



RELIGION

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C.M.E. bishop urges political involvement

by Nathaniel Scott

The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, brought to a close the 18th session of the Alaska-Pacific Conference, Sunday, August 12th, with a morning worship service conducted by Bishop Nathaniel L. Linsey.

Bishop Linsey is the presiding prelate of the ninth Episcopal District, which encompasses Oklahoma, Arizona, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington, Alaska and California.

The theme for this year's conference was: "The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church understanding and seeking the Kingdom of God through witnessing and social concerns."

Bishop Linsey was adamant about the position of the church, especially on social issues. "The church is a militant institution. We are soldiers of the cross. God is still on our side. We must work with Him in the liberation of our people."

This year, the Bishop explained in an interview, the Methodist Episcopal Church is "greatly con-

cerned about people."

The concern for and about people, he said, is a multifaceted thing: registering to vote; voting, fair employment; access to decent housing, a parity of education and all the other things that spell equality.

"We are concerned about bringing about justice," he said. "We still recognize the fact that much of what we gained during the 60's are being lost. Many of the jobs Black people had during the 60's are being lost; (and) many of the small businesses are being lost, (too). Not because of policy, but because of racism," he said.

"You have to have power," he said, adding, "that was demonstrated by (Rev. Jesse) Jackson in the campaign. Had he been white, he would have been elected (the presidential nominee of the Democratic party)."

Bishop Linsey noted that many people advise the church not to get involved in politics. However, he stressed, "Our people (Blacks) have to get involved in politics as well as witnessing in Christ." "Evangelism



Attending the 18th session of the C.M.E. Alaska-Pacific Conference were (l-r) The Rev. Elonza J. Edwards of Allen Temple C.M.E. Church, The Rev. William G. Mitchell and Bishop Nathaniel L. Linsey. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

and social concerns are inseparable."

Because we are Black, the Bishop said, our experiences are limited. We have been denied access and our exposure to certain knowledge goes lacking. Nonetheless, he said, "We need to be more vocal: we are too quiet."

Bishop Linsey's concerns about quietness and involvement were not just directed towards the layman, he included the pastors, too.

"I am concerned that the ministers here (in Portland) get involved with the Urban League, the NAACP, and other groups in the community."

"God sent us to be involved in social concerns: jobs, justice; whatever," the Bishop said. "We

are concerned about the whole man." But, he pointed out, "too many of our men think they have to go out and destroy women to be a man. That's not what it takes to be a man," he added.

Portland's co-hosts for the 18th session of the Alaska-Pacific Conference, Rev. Elonza J. Edwards of Allen Temple C.M.E. Church and Rev. Ira D. Mumford of Smith Chapel C.M.E. Church, were reappointed pastors to their respective churches.

The presiding Elders for the conference were Rev. William G. Mitchell, head of the Oregon-Washington District, and Rev. Claude L. Johnson, head of the Alaska District.

A.M.E. expands African missionary work

by Kathryn Hall Bogle

The Rt. Rev. Henry W. Murph, bishop of the Fifth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church presided over the 93rd session of the Puget Sound Annual Conference held for six days, from August 6th through August 12th, at Bethel Church in Portland.

Much is required of any bishop and each gives much to the church. The Rt. Rev. Henry Murph has arrived at a peak period in his stewardship of churchly matters for, in July, he became the Senior Bishop of the A.M.E. Church. He has become presiding officer of the general board of the national church and, as chair of the general conference commission, he conducts the conference that makes assignments for all the bishops of the

church.

Bishop Murph moves easily into his lustrous new position, for all of his life has been a preparation for such a crowning experience. As a young graduate of historic Oberlin's College of Theology, Murph spent several years ministering to students on the campus of Prairie View College in Texas. For eight years, he was pastor at St. Philip in Savannah and, for 18 years, he was pastor of Grant A.M.E. Church in Los Angeles, where the active membership was 2,000—with 6,000 names carried on the church rolls.

Following his election to the bishopry in Philadelphia in 1968, Murph spent some time in building and encouraging growth of the church in Southern and in Central Africa, including lengthy visits to Lesotha, Swaziland, Malawi and

Zambia (now known as Zimbabwe). He learned, first hand, the needs of some African countries and their churches.

For 10 years, Murph served the District of Columbia and Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina. In 1980, Murph was made presiding

Lord came to this world to proclaim. In so far as we can, we must give our moral support and our financial gifts to sustain the underprivileged and downtrodden of that area, reassuring them that they are our brothers. The church must identify with these dispossessed



(l-r) The Rt. Reverend Henry W. Murph, presiding Bishop, the Rev. W. Watley, Bethel A.M.E. Church and Martha Stanley Radfield, newly appointed Itinerant Deacon for the Puget Sound A.M.E. Conference. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

bishop of Texas with offices in Waco, an office he closed a few weeks ago when, with his appointment to serve as bishop to the Puget Sound Conference, he headed to Portland and the Northwest with his wife, Geraldine.

"At the July general conference held in Kansas City," said Bishop Murph, "for the second time a conference (area) was set up in Africa. The Rev. Senalte of Cape Town was assigned there as bishop of the area which includes Swaziland, Bothaswana and Lorenzo Marcs. This area is to be known henceforth, as the 19th District of the A.M.E. Church.

"Our church strongly condemns the apartheid system," the bishop said gravely. "It violates all the canons of the Judeo-Christian ethic, it is the very antithesis of the gospel of freedom and liberation which our

people.

"In our missions," Murph continued, "we are concentrating not only in Africa, but also in Haiti and other struggling countries of the Caribbean and South America. Our outreach program is obedient to the injunction of the Lord, 'Go ye into all the world and preach my Gospel.'"

"We find a void. We need to let people know what we are about—old people, young people, lame people, blind people. We want total involvement in the community for a church loses its power when it loses its spirituality," the bishop concluded. He left Portland to go to conferences in California and other western states. The bishop and Mrs. Murph expect to establish a home in Los Angeles whenever they can find sufficient time from the pressures of conference affairs.



(l-r) Helen Taylor, president Bethel A.M.E. Missionary Society, Lenore Morris, conference publicity and Gertha Smith, president Puget Sound Conference Missionary Society. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

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