

To the Reader:

It is a pleasure and a privilege for Black Ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in partnership with Concordia Publishing House, to bring to you some classic books about the history of LCMS Black Ministry.

This year, we are thanking God for 140 years of black ministry in our church. These resources are intended to help you understand the history of black ministry in the LCMS and to help you grow in your appreciation for the work of our forefathers and foremothers on whose shoulders LCMS Black Ministry was launched. These resources tell the history of Sunday School classes, Christian school education, and Word-and-Sacrament congregations gathered around the historic confessions of the Lutheran Reformation: grace, faith, and Scripture in Christ—to the glory of God alone! It is the history of how the Gospel message changed the lives of untold thousands of black Americans only fourteen years from enslavement and thirty years from the founding of the LCMS. It is a history of great joy and immense struggles, as black Lutherans celebrated their heritage as Lutherans and stood up for their Lutheran equality and inclusion.

As this early mission work unfolded, the narrative was recorded in the verbiage and language of the time. These resources are the written history of those who lived in a segregated, prejudiced, and xenophobic society, especially in the Deep South, where most of LCMS Black Ministry started before spreading throughout the United States.

Neither I nor Concordia Publishing House endorse, embrace, or approve of such language. But we discussed the historic nature of the works and are reproducing these resources in the language of the writers. As the leader of LCMS Black Ministry, I asked Concordia Publishing House to make these books available again. My prayer is that you find in these books the historic narrative of a great number of Lutheran pastors, educators, and laypeople who left us the legacy of black Lutheranism, rich in its heritage.

We stand on the shoulders of those courageous, faithful men and women who have preserved our faith and heritage as Lutherans. They have left us a legacy that we must courageously fulfill for the future, for new generations of laypeople, educators, deaconesses, pastors, and other church workers for centuries to come—to witness of the glorious Gospel of our Savior, Jesus Christ, God's salvation for everyone who believes it.

As we look back 500 years to the start of the Reformation and at 140 years of LCMS Black Ministry, we can see we are at the threshold of a Reformation for these new generations to come. Like Drs. Rosa Young, Robert King, Richard Dickinson, Julius Jenkins, and others, we have a mission to accomplish. May God gift us with His Spirit to faithfully engage the world with His love, mercy, and grace in Christ.

Now, “may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope” (Romans 15:13).



Sincerely, serving Christ and His Church,

Rev. Dr. Roosevelt Gray Jr.
Director, Black Ministry
LCMS Office of National Mission

June 7, 2017

Roses and Thorns

**The Centennial Edition
of
Black Lutheran Mission and Ministry
in
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod**

**BY
RICHARD C. DICKINSON**

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To my lovely wife,
Blanche,
whose faith, love, trust,
and coercion
made this
volume possible.

We have come over a way
that with tears has been watered,
We have come treading our path
through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
'til now we stand at last,
Where the bright star
of our bright star is cast.

—James Weldon Johnson
Negro National Anthem

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CENTENNIAL REFLECTIONS

One hundred years of faith, Lord,
Of saving faith in Thee,
Who gave your Son to save us
And set all mankind free.
We do believe your promise
Of heaven as our home.
Washed in the blood of Jesus,
Thy saints have overcome.

One hundred years of mercy
In Word and Sacraments,
Of humble service rendered
To prove our heart's intent.
Imperfect though our offerings
Its yours we have become.
Forgiveness, Lord, in Jesus,
And we have overcome.

Like Israel, God's chosen,
We look back through the years
To cruel human bondage,
In hopelessness and tears.
We sing of His deliverance
By grace and grace alone.
His mighty arm brought freedom,
Praise God, we've overcome.

One hundred years of hope, Lord,
In this, a weary land,
Where Satan holds such power,
And rules on every hand.
Reveal again your strength, Lord,
The powers to disarm!
Your Son has won such battles,
Your saints can overcome.

Foreword

Religion expresses the essence of the Black experience in America. The moving eloquence of the old spirituals captures in an unforgettable way the depths of an encounter with humanity that stretches from the tranquil shores of ancient Africa to the hurried bustle of the contemporary world. To be sure, Black religion's forms have varied tremendously, from the earnest late-night secrecy of slaves, "sneaked" meetings, to the glittering fashion-plate splendor of Sunday social gatherings. Yet beneath this diversity in form and style lies a more fundamental unity, that shared sense of constant struggle so poignantly articulated in James Weldon Johnson's immortal lines:

Sing a song
Full of the faith
That the dark past
Has taught us.
Sing a song
Full of the hope
That the present
Has brought us.

Faith born of the strength gained in the struggle for survival. Hope nurtured in the optimism shaped by the ability to endure. Out of the depths of often unbelievable suffering and oppression, Black people fashioned an undying spirituality. It is this most basic current that gives to Black religion its great power and strength.

Roses and Thorns recounts a critical part of that bittersweet legacy. It is not only the story of struggle through adversity, but it is also the tale of success through perseverance. In a whole variety of very meaningful ways, the passionate account that follows captures the spirit of James Weldon Johnson's verse: "We Have Come." Nothing could better express the triumphant assertion that despite adversity and trial, Black Lutherans have

come to the place where they can begin to make their presence felt. Faith and Hope. Without faith, there is nothing. With hope, there is the possibility of everything. This book is part of the celebration of that coming, of having traversed the rites of passage and of emerging into the dawning of a new day. In its own small way, that message speaks lucidly to the contemporary status of all Black Americans.

By focusing upon the struggles of Black Christians in a largely white denomination, the Reverend Dr. Richard Dickinson demonstrates the real significance of an aspect of Black religion too often overlooked. This book makes it clear that a substantial group of Blacks, in city and on farms scattered across the United States, have chosen to make their fight from inside the American mainstream. Normally, we think of Black churches as operating in virtual independence, shielded from outside interference by the cloak of institutional and legal autonomy. Yet this is clearly not all that there has been to Black religion. Dr. Dickinson speaks eloquently to the reality that the religious experiences of Blacks operating within white churches draw just as deeply from that common well-spring of irrepressible Black spirituality as any other church group. In so doing, Dr. Dickinson's work serves to broaden our perception of the spectrum of Black church life and makes a real contribution to its careful study and analysis.

Roses and Thorns has special relevance to our understanding of contemporary social problems because it addresses the issue of how Blacks can sustain their identity while working within largely white institutions. For if Black Lutherans can retain their sense of Blackness, then most certainly Black identity need not be surrendered in the name of gaining equal access to American society. Dr. Dickinson deftly illuminates the extent to which Black Lutherans succeeded in sustaining their spiritual identity. Despite virtual envelopment, they struggled, they fought, they survived and they maintained their links to the larger Black community. Their story is thus a microcosm of the challenge facing Blacks in America, the struggle both for participation in the mainstream and for recognition of a distinctive identity. Balancing these often contradictory goals remains a paradoxical dilemma. The struggle Dr. Dickinson unfolds sheds significant new light on how that battle must be fought and suggests strategies for how it can be won.

The book possesses a number of real strengths. It is scholarly and authoritative. It employs a variety of hitherto neglected sources in very creative ways. But its most notable contribution to Black religious history emerges from the Reverend Dickinson's consistently successful effort to tell the story of Black Lutherans within the context of larger events. All too often in-house church histories degenerate into narrowly focused exercises in myth making. What distinguishes this volume is its careful attention to historical accuracy and its consistent emphasis upon joining the narrative to the world outside the church's doors. As a result, Dr. Dickinson provides us with a unique and valuable perspective on the evolution of an important portion of the Black religious experience in America. By combining careful and patient archival research with a broadly based series of oral interviews, the Reverend Dr. Dickinson has preserved for posterity some otherwise irretrievable aspects of Black religious history.

One can only hope that the future will bring more such serious scholarly efforts. As we accumulate additional studies of other phases of Blacks' religion, we shall begin to be able to see this religious experience as a whole, with all of its variations and contradictions. Human experience seen whole is the goal of all real scholarship. *Roses and Thorns* promises to make an important contribution to that never ending quest.

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Introduction

This book is an outgrowth of the desire on the part of the Black Lutheran Centennial Committee to have an appropriate publication for the occasion of the Black Lutheran Centennial. Since the 50th-anniversary publication was written by Dr. C. F. W. Drewes and mirrored the work from the white worker's perspective, the Centennial Committee resolved to strive to have the Centennial publication written by a Black worker who would reflect on the work from the Black worker's perspective.

The title for this publication was not chosen willfully. It came to the author by accidental revelation. During the working life of the Centennial Committee, the Reverend DeWitt Robinson, a member, was honored by Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Ill., now Ft. Wayne, Ind., and awarded the degree of doctor of divinity. At the meeting following this great occasion and amid the chorus of congratulations, it was revealed that this action by the Springfield seminary left only one member of the committee without a doctorate.

When this fact became clear, it was immediately moved with proper second and passed unanimously that the Reverend Kermit Ratcliffe be awarded, immediately, by the committee in session, the honorary degree of T. D. (Temporary Doctorate), with all the honors accruing thereto; that this honorary degree be effective when, and only when, the committee is in session; that when any of the other "Doctors" around the table fail to accord such honor to the Reverend Dr. Kermit Ratcliffe during the course of the committee sessions, they be censured severely and that their own honors be withdrawn temporarily.

The Centennial Committee, in "bull session" assembled, began to add up the years of service around the table. It was noted that Dr. Hunt and Dr. Robinson, between them, had almost 90 years of service to the Lutheran Church. It was further noted that Dr. Robinson had served extended periods under noted

Superintendent E. A. Westcott, of the Alabama Field, 12 years; and under Superintendent G. M. Kramer, of the Louisiana Field, 15 years. He had also served under district mission executives of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod 18 years. Dr. Hunt then made the observation, "It ain't been no bed of roses." Someone quipped, "That's where you are wrong, it's been quite a bed of roses. It is just that they forgot to clip the thorns." That quip always came to mind as I tried to think of the direction for this study. When I considered the rose in Luther's coat of arms and the rose on the official emblem of the Black Lutheran Centennial, the direction was clear.

If this book seems slightly bitter and pessimistic in places, remember that many of my interviewees felt that it should have been entitled, "Thorns and Roses," or "The Rose Has Many Thorns." I tried to find one word which would express the sentiments of the workers in Black ministry as they reflected on their relationships and accomplishments over the years. The word expressed more often than any other was "struggle." The reactions ranged from "joyful to disappointing." "One Hundred Years of Struggle" would have been a title which could have aptly described, in summary, the sentiments of the workers interviewed.

The priceless treasures and riches of God's grace in Christ Jesus our Savior are the roses which the Lord has entrusted to the Lutheran Church. In this church, these precious roses are clearly identified for what they are and the blessings they bestow. In this church, the means of grace, working through the Word of God and the blessed sacraments, are taught and administered as Christ Himself directed. The jewels of the Reformation, "Scripture alone, grace alone, faith alone," are ever in public view. It is to this church, a repository of all His riches, that the Lord Christ gives the great commission, "Go ye and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

The thorns appear when Black people strive to partake of these precious jewels of Salvation, these priceless riches of God in Christ Jesus. If one views the Lutheran Church as a ship carrying this precious cargo and the world as the raging sea, the picture becomes clearer when the Blacks are seen as the unsaved, in the water and pleading for help. Lifelines are thrown

overboard, but they are rose vines with many thorns. Some persons, with guilty consciences, perhaps, throw some lifeboats overboard, and many Blacks climb into them. Some of the boats are tethered to the ship with thorny vines. Others have no connection or anchor whatsoever and soon drift away and are lost in the storm.

The people on the ship sing cheerful songs to the people who are in the lifeboats and hanging on to the lifelines. They also pass down to them choice portions of the riches on board, but they will not lend a hand to help bring them on board. If they want to come aboard, they must climb the vines, striving to avoid the dangerous and deadly thorns. The thorns are plentiful. Some are imposing. Others are visible, while some are skillfully camouflaged, but piercing, nonetheless.

The thorn of "racism" is imposing as it is in all societies which are polarized along racial lines. Since the Lutheran Church is considered a white denomination, "white racism" is the most pronounced. This is the thorn which is frustrating every experiment at "integration" within the congregations of the Synod. It is an unruly evil which is enthroned in the church, demanding and often receiving more loyalty and devotion than handbooks, Bibles, and the clear directives of Christ Jesus Himself.

The thorn of "despotism" is also manifest. Often Black ministry in the Lutheran Church has been the victim under the reign of many superintendents, who were like the "riding bosses" of slavery times. These men were armed with humiliating, dehumanizing, and emasculating mission policies, which gave them power and authority almost unlimited over the workers. Other thorns, clearly visible, could be listed, such as paternalism, bigotry, hostility, rejection, ignorance, prejudice, and discrimination. Those who have come aboard the ship despite the many thorns and obstacles join in full agreement with the chorus:

"We have come over a way
that with tears has been watered
We have come treading our path
through the blood of the slaughtered"

This book is not intended as a history book, although it does record much that is historical fact. It is extremely narrow in its

perspective relative to Black Lutheranism in the U. S. A., and that was purposefully done for two reasons. The Centennial Celebration essentially narrowed the presentation to the Lutheran synods affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America and lack of time and resources prevented me from expanding the study to include other Lutheran bodies such as the American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to a number of persons for taking time to read the manuscript and especially for their helpful criticism; to my beloved wife, Blanche, and to my children, who have endured the silent and absent husband and father these last few months; to the members of my congregation, The Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, for granting to me the leave of absence to do this work; to my secretary, Mrs. Evelyn Colbert, who typed the manuscript; to Mrs. Mary Carlisle, who edited the document and refused to accept payment; to Dr. Armstead Robinson, for his technical assistance and the Foreword; and to the Black Lutheran Centennial Committee, whose names are listed below. It was they who stimulated me, by mandatory decree, to do this work.

THE BLACK LUTHERAN CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE:

Dr. Joseph G. Lavalais, Chairman
Dr. Peter R. Hunt
Dr. DeWitt Robinson
Dr. Willis Wright
Dr. August Suelflow
The Reverend Kermit Ratcliffe (T. D.)
Dr. Richard C. Dickinson,
Secretary and Executive Director

CHAPTER 1

Black Lutheranism Before the Synodical Conference

In this chapter, we propose to investigate Lutheranism among Negroes before the Synodical Conference accepted responsibility for the work. We shall investigate the dynamics which forced a form of integrated worship upon the master-slave society of the antebellum South. The study leads to white Lutherans in slave territories, for the religion of the master was usually the religion of the slave. This chapter will investigate, very gracefully, the principle which established the responsibility for the religious life of the slave upon the master, but the religious life of the freedman was his own responsibility. Operating on the basis of this principle, white Lutheran synodical structures of Reconstruction years were eager to control Black Lutheran endeavors, but failed to give financial and other support. This chapter will also take the reader to the counties of Cabarrus, Rowan, Catawba, Alamance, Guilford, and Mecklenburg, in North Carolina, where the roots of Lutheranism grow deep in many Black families. Many can trace their Lutheran heritage back into slavery times. We will also investigate the struggle of these families to retain their Lutheran heritage with and without the support of the white Lutheran Church.

Although we propose to write relative to the 100 years of organized Lutheran outreach to Black people of the United States through the organized, deliberate efforts of The Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America and of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, one must remember that there were many Black Lutherans among the slave population of the South. The Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America was not formed until 1872. It did not begin a program of mission outreach to the Black communities until 1877, more than a decade after the Civil War and the emancipation.

Many of the slaveholders were Christian and became

interested in the spiritual welfare of their slaves. All masters monitored the religious aspects of their slaves in order that they might know and determine the religious teachings to which they were exposed. During the last few years of slavery, about the only years of Lutheran involvement, owing to late migration of Lutherans to this country, the religious life of the slaves was more closely monitored than ever before.

Under Toussaint L'Ouverture and his successor, Dessallines, slaves in Haiti had led a successful revolution against their masters and the governments which had supported them. They had established a Negro-controlled nation in which all inhabitants were free.

In the summer of 1800, inspired by the success of Toussaint L'Ouverture, Gabriel Prosser, of Henrico County, Virginia, organized about 1,000 slaves, armed them with clubs, knives, and guns and marched on Richmond. He had planned to take the arsenal there, arm his men, and begin the slaves' battle for freedom. Nothing seemed to go right in this rebellion. Even the Lord didn't cooperate. On the day appointed, there occurred one of the heaviest rain storms in the history of the area, washing out roads and bridges. There was no way for Prosser's ragged army to get to Richmond. Maybe it was all for the better. Two slaves had revealed the details of the plot to the authorities and the soldiers were waiting for them in Richmond.

Slave revolts were numerous in those days, and agitation from anti-slavery groups was mounting. Herbert Aptheker documents the existence of some 250 slave conspiracies, uprisings, or revolts. His records do not include the runaways, individually or in groups, nor the steady attrition of the "Underground Railroad."

Benjamin Quarles says, "No revolt equaled that of Nat Turner in its consequences. A slave preacher in Southampton County, Virginia, Turner's actions were inspired by his interpretation of the Old Testament and his belief that he was God's chosen instrument to lead the slaves out of the house of bondage. Turner's preparation consisted of prayer and looking for a sign from on high, rather than in the enlisting of a large force. Hence, on the August evening, 1831, when he set out on his crusade, his total party numbered not more than eight. They began by killing Nat's master and his family. Pushing through the countryside, they gathered additional recruits, eventually numbering seventy.

Taken by surprise, with their houses open in Virginia's summer weather, nearly sixty whites were seized and put to death. After forty-eight hours, the rebellion came to an end. The aroused whites had mobilized volunteer companies and called out the militia. 'The Prophet,' as Turner was called by the slaves, was caught and sent to the gallows, along with nineteen other culprits. The antebellum South never forgot Nat Turner." (Quarles, *Negro in the Making of America*, p. 82)

Although the slaves could not read, they were not unlearned, because they were quick to master the teachings of the Scriptures. They also showed an uncanny quality for applying these sacred teachings to their position and condition. It is here that one can easily discern the difference of emphasis between the Black church and the white denominations. In its teachings, the white church emphasized "The Curse of Ham" and Calvary, where Christ died for the forgiveness of sins. The Black church was determined to stay at the Red Sea until Pharoah's entire host was drowned beneath the waves.

The masters monitored the religious teachings to which their slaves were exposed, because the clandestine, unauthorized Black preacher could easily foment rebellion right out of the pages of God's Holy Word. The case of Nat Turner, the "prophet," demonstrated the truth of this statement. Paul Lawrence Dunbar could capture the spirit of a moment, serious though it might be, and reduce it to comedy in his dialect poetry. Imagine the clandestine, unauthorized Black preacher in a secret rendezvous with a small party of slaves who wanted to hear a sermon on the theology of deliverance, as you read Dunbar's poem.

AN ANTE-BELLUM SERMON

We is gathahed hyeah, my brethahs,
In dis howlin' wildaness,
Fu' to speak some words of comfo't
To each othah in distress.
An' we chooses fu' ouah subjic'
Dis—we'll 'splain it by an' by;
"An' de Lawd said, 'Moses, Moses,'
An' de man said, 'Hyeah am I."

Now ole Pher'oh, down in Egypt,
Was de wuss man evan bo'n,
An' he had de Hebrew chillun
Down dah wukin' in his co'n
'T well de Lawd get tiahed o' his foolin',
An' sez he: 'I'll let him know—
Look Hyeah, Moses, go tell Pher'oh
Fu' to let dem chillun go.'

"An' ef he refuse to do it,
I will make him rue de houah,
Fu' I'll empty down in Egypt
All de vials of my powah."
Yes, he did—an' Phero'oh's ahmy
Wasn't wuth a ha'f a dime;
Fu' de Lawd will he'p his chillun,
You kin trust him evah time.

An' yo' enemies may 'sail you
In de back an' in de front;
But de Lawd is all aroun' you,
Fu' to ba' de battle's brunt.
Dey kin fo'ge yo' chains an' shackles
F'om de mountains to de sea;
But de Lawd will sen' some Moses
Fu' to set his chillun free.

An de lan' shall hyeah his thundah,
Lak a blas' f'om Gab'el's ho'n,
Fu' de Lawd of host is mighty
When he girds his ahmer on.
But fu' feah some one mistakes me,
I will pause right hyeah to say,
Dat I'm still a-preachin' ancient,
I ain't talkin' 'bout to-day.

But I tell you, fellah christuns,
Things'll happen mighty strange;
Now, de Lawd done dis fu' Isrul,
An' his ways don't nevah change,
An' de love he showed to Isrul

Wasn't all on Isrul spent;
Now don't run an' tell yo' mastahs
Dat I's preachin' discontent.

'Cause I isn't; I'se a-judgin'
Bible people by deir ac's;
I'se a-givin' you de Scriptuah,
I'se a-handin' you de fac's.
Cose ole Pher'oh b'lieved in slav'ry,
But de Lawd he let him see,
Dat de people he but bref in,—
Evah mothah's son was free.

An' dah othas thinks lak Pher'oh,
But dey calls de Scriptuah liar,
Fu' de Bible says "a servant
Is a-worthy of his hire."
An' you cain't git roun' nor throo dat,
An' you can't git ovah it,
Fu' whatevah place you git in,
Dis hyeah Bible too'll fit.

So you see de Lawd's intention,
Evah sence de worl' began,
Was dat His almighty freedom
Should belong to evah man,
But I think it would be bettah,
Ef I'd pause again to say,
Dat I'm talkin' 'bout ouah freedom
In a Bibleistic way.

But de Moses is a-comin',
An' he's comin', suah and fas'
We kin hyeah his feet a-trompin',
We kin hyeah his trumpit blas'.
But I want to wa'n you people,
Don't you git too brigity;
An' don't you git to braggin'
'Bout dese things, you wait an' see.

But when Moses wif his powah
Comes an' sets us chillun free,
We will praise de gracious Mastah
Dat has gin us liberty;
An' we'll shout ouah halleluyahs,
On dat mighty reck'nin' day,
When we'se reco'nized ez Citiz'-
Huh uh! Chillun, let us pray!

(Dunbar, *Works of . . .*)

This "Antebellum Sermon" clarifies the issue of why it was common practice for both Blacks and whites, slaves and masters, to worship together in the same church building although observing a segregated seating arrangement. A common practice, in many churches, especially in the churches of the Northern states, was to mark a certain section of pews with the letters "B. M." meaning Black members. Here is where the Black members were supposed to sit. If this can be called integration, there was more integrated public worship during slavery than is found in the country today.

In some instances, separate churches were built for slaves where white pastors, or approved colored preachers, were in charge. Many drawings of that period show the white masters seated on the platform listening to every word of their Black preacher's sermons. In many white churches in the South, there were long galleries set apart for the use of the slaves, in others, there were pews screened off for them.

The institutional patterns of American slavery were established in the islands of the West Indies, where the Africans were subjected to "the Break-in System." Whites tried to strip Blacks of their African heritage and culture, including language and religion. It was in the West Indies that the organized churches began a systematic effort to bring the Christian faith to the African slaves. The Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts carried on work in Bermuda, Barbados, and Jamaica. After the middle of the 18th century, the Moravians, who also kept alive the Protestant missionary impulse, began work in these British Caribbean islands.

The first organized effort to give religious instruction to the

slaves in the American Colonies was made in 1702, in South Carolina, by the London Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. The Moravians began their work among the Negroes in South Carolina in 1738. Later the Methodists and the Baptists became involved in this work. This latter group, the Baptists and Methodists, were the most successful. In 1859, there were 175,000 Blacks who claimed membership in the Baptist Church. In the Methodist Church, in that same year, there were 215,000.

So successful were the Baptists and Methodists in their mission outreach to the slaves that the Black church, today, is basically Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal. Booker T. Washington is quoted as saying that the religion of the Negro is Baptist. Many Negroes are Methodist. When he found a Negro who was a member of any other denomination, such as Presbyterian or Lutheran, Washington knew that some white person had been messing with that man's religion.

The Lutheran Church was not numerically strong in the slave states. The Lutheran Salzburger, who settled in Georgia as early as 1734, were opposed to human slavery. No reasons have been stated for their opposition, but by those who are familiar with German tradition many guesses have been ventured. Since the Germans themselves are traditionally such hard workers and are so meticulous about how their work should be done, the usual shoddy field work of slaves would have been more frustrating than helpful. Most Lutheran slave-holders lived in the states of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee. It is from the Lutheran churches in these states that the following information has been gleaned.

Almost from its beginning, the North Carolina Synod of the Lutheran Church recognized its responsibility for the spiritual care of the members of the Black race who, under the institution of slavery, were so closely connected with the people who made up its congregations. At its 12th Convention (1815) the following was adopted, "Resolved, that it is our duty to preach the Gospel to Negroes, and, after proper instruction, to admit them to all the means of grace of the church, and for this purpose to make room for them in our churches." It was further declared, that "masters are, in love, to grant liberty to their slaves for this purpose, and herewith it is placed on record that it is the duty of masters to have them instructed in Christianity."

Beginning in 1818, and for several years thereafter, the

number of slave accessions was reported. Fifty slave baptisms were reported in 1819, forty in 1820, seven slaves and one Indian in 1822, and in 1824, three slaves. No further reports were given separately from 1820 forward, but the practice of receiving slaves and allowing them to worship with their masters was continued until after the close of the Civil War.

In 1860 the Synod of Georgia had 312 confirmed members, of whom 54 were Black. In 1840 the South Carolina Synod had 1,692 confirmed members. Seventy of them were Black. The North Carolina Synod seems to have demonstrated more genuine concern for the confirmed Black slave members. At Old Organ Church, in Rowan County, North Carolina, the marks of the old section of the Lutheran graveyard can still be seen.

After the Civil War there was a mass exodus of Negroes out of the churches of their former masters. The Black Lutherans were no exception to this rule. Comparing the figures from the South Carolina Synod for 1862 and 1868 will demonstrate the magnitude of this phenomenon. In 1862 the South Carolina Synod reported 4,120 white members and 954 Black, or slave, members. In 1868 the figures reported were 3,289 white confirmed members and only 144 Blacks. This represents a decline in membership on the part of the white constituency of approximately 20 percent. The Black confirmed constituency had declined an unbelievable 85 percent from 1862 to 1868, or from slavery to freedom.

Many reasons have been advanced for the mass exodus of Blacks from the Lutheran churches of their former masters and the apparent disregard of the Lutheran churches for a soul conservation program to retain, or regain, their fallen Black members. One Southern Lutheran writer said, "One reason was the disorganized condition of the Southern Lutheran Church after the war. Another was the paucity of her ministers and the poverty of her members. A third, he states, was the urgent need for looking after and caring for her white members, who were relatively in the majority and were widely dispersed. These groups of scattered sheep demanded her pastoral care and they were wanting the men and the means to raise up suddenly a colored ministry for the colored people."

Another writer says, "The poverty of the white people made it scarcely possible at this time to support churches for themselves, and all missionary work was relatively suspended;

and this was at the very time when the Negroes temptation was greatest to break away from all religious restraints and indulge in sinful excesses." Dr. Christopher Drewes writes, "They fell prey to noisy revivalists."

With the clear perspective of hindsight gained over a period of one hundred years, it is abundantly clear that the South was embarking upon a program to establish a social caste system within the country based on color, one Black and the other white, separate and unequal. The church, regardless of her theologies, was in the vanguard in the establishment of the social caste system for the country. Rationalizing that the spiritual life of the slaves was the responsibility of the master during slavery and had only become the responsibility of the church-at-large after freedom, the church could say, evidently with no perils of conscience, that she was not prepared to assume this new and unprecedented responsibility.

Although the Lutheran Church may soothe its conscience by saying that the Black members forsook their fellowship, it is equally true that the Lutheran Church forsook its obligation to support its Black members in this time of crisis. It is hard for Lutherans, who boast that their church is as broad and as narrow as the Bible, or that, "When scripture has spoken, the case is decided," to admit that their beloved church was implicated in stretching the truth, or winking at Scriptural transgressions. But when the mandates of God's Holy Word were in conflict, or even constant tension, with the mandates of the racial caste system in the country, racism inevitably won the victory.

In his address to the Georgia Synod in 1866, Dr. D. M. Gilbert said, "Suddenly and without preparation, thrown upon their own resources as they have been, the freed man stands more in need now than ever in the past of our sympathy and aid. Understanding the bad conduct of some, who through ignorance have suffered themselves to be prejudiced against those who have always been their best friends, let us do what we can to have them all treated with kindness and forbearance and to encourage and forward all proper schemes for their advancement and well-being for this world and the world to come."

Four Lutheran synods have been singled out for their activity on behalf of the slaves and freedmen in their areas. Each synod was singled out for a different reason. The Synod of

Georgia reported Black accessions to their membership as late as 1870.

The Synod of South Carolina could boast of producing the first educated Black Lutheran pastor in the U. S. A. A young boy by the name of Daniel Payne was confirmed by the Reverend Dr. John Bachman, Pastor of St. John's Church, Charleston, South Carolina. Daniel Payne was instructed privately by Dr. Bachman, who also sent him to the Lutheran Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to study. He would have been the first Lutheran pastor to be fully educated in one of our Lutheran seminaries and to serve in the Lutheran Church, but because of his race, there was no place for him in the ministry of the Lutheran Church. He turned his talents and abilities to the Methodist Church. He became one of the greatest preachers of his age. He was, perhaps, the greatest Bishop that the A. M. E. Church has ever produced. Libraries, universities, seminaries, schools, and other projects in the Methodist church are named in his honor. Dr. Rosa J. Young, the great Lutheran pioneer in the state of Alabama, graduated from Payne University, a school whose very name honors the memory of this great man. He was a Lutheran, a product of the South Carolina Synod of the Lutheran Church. But because he was Black, he was a stone upon which the white builders refused to build.

The Tennessee Synod is distinguished because it probably produced the first licensed Black Lutheran preacher in the country. Thomas Frye, also called Thomas Smyer, was born on the plantation of George Washington, at Mount Vernon, Virginia. From Mount Vernon he was sold and brought to North Carolina. The legend has it that while he was tending his master's whiskey still near Catawba, North Carolina, he studied the Lutheran Confessions. In 1868 he was licensed to preach by the Tennessee Synod. As far as is known, he was the first Black Lutheran minister to be licensed to preach in the entire country. Owing to his advanced age, however, Thomas Frye was not privileged to preach longer than three months before the Lord called him to his eternal reward.

The North Carolina Synod, organized in 1803, was perhaps the most effective synod in serving its Black constituency through the transition from slave to free, from integrated to segregated worship and church structures. Probably the first Black person to be licensed to preach by the North Carolina