

From The Pulpit

by Rev. Donald M. Clark

DISCOVERY OF LIFE'S MEANING

Text: "Live life, then with a due sense of responsibility, not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life, but as those who do." Eph. 5:15.

IF PARENTS could listen in on their children's bull sessions, I think they'd make an interesting discovery.

The kids are talking and worrying about the same things their fathers and mothers used to talk and worry about when they were in college. The times have certainly changed, but the basic agony--the bittersweet agony of discovering its own truths, which every generation has to go through--is the same as it's always been.

Whether it be called "bittersweet agony" or "authentic thrill," each generation might well seek answer to the question: What is the meaning and purpose of life?

Without that answer, life cannot be lived with a due sense of responsibility.

WHO ARE these who live life as men who do not know the meaning and the purpose of life?

Boredom is a bad guest in any house. A man or woman may become fed up with things and, in a family, with each other.

The waywardness, illness, or death of a loved child may darken life with sorrow or remorse. Sickness, old age, and death are bound to visit the home.

Without knowledge of the meaning and purpose of life, how unattractive, how poverty-stricken in true values such selfish mediocrity becomes.

THEN, THERE are the apathetic. These do not live life with a due sense of responsibility. They play it cool. They don't get excited. And, of course, they never get out on a limb. The burning issues of the day are "too colossal, too impersonal, too remote" to reach them.

When asked, "What's the meaning of it all?" or "What's the meaning and purpose of life?" they are willing to wait and see. They'll take the train that stops. They have no castles in Spain, no objectives to reach, no goals to attain.

These persons will not start any rebellions. They will stir up no revolutions. The tragedy is that they aren't really living.

(To be continued in the next issue.)



REV. D. M. CLARK

Christian Homecoming Week



THE REV. J. L. SIMMONS

MARKING THE first time in the history of the state such an event has been programmed, a Christian Homecoming Week is now in progress at St. James Baptist Church with all local churches participating in the spiritual reaffirmation program.

The unique religious ceremonies, moderated by Rev. J. L. Simmons, Pastor of St. James Baptist Church, began June 19 and sessions are scheduled for every evening at 7:30 through Sunday, June 25.

Rev. J. L. Simmons, 26 years residential pastor in the City of Las Vegas, is realizing a long time dream come true in this program which brings churches of all faith together. Rev. Simmons is presently serving in his 19th year as moderator of The Pride of the West District. He also is now enjoying his 13th year as Chairman of the Moderator Department of the National Baptist Convention of the United States.

Each session is hosted by one of the participating churches with the evening's program including a history of that church. The minister who congregates the most people will be awarded a prize. Pictures of the Congregation are taken nightly.

Rev. Simmons urges everyone to buy a badge and join the parade of the Christian Homecoming Week. It is also his fervent wish that the event will become an annual one.

A CALL TO WORSHIP

Five-Day Revival At Zion

Rev. W. D. Lester, Sr., Staff Member and Director of the Department of Evangelism for Special Activities of the General Board of Evangelism of the Methodist Church, will conduct a five-day Revival at Zion Methodist Church. For 15 years, Rev. Lester has held his present position, working through the Methodist Headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee. To this revival, beginning 7:30 p.m. Sunday, June 25, 1967, he brings over 40 years of religious training, experience and service.

After receiving a basic education in the state of Arkansas, he obtained his religious training at Gammon Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Georgia and Philander Smith College, Little Rock, Ark. Rev. Lester's under-graduate Alma Mater, bestowed the Doctor of Divinity Degree on him in 1952.

LISTED IN Who's Who and Prominent Personalities in The Methodist Church, Rev. Lester's professional positions also include serving as a College Dean, instructor of Math and History, Junior High School Principal, and Oklahoma State Hospital Chaplain.

An energetic and concerned individual, he serves as Director of the United Negro College Fund, President of the Interracial Interdenominational Ministers Alliance, and actively participates in three fraternal organizations--Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Masonic Lodge and the Knights of Pythians Lodge.

Rev. Lester is married to the former J. Beatrice Smith of Pine Bluff, Ark., and is the father of two sons. He is acclaimed as one of the more dynamic religious leaders.

ALTAR CALL

By EMORY G. DAVIS, D. D.
NEGRO PRESS INTERNATIONAL

NO GIFT: BIG WHITE ELEPHANT

The probability of renewal in the organized church is quite remote. Albeit that there are a few isolated examples of "change" in a specific church here and there, to expect across-the-board denominational change is expecting too much.

The Ecumenical Institute, based in Chicago--drawing ministers and lay people from throughout the nation--is dedicated to the proposition that revolution in the church can be achieved by training and developing a few revolutionaries, who, hopefully, will go back to their individual churches and begin the renewal process.

INDICATIVE OF the seeming impossibility of renewal within the structure of a given church denomination is the experience of an Episcopal church group in New York--the Renewal Group--headed by the Rev. Raymond T. Ferris.

He admits that the Episcopal church is "downright conservative... a kind of refuge for people who don't want to face upheaval."

Despite the fact that in two years the group can only account for "a loose association of some 45 Episcopal clerics and laymen" the leader still believes that the church can renew itself, by the prodding of groups such as the Renewal Group, and become "a cutting edge for change."

THE MOST formidable opposition to change is the vested interests in the church body politic. Those who, with their money and influence, have attained places of power and control will always resist and oppose any change that might deplete their power.

The wealthy, for example, who use the power of their money to influence the pastoral selection and the church policy are seldom, if ever, concerned about the kind of renewal that puts the church in the front line of the battles against social injustices.

It is in the metropolitan areas where a vigorous, socially-awakened church could be helpful in solving many of our urban problems. But, here is where the decay is most evident.

The New York group indicates that 11 Episcopal churches in Manhattan and the Bronx, are no longer self-supporting, due to the influx of Negroes and Puerto Ricans. Big, white money from the suburbs supports these "churches" insisting upon maintaining the typical, conservative, middle-class, status-quo traditionalism.

NEGROES IN the inner city are caught in the trap... happy to have "Mr. Charley's big, beautiful, white-elephant church" in which to get happy, but never counting the cost of lost freedom nor the sub-quality leadership.

Inner-city problems require The Altar: Free--free of the usual traditional denomination controls. If dark-skinned people are to be free, it will require a power force more meaningful than the usual hide-bound institutional church.



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