**“One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism”**



## “Preserving Our Past is Necessary for Protecting Our Future”

The late Dr. Roosevelt C. Wells attempted to name each of the preachers below who attended the first “Historical” Annual National Lectureship in 1945. Our research has enabled us to identify twenty-two of the thirty-three men shown in this photograph. Can anyone today name the other individuals?



- Bottom Row L-R     John O. Williams, E. W. Anderson, Luke Miller, Levi Kennedy, Jr., Unknown, G. P. Bowser, G. E. Steward, Unknown, J. S. Winston, H. H. Gray, Jr., W. D. Booker
- Middle Row L-R     Alonzo Patterson, Unknown, Roscoe M. Moore, L. M. Jones, Unknown, Cathey C. Locke, LeRoy Durley, Unknown, E. Butler, R. F. Nunley
- Top Row L-R         R. N. Hogan, Preston Gray, Unknown, Elcue Wright, Paul S. Settles, Unknown, C. L. Caperton, Robert Butler, Unknown, Unknown, Unknown, Unknown

*“It is incumbent upon those of us today who are surrogates of their sacrifices, to acknowledge the toil, the tears, the long-suffering and labor which they invested in the African American Church of Christ. It is without question a legacy of undying dedication and unfaltering faith that we should never forget.”*



**“One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism”**

## “Don’t Burn the Bridge: Why Preserving Our History Matters”

### Evangelist Edward J. Robinson, Ph.D. – Contributing Journalist

In 1900, Will Allen Dromgoole (1860-1934) a Tennessee poetess, published a poem entitled: “*The Bridge Builder*.” The last stanza of the poem went as follows:

*“The builder lifted his old gray head;  
‘Good friend, in the path I have come,’  
he said. There followed after me today  
a youth whose feet must pass this way.*

*“This chasm that has been as naught  
to me, to that fair-haired youth may a  
pitfall be. He, too, must cross in the  
twilight dim; Good friend, I am  
building this bridge for him!”*

African American Churches of Christ are who they are and where they are today because of spiritual “bridge builders” that we have crossed. Of course, Jesus is the Ultimate Bridge Builder (Matthew 16:18). Yet, God has raised up spiritual bridge builders in the American context to assist us in our journey to heaven.

Such spiritual bridge builders in America include: Barton W. Stone (1772-1844), Thomas Campbell (1763-1854), Walter Scott (1796-1861), Alexander Campbell (1788-1866), David Lipscomb (1831-1917), Samuel W. Womack (1851-1920), a Black Alexander Campbell (1862-1930), among many others.

If we fail to learn, study, and preserve our history, we are essentially “burning the bridge” that brought us over. We face seven main pitfalls when we neglect our own rich and varied history.

First, there is the pitfall of misrepresentation. The traditional narrative of African American History proper

went something like this: “Black Americans were subjected to the whims and caprices of white people. Black people did virtually nothing to shape their own culture and destiny.”

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*We face seven main pitfalls  
when we neglect our own  
rich and varied history.*

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However, when scholars such as Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950), Benjamin Quarles (1904-1996), John Blassingame (1940-2000), John Hope Franklin (1915-2009), W. E. B. Dubois (1868-1963) and others, began examining pertinent sources of African American History, they discovered that Black people have always been movers and shakers of their own lives.

More than being recipients of white beneficence, history reveals that African Americans turned to God and themselves in an effort to uplift their people. On the one hand, white Church leaders through the *Gospel Advocate* influenced many African Americans in Churches of Christ throughout the nation.

On the other hand, African American Christians have done much to control their own congregations, to create their own liturgy, to disseminate their own papers, and to lead their own institutions (e.g., schools and Lectureships). If we don’t take care to learn, study, and preserve our own history, we subject ourselves to distortion and misrepresentation by historians

with racially tinted lenses.

Second, there is the pitfall of myopia, which means a lack of spiritual or intellectual insight. Many people in African American Churches of Christ know something about Marshall Keeble (1878-1968) and G. P. Bowser (1874-1950), but few understand the compelling stories of S. R. Cassius (1853-1931), F. F. Carson (1909-1987), Annie C. Tuggle (1890-1976), and others. In short, the story of African American Churches of Christ is much broader and more complex than the Keeble-Bowser dichotomy.

S. R. Cassius, an enslaved African from Virginia, converted to the Stone-Campbell Movement in the 1880s when Keeble and Bowser were adolescents. Cassius was a committed Evangelist and zealous educator who planted congregations in Oklahoma and California (e.g., the Compton Avenue Church of Christ in 1924) and launched a short-lived school in Logan County, Oklahoma.

But he was more than just a “preacher.” He fused theological tenets with social uplift, using the pulpit, pen, and podium to contest racial proscriptions in American society. In 1915, when the anti-black movie “Birth of a Nation” hit movie screens nationwide, Cassius referred to the theatrical production as “mind poisoning.”

In Cassius’s view, the movie intended to “poison the mind of Northern (Continued on page 16)

**“One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism”**

(DON'T BURN THE BRIDGE... Continued)

and Western white men against the Negro by picturing the Negro as a licentious brute that was roaming around seeking an opportunity to assault white women" (Robinson, 2019). He was the only known leader Black or white in Churches of Christ to assail such racism openly. S. R. Cassius was in a "class by himself."

Third, there is the pitfall of missing the stories of struggles Black Christians endured and the successes they enjoyed. R. N. Hogan (1902-1997) while preaching for the Figueroa Church of Christ in Southern California would drive 1,547 miles to Houston, Texas, to help build fledgling Black congregations. Ira Y. Rice, a white supporter of Hogan observed that the Black Evangelist often arrived to his preaching appointments in Texas "completely exhausted." Rice added that Hogan traveled by car and had "to keep right on going day and night without stopping but for gas and oil, all the way through" (Robinson, 2008).

During the dark age of Jim Crow, most hotel and motel establishments in America excluded Black patrons. Unfortunately, many post-Jim Crow children fail to realize the sacrifices our spiritual forbearers lived through for the cause of Christ.

Stories of African Americans in Churches of Christ comprise a unique corollary of struggles and successes. F. F. Carson (1909-1987) for example, emerged from a plantation in South Central Texas and became a prominent Black preacher in Northern California. After brief stints in Oklahoma, Texas, and Kansas, he and his family eventually made their way to Berkeley, California,

where they lived in a converted basement infested with rats.

Carson recalled that the rats were "so big and bold, it was all that we could do just to keep them at bay," adding that the rodents fur and droppings caused his wife, Wilma E. Lyons-Carson (1916-1985) to contract tuberculosis which confined her to a "sanitarium for many months" (Robinson, 2019). Do we fully understand what preachers, their wives, and children sacrificed to do the will of God?

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*He was the only known leader Black or white in Churches of Christ to assail such racism openly. S. R. Cassius was in a "class by himself."*

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Later in 1949, Carson and his family moved to Richmond, California, where he, by grace and grit transformed a small impoverished congregation into a thriving, prosperous body of believers. Indeed, the North Richmond Church grew so strong that it began supporting white missionaries (e.g., white preacher Myles Thomas Tune [1929-2013]) at a time when many Black preachers still relied on monetary support from white Christians.

In the early 1960s, Carson and Levi Kennedy, Jr., (1899-1970) traveled to Nigeria, West Africa, and baptized more than six hundred people. When asked how he was able to accomplish so much during his ministerial career, Carson answered: "It was a matter of faith."

Fourth, there is the pitfall of ignoring the invaluable contributions of women. Abigail Adams (1744-1818) wife of founding father John Adams, counseled him and other members of the Continental Congress to "remember the ladies."

Few people are aware that the peerless R. N. Hogan once left the Church and the preaching ministry in Detroit, Michigan, after he became despondent over the death of his infant daughter.

Hogan wrote: "I worked in the automobile factories for six years during which time I allowed Satan to discourage me, but my wife remained faithful which finally awakened my soul and brought me to repentance" (Robinson, 2008). Thank God for Maggie Bullock Hogan!

Indeed, some of the notable spiritual "bridge builders" in African American Churches of Christ have been devoted and committed women. These gracious "Sisters of the Struggle" include: Frances R. Bowser, Thelma Holt, Minnie Keeble, Maggie Hogan, Laura Keeble, Mizetta Winston, Ella Steward, Annie C. Tuggle, Alberta Noveline Kennedy, Mary Carpenter, Bethel Smith, Imogene Cole, Izetta Sams, Patricia Evans, Frances Harrison, along with many others.

Fifth, there is the pitfall of missing the substantive contributions to the Civil Rights Movement. Some have scornfully asked: "Where (Continued on page 17)



## (DON'T BURN THE BRIDGE... Continued)

were African American Churches of Christ during the Civil Rights Movement?" The answer is: "They were right in the middle of it." When you research the narratives of Mary Carr, Patricia Jenkins, Andrew Hairston, Franklin Florence, Sr., R. N. Hogan, Fred D. Gray, K. K. Mitchell, Carroll Pitts, Eugene Lawton, and R. C. Wells, one readily sees that Black members in Churches of Christ played a major role in toppling Jim Crow in America.

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*Do we fully understand what preachers, their wives, and children sacrificed to do the will of God?*

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Sixth, there is the pitfall of missing the unsung heroes in our local congregations. For example, several of our congregations have military veterans, men and women, who fought in every major modern war — World War II, the Vietnam War, the Korean War, Desert Storm, and the like. Few people know the story of Roosevelt Sams (1923-2003) who, after serving in World War II, returned to Texas and left an indelible mark as an educator and Evangelist in African American Churches of Christ.

Sams was part of what journalist Tom Brokaw has called "the greatest generation." African American men and women in Churches of Christ who served in the United States military toiled for a country that often denied them of their civil rights. If you have veterans in your congregations, please take time to record their stories and honor them. Give them their flowers while they yet live.

Seventh, there is the pitfall of repeating the mistakes of our spiritual foremothers and forefathers. Let us not allow minor issues such as hand-clapping distract us from the major issues of edifying the saved, teaching the lost, and helping the poor. Moreover, many pioneer preachers labored faithfully for the Lord for decades only to languish in poverty in their declining years.

African American Churches of Christ must offer better compensation packages to ensure that older preachers and their wives are taken care of and that younger Ministers will want to enter and stay in the preaching ministry.

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*Unfortunately, many post-Jim Crow children fail to realize the sacrifices our spiritual forbearers lived through for the cause of Christ.*

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Furthermore, many in our faith tradition have tended to elevate the Church above the Christ. We have made the mistake of putting the Church of Christ on a pedestal of perfection. The truth of the matter is that the Church is imperfect; Christ alone is perfect. The Church does not save; Christ alone saves, yet those whom Christ saves He adds to the Church (Acts 2:47).

African American Churches of Christ must not only preach the truth, but we must also live out the truth.

The late Dr. Jack Evans, Sr., (1932-2019) often counseled ministerial students to "Live the life and preach the Word" in that order.

I thank God for the Church of Christ. The Church of Christ is not a "perfect fellowship," but she is a "perfecting fellowship." I clearly understand that I am crossing a spiritual bridge that was built by the "blood, sweat, and tears" of faithful men and women of God. Don't burn the bridge that brought you over.

NOTE: This article has been submitted by Dr. Edward J. Robinson, preaching Minister for the North Tennesha Church of Christ in Tyler, Texas. It is dedicated to the honor and memory of:

Diane Lawton (1937-2018)  
Eugene Lawton (1937-2022)  
Woodie Morrison (1932-2021)  
Dorothy Wells (1935-2020)  
Roosevelt C. Wells (1937-2019)

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Robinson, E. J. (2019). *Hard-Fighting Soldiers: A History of African American Churches of Christ*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press.

EDWARD J. ROBINSON, Associate Professor of History and Religion at Texas College, has written seven books including the following publications:

*To Save My Race from Abuse: The Life of Samuel Robert Cassius.*

*A Godsend to His People: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Marshall Keeble.*

*I Was Under a Heavy Burden: The Life of Annie C. Tuggle.*

*Show Us How You Do It: Marshall Keeble and the Rise of Black Churches of Christ in the United States, 1914-1968.*

*To Lift Up My Race: The Essential Writings of Samuel Robert Cassius.*

**"One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism"**

## “Praising God in Vocal Song and a Consideration of Mechanical Instruments with Song for Worship in Churches of Christ”

**Dr. Jefferson R. Caruthers, Jr. – *Christian Courier* Staff Writer  
Carver Road Church of Christ – Winston-Salem, North Carolina**

In the early centuries, Churches of Christ worshipped, glorified, and praised God when they sang songs to God. These congregations sang without the accompaniment of mechanical instruments of music. Although there were no mechanical instruments of music, the believers were taught, admonished, encouraged and edified through their vocal psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

All was good. Singing glorified God, it pleased God and it satisfied God. Worship practices of the early believers continued to please God through the centuries. There was no indication that God required or asked for more than the believers' vocal expressions of worship in song.

### ***Protestant Justifications***

In more recent centuries from the 1700s forward among Protestant faith groups in North America after mechanical instruments of music were introduced, believers sought to justify through Scripture what they deemed to be an improvement for, and sometimes a necessary enhancement to, worship expression in song.

Among the arguments, there were lexicographical studies examining Greek words like *psallo* and *psalmos*, covenant studies on First Testament (Old Testament) worship that might inform New Testament worship, hermeneutical studies on how silence is permissive or non-permissive, providing freedoms when silence was permissive. The studies concluded time and again that there was no word authorization, no Old Testament authorization, and no hermeneutical authorization for the use of mechanical instruments of music in New Testament worship; it was simply not possible to find authorization along those lines.

The purpose of this writing is not to review those arguments again; they are well-documented and easily accessible to students interested in them. It will continue to be the practice of each generation to revisit these arguments to discover what others might have missed. The conclusions remain the same.

### ***New Considerations and Justifications: Attraction, Elders and Preachers and Decrees***

The present study acknowledges that there are new considerations and justifications given for the use of mechanical instruments of music in churches of Christ. Believers continue to acknowledge that at gatherings of saints throughout the first several centuries of the Church, singing *with* instruments of music would have been an odd and questionable sight. Today, the opposite is true. What is odd and questionable has changed.

Believers want to know why some faith fellowships do not have mechanical instruments of music. Let us not miss the profundity of this observation. In the first several centuries the oddity would be singing *with* mechanical instruments of music. In the last three centuries and a few decades, churches singing *without* instruments of music are thought to be odd, sometimes backwards, out of touch with society, and unaware of how to be attractive in today's world.

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*There was no indication that God required or asked for more than the believers' vocal expressions of worship in song.*

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The notion of attraction especially that based primarily on what the world might desire has become a primary consideration of many in recent years. We have seen the headlines and articles announcing that a group of elders has decided for their congregation that for the purpose of presenting attractive options for the community, the elders have instituted a mechanical instrument worship option during one of their services.

The assumption for some of their followers is that if the elders decreed it, it is permissible and we must believe it. After all, these are elders, men God set in the Church to rule and to oversee; or so the thinking and false teaching goes. The truth is however, that there is nothing authorizing elders to make a decree about what is acceptable (Continued on page 19)

**“One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism”**

(PRASING GOD IN VOCAL SONG... Continued)

before God. It is not true that “if they decree it, we must believe it.”

The same is true for any preacher who might want to relieve the uncomfortableness of practicing what is not clearly required when believers worship. As a preacher, I can come to conclusions for myself that relate to what I have studied and how I have studied. But the conclusions of my study must meet the criteria of Scripture for what I encourage God’s people to do.

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*The studies concluded time and again that there was no word authorization, no Old Testament authorization, and no hermeneutical authorization for the use of mechanical instruments of music in New Testament worship; it was simply not possible to find authorization along those lines.*

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I must be careful about adopting the permissions Paul enjoyed as an apostle to enjoin practices for the people of God (1 Corinthians 7:40). A preacher should not and cannot grant permissions that provide no way for believers to justify themselves by Scripture.

Believers must understand that neither elders nor preachers can give one a “sin pass” on the subject of whether mechanical instruments of music in worship are what God authorized the children of God to present to Him. What is to be judged is whether what one does is of faith or not. Understanding that even when there are clearly permissible allowances by God, those allowances can become sin when they are not of faith (Romans 14:23).

There is no evidence in the New Testament Scripture that mechanical instruments of music in worship are permissible or acceptable. Therefore, at all times what is wise to do is what God clearly authorizes and always seek the voice of God.

#### ***Seeking the Voice of God***

When the daughters of Zelophehad believed that they should inherit land, Moses had no answer for their request so he sought the voice of God (Numbers 27:1–7). When certain Levites of the days of Nehemiah could not trace their lineage for the priesthood, it was recommended that they wait for the voice of God, the

day when there would stand up a priest with Urim and Thummim (Nehemiah 7:65). When God’s Word was clear and Naaman thought there were better healing practices than the Jordan river, rivers like Abana and Pharpar, what prevailed was the voice of God and Naaman found himself dipping in the river Jordan seven times (2 Kings 5:11–15).

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*There is no evidence in the New Testament Scripture that mechanical instruments of music in worship are permissible or acceptable.*

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In the New Testament, when the writer of Hebrews acknowledged that there was no word in the writings of Moses that spoke of a priest coming from the tribe of Judah, the writer found the words of the Psalms, the voice of God, justifying another priest and priesthood after the order of Melchisedec (Hebrews 7:10–17). When the Church at Corinth had questions on living and worship, it communicated with Paul (1 Corinthians 7:1; 12:1; 16:1).

The question for our generation becomes: “Where is there a voice from God suggesting that God is worshipped better, that the Church is more presentable, that the Church will be more greatly appreciated, and that God is more significantly praised with mechanical instruments in New Testament worship?” Is it not the case that the mechanical instruments of music are more clearly desired because they are simply what pleases us, what we desire and what suits our tastes?

Is it not proven throughout Scripture history that people can be just fine doing what God has not encouraged? Let me encourage, please don’t put the practice on God. God has already demonstrated that He and His purposes are fully met without the pluck of a string, the beat of a drum, the sound of a trumpet, or the melody of keyboards. How do we know?

#### ***The Voice of God on Singing in Churches of Christ***

The Scripture provides profound certainty on the truth that God was completely pleased with worship that summoned the voice to give Him honor, glory, praise and worship in the Churches of Christ of the first century. The provinces of the first century included areas where the (Continued on page 20)



## (PRAISING GOD IN VOCAL SONG... Continued)

Apostle Peter, the Apostle John, the Apostle Paul, and James (the brother of the Lord) taught and influenced churches. In all of those provinces, the mission, purpose, and will of God were powerfully engaged and not once was there the need for mechanical instruments of music. In Jerusalem in Judea, there were no mechanical instruments of music among the believers and the people were praising God and having favor with all the people as God added to their number (Acts 2:47).

The Apostle Peter later wrote to people suffering as Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Peter 1:1; 4:16), where the people were a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, showing forth the praises of the God who called them out of darkness to light (1 Peter 2:9) and there were no mechanical instruments of music utilized by the saints. There was no indication that the saints believed they were less effective without them.

The Apostle Paul labored with Barnabas in Galatia during his first missionary journey. Barnabas and Saul traveled through Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. In Antioch, the Gentiles heard the word of the Lord and were glad; they also believed (Acts 13:48), and though they had no mechanical instruments of music for worship, they were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:52).

During the second missionary journey, it was Paul and Silas in Macedonia, particularly the cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. In the letters addressed to Philippi and Thessalonica, we read that in Philippi the believers were the true circumcision who worshipped God in the spirit, and rejoiced in Christ Jesus, with no confidence in the flesh (Philippians 3:3). But there were no mechanical instruments of music in their fellowship.

In Thessalonica the people had joy and the Holy Spirit. They turned from idols to serve the living God, but there were no mechanical instruments in worship (1 Thessalonians 1:6, 9). How was it possible that they completely served the living God without the accompaniment of mechanical instruments of music?

The third missionary journey involved Paul's work and influence in Asia Minor. There were the churches in Ephesus and Colossae to whom Paul wrote they

should sing with wisdom and as people filled with the Holy Spirit (Colossians 3:15, 16; Ephesians 5:18, 19). In none of the churches of those regions was there evidence that God was not fully served, worshipped, nor glorified because the people did not have mechanical instruments of music.

The New Testament is unanimous on the conclusion that singing before God was completely sufficient, honoring and glorifying of God. It edified the saints. Who needs more? Certainly not God. What has our inclusion of mechanical instruments of worship added to our desire to please God?

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*God has already demonstrated that He and His purposes are fully met without the pluck of a string, the beat of a drum, the sound of a trumpet, or the melody of keyboards.*

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Mechanical instruments of music are used solely for the purpose of pleasing the modern worshipper. That worshipper has no requirement from God. There is nothing about the personality of God that says that God desires it and there is no practice in Scripture of the first century (and several centuries beyond the first) where believers sought to be acceptable to society, to be evangelistic, to be more palatable to the world at large by using mechanical instruments in worship.

There is no eldership nor preacher who can change what is indelibly etched in the annals of time and Holy Spirit written on the pages of Scripture that can justify the use of mechanical instruments of music in New Testament worship. None can say that the use of mechanical instruments of music in New Testament worship is a matter of keeping the faith. It is not a matter of having a more acceptable Church. It does not make God happier. It has simply to do with our tastes and appetites which really are not criteria for determining how to please God; that is, if God factors into what we do at all. Moreover, it is great joy to know that it is possible to give God what completely pleases Him.

***Give God What Pleases God***

Why not give God what He loves and what pleases Him rather than what pleases our fleshly appetite for enhancement of sound (Continued on page 21)

(PRAISING GOD IN VOCAL SONG... Continued)

appropriate for places other than worship before God? With instruments of music, love your teen music, love your graduation music, love your marriage music, and love your intimacy music. However, in New Testament worship give God what He has demonstrated He loves and what He has shown is completely enough to give Him all the glory, honor, and praise He seeks and deserves. But do not put our desire for instrumental music in worship on God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), nor God the Holy Spirit. Singing with a pure heart before God and others accomplishes all that God asks. All is enough. All is sufficient. All needs no more.

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*The New Testament is unanimous on the conclusion that singing before God was completely sufficient, honoring and glorifying of God. It edified the saints. Who needs more? Certainly not God.*

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In this generation as in all generations preceding this generation, there must be a decision made to honor God through what He reveals. The children of God are admonished to never be satisfied with the deceptive genius nor carnal desires of men who have less that complete obedience to what is revealed at heart.

Elders and preachers are not encouraging the use of mechanical instruments of music in New Testament worship because there is new understanding. What is evident is the same old carnal desires to have our way over the will of God.

#### **Summary**

Mechanical instruments of music are not a part of New Testament worship in Scripture. Its usage is not inspired nor authorized by any New Testament writer. The attraction to Jesus and His Church is not determined by using mechanical instruments of music in New Testament worship. Neither elders nor preachers can give a decree to sanction the use of mechanical instruments of music in New Testament worship. The Word of God must give voice to our worship practices. Give God what God loves, what pleases Him and what completely, fully, and obediently honors and glorifies Him. Sing to His glory! ✝

## **“Preparing to Preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ”**

**Dr. Robert M. Woods – Chicago, Illinois**

Preaching the gospel is both important and difficult. The great appointed means of spreading the tidings of salvation through Christ is preaching to an individual or to an assembly. Therefore, it follows that preaching must always be a necessity and Bible-centered “good preaching” is a mighty power.

In every age of Christianity since John the Baptist drew crowds into the desert; there has been no great religious movement, no restoration of scriptural truth, and no reanimation of genuine piety, without the power of preaching both as its cause and effect.

It has been said that there are at least five essential imperatives to effective preaching. They are namely: piety, natural gifts, knowledge, skill, and prayer. For the purpose of this brief presentation, we will enlarge upon “prayer” and its importance.

Prayer is undoubtedly a vital part of the daily life of the man who decides to preach. The outstanding examples of preachers in the Bible are men who talked as well as those who walked with God. There is very little in a preacher’s work that he can do alone. As a result, he must pray constantly.

An interested brother representing a congregation went to the suggested source and asked for a preacher. “How big of a man do you want?” replied the man in charge. “I do not care so much about his size” said the brother. “But I want him to be tall enough to reach heaven when he is on his knees.”

When preparing to preach, the preacher must study his Bible well and live a life that his prayers may not be hindered.

Sermon excerpt delivered by the late Dr. Robert M. Woods at the 21st Annual National Lectureship in Kansas City, Missouri, 1965.



Dr. Robert M. Woods  
1930-2017

**“One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism”**





*The W. F. Washington Theological Institute  
Ministers' Institute Conference USA  
Extends Words of Consolation and Comfort*

To the Family of the Late Evangelist Dr. Kenneth E. Fleming, Sr.  
Minister/Elder of the Newburg Church of Christ – Louisville, KY  
September 15, 2022

Dr. Harvey M. Jackson, Mound Bayou, MS  
National Coordinator  
Regional Coordinators  
Dr. Steven N. Thompson, Milwaukee, WI

Dr. David C. Penn, Chicago, IL  
Minister Leroy Butler, Valdosta, GA  
Dr. Orpheus J. Heyward, Atlanta, GA  
Minister DonBurnell Holly, Memphis, TN  
Minister Samuel Pounds, Winter Haven, FL



Dr. Luis R. Lugo, Tampa, FL  
Dr. Shelton T. W. Gibbs III, Dallas, TX  
Dr. Olu J. Shabazz, Harlem, NY  
Dr. Jeff Caruthers, Winston-Salem, NC

*W. F. Washington, Ph.D. – Institute Founder/President*



## The Churches of Christ “Historical” National Lectureship Salutes Fred D. Gray Having Received the Presidential Medal of Freedom

On Thursday, July 7, 2022, President Joe Biden awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom which is nation’s highest civilian honor to attorney Fred D. Gray, the courageous lawyer of Montgomery, Alabama, who skillfully represented Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, and dozens of Montgomery residents arrested for participating in the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott Movement.

President Biden said at the Presidential Medal of Freedom ceremony: “When Dr. King, Rosa Parks, Claudette Colvin, John Lewis, and other giants of our history needed a lawyer for their fight for freedom, you know who they called? They called a guy named Fred Gray...”

Mr. Gray’s work in the *Browder v. Gayle* case resulted in the Supreme Court ordering Alabama to abolish segregation on public buses. He later represented Black students who were denied admission to Alabama universities due to their race and secured a settlement for victims of the “Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment.”

President Biden continued by saying: “One of the most important Civil Rights lawyers in our history, Fred’s legal brilliance and strategy desegregated schools and secured the right to vote. He went on to become one of the first African Americans elected to the Alabama State Legislature since Reconstruction. An ordained minister, he imbued a righteous calling that touched the soul of our nation.” Biden added that at 91, Mr. Gray is still practicing law. “He’s still keeping the faith in the best of America.”

Representative Terri Sewell nominated Mr. Gray, a native of Alabama’s 7th Congressional District, for the Medal of Freedom. Ms. Sewell said in a statement: “From the very beginning, I’ve known that there is no one more deserving of our nation’s highest civilian honor than Attorney Gray whose trailblazing work helped end segregation and advance a more equitable future. Attorney Gray is one of the most consequential Civil Rights lawyers of our time, having represented Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., John Lewis, and the Foot Soldiers.”

Attorney Gray thanked President Biden along with Representative Sewell and those that sent letters of support to the President. Gray said: “I humbly accept this award on behalf of those who during the past 67 years trusted me to handle their legal cases. It means a great deal to me as an African American Civil Rights lawyer who was born in the ghettos of Montgomery, Alabama.”

Mr. Gray was educated at the Nashville Christian Institute during the presidency of Marshall Keeble, in addition to Alabama State University and Case Western Reserve University. He along with Hassen Reed, Robert M. Woods, and Robert McBride, became four of Keeble’s “Boy Preachers” in the Church of Christ traveling with Keeble across the country. Gray is also an elder of the Tuskegee Church of Christ.

Fred David Gray was born December 14, 1930, in Montgomery, Alabama. He grew up on a street named after Confederate President Jefferson Davis. At the age of 12 he moved to Nashville, Tennessee, to attend Nashville Christian Institute; an African American boarding school operated by the Church of Christ.

Despite a state law enacted in 2017 to protect Confederate monuments, Montgomery city leaders voted unanimously to rename the street in his honor. Attorney Gray said at the unveiling of “Fred D. Gray Avenue” last October, “The struggle for equal justice has not ended. We are still living in a society that has two basic problems: racism and inequality. They are still there. We still have a responsibility. Don’t wait on somebody to tell you what to do. Get out and help solve these problems.”



Keeble’s “Boy Preachers” – Gray and President Biden

**“One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism”**

## New Appointment to the National Lectureship Executive Committee

Congratulations are given to Wesley T. Leonard for having been appointed to the Churches of Christ “Historical” National Lectureship Executive Committee. We are grateful and most appreciative of his willingness to serve in this noteworthy capacity as it pertains to the National Lectureship.

Wesley T. Leonard was born in Tallahassee, Florida, and he has been preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ since 1985. Minister Leonard currently serves as Senior Minister of the Southside Church of Christ in Orlando, Florida. Several of his many outstanding achievements include the following:

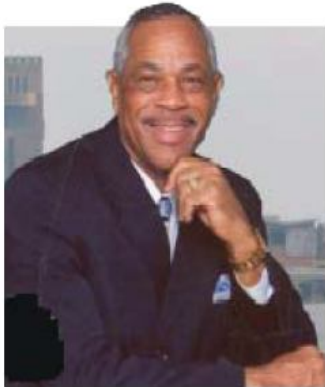
- Bachelor of Arts in Family Christian Counseling from Colorado Theological Seminary.
- Professional Clinical Member of the National Christian Counselors Association (NCCA).
- Conducted numerous gospel meetings across the globe.
- Frequent speaker on the “Historical” Annual National Lectureship and Ministers’ Institute Conference, USA.
- Author of two books:  
*“Unmasking the Satanic Attack Against Masculinity: What Both Women and Men Need to Know.”*  
*“Bad Girls Are in the Church Too.”*



**Wesley T. Leonard**  
Southside Church of Christ  
Orlando, FL

The commitment of Wesley T. Leonard in the areas of public speaking and community service provide a solid foundation on which he steadfastly stands as a Minister and counselor in the Lord’s Church.

## Condolences Are Given to the Late Dr. Kenneth E. Fleming, Sr., and Family



**Dr. Kenneth E. Fleming, Sr.**  
Newburg Church of Christ  
Louisville, KY  
1945=2022

Dr. Kenneth E. Fleming, Sr., was a native of Nashville, Tennessee. He served as an elder for the Newburg Church of Christ in Louisville, Kentucky, and for eighteen years he led the Newburg congregation as Senior Minister before his retirement in 2019. Dr. Fleming was baptized 1970 and preached the gospel for fifty years. He was married to his wife Ann since 1966 and they have two sons; his oldest son Kenneth Jr., is also a gospel preacher. A few of his many outstanding achievements include the following:

- Bachelor of Arts in Biblical Studies from David Lipscomb University and David Lipscomb School of Preaching.
- Minister of the West Broadway Church of Christ in Louisville, Kentucky.
- Minister of the Bird Street Church of Christ in Shelbyville, Tennessee.
- Board of Directors of Habitat for Humanity.
- Chaplain for the Louisville, Kentucky, Police Department.
- Board of Directors for the Bedford County Senior Citizens Home.
- Founder/CEO of the Community Outreach Program/COP.
- Doctor of Divinity from Simmons College of Louisville, Kentucky.
- Vietnam War Veteran.

After an extended illness, Dr. Kenneth E. Fleming, Sr., passed away on the evening of September 7, 2022.

**“One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism”**

## “Is Interdenominational Fellowship Involving Members of the New Testament Church of Christ Acceptable According to the New Testament Scripture?”

**Evangelist Eddie M. Taylor, Ph.D. – Church of Christ – Chandler, Arizona**

**T**he question above is indeed worthy of great consideration. Many Church leaders today have begun to engage in interdenominational fellowship by sharing pulpits, inviting leaders from different religious groups to instruct religious classes and having joint participation in traditional religious events. It will be the intent of this writer to provide a response to the interrogative before us.

It is important to understand what the question is asking by first observing two words and then looking at several passages of Scripture in the New Testament. The first word we will underscore is “fellowship.”

The term “fellowship” can be defined from a multitude of perspectives. It can mean a group of people or an organization with the same purpose; money for teaching or study given to a student studying for an advanced degree or position at a university; people with the same purpose, experience, or interest. It can be interpreted as “*koinonia*” such as partnership; contributory help; participation; sharing in common; communion; financial assistance; being a partaker; to share in company with; and etc.

Ecumenically, “fellowship” unites others in doctrine and discipline. It is dependent upon each party of the relationship completely supporting the other. The foundation of New Testament “fellowship” is the oneness or unity of those who believe in Christ

based upon the inspired words of the apostles as documented within the New Testament (John 17:20). Scriptural “fellowship” will result in the strengthening of individual faith during spiritual conflict and personal weakness (Galatians 6:1, 2).

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*The term “fellowship” can be defined from a multitude of perspectives.*

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When Bible-based “fellowship” is enjoined, it means that those who are participating in the “fellowship” must partner, agree, participate in, be in association with, provide contributory help, exist with the same purpose, and share in that which those within the fellowship adhere to. If not, then it is not a “fellowship.” If yes, then it is a “fellowship.”

The next term is “interdenominational.” Theologically speaking, this term involves a myriad of religious denominations and/or members of different groups within a faith-based community. The word “denomination” in the context of religion often embodies different doctrinal beliefs and values that are in opposition to one another.

For example, some religious denominations engage in ordaining women as pastors/bishops giving them oversight of their local Church. Other religious denominations emb-

race their own specific creeds and requirements for “fellowship” which are contrary to the inerrant Word of God.

Notwithstanding, some religious denominations advocate that if a person desires to receive Christ as their personal Savior, all they need to do is express faith in Christ by offering a simple prayer acknowledging their sinfulness and accepting His forgiveness for their salvation.

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*The foundation of New Testament “fellowship” is the oneness or unity of those who believe in Christ based upon the inspired words of the apostles as documented within the New Testament (John 17:20).*

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Furthermore, there are religious organizations and denominations who adamantly teach that baptism (immersion in water) is not essential or a prerequisite for salvation.

Interdenominational “fellowship” requires the adherence or cooperation of the doctrine, belief, and tenets of the denomination wherein the fellowship is granted. However, the New Testament Church must stand for the truth of the New Testament. “*Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our* (Continued on page 26)

**“One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism”**



## (INTERDENOMINATIONAL FELLOWSHIP... Continued)

*common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints*" (Jude 3).

Any presupposed faith that avoids theological arguments in respect to Christianity's distinctive salvific doctrine is not the faith of the New Testament.

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*Interdenominational "fellowship" requires the adherence or cooperation of the doctrine, belief, and tenets of the denomination wherein the fellowship is granted.*

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So again, "Is Interdenominational Fellowship Involving Members of the New Testament Church of Christ Acceptable According to the New Testament Scripture?" *"And when Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision"* (Galatians 2:9).

It should be clearly noted that "fellowship" based upon a New Testament analysis and construct is a unique experience. *"You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons"* (1 Corinthians 10:20, 21). *"Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?"* (1 Corinthians 10:22).

There are denominations whose doctrines, beliefs, and practices are based upon their own tradition. Our Lord Himself says that their worship is man-made and vain. Any attempt to theoretically "fellowship" with religi-

ous denominations that have developed their own plan of salvation and whose doctrines are not congruent with New Testament teaching would be to partake, agree, adhere, support and share with them.

*"Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do... Making the word of God of non effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye"* (Mark 7:7, 8, 13).

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*It should be clearly noted that "fellowship" based upon a New Testament analysis and construct is a unique experience.*

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*"Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?"* (2 Corinthians 6:14, 15).

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*Any presupposed faith that avoids theological arguments in respect to Christianity's distinctive salvific doctrine is not the faith of the New Testament.*

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*"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers"* (Acts 2:42). They were devoted to

"fellowship." It was not something taken lightly or without deep concern. *"We declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ"* (1 John 1:3).

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*Furthermore, there are religious organizations and denominations who adamantly teach that baptism (immersion in water) is not essential or a prerequisite for salvation.*

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The apostle declared what was seen and heard so that they would have "fellowship" with them. That "fellowship" was based upon what was declared, to establish the same belief, faith and hope.

New Testament Christianity and the Church of Christ must find guidance and direction through the Word of God, the Truth (John 17:17; Ephesians 6:17).

It is important that we have and maintain "fellowship" within our faith, belief system, revealed doctrine, and the Church of Christ.

Mutated "fellowship" outside of the New Testament leads to confusion, misinformation, misguidance, and being mislead. ✝

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