

Religion And Youth Debated At Symposium

William Lloyd Imes Pleads for a More Educated Christian Ministry

"New Negro" Defined

Youth of Today Higher Type than Ever; Forget Race in Business, the Speaker Advises

Schuyler Talks Politics

By ORRIN C. EVANS

It is undeniably true that the education of ministers of the Negro group is poor, and sometimes absurd, declared the Rev. William Lloyd Imes, of New York City, former pastor of Lombard Street Central Presbyterian church in this city, on last Tuesday evening at the Fifth Annual Educational Symposium of Berean Presbyterian church, Nineteenth and South College avenue, held under the auspices of the Frogs.

The New York clergyman, considered one of the most outstanding and representative ministers of the Negro group in this country, predicted that coming generations would not tolerate, nor place much dependence in a ministry that was unprepared educationally to develop the spiritual life of the Negro.

"Even at its very worst," he stated in developing his subject, "Is the Old Time Religion Good Enough For the New Negro", the racial religious traits of the old time Negro were far from unlovely. There is, however, today a tendency to ignore or undervalue religious life. The old time religion did the best it could under a somewhat limited order."

Defines 'New Negro'

In the opinion of Rev. Imes the 'New Negro' is basically the spiritual expression of the life of an African people, whether on their native soil or elsewhere, depressed from within and oppressed from without, who have revolted against traditional customs and beliefs unless the "whys" and "wherefores" of a quizzical mind are satisfactorily answered.

The "New Negro" is unwilling to accept certain dictums and doctrines with no more substantial stamp of authenticity than that of traditional belief. That, in brief, and in substance, was the definition given the distinctly new American phenomenon, as the cleric aptly put it.

Asserting his belief in the fundamental tenets of religion, and in the supremacy of the Godhead, he condemned hypocrisy and insincerity in the religious life of today, and expressed his conception of religion generally, and Christianity particularly, as embodying four essential characteristics.

"We must have," he said, "salvation as a transformation from wrong to right; sympathy with the world, not an antagonistic or hostile attitude; expression, not repression of joy; and a deliverance of, and not from the world."

"A good many people do not know what religion is all about. Religion makes no attempt to stultify the mind or the intellect, and I believe the 'New Negro' feels the essential physical oneness of the entire world."

Deplores Corruption

Corruption and hypocrisy within the Presbyterian denomination was deplored, and unmercifully flayed by Rev. Imes. Men in high governmental official positions who are known to be communicants of the Presbyterian church were scored viciously by the speaker. The men linked in the recent oil scandal and Presbyterian clergymen who are guilty of discrimination on the basis of race and color were represented as unworthy of their religious affiliations.

What was considered one of the most brutally frank addresses of the evening was that of Mrs. Alice Dun-

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has never known.

"I remember the ministers in the pulpits preaching as vigorously against long skirts as they do today against short skirts," she said.

"I must admit, however, that our young people are just a little bit behind the young people of other races. But I think that the boys and girls of our race have a higher standard of morality than those of other races.

"Modern youth is not going to swallow the stuff that the so-called Victorian age jammed down their throats. The only indictment the older people who complain of youth of today can bring against the youth is that of questioning and searching for the truth. The youth of today cannot see why it isn't correct to call a spade a spade. Youth detests deceit and hypocrisy.

"The whole attitude of America on the sex question has been and is a bitter mistake. Parents have none but themselves to blame for youth getting the wrong viewpoint on sex matters."

In a subtle thrust at the practices of the church she stated that you can't have a lie in church and truth and honesty in business.

"Nor can you," she continued, "have hushing up at home and clean and above-board politics. The youth movement is merely a revolt against the tyranny of lies. We place too much stress upon the non-essentials of life when there are so many big essentials. Youth will eventually save this race of ours."

Political graft, chicanery and corruption formed the structural material about which George S. Schuyler, columnist, satirist and editor, constructed an ironical and satirical tower of iconoclasm.

Prefacing his remarks with the observation that there were just as many "Uncle Toms" today as before emancipation, Mr. Schuyler attributed traffic in graft to both the Republican and Democratic parties.

"The only difference between the 'Uncle Tom' of the days before emancipation and the 'Uncle Tom' of today is that those of today instead of wearing overalls wear tuxedos. This 'New Negro' thing is not new at all. Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Toussaint L'Ouverture were all 'New Negroes' in the sense that they were militant and courageous. That is all that the term 'New Negro' means," Mr. Schuyler said.

"If the Democratic party has practically disfranchised the Negro in the South, the Republican party has conspired in that disfranchisement. If the Democratic party is found to be allied with the Klan in some places, so has the Republican party. If the Democratic party has treated the Constitution as a scrap of paper, so has the Republican party."

Stating that the Negro could not depend upon either of these two parties in Federal politics, he urged the use of whatever political power the Negro possesses independently.

"There are several Negro communities that have it within their power to send a Negro to Congress. In order to do this, however, it is necessary for an independent organization to be formed in each city. To work with the political organizations existent in these cities, is to work with the forces that fatten off crime, gin mills, bawdy houses, gambling dens, bad housing, bad sewage, tyrannical police and crooked officials. No matter how good a Negro may appear to be, if he is the choice of one of these corrupt politi-

cal organizations in any of our cities, he can be depended upon to represent the forces that pay his campaign expenses and buy votes for him out of the filthy money extracted from the degrading forces existent."

He then made a plea for representative and incorruptible champions to organize independent organizations. In an appeal for a repudiation of imperialistic tactics, illustrating with the demand of the withdrawal of the Marines from Haiti, San Domingo and Nicaragua, he concluded his address with a virulent demand for leaders who stood politically for honesty, courage, fidelity and a new social order in which graft would be at a minimum.

No "New Negro"

In a contradictory vein, Mrs. G. Edward Dickerson, speaking on the "New Negro in Business", contended that there was no "New Negro", but insisted that more Negroes were doing things of a constructive nature in the fields of business, art, education and science. She also pointed out that there were more avenues and means of expression for the Negro today than formerly. In a comparison of Negro business of today and forty years ago she stated that the man and woman of today in business was thinking of business as a profession.

"Business men of today are beginning to realize that advertising is the biggest of their business assets. The Negro business man is also beginning to know how to cooperate, link up and touch forces in common with his own. The Negro business man must realize that in the field of business he is fundamentally a business man and not a Negro. Business knows no color."

According to Mrs. Dickerson, there are over 70,000 Negroes doing business in this country today.

In the opinion of Arthur Huff Fauset, a member of the organization sponsoring the meeting, and who presided over the symposium the term "New Negro" is being overworked.

"Youth has decided," said Mr. Fauset, "that since the older folk do not seem able to solve many of the problems of life they are going to attempt the solution."

Children of the Joseph Singler School, Nineteenth and Berks streets, sang several vocal choruses.

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bar-Nelson, Executive Secretary of the National Inter-racial Peace Movement. In an address pregnant with possibilities of being misconstrued Mrs. Nelson defended modern youth, and unequivocally asserted that the youth of the present generation was of as high a type, if not higher, than the world