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ANNIVERSARY

# From Tragedy To Triumph

Exploring Man's Fall And God's Call To Redemption

Special Biographical Insert of Gospel Preachers  
Past and Present in the African American Church of Christ  
St. Louis, Missouri • April 21-25, 2019

# Best Wishes to the 2019 Churches of Christ National Lectureship



Dr. and Mrs.  
W. F. Washington, Sr.  
*Minister and First Lady*



*A Going Church  
For Our  
Coming Lord!*

2051 NW 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue  
Lauderdale Lakes, FL 33311  
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## WEEKLY SERVICES

### *Sunday*

Sunday School.....9:00 AM  
AM Worship.....10:00 AM  
Bible Study.....4:00 PM  
PM Worship.....5:00 PM

### *Wednesday*

Bible Study.....6:30 PM

## MEDIA MINISTRY

### Radio

#### **WEXY, 1520-AM**

12:30PM  
Sunday—Wednesday,  
Friday  
6:00PM, Saturday

#### **WMBM, 1490-AM**

7:30AM  
1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays  
8:30AM  
2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays

#### **WSWN, 900-AM**

9:00AM  
Monday—Friday

### Television

#### **The Word Network**

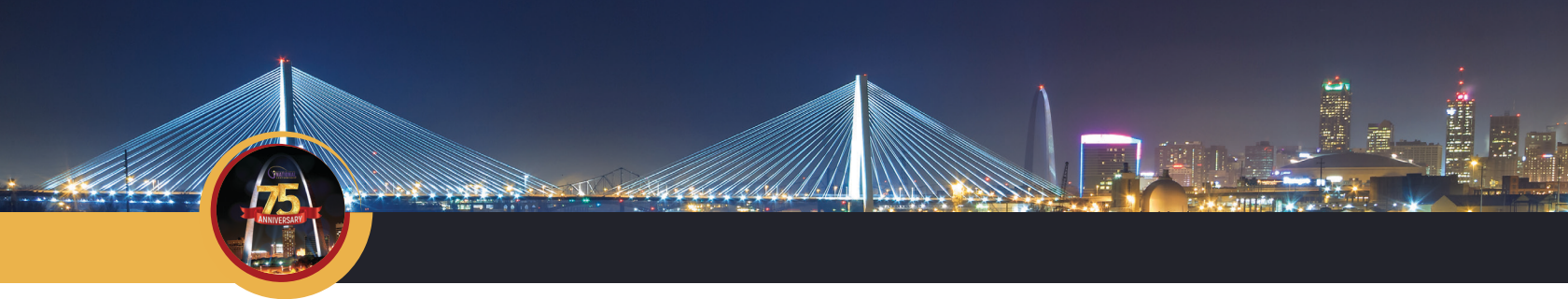
7:00AM  
Saturdays

Services streamed on You Tube at:  
*The New Golden Heights Church of Christ*

## OUR CHRISTIAN PURPOSE

We are a congregation striving to glorify God and His Son, Jesus Christ, in the fulfillment of His mission on earth, and continuing steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer, awaiting the second coming and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.





# Remembering Those Who Walked Before Us

## Legends Of The Past In the African American Church of Christ

George Philip Bowser  
(1874-1950)  
Founder of  
"The Christian Echo"  
Detroit, Michigan



Born in Maury County, Tennessee. G. P. Bowser was born on February 17, 1874. He was the son of Thomas and Charity Bowser and grandson of Frank Sowell; a highly respected pioneer preacher of the Maury County community. It was Frank Sowell who solemnized the marriage rites between Nathan George, the great-grandfather of Levi Kennedy, Jr., and his second wife Annie Wayneright on January 1, 1891. When Bowser was just three years old his family relocated to Nashville, Tennessee, where he received his formal education in the Methodist

tradition. He joined the Methodist Church at the age of fifteen and was licensed to exhort or make talks at the age of eighteen. He studied diligently at Walden University mastering five languages: Greek, Hebrew, French, German, and Latin. Bowser once stated that upon careful examination of the scriptures, he soon realized that he was not a Christian. In the process of time he met and studied with Samuel Davis, another pioneer preacher and former slave of the Nashville area. It was Davis who enlightened him further concerning New Testament doctrine and who baptized him into the body of Christ in the year 1896.

G. P. Bowser married Francis (Fannie) Rebecca Billups in November of 1896. Seven girls and one boy were born to this union; one of whom was Thelma Holt, mother of G. P. Holt. Although he was already a great preacher whose literary and language skills exceeded his contemporaries, Bowser turned his attention towards two great needs among African American Christians: 1) a Christian journal and 2) a school for Black members of the Church of Christ. With the knowledge he had previously acquired as a printer, at twenty-eight years of age Bowser established *The Christian Echo* in 1902, of which he served as editor and publisher. The *Christian Echo* arguably holds the unique distinction of being the first widely circulated religious periodical published among African American churches of Christ.

Few Blacks at the turn of the century gave serious attention to attending school with the whites, but as G. P. Bowser pointed out, Blacks looked with awe on white Christian schools and were ashamed to realize that nothing had been done for them. In October 1906, a meeting was called in Nashville to consider the issue. It was then decided to begin a school at the Jackson Street Church of Christ. This school was to become known as the "Nashville Normal, Industrial and Orphan School." As events developed, the school opened January 8, 1907, with seventeen students. While using the Bible as a textbook, the school sought to meet all the requirements of a "Normal" institution. By mid-October 1909, the Jackson Street school was moved to Silver Point, Tennessee, seventy-five miles east of Nashville on the Tennessee Central Railroad. Bowser later said, "Beginning with nothing save determination, we bargained for about ten acres of ground," which they obtained for \$250.00 and on this land they erected a two-story frame building. G. P. Bowser and Miss P. H. Womack, another daughter of S. W. Womack, were the teachers. Bowser also served as the school's president. From the nine students who enrolled the first term at the Silver Point Christian Institute, the school grew to sixty-three by 1915, and reported its most prosperous year as 1913. Bowser gave himself unselfishly to the institution until the commencement exercises April 11, 1918, when he resigned as president; much to the dismay and surprise of many friends. By the year 1920 according to many, the school was in a serious financial dilemma and had no alternative but to close.

The Bowsers later relocated to Fort Smith, Arkansas, where he continued his evangelistic work and publishing of the *Christian Echo*. In 1938, Bowser opened the Bowser Christian Institute, forerunner of Southwestern Christian College now located in Terrell, Texas, where the students earned their board by working in the print shop where the *Echo* was produced as a bi-monthly journal. The subscription rate was \$1.00 per year or \$.50 for six months. The co-editors were R. N. Hogan and G. P. Holt. The staff writers were Levi Kennedy, Jr., J. S. Winston, G. E. Steward, R. F. Nunley, T. H. Busby, Annie C. Tuggle, and E. D. Phillips. Among the students who attended the Bowser Christian Institute were G. P. Holt, a grandson of Bowser, Preston Grey, L. H. Alexander, James Stewart, Samuel Melton, H. E. Mitchell, and Lemmie Cooper. Also associated with the Bowser Christian Institute were four men who became national preachers in the African American Church of Christ; these men were Levi Kennedy, Jr., R. N. Hogan, J. S. Winston, and G. E. Steward.

After the closing of the Fort Smith school, Bowser moved to Detroit, Michigan. It was in Detroit, where his wife Sister Fannie R. Bowser passed away on June 6, 1947. However, Bowser's dream of establishing a permanent school for Black Christians continued and during the fall of 1948, a school began operating at the Lake Como Church of Christ. This school was named the Southern Bible Institute with J. S. Winston as its first president. Due to its overall success, a search was made for larger facilities. The Texas Military School in Terrell, Texas, was then purchased but it could not officially open as Southwestern Christian College until September of 1950. Although G. P. Bowser never witnessed Southwestern in operation as a Christian College, he was able to visit the campus before his death on March 23, 1950. G. P. Bowser has rightfully been acknowledged as the "Father of Christian Education" among Black churches of Christ.



# Remembering Those Who Walked Before Us

## Legends Of The Past In the African American Church of Christ

**Marshall Keeble**  
(1878-1968)  
Nashville Christian Institute  
Nashville, Tennessee



Born in Rutherford County, Tennessee. Marshall Keeble was baptized into the body of Christ in the year 1895 under the preaching influence of Preston Taylor. When he was four years of age, his parents Robert and Mittie Keeble moved to Nashville, Tennessee. One of the major influences on the life of young Keeble was S. W. Womack, a pioneer preacher and teacher who along with G. P. Bowser, Alexander Campbell and others, laid the foundation for a Christian school among African Americans. The Womacks were members of the Lea Avenue

congregation in Nashville, and next door neighbors to the Keebles. At the age of nineteen, Keeble was united in wedlock with Minnie Womack a graduate of Fisk University and one of the daughters of S. W., and Sally Womack. To this union three children were born. With the literary training of his Christian wife and the spiritual training of his father-in-law, Marshall Keeble became one of the greatest preachers of the gospel since the days of the Apostles.

The very first meeting held by Keeble which resulted in a large number of baptisms occurred in Henderson, Tennessee. Sixty-nine precious souls obeyed the gospel of Christ on this occasion. In 1927, during a meeting in Tampa, Florida, he baptized ninety-nine. At Valdosta, Georgia, in both 1929 and 1930, he baptized one hundred-sixty three in the first gospel meeting and one hundred sixty-six in the second. Although Keeble was praised for his simplicity of preaching, he was often criticized for his passivity on racial issues. One of his secrets for success was his unique ability to obtain financial support from the white brethren. Many have often compared his personal ideology to that of Booker T. Washington and the ideology of G. P. Bowser to that of W. E. B. DuBois, regarding their diverse philosophies towards the educating African Americans. Keeble once acknowledged that Booker T. Washington was his idol and frequently employed Washington's strategy to raise funds from many whites for the benefit of Nashville Christian Institute.

On December 11, 1932 Sister Minnie Womack Keeble passed away at the age of fifty-three. After her death Keeble then married Laura Catherine Johnson of Corinth, Mississippi, on April 3, 1934. Laura Catherine was the sixth child of ten siblings born to Luke and Susan Johnson on August 6, 1898. At the time she married Marshall, Sister Keeble was employed by a widow who tried to encourage her against getting married. When she made the decision to marry Keeble regardless, her employer then insisted on buying her wedding outfit. However, when the day of the wedding arrived, Keeble was nowhere to be found. In a statement later given by Sister Keeble she said, "I didn't know if he decided to come or what." An hour or two after the ceremony was supposed to have begun a friend finally drove him up in a brand new Chevrolet. The car dealer had warned them not to drive over thirty miles per hour until the car was broken in; and that's exactly what they did all the way from Nashville, Tennessee, to Corinth, Mississippi.

In the year 1943, a new chapter opened in the life of Marshall Keeble when he became the first official president of Nashville Christian Institute. Being president of NCI elevated Keeble's influence among African American Christians and it also gave the school credibility among Blacks as well as whites. Without Keeble's name and his ability to raise funds for the school, Nashville Christian Institute would not have survived as long as it did. During his NCI days, wherever Keeble went, he always took his "preacher boys" with him to participate in the services that were well attended by both races in an era of rigid segregation. Many preachers in our brotherhood today were once students of Keeble at Nashville Christian Institute.

Although the formal education of Marshall Keeble was limited, he is credited with baptizing more than 45,000 people and establishing over 200 congregations. No other person in the history of the Restoration Movement has been known to accomplish this feat. He knew how to make incisive points by using simple illustrations from everyday life. In a ministry that spanned over fifty years, he often preached three times on Sunday and each night during the course of a week. He made highly successful preaching trips to Nigeria, West Africa, and was involved in numerous debates where he always defended the Word of God. In several of his debates, he was able to baptize his opponent before the debate was over. Because of his convictions, Keeble's life was threatened on various occasions and threats of bodily harm were made against him.

Having become very weak in the last years of his life due to age and diabetes, Keeble would still get up and dress every morning and patiently wait for his assistant Willie Cato to come and pick him up for work. Because of his failing health and new federal legislation which allowed Blacks to attend white institutions of learning, Keeble announced in the March edition of the *Gospel Advocate* that Nashville Christian Institute would permanently close its doors on June 2, 1967. Finally, one April evening in 1968, the 89 year old Marshall Keeble took a bath, came out and sat down on the couch, nodded his head for the last time and died. Yet, the legacy of Marshall Keeble still lives on in the lives of many whom he touched. There will not be another like him soon, who was blessed to achieve so much with so very little to work with.





# Remembering Those Who Walked Before Us

## Legends Of The Past In the African American Church of Christ

Dr. Richard Nathaniel Hogan  
(1902-1997)  
Figueroa Church of Christ  
Los Angeles, California



Born in Monroe County, Arkansas. Dr. Richard Nathaniel Hogan was the fourth child of Willie and Emma Cathey Hogan. He was born on Sunday morning, November 30, 1902 and named "Nathaniel" in honor of his maternal grandfather Nathan Cathey. After growing up, he later gave himself the name "Richard." His father died when he was five years old and he went to live with his grandparents Nathan and Frances Cathey. They in turn sent Nathan to live with G. P. Bowser who recognized his keen ability and potential greatness

for the ministry. Bowser trained and developed Hogan's gifts for preaching by having him memorize whole chapters in the Bible. At the age of either 13 or 14, Hogan preached his first sermon while attending Bowser's school in Silver Point, Tennessee. His subject was entitled, "What Think Ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" Before long, he gained the reputation as being "The Boy Preacher" as he traveled with Bowser and was frequently referred to as "The Child Evangelist." By the time Hogan was 17, he had already baptized 70 people.

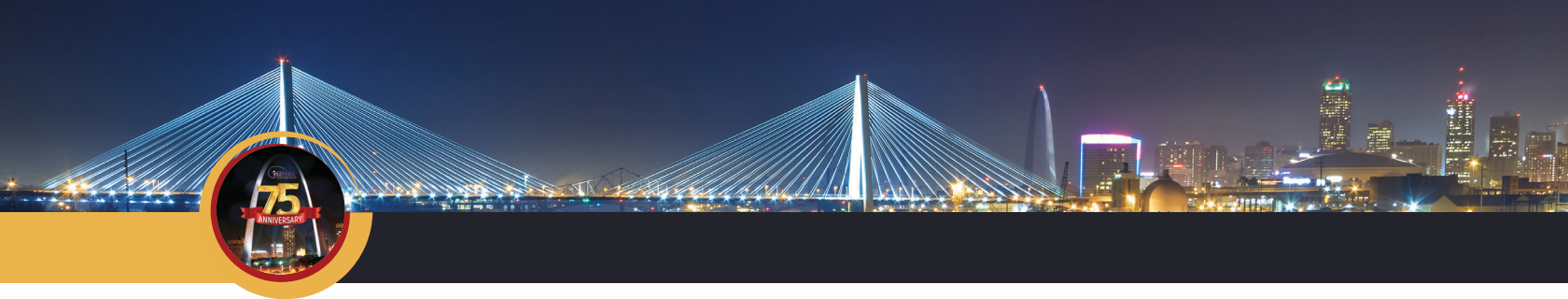
R. N. Hogan married Maggie Bullock of Columbia, Tennessee, on November 28, 1920. Maggie Bullock was a cousin of Annie Mae Bullock, a.k.a. Tina Turner. To this union three daughters and one son were born; namely, Alberta, Harold, Dorothy, and Margaret who died at an early age. The Hogan family lived in Tennessee, Arkansas, Kentucky, Detroit, and Chicago, during the formative years. While in Detroit, Hogan worked as a plumber, factory worker, and foreman of a paint company. Along with Levi Kennedy, Jr., a distant cousin on the Cathey side of their respective families, R. N. Hogan helped to evangelize the South Side of Chicago and establish the first African-American Church of Christ in 1931. His first full-time ministerial work began in 1932 at Muskogee, Oklahoma where he organized a school for preachers. Among the students were Russell H. Moore, H. H. Gray, J. S. Winston, Walter Weathers, P. E. Walker, Claude Caperton, and Jessie Porter. In a six-year period during the 1930s, Hogan started 50 new congregations and baptized more than 1,500 people.

Dr. R. N. Hogan and George Pepperdine (founder of Pepperdine University) had much in common. They both came to California in 1938 with a mighty vision. Pepperdine wanted to build a college for the Church of Christ and Hogan wanted to establish congregations all over the state of California. God was with them both in their visions and today we see the visible results of these great men who were also good friends in the Lord.

In the year 1937, Dr. Hogan conducted a gospel meeting at 110th & Wilmington Streets. The results were 44 baptisms. In 1938, he returned again to Los Angeles for a gospel meeting which resulted in another 40 baptisms and the beginning of a new congregation at 48th Place and Compton Avenue. He became Minister of this congregation which eventually became known as the Figueroa Church of Christ. With the leadership and dynamic preaching of Hogan, the new congregation grew rapidly. While preaching, Hogan quoted the scriptures prolifically and was widely known as "The Talking Bible." In the year 1945, the Church moved from Compton Avenue to 4361 McKinley Avenue, a more commodious building. In 1953 when the McKinley Avenue facilities were no longer adequate, the present Figueroa church building was purchased. In the year 1966, another expansion program was initiated which included a new auditorium seating 1500 along with 15 classrooms.

Under Hogan's leadership, the Figueroa Church of Christ became instrumental in developing several congregations in the area; namely, Myrtle Street in Long Beach; Southside in Los Angeles; Normandie Avenue in Los Angeles; Alondra Avenue in Compton; and Eastside in Los Angeles. R. N. Hogan was also active in fostering other programs, such as the setting up of a Nigerian Foundation for the education of youth in Nigeria, West Africa, unlimited support for Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas, and the Los Angeles School of Preaching.

In 1975 Pepperdine University conferred upon Richard Nathaniel Hogan the honorary Doctor of Humane Letters and in 1980 the University honored him at the 37th Annual Bible Lectureship by establishing a ministerial scholarship in his name. In 1987 he was given the University's highest recognition the "Life Achievement Award" on the opening night of the 44th Annual Bible Lectureship, celebrating Pepperdine's 50th year. R. N. Hogan served as a member of the Board of Directors for Southwestern Christian College from its inception until his death. Before the death of G. P. Bowser on March 23, 1950, Hogan promised him that he would keep the *Christian Echo* in circulation, which Bowser founded in 1902. He kept this promise many times at great sacrifice. For more than fifty years, R. N. Hogan worked tirelessly over the entire brotherhood for the cause of Christ. He along with his wife Maggie blazed a trail of leadership and development for the Lord's Church in California, especially at the Figueroa Church of Christ. Because of his great work on behalf of the Lord's kingdom and the furtherance of Christian education, an honorary doctorate degree was conferred upon Evangelist Richard Nathaniel Hogan by Southwestern Christian College. Dr. R. N. Hogan departed this life on February 22, 1997. His wife, Sister Maggie Hogan preceded him in death on September 29, 1996.



# Remembering Those Who Walked Before Us

## Legends Of The Past In the African American Church of Christ

**Dr. Levi Kennedy**

(1899-1970)

Michigan Avenue Church of Christ  
Chicago, Illinois



Born in Hickman County, Tennessee, Levi Kennedy, Jr., was baptized into the body of Christ on September 10, 1921, under the preaching influence of Alonzo Jones. He was the fifth child and third oldest son born to Levi, Sr., and Sarah Alice Anderson Kennedy on December 29, 1899. Levi Kennedy, Jr., was named after his great-grandfather Levi Cathey and his father Levi Albert Kennedy, Sr., a former slave and pioneer gospel preacher. Similar to his father and first cousins Levi [Lee Ghant] Kennedy and Paul D. English, Sr.,

in addition to his maternal uncle D. M. English, Levi, Jr., became one of the most distinguished and recognized preachers in the rich history of the African American Church of Christ. Kennedy along with R. N. Hogan, J. S. Winston, and G. E. Steward, were co-founders of Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas, and were commonly referred to as "The Big Four" among Black churches of Christ.

Levi Kennedy, Jr., married Alberta Noveline Delk of Maury County, Tennessee on November 10, 1921. Upon leaving the state of Tennessee in the year 1922, he along with his wife, his eldest daughter, two older brothers and their families, they each relocated to Wheeling, West Virginia. Finding no congregation in Wheeling, he started one in his living room and gave his first talk in the year 1923. At some point during the year 1925, he left this small group consisting of 23 members and relocated to Gary, Indiana, and finally to Chicago, Illinois. It was on the West Side of Chicago at the old Maypole Avenue congregation where he began preaching part time in 1926. To make a living for he and his family, Kennedy sold ice and coal from a wagon pulled by an old gray mare. In time he established a thriving business and was able to purchase a second wagon along with a truck. According to an oral interview once given by Kennedy he stated: "Money was easily made up until 1929 when I went broke during the Depression."

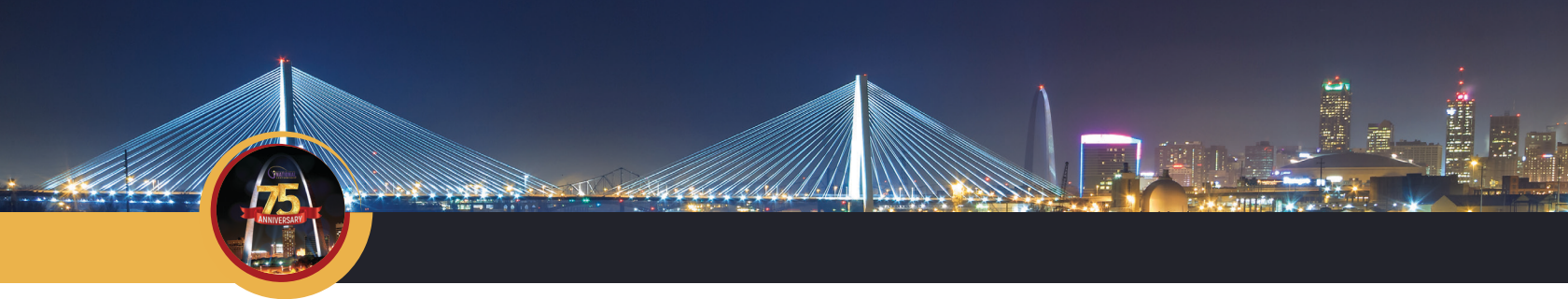
With the persistence and encouragement of Herbert Anderson, Sr., his maternal uncle, Levi Kennedy, Jr., and fifty members of the old Maypole congregation began the South Side movement of the African American Church of Christ located at 20 West 51st Street on May 21, 1931. In the year 1933, during the height of the Depression, Kennedy said that he faced the most difficult decision of his life when the Church asked him to preach full-time. With five young children at the time, he parked his coal and ice truck and began preaching full-time for only \$5.00 a week. He said that he and his wife made the decision to "trust in the Lord." When asked how he made it with such meager resources, Kennedy would say, "I didn't make it, the Lord made it for me... We ate bread and potatoes for breakfast and potatoes and bread for dinner." R. N. Hogan a distant cousin of the Kennedys, also labored for a period of time with the congregation helping to evangelize the South Side of Chicago. This small group of believers eventually became known throughout the brotherhood as the Michigan Avenue Church of Christ after moving to 6228-30 South Michigan Avenue in the early 1940s.

Due to the involvement of the United States in World War II, it was extremely difficult to obtain resources for building and construction. However, Kennedy did not let this circumstance impede his work for the Lord. A formal letter was drafted to President Franklin D. Roosevelt explaining the plight of the Michigan Avenue congregation. Within a few months a permit was granted by Eleanor Roosevelt allowing the Church to purchase \$5,000.00 worth of building material. The congregation grew from fifty members to well over nine hundred and was by far the largest African American Church of Christ in the entire Midwest until the mid 1960s. The unwritten standard of measurement which determined the success of a preacher in the African American Church of Christ during this period of time was to be called upon to preach for R. N. Hogan at the Figueroa Church of Christ in Los Angeles, or Levi Kennedy, Jr., at the Michigan Avenue Church of Christ in Chicago. Once a preacher had accomplished this goal, he was looked upon as having "made it" in the brotherhood.

Let it be said that multiplied thousands were led to the Lord in the United States and abroad by the evangelistic efforts of Levi Kennedy, Jr. He served on the Board of Directors for Southwestern Christian College from its inception until his death. He also served as Chairman of the SwCC Annual Lectureship Program, Chairman of the Annual National Lectureship among African American churches of Christ, and President of the Living Endowment Association of Southwestern Christian College. In October 1962, Kennedy went to Ukpom, Nigeria, West Africa, to preach for one month. In Nigeria, he preached from five to six sermons daily, baptizing six hundred-fifty persons and establishing twenty-seven congregations. He made a second trip to Nigeria in the year 1965.

In summation, Evangelist Levi Kennedy, Jr., was without question a preacher "par excellence." He departed this life on December 30, 1970, after experiencing no less than twelve operations. Because of his dedication to Christ and commitment to Christian education, an honorary doctorate of Humane Letters was conferred upon him posthumously by Southwestern Christian College in the year 1986. His wife Alberta Noveline Kennedy passed away on August 14, 2002.

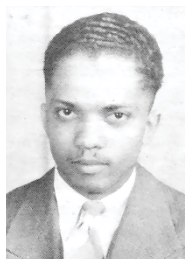




# Remembering Those Who Walked Before Us

## Legends Of The Past In the African American Church of Christ

**Dr. John Henry Clay, Sr.**  
(1920-2005)  
Altadena Church of Christ  
Altadena, California



Born in Lafayette, Louisiana. John Henry Clay was born June 24, 1920. He was baptized into the body of Christ at the age of eighteen as a result of the preaching influence of Marshall Keeble. Two months short of his twentieth birthday on April 1, 1940, he married Miss Sadie Fontenot in Hobbs, New Mexico. Having initially traveled with Luke Miller in order to refine his ministerial skills, Clay later worked extensively with his mentor Marshall Keeble.

It was in Hobbs, New Mexico where Clay began his first work. His salary was a meager \$7.00 a week, so he and his family relocated to Texas. In the early years of his preaching career Clay suffered many trials and hardships. Many times he held month-long gospel meetings only to be compensated with a few chickens and other perishable food items. Often during meetings he would stay in the homes of non-Christians. During this era of "Jim Crow" (racial segregation) African Americans were prohibited from utilizing hotel facilities unless they were employed to cook and clean. On many occasions Clay would find himself in the cotton fields working alongside of others, sharing the gospel message and inviting them to the meeting services. Many precious souls were led to Christ by John Henry Clay because of his unique "cotton fields" experiences.

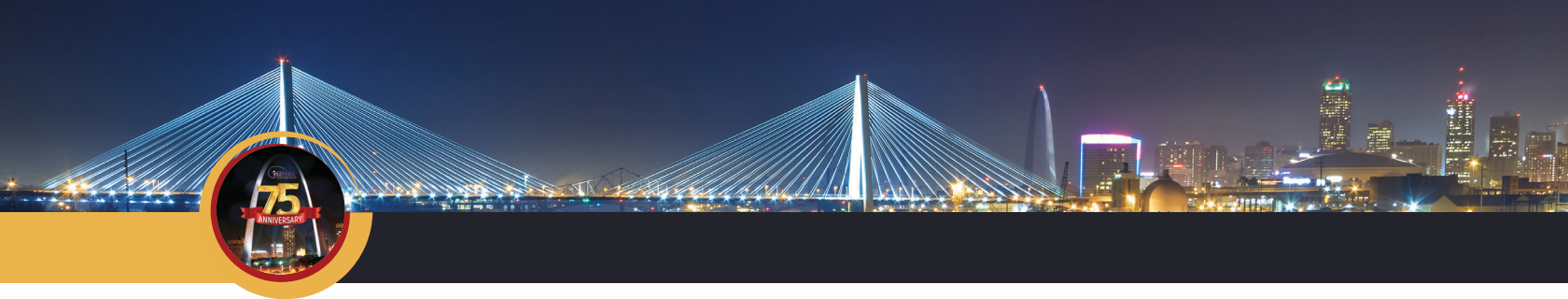
Clay preached throughout the entire continental United States; from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific coast including Belize, Central America; Guyana, South America, South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria, West Africa. People would actually walk three days just to hear the preacher they called "The Old Man." However, it is believed that his most productive ministry took place in Alabama, where he survived several confrontations with the Ku Klux Klan by the grace and providence of the Almighty God. John Henry Clay was known to have baptized more than a hundred people during a single meeting, with a record of over two-hundred baptized in a meeting once held in Clanton, Alabama. In the year 1950, he moved to California, preaching in the Oakland and Pasadena area. He established the Altadena Church of Christ in 1967, and this remained his home congregation for the rest of his earthly life.

In 1988, his beloved wife Sadie passed away following a long extended illness. Shortly afterwards, the congregation in Guntersville, Alabama, encouraged him to serve as their missionary in the Guntersville vicinity. Consequently, every year for six months, he would return to Alabama and travel throughout the area singing and preaching. Although the Guntersville congregation supported his ministry financially, Dr. John Henry Clay had support from a personal business venture. While in Pasadena, California, he opened a fast food restaurant which proved to be extremely successful. His family operated the business while he was away engaged in meetings.

Sometime during the year 1994, John Henry Clay went to Moultrie, Georgia, to hold a tent meeting. While in Moultrie, a young lady 34 years younger desired to go door-knocking with him. After much insistence, she ended up assisting him, bringing along umbrellas and water to protect him from the humidity of a hot Georgia summer. Six months later they were married and continued working together until his death in the year 2005. Throughout his sixty-nine years of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, Dr. Clay baptized well over 10,000 people and established more than fifty 50 congregations. His trademark song before every sermon was: "He loved me so... He gave His life a ransom just because He loved me so." In recognition of his work and life-long achievements, Pepperdine University awarded him a Distinguished Christian Service Award while Southwestern Christian College conferred upon him an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters.

On August 12, 2005, Dr. John Henry Clay, evangelist extraordinaire and articulate ambassador for the Church of Christ, he was buried in Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, California. It is somewhat ironic and yet befitting that as much as Dr. Clay loved singing, he was laid to rest within the same proximity of the legendary Sam Cooke. He leaves to cherish his memory, his wife Deborah; one daughter, Pearl; a son, John, Jr.; a daughter-in-law Beverly; two grandsons, John III and Joaquin; one great-grandson, Joaquin, Jr.; one brother, Ambrose W. J. Clay; one sister-in-law, Minnie; a great galaxy of nieces, nephews, cousins, friends, and "the entire brotherhood."

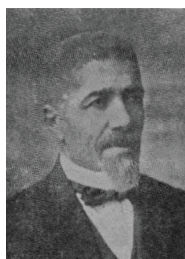
Having mentored and served as a "father in the faith" to many present day gospel preachers, one of the most notable being Dr. W. F. Washington, Minister of the New Golden Heights Church of Christ in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, let it be said without fear of successful contradiction, that to remember this great "Warrior of the Word" is to indeed remember a life that demonstrated his firm belief that... "God loved him so."



# Remembering Those Who Walked Before Us

## Legends Of The Past In the African American Church of Christ

**Samuel Robert Cassius**  
(1853-1931)  
An Unsung Hero of Black Education  
Logan County, Oklahoma



Born in Virginia to the bi-racial union of a slave mother named Jane and a white physician owner named James W. F. Macrae. His father/owner was a cousin of General Robert E. Lee and it was Lee who later purchased Cassius along with his mother when he was seven (7) years of age to keep them from being sold to an outsider. Because his mother was fundamentally literate, she taught Cassius how to read and write using a "John Comly Speller." During the Civil War, Cassius and his mother relocated to Washington, D. C., where he enrolled in

the first school for black children in the nation's capital; subsequently becoming the first African American male to finish high school there.

In this school, young Samuel encountered a white school teacher from Connecticut, named Frances W. Perkins, who inspired his appetite for knowledge, steered him toward the ministry, and encouraged him to teach in his adult years. While residing in Washington, D. C., Samuel Robert Cassius shook hands with President Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, and a host of other black and white dignitaries.

In the year 1874, Cassius married Effie Festus-Basil in Washington, D.C., and shortly thereafter the family relocated to Brazil, Indiana, where he toiled as a coal-miner; became a member of the Church of Christ (known as the Stone-Campbell Movement or Restoration Movement) and began his ministry. In 1891, Cassius, driven by a religious impulse as well as a desire for economic advancement, took up residence in the Logan County Iowa Tribal Lands of Oklahoma Territory, where he lived until 1922. It was in Logan County that he worked as a preacher, educator, farmer, entrepreneur, postmaster, and politician. In a letter written from Tohee, Oklahoma, dated November 20, 1893, Cassius seeks contributions for a "house of worship," stating that "the logs are cut, the land is donated, but it takes money to build the house." Cassius fathered eleven (11) children with his first wife Effie who died in 1895, and twelve (12) with his second wife, Selina Daisy Flenoid, who he married on May 10, 1897 at the church near Tohee.

In a document dated March 14, 1898, Cassius again solicits funds, but this time for the "Tohee Industrial School." This vision took shape from his own struggle to obtain an education but finding himself without a trade. Cassius was also highly influenced by Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee Institute, where he would later send his own son, Amos Lincoln Cassius (1890-1982). "Two years ago," Cassius wrote in 1899, "I began this work and I have now completed a good building which is free from debt. But I still need books, maps, black boards, charts, and one or two helpers before I can begin work." That the school building was "free from debt" was probably a result of the numerous mortgages Cassius used his own land to secure, his continued fundraising, and the sale of garden seed and other produce from his farm.

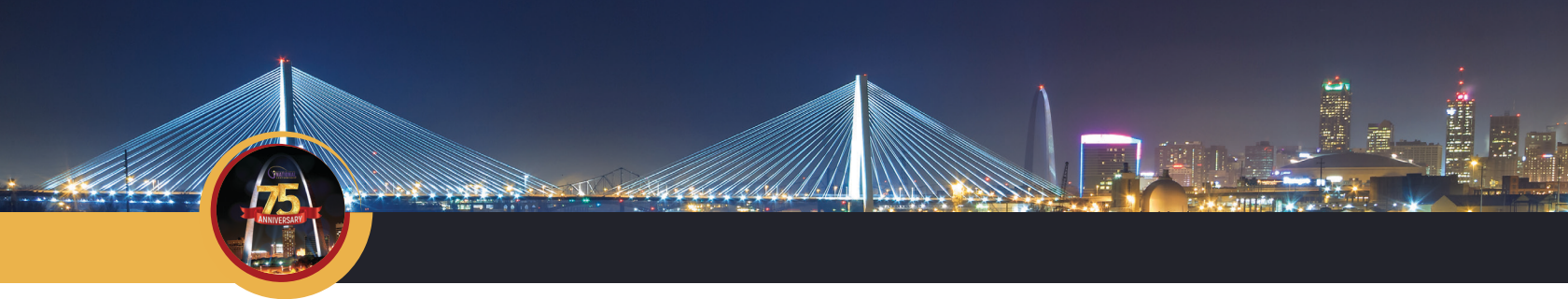
Regarding the school, Cassius wrote: "We will teach trades of as many kinds as my means will allow. We will also teach as many branches of practical education as possible. Agriculture will also play an important factor in the support of the school. And best of all, there will be a night-school system for the benefit of grown persons." During a fundraising tour to Saint Louis, Missouri, on August 20, 1900, Cassius wrote: "Three years ago I began this work (the school), feeling that such a work was needed among the thousands of colored people who have settled in Oklahoma. I received \$465.00 with which I built a building that will accommodate about 150 children."

Not limiting his energies to the church and school, Cassius was appointed postmaster of Tohee on July 13, 1897, and served until the post office closed on January 31, 1906. Samuel R. Cassius lost his entire personal library in a fire sometime before 1910. Yet, he continued to occupy the land in Tohee with a postal address on Route 2, Meridian, until he moved to Guthrie, Oklahoma, in 1917. During this time in Oklahoma, Cassius became known by whites as a "Father of Christianity" among his people and continued to travel throughout Oklahoma and the United States as "The Colored Evangelist."

In 1920 Cassius published *The Third Birth of a Nation*, a response and denunciation to Thomas Dixon's 1905 racist novel *The Clansman* and D. W. Griffith's 1915 inflammatory movie entitled "*Birth of a Nation*." It was his hope that his study and experiences would lead to the awakening of a new thought concerning the "race problem" that still troubles our country. Cassius reissued his book in 1925. From 1922 until 1925, Cassius lived and preached temporarily in Ohio, Illinois, Minnesota, and California, before settling in 1926 in Colorado Springs, Colorado, where he died on August 10, 1931. The last line of his obituary notes that "The race has lost a leader, Christianity a friend, and the family a husband and father."

Although the "Tohee Industrial School" is now lost to time, the legacy and contributions of Samuel Robert Cassius on behalf of education is currently being revisited by many scholars and churches he helped to build. His school was not only a pioneering work towards black education in the Oklahoma Territory, but it was the initial spark that led to the establishment in 1897 of "The Colored Agricultural and Normal University" (now Langston University) in Langston, Oklahoma.





# Recognizing Those Who Are Walking With Us

## Legends of the Present in the African American Church of Christ

**Dr. W.F. Washington, Sr.**  
 International Evangelist  
 New Golden Heights Church of Christ  
 Fort Lauderdale, Florida



Dr. W. F. Washington, Sr. is one the most respected and sought after gospel preachers among churches of Christ today. His clear presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ is heard on radio, television, from pulpits throughout America, and across the vast continent. He is a renowned Conflict Resolution and Management Consultant for congregations who, from time to time, may experience church conflict.

Dr. Washington's full-time ministry began in Texas. As a sophomore in college, he served as Minister of

the Westside Church of Christ in Marshall, Texas. Upon graduation from college and as full-time preacher, he also worked as Assistant Principal for Administration at Pemberton High School in Marshall. Commensurate with his ministry in Marshall, he was employed by Bishop College in Dallas, Texas, as Dean of Students at 23 years of age. He was selected by the America Personnel Association as the youngest Dean of Students in American universities and colleges.

Today, Dr. Washington is the full-time minister of the New Golden Heights Church of Christ where he has preached for 34 years – and he is still going strong. When Dr. Washington arrived in Fort Lauderdale in 1974, he led 125 members who met in a small back street church building located on 15th Court to a three million dollar, two thousand seat sanctuary with a total membership of more than 4,500. The church meets in their modern Roman/Gothic style building on Martin Luther King Boulevard in Lauderdale Lakes, Florida.

Under the leadership of Dr. Washington, the “Heights” is considered as one of the largest and fastest growing African-American churches in Broward County, Florida. Dr. Washington is a respected leader among Ministers of faith, city, county, State, and national elected officials. His steadfast commitment to evangelism and cultural empowerment is demonstrated in the organizations he has founded such as the Golden Heights Multi-Crisis Center in 1991 and Golden Heights Christian Academy in 1992. The “Heights” has over 16 outreach ministries. Their “Feeding the Hungry” ministry feeds and clothes over 3,000 homeless persons each year.

His radio and television outreach ministries began in 1974 where he began his radio ministry on WRBD radio. During that time he was selected twice as “Minister of the Year.” Dr. Washington can be seen on his weekly television broadcast on the CBS Network of Miami. The “Heights” also has two regular weekly radio programs.

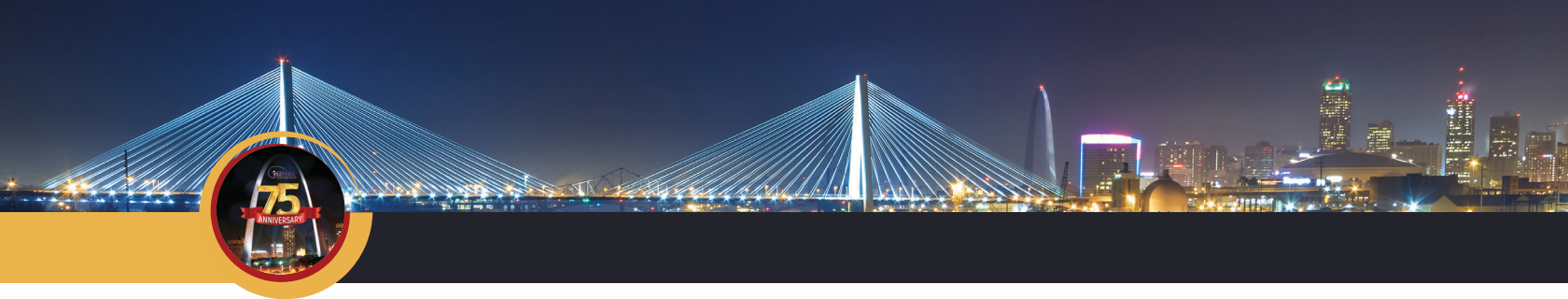
Dr. W. F. Washington earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Science with an emphasis in History and Western Civilization from Bishop College in Dallas, Texas; thirty (30) Master Degree hours in Criminology and Contemporary Corrections from Sam Houston State University, and a Ph.D., in Behavioral Psychology, from National Christian University. In the year 2003, Dr. Washington was bestowed the Doctorate of Humane Letters from Mississippi Valley State University in Itta Beta, Mississippi.

Dr. Washington is also an author of several publications. His most recent are: *Journey to Canaan* (2003 best seller); and *Church Growth, Church Health, and Church Administration* (2006). Dr. W. F. Washington has also published several other works including: *Can You Run With Horses*; *The Church on a Collision Course*; *Is God Black?*; *When You Have Lost a Loved One*; *The Christian and Stress*; *The Christian and Depression*; and *Instant Replay: An Anthology on Abortion*.

Born and raised in the city of Valdosta, Georgia, Washington traveled as a young preacher and singer with some of God's greatest gospel preachers. Men such as John Henry Clay (his father in the Gospel), Ulysses Shields, Marshall Keeble, Luke Miller, V. E. Williamson, James L Cothran, William Whitaker, and David Shanks.

Dr. Washington is married to the former Deloris Dixon of Hallsville, Texas, and they have four (4) children: Willie, Jr., Antonio, MarQuite, and Soncyarai; three (3) grandchildren; Arielle, Gabrielle, and Nevaeh; one (1) daughter-in law, Niermala; and two (2) sons in-law, Orpheus and Daryl.

Dr. Washington's purpose in life is to glorify God and His Son Jesus Christ in the fulfillment of His mission on earth and 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 Christ.



# Recognizing Those Who Are Walking With Us

## Legends of the Present in the African American Church of Christ

**Dr. Jack Evans, Sr.**  
 International Evangelist  
 President Emeritus  
 Southwestern Christian College  
 Terrell, Texas



Dr. Jack Evans, Sr., is a native of Houston, Texas. He was baptized into Christ in 1953 at the age of 15 under the preaching influence of Paul Settles and began preaching at the age of 16. After attending the public schools of Houston for 9 years, he then transferred to Nashville Christian Institute (NCI) in Nashville, Tennessee, of which the eminent Marshall Keeble was President at this time. He graduated from NCI in 1957 and then enrolled in Southwestern Christian College (SWCC), in Terrell, Texas, from which he graduated

in 1959. He served as the Associate Minister of the College Church of Christ while attending Southwestern.

After graduating from SWCC, Jack Evans Sr., enrolled in Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, New Mexico, majoring in History and Religion. He graduated from this university in 1961. He preached for a small congregation in Hale Center, Texas, while attending college in New Mexico. Upon graduation, Dr. Evans began graduate work in 1961, in History and English at the University of Texas in El Paso, Texas.

In the year 1963, Evans received his Master of Arts degree. His unpublished thesis was entitled: "*The History of Southwestern Christian College of Terrell, Texas.*" He was the Minister of the Cebada Street Church of Christ in El Paso while attending graduate school and he has had conferred upon him the Doctor of Laws (LL.D.) degrees by Harding University, Pepperdine University, and Abilene Christian University.

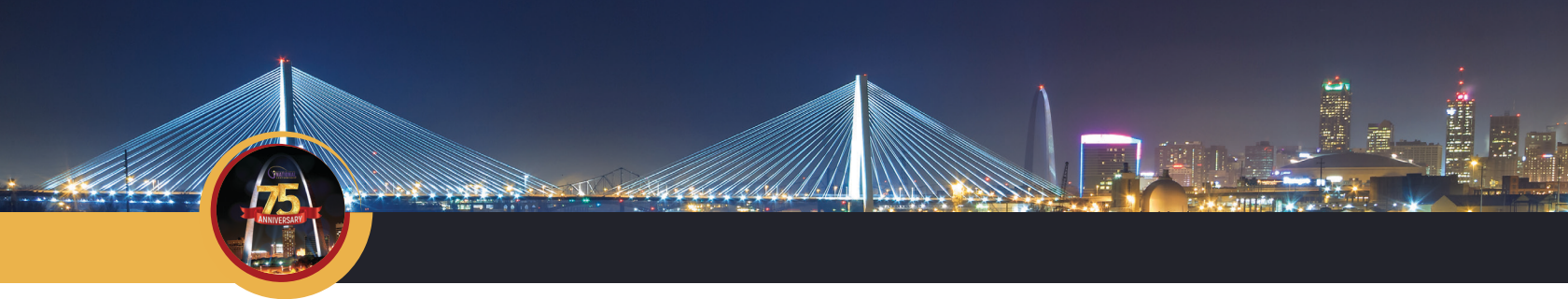
Dr. Evans became Dean of SWCC in 1963. He served in this capacity and as an instructor in History for a period of four (4) years. In 1967, he was appointed President of Southwestern Christian College; thus becoming the first African American president of the only predominantly black Christian College among the churches of Christ. He is presently serving in this capacity. Southwestern Christian College became fully accredited under his administration in 1973. He is listed in the "Who's Who in American College and University Administration" and "Who's Who in Texas Today." He is also a member of the Board of Directors of David Lipscomb University.

Dr. Jack Evans, Sr., has been a featured speaker on virtually every major lectureship hosted by Christian colleges and in special seminars/meetings on other college campuses. He conducts gospel meetings and Crusades for churches of Christ throughout the nation and has participated in a number of religious debates. In the year 1981, Evans became the keynote speaker for the biennial National Crusade for Christ.

He is the author/editor of the *Evans-Barr Debate*; *The Curing of Ham*; *The Cross or the Crescent*; *Sermons That Save*; and *Sinai or Zion? The Two Covenants*. He has co-authored with Dr. James Maxell, Vice-President of Southwestern Christian College, on *Divorce and Remarriage* and with Dr. G. P. Holt on *Sermons of the Crusades*.

Dr. Jack Evans, Sr., is married to the former Patricia Officer of Nashville, Tennessee, and they have three (3) sons: Jack Jr., Herbert Raye and David Paul. They have two (2) grandsons: Jack Evans III and Brandon Jamal; and two (2) granddaughters: DaJanette and Dominique.





# Recognizing Those Who Are Walking With Us

## Legends of the Present in the African American Church of Christ

**Dr. Eugene Lawton**  
International Evangelist  
Newark Church of Christ  
Newark, New Jersey



**D**r. Eugene Lawton is a native of St. Petersburg, Florida. He was baptized into the body of Christ under the preaching influence of S. J. Dudley and began preaching the gospel as a student at Southwestern Christian College. His academic credentials include an Associate of Arts degree from Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas; a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts from Pepperdine University in Los Angeles, California; advanced post graduate work at Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New

Jersey; and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Trinity Seminary in Newburgh, Indiana.

Dr. Eugene Lawton has been preaching the gospel for over fifty-three (53) years and his experiences are numerous. He served with distinction as Minister of the East 7th Street Church of Christ in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma from 1959-1961 and he has served as Minister of the Newark Church of Christ in Newark, New Jersey, for 43 (forty-three) years. He worked as a field representative for Southwestern Christian College from 1961-63. He was the Academic Dean of Southwestern Christian College from 1969-1971, and he is presently a member of the Board of Directors of Southwestern Christian College.

As an accomplished writer, Dr. Eugene Lawton has written articles in several national publications. He is the author of four (4) books of sermons: *Let Me Sound My Trumpet*; *Come Out With Your Hands Up*; *Fasten Your Seatbelts*, and *Can I Preach A Little?*

In 1978, the Newark Church of Christ for the first time was among the twenty-four (24) congregations that baptized one hundred (100) or more persons into Christ. Under the dynamic leadership of Dr. Eugene Lawton, the Newark Church of Christ in Newark, New Jersey, continues to be a rapid growing congregation with over 2,752 persons having been baptized into Christ during his ministry. God has indeed smiled on this great church.

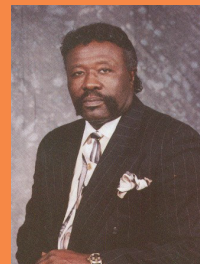
Dr. Lawton has been preaching on the "Liberation Hour," a weekly radio program for thirty-four (34) years and he has been preaching on cable television for fifteen (15) years. Both programs have been instrumental in baptizing some 160 persons. He is the founder of the Northeastern Youth Conference which is attended by 1200 to 1300 young people and adults in Newark annually. He has been directing this conference for forty (40) years.

Dr. Eugene Lawton is perpetually busy speaking on National Lectureships, College Lectureships, National Youth Conferences, and conducting Gospel Meetings and Evangelism Seminars from the Gulf to the Great Lakes, and from the sunny shores of California to the skyscrapers of New York City. He is married to the former Diane Trone and they have three (3) children: Fitzgerald, Cedric, and Kathleen; in addition to four (4) grandchildren.

# Best Wishes to the 75th Annual Churches of Christ Lectureship



The Ministers' Institute Conference is hosted by the New Golden Hts. Church of Christ in the interest of bringing together men of God of like precious faith. Men and women who believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God, our authority, and our only authority in religion. Men who believe God is both just and sovereign, with a burden to continue to proclaim and live the powerful standard portrayed in God's book, the Bible.



W. F. Washington, Ph.D.  
Host Minister

