

Army chaplain regains honorable discharge

By *Abdur-Rahman Muhammad*
Special to *Sentinel-Voice*

LANDOVER, Md. (NNPA) — "Today's ceremony is a testimony to the truth that God's millstone of justice may grind slowly, but it grinds exceedingly fine," said Army Chaplain Maj. Gen. David H. Hicks.

Hicks spoke at a solemn and beautifully moving service conducted by the U.S. military to honor the life and work of Henry V. Plummer, the nation's first African-American chaplain in the regular Army.

Plummer was unjustly court-martialed and relieved of his duty at Fort Riley, Kansas, in 1894.

Earlier this year, the Army Board for the Correction of Military Records concluded that racism was a dominant factor in the

events leading up to Plummer's court martial and dismissal from the military. Though the board did not overturn the court-martial, it determined that Plummer be issued an honorable discharge to restore equity.

In the afternoon of July 3, roughly 100 attendees — Plummer descendents, high-ranking military representatives and members of the Committee to Clear Chaplain Plummer — gathered under a small green tent at Plummer's gravesite in the historic Harmony Memorial Park Cemetery in Landover, Md.

"Henry Vinton Plummer lived the last 10 years of his life struggling to accomplish what has been finally realized here: his exoneration," said the Rev. Jerome Fowler, Plummer's great-nephew and chairman of the Committee to Clear Chaplain Plummer. The

committee, which included members of the Prince George's County Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, has been working for the last four years to restore Plummer's reputation.

"Oblivious of the many hurdles and detours that we encountered along the way, I am proud that these men and women [members of the committee] never lost sight of the goal and were instrumental in keeping me focused on the ultimate goal," he said.

Also present was Plummer's great-granddaughter, Olga Plummer-Talley.

"This is the most emotional situation I have ever been in my life," she said.

"It was overwhelming. I felt like I was going to faint. If he [Henry Plummer] were here today, he would say 'God is truly a won-

derful God.'"

After remarks were made, Brig. Gen. Mari Eder presented the honorable discharge papers of Chaplain Plummer, mounted on a beautiful plaque, to Fowler on behalf of Plummer's family.

Eight soldiers then performed the opening and folding of the U.S. flag, while Plummer was honored with a 21-gun salute and the playing of taps.

Finally, Fowler unveiled a bronze grave marker that reflected Plummer's newly recognized status: "Henry Vinton Plummer, U.S. Navy Seaman, 1862-1865, Captain U.S. Army, 1884-1894, First African-American Chaplain, Buffalo Soldiers, 9th Cavalry."

Abdur-Rahman Muhammad writes for Afro Newspapers.

Report: Interracial marriage on rise across America

By *Jim Lobe*
Special to *Sentinel-Voice*

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — The number of interracial marriages in the United States increased more than ten-fold between 1970 and 2000, according to a new report which concludes that U.S. attitudes towards interracial dating and marriage have undergone a marked transformation over the past generation.

Owing in part to increased immigration and higher education levels, the percentage of interracial couples grew from under 1 percent in 2000 to more than 5 percent of the estimated 57 million couples recorded in the 2000 census, according to the report by the Washington-based Population Reference Bureau.

That translated into an increase from roughly 300,000

interracial couples in 1970, to 1.5 million in 1990, to more than 3 million in 2000, according to the 36-page report, "New Marriages, New Families: U.S. Racial and Hispanic Intermarriage."

That trend, which shows no sign of slackening, suggests that the United States is shifting increasingly from a salad bowl — where racial groups maintain their separate identities and resist marrying outside their groups — to an updated melting pot, where they are far more open to relations, including marriage, with people of a difference race.

And interracial marriage means more bi-racial or even multi-racial children. Of the 281 million people enumerated in the 2000 census, more than 2.4 percent, or 7 million people, reported "multiple

race," a figure that the bureau suggested probably understates the actual number.

The 2000 Census was the first in which the "multiple race" category was listed as an option for respondents to check, along with 15 other categories, including 11 Asian and Pacific subgroups.

For purposes of the bureau's new study, intermarriage is defined as interracial — that is, between people from different racial groups, including White (75 percent of the total population), Black (12 percent), Asian and Pacific Islander (4 percent), American Indian (1 percent), "some other race" (almost all Hispanics) (6 percent), or multiple race (2 percent) — or inter-Hispanic — which applied to individuals of Hispanic origin who married a non-Hispanic partner.

Those who identified themselves as Hispanics who could also choose any race constituted a total of 13 percent of the total. (Not all Hispanics chose the some other race [SOR] category.)

Aside from the more than five-fold increase in the percentage of interracial married couples, key findings of the report included:

— The typical interracial couple is a White person with a non-White spouse, while intermarriage between two people from minority racial groups is relatively infrequent.

— Whites and Blacks have the lowest intermarriage rates, while American Indians, Hawaiians, and multiple-race people have the highest. Asians and SOR people fall in-between.

— Black men are more

likely to intermarry than Black women, while Asian women are more likely to intermarry than Asian men. Men and women from other racial groups, on the other hand, are equally likely to intermarry.

— About one-fourth of Hispanic couples are inter-Hispanic, a rate that has been fairly stable since 1980.

— Younger and better-educated people in the U.S. are more likely to intermarry than older and less-educated citizens.

— U.S.-born Asians and Hispanics and foreign-born Whites and Blacks are more likely to intermarry than foreign-born Asians and Hispanics and U.S.-born Whites and Blacks.

— Between 1970 and 2000, the number of children living in interracial families increased nearly fourfold — from 900,000 to 3 million, while the number in inter-Hispanic families increased nearly three-fold, from 800,000 to 2 million.

The study noted that changes in racial attitudes over the last 30 years clearly played a major role in the mushrooming of interracial marriages, which were illegal in most states at the end of the 19th century. As recently as 1945, the legislature of California which, next to Hawaii, has become the

country's most multi-racial state, passed a law that banned marriage between Whites and Negroes, mulattos, Mongolians (which included Chinese and Japanese), and Malaysians.

After World War II, however, the law began to change as U.S. servicemen married Japanese women, and as the civil rights movement began challenging anti-miscegenation laws in the courts. In 1967, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that all such laws were unconstitutional, although it took Alabama until 2000 to repeal its ban.

A late-2003 Gallup survey found that 86 percent of Blacks, 79 percent of Hispanics, and 66 percent of Whites said they would accept their child or grandchild marrying someone of a different race. As recently as 1990, two out of every three Whites said they would oppose any relative marrying a Black person.

Yet another 2003 poll found that 77 percent of respondents had no objection to Blacks and Whites dating each other. The U.S. West, with its population centers and high racial diversity, had twice the proportion of interracial couples (10 percent) as other major regions (5 percent), according to the report. Hawaii, Alaska, California, Nevada, and Oklahoma led the rest of the states.

Interim

(Continued from Page 1) team and staff) are coalescing. I think I bring this whole psychological thing — 'the I know we can again'..." She added, "I think that everyone has addressed what needs correcting. It's now our time to make the plans to do it."

Optimistically, an understatement to her enthusiasm, she added, "I feel like I'm coming back home... It's a different time... I feel good."

With a kindred determination, as interim director of the Urban League chapter, Gaines is ready and able to handle her responsibilities to keep the organization headed in an upward direction.

She has been with the local affiliate since it was started and works in the capacity of Vice President of Programs with emphasis on jobs development and workforce readiness training. Her term as an interim, follows Larry Mosley, who was

also an interim, appointed when the chapter was formed, pending the hiring of a permanent CEO. Mosley left in June to pursue other career interests. "I'm committed to being here for as long as needed until they find the new CEO," Gaines said.

"This is an opportunity to make a contribution," Gaines said. "I'm here to lay the foundation for him or her," she added.

Both organizations are currently in search mode for the top local position. The Urban League is conducting a national search and plans to make a selection sometime in September or October at the latest, according to Gaines. EOB has been on an intensive national search, but after finding no candidates to handle the organizations "special circumstances," it was decided that a contract would be offered for an interim executive manager.

Childs is operating under a 90-day contract with options for two extensions for 60 days each. The job opening is posted on their website, and an administrative spokesperson said that applications are being accepted.

Will the interim, highly experienced, women in charge want to be considered as a candidate for permanent hire to remain in the lead position? Here, there's another contrast: Childs, exuberantly, yes; Gaines, assuredly, no.

Childs has a passion for non-profit organizations, she said, "because of the advocacy."

She has a deep commitment to her work at the agency: "EOB is one of the most unique organizations in Nevada, and Nevada needs us... it's growing fast." When asked if she planned to put her name in for the Executive Director position, she said with no hesitancy, "Yes,

I'm definitely going to apply. So they have some months to look at me."

Gaines, who is retired from her own consulting business, spoke with certainty, "I have been the Vice President of Program Development... I stepped up to the ring to fill the vacancy, but I have no desire to seek or accept the position as CEO."

Gaines said her desire is "to help the new CEO reach his or her goals." She further said, "I think I can help here. I have vision." Most importantly, she said she is happy working with jobs development, ex-offenders assistance programs and motivating youth and adult workers to excel and attain "meaningful employment," and she plans to continue her work after a permanent top leader is hired.

Her choice and conviction is believable when she said, "I love my young people."

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