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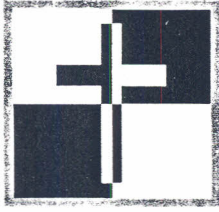
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Reading About Race Relations In and Out of the Churches



Don Haymes

The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America, and the islands of the sea.

—William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, 1903

I still think today as yesterday that the color line is a great problem of this century. But today I see more clearly than yesterday that back of the problem of race and color, lies a greater problem which both obscures and implements it: and that is the fact that so many civilized persons are willing to live in comfort even if the price of this is poverty, ignorance and disease of the majority of their fellow-men; that to maintain this privilege men have waged war until today war tends to become universal and continuous, and the excuse for this war continues largely to be color and race.

—William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, 1953

And even now, near the end of “this century” and the beginning of another, the “color line” remains—in America, in its institutions public and private, and in those most “American” of Christian communities, the churches of the so-called Restoration, or Stone-Campbell, movement. If we have come to believe that those churches in some way continue the spirit and truth of the churches of the New Testament, as their founders surely claimed that they did, then where does our faith seek understanding of their historic and present relation to the “color line” in America?

I am asked by the editors of this issue of *Leaven* to compose a “bibliographic essay . . . that would especially interest someone from the Stone-Campbell heritage who wants to read in this area.” Well then, dear sisters and brothers, what would that be? I am reminded of that mar-

velous admonition of Walter Kaufmann, “You cannot tell all the truths you know to all men you meet.” Nor to all women, either. There are many things useful to read about race relations in America and in the churches, more than there is time or paper to tell, and there is likely neither world nor time enough for anyone to read them all. Much of what might specifically be relevant to an understanding of race relations in any of the splinters of the Stone-Campbell heritage is to be found only by turning over pages one at a time in the musty rows of periodical stacks of academic and seminary libraries. Some of it is to be seen only under the watchful eyes of its faithful guardians in the “special collections” of those institutions. I have done some of that for my beloved Churches of Christ, but not nearly enough. Some of the fruits of my labor can be found on the World Wide Web as a subsection of Professor Hans Rollmann’s wonderful “Restoration” site, for which the URL is: <http://www.uccs.mun.ca/rels/restmov/subs/race.html>.

Those who seek out this site—“Race and Churches of Christ”—will find forty-three primary documents from the years 1904 to 1968 and considerable commentary. Eventually, there will be perhaps as many as forty more, including a couple of lengthy segregationist tracts from the collection—but not the pen!—of the indefatigable Terry John Gardner. Some of the material is gospel; some of it is truly heroic; much of it is maddening; and more of it is distressing and disgusting. It ain’t none of it pretty, dear hearts, but all of it is necessary if we are to understand how we came to be where we are, in this America, in these churches. Those who have access to the right libraries can and should go looking for it, if they’re of a mind to do the work. There’s more to be done.

But now where should the casual reader—or, indeed, the nascent serious researcher—of Stone-Campbell pedigree turn to learn about race relations, both in America

and in the churches? One might begin with basic reference works, of which there are distressingly few, of uneven quality and—already!—out of date. *A Bibliography of the Negro in Africa and America*, edited by Monroe Nathan Work (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1928; reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1965; xxiv + 698 pages), is exhaustive and truly exhausting—up to the date of its original publication. “The Negro Church and Religious Life,” a relatively brief section, begins on page 405. Dwight L. Smith’s *Afro-American History: A Bibliography* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1974) begins in 1954 and is tersely annotated, but it is not to be compared to Work’s work. The most useful and accessible general bibliography, now more than a quarter-century old, remains *The Negro in America: A Bibliography*, 2d ed., edited by Elizabeth W. Miller and Mary L. Fisher (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970; xxii + 351 pages). Its 6,500 entries are carefully gathered by subjects delineated in the table of contents. “Religious Life and Negro Churches” (32–35), a short section under “Social Institutions and Conditions,” contains 74 entries, many of them helpfully annotated. “The Role of the Churches” (274–82) is an extensive section in the chapter “The Freedom Revolution.” *Dictionary of American Negro Biography*, edited by Rayford W. Logan and Michael R. Winston (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982; viii + 680 pages), is indispensable, and one will not find a dull page in it—but neither have I found in it, in my all-too-brief acquaintance, any adherent of the Stone-Campbell movement. All of these basic reference works should be readily available in any good public or academic library, and they should not disappoint the earnest inquirer.

Two more specialized reference works produced by scholars at Howard University are useful—if frustrating—guides to religious studies and religious bodies in African America. *The Howard University Bibliography of African and Afro-American with Locations in American Libraries*, edited by Ethel L. Williams and Clifton F. Brown (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1977; xxii + 523 pages), is a printed typescript, monumental in its overall proportions and coverage but often disappointing in its eclectic details. Materials related to “Disciples of Christ” can be found on pages 132, 272, and 316; there one may find citations to A. Campbell on slavery in the 1845 *Millennial Harbinger*; Robert Oldham Fife’s 1960 Indiana dissertation, *Alexander Campbell and the Christian Church in the Slavery Controversy*; Nathaniel Smith Haynes’s “The Disciples of Christ in Illinois and Their Attitude Toward Slavery” in *Papers in Illinois History and Transactions for the Year 1913* (Springfield: Illinois

State Historical Society, 1914; 52–59); Stephen D. Eckstein’s *History of Churches of Christ in Texas* (1963); and Robert Frederick West’s *Preaching on Race* (St. Louis: Bethany, 1962). *Directory of African American Religious Bodies: A Compendium by the Howard University School of Divinity*, 2d ed., edited by Wardell J. Payne (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1995), is the more recent of these reference works, and it is a superficially helpful guide through the maze of African American denominations and sects, but it, too, often fails in details. The section headed “Disciples of Christ” offers useful information about the “General Assembly of Churches of Christ (Disciples of Christ)” and the “National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),” but under “Church [*sic*] of Christ” one finds only a single, didactic paragraph of dubious validity and no utility. Southwestern Christian College (Terrell, Texas) is not mentioned.

For critical bibliography of the African American religious experience, Charles H. Lippy’s *Bibliography of Religion in the South* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1985; xvi + 498 pages) remains unsurpassed, despite—indeed, perhaps because of—its regional focus. In his chapter “The Religious Experience of Southern Blacks” (81–146), Lippy gathers 731 citations, prefaced with a penetrating bibliographic essay. In “Religion and Society in the South” (441–82), Lippy offers 86 more citations under the heading “Racism, Discrimination, and the Civil Rights Movement,” again with insightful remarks. Lippy does not differentiate black adherents of the Stone-Campbell movement in his account of “Campbellite and Restorationist Traditions in the South” (275–86), but he does cite Julian E. Choate’s 1968 “biography” of Marshall Keeble.

These works make clear the relative wealth of material about African Americans and their religion *in general* and the relative poverty of resources about black Campbellites and their peculiar relations with their white siblings. So where should an interested reader begin? An understanding of the “American dilemma” (as Gunnar Myrdal called it) is fundamental to any study of race relations in an American church. *Negro Social and Political Thought 1850–1920: Representative Texts*, edited by Howard Brotz (New York: Basic Books, 1966; ix + 593 pages) brings together in one volume essential works by Frederick Douglass (1817–1895), Booker T. Washington (1856–1915), William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868–1963), Marcus Garvey (1887–1940), and several others less well known but no less able. Here one can see in bold relief the foundational debate between Du Bois and Wash-

ington, a discussion known to most of us only at second hand, if at all, and usually reduced to inflammatory code words. One should read these texts with care, and *then* read Brotz's perceptive introduction. However one may judge between Washington and Du Bois, one may learn much from both of them, even as they clash and jar. From here it is but a step to Du Bois's classic, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1903), which is generally available in several paperback editions. Du Bois's *The Negro Church* (Atlanta: Atlanta University Press, 1903), from the beginning of this century, may also reward the earnest researcher who can find it. The great strength of Du Bois over against many of his contemporaries and successors is his empathic intellectual and spiritual understanding of African America that transcends mere sociology.

At mid-century James Baldwin (1924–1987) emerged from Harlem via Paris to confound his contemporaries and establish himself as the spiritual heir to Du Bois, by then an aging Marxist dying in African exile. Baldwin was already recognized as an important novelist, playwright, and critic when his ironically titled collection of essays, *Nobody Knows My Name*, appeared in 1961, but in that "private logbook" Baldwin plumbed the depths of his raging perplexity and profoundly religious sensibility. He followed it with "Letter from a Region in My Mind," which consumed almost an entire issue of the *New Yorker* in the fall of 1962 and became most of *The Fire Next Time* (1963)—part memoir, part reportage, part brilliant manifesto. Wherever one may come upon them—in a library, or browning in shelves of used paperbacks—these works are worth whatever it takes to find them, for Baldwin knows some truths that elude mere political analysis.

I suggest that the role of the Negro in American life has something to do with our concept of what God is, and from my point of view, this concept is not big enough. It has got to be made much bigger than it is because God is, after all, not anybody's toy. To be with God is really to be involved with some enormous, overwhelming desire, and joy, and power which you cannot control, which controls you. I conceive of my own life as a journey toward something I do not understand, which in the going toward, makes me better. I conceive of God, in fact, as a means of liberation and not a means to control others. ("In Search of a Majority" in *Nobody Knows My Name*)

Baldwin's novels—especially *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1963)—also open a window on what it means to be black

in America. So, in its way, does Ralph Ellison's classic novel, *The Invisible Man* (1952). Ellison's collection of essays, *Shadow and Act* (1964), is, I think, a response to Baldwin's work, just as Baldwin responds in so many ways, overtly and covertly, to the work and to the very presence of Richard Wright (1909–1960). Wright's *Native Son* (1940) is among the first works of literature to "tell it like it is" in a way that reaches and disturbs white unconsciousness. In *Black Boy* (1945) and *American Hunger* (1977), Wright tells his own story of liberation, triumph, and disillusionment. *Richard Wright Reader*, edited by Ellen Wright and Michael Fabre (New York: Harper & Row, 1978; xxiv + 886 pages), collects a cross section of Wright's fiction, poetry, essays, criticism, and autobiography, displaying the versatility, vulnerability, anger, and anguish of a distinguished and tragic American author.

Claude Brown is not an author, not so eloquent as Baldwin, Ellison, or Wright, but his autobiographical account, *Manchild in the Promised Land* (New York: Macmillan, 1965; 415 pages), is a guided tour of the streets of Harlem from the inside, in a voice matter-of-factly profane and thoroughly authentic. On his journey from Harlem to Howard University, this secular man encounters only a few "religious" figures, and only one that he can begin to respect, near the end, as a true benefactor. His critical analysis of the Nation of Islam and its converts in the 1950s (316–37) is a rare, objective, vivid portrait of the Black Muslim rank and file and the influence of the Nation in Harlem. *Manchild* is a necessary counterpoint to *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965), a classic testimony of religious conversion and martyrdom that ranks with Augustine's *Confessions*, not as theology or as literature, but as a gripping witness to *metanoia* in a syncretistic parody of Christianity and Islam. The poverty of thought in the Nation as Malcolm knew it may cause us to wonder at its power to change his life, but we should not marvel when the true believer moves beyond his first naïveté, becomes—against his will—a heretic, and dies for his faith.

In introducing Eldridge Cleaver's essays in *Soul on Ice* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968; xvi + 210 pages), the critic Maxwell Geismar points to the volume's "true moral affinity" with *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. In some ways that is right, for Cleaver and Malcolm were both "educated" in prison, and both had been drawn to violence in response to injustice. But Cleaver had not experienced a "religious" conversion; in his view, "No one could save me but myself," so "I started to write. To save myself." Cleaver is a figure far more complex than Malcolm X: a writer of extraordinary eloquence and intelligence, a speaker of charismatic presence, and a man

of deep moral confusion. First arrested at age twelve, and incarcerated for most of the next nineteen years, Cleaver by his own account became by turns a Catholic (“Protestants” in that facility were all white) and then a Black Muslim. Both of those communities ultimately disappointed him intellectually and morally, and he abandoned them. Out of prison in 1966 on the strength of the essays that became *Soul on Ice*, Cleaver hooked up with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and then became the Minister of Information and the primary intellectual force of the Black Panther Party. Unlike the Muslims, the Panthers were never a mass movement, but their radical determination, a true call to arms, generated a murderous response. Cleaver escaped with his life to Cuba in 1968, beginning a seven-year exile that took him to the Marxist capitals of the Third World and, finally, to France. There, if we may believe his account in *Soul on Fire* (Waco: Word Books, 1978; 240 pages), Cleaver at last encountered the Lord Jesus Christ, a discovery that led him to return voluntarily to the United States and certain imprisonment. *Soul on Fire*, in fact, lacks the fire of *Soul on Ice*; perhaps the raw anger that propelled and sustained Cleaver’s revolutionary eloquence has at last been extinguished. It is also possible that Cleaver is in this work hustling the evangelical Christians just as he once hustled Kim Il Sung, once more writing to “save [him]self” and “saving [him]self” by writing. Yet his confession—and that is what it is—must have filled those evangelicals with consternation, for his indictment of white attitudes, of the inhumanity of the California prison system, and of the machinations of various agencies of the United States is perhaps, in this relatively subdued language, even more blistering and believable. Not everything is here, not all loose ends are secured, but *Soul on Fire* is worth reading. One should bring to it a hermeneutic of suspicion—and should read *Soul on Ice* first.

Over against Malcolm X (1925–1965) and all of his kin, one must turn at last to that American who has, in spite of his widely publicized human flaws, come in martyrdom to embody sainthood for millions of his contemporaries: Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–1968). There is no better introduction to all the words that King wrote and uttered in his brief, meteoric career as preacher and civil rights leader than *Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, rev. ed., edited by the late James Melvin Washington (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991; xxvii + 702 pages). Washington’s introduction to this truly monumental work helps us to understand the man, his words, and his work in brief compass with careful, critical judgment. Biography of King is a major industry, but few of those who

have written about King have understood him religiously, in his theological development, and so most of them fail to realize him in all of his complexity. An outstanding exception is Frederick L. Downing in *To See the Promised Land: The Faith Pilgrimage of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1986; 297 pages), one of the first attempts to assay a life of King’s magnitude in “faith development” terms. I should disclose that I edited this work for publication, but I can also say as a critic that it succeeds, both in spite and because of the tools and methods of its author, in becoming one of the few useful books about King. In *Malcolm & Martin & America: A Dream or a Nightmare* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1991; xviii + 358 pages), the black theologian James H. Cone offers a political correction rather than a theological assessment of his subjects, but one who has read both Malcolm and King can come to Cone’s conclusion with assent: “We need both of them and we need them together.”

Cone’s first book, *Black Theology and Black Power* (New York: Seabury, 1969; x + 165 pages), is a landmark in this literature—a valiant attempt to administer Christian baptism (or, at any rate, a “christening”) to the ideology of Malcolm and Cleaver. It is also a challenge to white Christians, pricked in their hearts by the suffering of blacks, who cry out, “What shall we do?” For all too many, as Cone writes, this question—“What can I do?”—means, “What can I do and still receive the same privileges as other whites and [this is the key] be liked by Negroes?” Cone’s answer—a deliberate echo of Malcolm X—is, “Nothing.” The only whites Cone is ready to receive—and, indeed, the only blacks—are “radicals,” those “who are prepared to risk life for freedom,” those who, like the abolitionist John Brown, “hate evil and refuse to tolerate it anywhere” (28).

Few indeed are the whites who have pursued John Brown’s radical course to its inevitable end, but more than a few have tried to take up their crosses and follow Jesus down the road to racial repentance and reconciliation. In *Christianity and the Race Problem* (New York: Association Press, 1924; xxii + 280 pages), the eminent missiologist and ecumenist Joseph Houldsworth Oldham (1874–1969) approaches racial issues from a truly global perspective. Oldham’s missionary consciousness dominates the work, but the peculiar American environment is never far from his mind. Oldham is a person of his time and place, and as an advocate of missions he is ready to work with the powers that be, but his work is also an indictment of European colonialism and its cavalier treatment of the “weaker” peoples. In the United States and South Africa of 1924, *apartheid* is a fact of life, and the

prevention of friction and conflict is important to Oldham as a Christian, but he knows that segregation must not and cannot be a final solution to the human problems of race.

There is, and can be, no escape from the fact that the different races have to live in the same world. Whatever social arrangements may be necessary as far as the masses are concerned, it is indispensable that some means should be found by which individuals may surmount the barriers and enter into friendship with members of the other race. Only in this way can real understanding ever be brought about. This task of interpretation is one which it is incumbent on Christians especially to undertake. The Christian spirit, which is essentially missionary and inclusive, can never reconcile itself to any barriers which separate man from man. (175)

A generation later, responding to the crisis arising from the decision of the United States Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* (17 May 1954), the Southern Baptist ethicist Thomas Buford Maston (1898–1988) published *Segregation and Desegregation: A Christian Approach* (New York: Macmillan, 1959; xiv + 178 pages). Maston was a student of H. Richard Niebuhr at Yale, but he is a thoroughgoing fundamentalist in handling the Bible. That makes his constructive case, beginning with his chapter “Biblical Teachings and Segregation,” even more powerful in its plea to white segregationists, for they could not successfully taint Maston with the magic epithet “liberal.” His *The Bible and Race* (Nashville: Broadman, 1959), beamed directly at Southern Baptists of his time, is consequently less useful generally than it might be, but Maston remains a powerful interpreter of the ethical teachings of the Bible in the plain words of the English text.

At the same time, Kyle E. Haselden (1913–1968), an American Baptist minister in West Virginia about to become managing editor of *The Christian Century*, produced *The Racial Problem in Christian Perspective* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959; 2d ed., New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964; 222 pages). Haselden’s aim is to correct the reluctance of the Christian church “to speak directly, courageously, and in its own language” to the tensions of race. His work is, in his own words about another’s reflection,

a salutary rebuke to those Christians who seek the solution of the racial crisis everywhere except in the powers of an applied Christian ethic. This is a rebuke which falls not only upon the ordinary

Christian in his racial behavior but also upon those interpreters of the Christian ethic who consider their task done when they have given the best secular views of these questions. (12–13)

Haselden expects Christians to speak not only to the world at large but also to other Christians, and he expects that Christians will practice what they preach. While his work emerges from its historic *Sitz im Leben*, his indictment and his prescriptions are in no way dated. Those concerned today with the relation of female and male in the church will find Haselden’s exegesis of Gal 3:28 (193–94) extraordinarily pertinent.

Will D. Campbell, born in Amite County, Mississippi, is yet one more Baptist witness to Christian responsibility and resistance, white and black, to realize the gospel in racial reconciliation. Of these three prophets, Campbell is perhaps the most significant and certainly the most pungent. His *Race and the Renewal of the Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962; vi + 90 pages) is a report from the trenches—angry, deeply pessimistic, and profoundly hopeful. *The Failure and the Hope: Essays of Southern Churchmen* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1972; 266 pages), edited by Campbell and James Y. Holloway of Berea College, brings together the testimony of a distinguished and disparate company of committed Christians, from Fannie Lou Hamer to Thomas Merton. Perhaps the most challenging of these essays—all of which come from the occasional journal *Katallagete: Be Reconciled*—is Pete Young’s penetrating report from the “white ghetto” of the North Carolina Ku Klux Klan (204–21). Campbell tells his own story of ministry and misunderstanding on both sides of the racial divide in his most important work, *Brother to a Dragonfly* (New York: Seabury, 1977). Those who know Campbell only in caricature, as the eccentric Reverend Will B. Dunn in Doug Marlette’s comic strip, *Kudzu*, can see this often reluctant but always faithful prophet whole as he recounts the continuing dialogue between his brother and himself.

Campbell is a Baptist of a distinctly “independent” sort, and he is certainly no “Campbellite.” But in *Race and the Renewal of the Church*, he finds his prophetic text to challenge the posture of Christians of all stripes in an editorial, “Race Prejudice” (*Gospel Advocate*, 21 February 1878), by no less an authority than David Lipscomb. Those who find this citation surprising have not met the real David Lipscomb, whose understanding of the gospel has been, since his death in 1917, honored more in the breach than in the observance in Nashville. In *Race and Churches of Christ* I have included the extensive correspondence between S. E. Harris, E. A. Elam, and Lipscomb

in “The Negro in Worship,” which appeared in the *Gospel Advocate* in 1907. Lipscomb would not countenance the separation of Christians in worship on the basis of race, but his faithful teaching did not survive him in the *Advocate* or in the institution that bears his name. Richard T. Hughes tells some of the story of race relations among Churches of Christ in chapter 12 (270–306) of *Reviving the Ancient Faith: The Story of Churches of Christ in America* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), but there is much more of the tale to be told. It is a story of heroism and shame. In volume 4 of his continuing saga, *The Search for the Ancient Order* (Germantown, Tenn.: Religious Book Service, 1987; viii + 409 pages), covering the period 1919–1950, Earl Irvin West celebrates the missionary accomplishments of George Philip Bowser, Marshall Keeble, Luke Miller, Richard Nathaniel Hogan, and some of the whites who helped them (235–56). Only in three sentences addressing the failure of the Southern Practical Institute in 1920 does West indirectly touch on the tragic context of the triumphs he recounts (253).

Annie Clay Tuggle (1890–1976) is an eyewitness to this event and many others, and the title of her autobiography, *Another World Wonder* (Perris, Calif.: private printing, 1974), is an apt description of the book and its subject. In telling her own story, Tuggle tells the story of black Churches of Christ in a straightforward, unaffected, unliterary voice that does not fail to touch and rend the heart. She knows the tragedy and the triumph at first hand, and while her instincts are fully as apologetic as those of Earl West, she knows that the tragedy must not be ignored. She is circumspect about the “misunderstanding” that brought down the Southern Practical Institute in 1920, but she does not conceal her grief. Those who have the opportunity to turn the pages of this rare volume—my copy has slipped away into some other collection—have the honor to commune with a true “witness for the truth.” Tuggle is not a scholar or an author, but her work is a living testimony and an indispensable primary source.

Annie Tuggle was educated at Silver Point Christian Institute, founded by the courageous, charismatic, and completely independent George Philip Bowser (1874–1950). In *Undying Dedication: The Story of G. P. Bowser* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1985; 105 pages), R. Vernon Boyd chronicles the struggles of this indomitable and intellectual preacher, teacher, printer, and editor. Bowser founded and attempted to maintain several short-lived schools, working entirely—except once, in the debacle of 1920—outside the plantation of white patronage. In 1902, 1903, or 1905 (depending on whose account one reads) Bowser began publishing *Christian Echo*, a “gospel paper” for black Churches of Christ, and continued it inter-

mittently as he was able throughout his life, finally passing the torch to his protégé, Richard Nathaniel Hogan (1902–1996), in the late 1940s. Only scraps of this most precious primary source survive in libraries and private hands. Only three library collections hold any issues of the *Echo* before 1950, and those holdings begin only in 1939. The material, with an issue from 1935 that survives in a private collection, has now been preserved on microfilm by the American Theological Library Association. Study of this treasure will be necessary to an understanding of Bowser and his work.

Bowser’s great contemporary Marshall Keeble is far better known among whites, but not better understood. Julian E. Choate’s hagiography, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: A Biography of Marshall Keeble* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1968), must be read with a hermeneutic of suspicion, but in that light it is often a revealing, if unwitting, analysis of the machinations of white power. One of Keeble’s most important white patrons, Benton Cordell Goodpasture (1895–1977), edited *Biography and Sermons of Marshall Keeble, Evangelist* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1931; 102 pages), which presents a series of sermons transcribed by professional stenographers in Keeble’s 1931 campaign in Valdosta, Georgia. This slender volume gives us Keeble’s preaching in—more or less—his own words at the height of his power, and it also offers, in Goodpasture’s uncommonly and unconsciously candid introduction, a portrait of Keeble through the spectacles of his white patrons. Keeble’s relations with whites are, inevitably, ambiguous. He became president of Nashville Christian Institute, offsetting and permanently disabling Bowser’s independent efforts, and he was the nominal editor of *Christian Counselor* (1939–1950), a journal plainly designed by the Gospel Advocate Company as a counterpoint to *Christian Echo*. In my brief essay “Brother Keeble: Notes Toward an Understanding,” which prefaces the Keeble texts I have collected in *Race and Churches of Christ*, I have begun to explore this ambiguity and its consequences. Marshall Keeble is not Uncle Tom; he is not Martin Luther King; he is, not so simply, Marshall Keeble, an admirer of “Mr. Booker T. Washington” and a close reader of the English Bible. Until we can understand him and appreciate him for what he really is, we shall not reconcile the races to one another in the Churches of Christ.

One of those who came to school to Marshall Keeble in the Nashville Christian Institute and traveled with Keeble as a “preacher boy” was an ambitious twelve-year-old from Montgomery, Alabama, named Fred D. Gray. From NCI young Gray went to Alabama State College and from there to Case Western Reserve University, where he studied law. Gray remained, as his mentor intended, a

preacher in Churches of Christ, but he also became something that Keeble could not conceive: the attorney who represented Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., the Montgomery Improvement Association, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and many other persons and organizations related to the American movement for civil rights. Fred Gray tells his story in *Bus Ride to Justice: Changing the System by the System* (Montgomery, Ala.: Black Belt, 1995; xvi + 400 pages). It is the story of a frank and faithful follower of the Lord Jesus Christ who is also the single person who may have done more than any other individual to destroy *de jure* segregation in the United States. In 1974, after he was instrumental in merging the two congregations in Tuskegee, Alabama, Gray became an elder of the Tuskegee Church of Christ. For him it was a crowning moment that brought together his great, consuming passions.

Not only was I able to destroy segregation in government, education, and transportation, but also in the church. My ministerial work has been a complement to my legal work, and the legal work has been supplemented by my ministerial work. They have worked hand-in-hand. (260)

Fred Gray, who knew intimately both Marshall Keeble and Martin Luther King Jr., and loves and reveres them both, stands and writes within the framework constructed by all of this literature. One can do no better than to say, to his readers and successors, "Go thou and do likewise."

DON HAYMES is editor of the American Theological Library Association Monograph Series and is a member of the Church of Christ in Evanston, Illinois.