SHOW US HOW YOU DO IT

MARSHALL KEEBLE AND THE RISE OF BLACK CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE UNITED STATES, 1914–1968

EDWARD J. ROBINSON

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For "my three little girls"—Clarice, Ashley, and Erika—spiritual descendents of Marshall Keeble

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I assume full responsibility for the material in this book. I hope that this work will stir further study and interest in this remarkable evangelist and his understudied religious group.

Show Us How You Do It

Introduction

> Marshall Keeble came preaching and churches sprang up all over the South. G. P. Bowser came preaching and Southwestern Christian College sprang up. That walking-Bible, R. N. Hogan, came preaching and churches sprang up in Texas, Oklahoma, and California.
>
> —Eugene Lawton, *Fasten Your Seatbelts, Turbulence May Be Ahead*

The renowned black preacher Eugene Lawton succinctly captured the impact and import of three of the preeminent evangelists in the history of African American Churches of Christ—Marshall Keeble, George P. Bowser, and R. N. Hogan—when he spoke of their preaching and church building.[1] Lawton acknowledges that Keeble, more than any other person, drove the emergence of black Churches of Christ across the South. While such men as Bowser and Hogan contributed significantly to the rise of black Churches of Christ in the northern and western parts of the United States, neither matched Marshall Keeble's impressive work in the South and beyond. Almost like some divine magician, Keeble seemed to speak black congregations into existence. A careful examination of his singular career reveals what made him the most successful evangelist in the history of African American Churches of Christ, the complex ways in which he accomplished this, and how white Christians played roles in the origins and expansion of black Churches of Christ. Beyond these matters, such a study uncovers the contributions of Keeble's converts—his "sons"—in the stabilization of African American congregations in the South. Finally, it reveals to what degree altruism or racism supplied the impetus for the rise of black Churches of Christ in the southern states.

At one point during the throes of the Great Depression, white leaders in Churches of Christ gathered in southern California to celebrate and question Marshall Keeble. During a three-week evangelistic effort in Los Angeles, California, several white ministers, enthralled with Keeble's ability to transform people's lives, arranged this meeting at the Central Church of

Christ with the black clergyman from Tennessee and begged him to reveal the secrets to his extraordinary success as an evangelist. The crowd of mostly white preachers implored: " 'Show us how you do it,' like the magician is called on to do sometimes by a few on the 'inside' of the ring." The inquirers assured Keeble that they did not wish to "steal his power"; they only wanted "to know just how he does it." In the minds of the white leaders, Keeble seemed almost a godly wizard with mysterious powers and abilities to mesmerize and sway his listeners to obey what he called the "pure gospel."[2]

According to E. N. Glenn, a white leader who attended the gathering, Keeble happily listed seven reasons for his achievement as an evangelist. First, he said his devoted wife, Minnie, was at the "bottom of his preaching career." Next, his father-in-law, Samuel W. Womack, had encouraged him and taught him the "gospel plan of salvation." Keeble then developed a "burning desire to preach the Word" full time. Fourth, white leaders S. H. Hall, F. B. Srygley, and N. B. Hardeman encouraged him; Keeble especially singled out A. M. Burton, who "recognized his ability and helped along in a financial way." In order to gain the support of white benefactors, however, Keeble assiduously "kept his place," scrupulously complying with the New South's Jim Crow mores, circumspectly working "never to bring reproach upon the Cause by his conduct," trying always "to keep himself good and humble." He realized the "importance of 'staying in place' " while in those parts of the nation "where the racial feelings were quite prominent."[3]

Keeble also attributed his power to "secret prayer." Before meeting with the white preachers at the Central congregation, Keeble had been " 'on his knees' four times in secret prayer." Additionally, Keeble seasoned his sermons with "spice"—wit, humor, and keen logic—which endeared him to both white and black Americans. "The white folks hear him just as gladly, and usually there are as many or more in the audience than his own race. No wonder that his many hundreds of converts have been led to the Lamb of God by the power of the Gospel in the hands of this man!"[4]

Keeble's comments not only opened the eyes of the California gathering, but they also provide insight for students of his life today. He attributed his preaching success to a supportive spouse, skillful tutelage, personal zeal, white philanthropy, a mild disposition, constant prayer, and homiletical skill. Of these, this study contends that three held chief importance in his remarkable ministerial accomplishments. Keeble's "meek" posture on the

race question, coupled with his dynamic preaching, attracted the attention and support of white philanthropists whose financial generosity, even if vitiated by racism, enabled the rise of black Churches of Christ in the South and beyond. White benefactors financed Keeble's preaching campaigns not only to save souls but also to keep blacks out of their churches.

A survey of the literature on Marshall Keeble reveals the need for a fresh and fuller examination of his life. In 1931 B. C. Goodpasture, a white leader in Churches of Christ and a Keeble supporter, published a biographical sketch of Keeble, together with five sermons that he had delivered in Valdosta, Georgia. Goodpasture's work reveals Keeble's high view of Scripture while demonstrating his ability to use practical illustrations to teach biblical truth.[5] Three decades later, Keeble chronicled his own missionary excursion to the Holy Land, Asia, and Europe. Even though Keeble's book focuses on his foreign activities, it does offer glimpses of his black pride. He expressed interest in the 1960 Olympic games in Rome, Italy, "since a young lady from Tennessee—a student at A & I State College here in Nashville—was to compete in the meet. (She won.)" This "young lady," black sprinter Wilma Rudolph, won three gold medals as Keeble toured Italy.[6]

In 1968 Arthur Lee Smith Jr., Keeble's former student at the Nashville Christian Institute, wrote an M.A. thesis attributing Keeble's preaching success to his illustrations, simplicity, sincerity, and humor. Smith believed that "Keeble's ability to appear simple in style, yet sincere, made him the first popular Negro preacher for the churches of Christ." The following year, Matthew C. Morrison published a scholarly article on Keeble, arguing that Keeble's humor enabled him to reach vast and diverse audiences. His "effectiveness as a tent evangelist was based on his disarming humor, giving him access to all types of audiences."[7] In the 1970s, three limited but important works on Keeble appeared. Forrest Neil Rhoads, a communications professor at David Lipscomb University, wrote an insightful dissertation on the "sources" that made Keeble an effective preacher. Keeble, according to Rhoads, "understood human nature, especially that of the members of his own race, and he used logical proof well, specifically in appealing to the Bible, in using his enthymeme 'the Bible is right,' and in his parables and personal experiences." In 1974 J. E. Choate, a philosophy professor at David Lipscomb University, produced an important, albeit eulogistic, paternalistic, and anecdotal account of Keeble's life. While Choate's study of Keeble

contains invaluable information, it relies excessively on oral testimony and consistently fails to document lengthy quotes from literary sources. In a 1977 article, Paul D. Phillips, a professor of history at Tennessee State University, argued that Keeble accomplished two noteworthy feats. First, he elevated African Americans by preaching the Gospel; second, he engendered unity among white and black members of the Churches of Christ.[8]

In the 1990s two additional Keeble studies surfaced. Willie T. Cato, Keeble's close friend, compiled nuggets of the latter's wisdom and humor, and in 1996 Tracy L. Blair, in a master's thesis, compared and contrasted the work and vision of Keeble and G. P. Bowser. More recently, Darrell Broking, expanding on Phillips's 1977 article, has argued that Keeble was essentially an eraser of racial barriers in Churches of Christ in an era of segregation. Broking insisted that Keeble implemented a "grand strategy" of expunging color lines in Churches of Christ. "Ironically, people who did not want their social system changed sent funds to Keeble for his work, and Keeble used those funds to erase color lines in the church."[9]

While recognizing the significant contributions of these scholars, this study offers a new assessment of Keeble by placing him in his historical context, particularly the racial and social culture of the Jim Crow South, and by showing that he received unprecedented support from white believers fundamentally because he exhibited the time-honored traits of humility and docility which southern whites expected of blacks. Like Booker T. Washington, Keeble understood what journalist Wilbur J. Cash labeled the "mind of the South," and he comprehended what scholar Grace Elizabeth Hale has described as "the culture of segregation in the South."[10] Because of his "humble" disposition and practical preaching and because he raised no threats to the South's entrenched social order, Keeble garnered widespread financial assistance from Caucasian Christians. This enabled Keeble to traverse the South, establishing separate black Churches of Christ. Many white disciples supported Keeble not simply because of their altruism, but because they wanted to keep blacks out of their own congregations. Keeble, then, did not directly seek to abolish racial barriers; instead, he sustained the racial divisions in Churches of Christ normative to his place and to his era.

Difficulties confront historians of religion who seek an understanding of Keeble and the African American Churches of Christ he served. Because his religious fellowship has no official headquarters or organizational structure

beyond individual congregations, and because of their ahistorical perspective of claiming to be the direct descendants of New Testament Christians, there is no collection of Marshall Keeble reports or papers, no complete runs of such journals as the *Christian Echo,* a paper established by G. P. Bowser in 1902. Despite these challenges and problems, this study proffers an analysis of Keeble through the lenses of previously neglected primary sources. Most studies on Keeble have relied indiscriminately on the *Gospel Advocate* and the *Firm Foundation,* the two most influential religious journals in his fellowship. While this work depends substantially on the *Gospel Advocate,* it broadens its scope and also explores the *Christian Leader,* a weekly paper established by John F. Rowe beginning in 1886 and continuing until 1960, and the *West Coast Christian,* a religious paper published by James Lovell from 1937 to 1948. These underused sources contribute importantly to our understanding of Keeble. The report of E. N. Glenn in the *Christian Leader,* for instance, implies that white leaders supported Keeble largely because he submitted to the racial code of the Jim Crow South, that is, he stayed in "his place." White racism, therefore, accompanied white beneficence.

In this study I seek to unveil the heart and soul of the most effective black preacher in Churches of Christ to date. Beginning with an examination of an early and pivotal theological stance of Keeble's, the work then highlights the philanthropic activity of A. M. Burton, which underpinned Keeble's efforts through five decades. This leads to an analysis of the minister's complex persona and his equally complex times. Later chapters appraise the theological impact of the *Gospel Advocate* on both Keeble and the African American congregations he erected in the South. In a movement that rejected extra-congregational organizations in its insistence on congregational autonomy, religious journals played a variety of important roles. Black Churches of Christ drew their exclusivistic doctrinal posture not from their reading of the New Testament alone, but also from the *Gospel Advocate*'s interpretation of the New Testament. Keeble owed much of his theological perspective to some of the white editors of the *Gospel Advocate,* and he transmitted this to his spiritual offspring throughout the New South.

I further examine Keeble's relationship with white Christians in the South and depict how the black evangelist navigated the dangerous waters of racial segregation to plant African American Churches of Christ across the re-

gion, even as he attracted and converted large numbers of whites in an era of strictest segregation. I also probe the turbulent encounters between Keeble and theologically different black religious groups in his homeland. Keeble, concluded one contemporary, possessed a dual personality as a gentle lamb among his religious friends, but like a ferocious lion among his religious foes.[11]

This study then moves beyond Keeble's work in the South to explore the evangelist's labors in the North and in the West. It particularly assesses his collaboration with James Lovell, A. L. Cassius, and R. N. Hogan in California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona. This work also offers the first broad assessment of some of Keeble's "sons," young men whom he baptized, taught, and trained to be traveling evangelists much in his mold. These sons perpetuated Keeble's legacy by stabilizing fledgling black congregations in the South and by also winning converts in areas little touched by Keeble's personal impact. Luke Miller, a Keeble convert, established the author's home congregation, the Border Street (now Seminary Heights) Church of Christ in Jacksonville, Texas. Like Keeble, Miller received a "call" from white Christians in Jacksonville to evangelize their black residents; and again like Keeble, Miller attracted moral and material support from these white believers because of his apt preaching ability as well as his unassuming racial posture.

I close with an appraisal of Keeble's "grandsons," young men whom he touched and trained at the school he headed, the Nashville Christian Institute. Most of these grandchildren maintained the theological conservativism and exclusivism of their spiritual predecessors, but they, unlike Keeble and his sons, uniformly challenged the racism and segregation that permeated the South, including white Churches of Christ. The words and deeds of Keeble's spiritual sons and grandsons illuminate our understanding of their father and grandfather.

Keeble's "grand strategy" did not aim directly at ending segregation in southern congregations; rather it accommodated the racial division in Churches of Christ. His strategy did, however, involve close cooperation with and dependence upon white brethren in the Restoration Movement and is instructive on several levels. First, as white believers collaborated with Keeble to build separate black congregations, much of this joint effort took place in the first half of the twentieth century, placing the origins of African

American Churches of Christ somewhat later than those of black Methodists and Baptists, dominant in the black South. The historian William E. Montgomery has shown that viable, independent black Methodist and Baptist congregations existed during the antebellum period, and as early as 1866 these churches "had gained a firm foothold in the South, evincing the new status of the former slaves."[12] Consequently, Keeble, although reared a Baptist, rejected Baptist doctrine and designed much of his preaching to loosen the grip that black Baptists and Methodists had on southern communities, and he won large numbers of his converts from these same groups.

Furthermore, because of Keeble's otherworldly outlook, he publicly downplayed the significance of the social and political issues which so deeply impacted black life in the United States.[13] Keeble's overarching emphasis on baptism for the remission of sins, the all-sufficiency of the church, and the centrality of spiritual concerns, which he passed on to his spiritual sons, helps account for their virtual absence from the civil rights movement. Thus when scholar Andrew Billingsley observed that the black church in America has consistently moved "beyond its purely spiritual or religious or privatistic mission to embrace it communal mission," he may have spoken for Henry M. Turner and the AME Church and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and many black Baptists, but he did not speak generally for African American Churches of Christ in the South.[14] There were, however, a few notable black ministers in Keeble's fellowship who did indeed address the material, social, and political needs of their parishioners. Yet the distance from social reformism maintained by Keeble and his sons had allowed them to secure the white support for their efforts.

The economic collapse of the 1930s shattered lives across social and racial spectrums, including members of Churches of Christ. More positively during the Depression years, as church historian Sydney E. Ahlstrom has noted, "neighbor discovered neighbor," and for Churches of Christ, this neighbor included the black man. F. B. Shepherd, a white missionary to Africa, urged fellow whites in Churches of Christ to establish five hundred congregations in 1931. "White churches, especially in the Southern States, could well afford and would make a profitable investment among the negroes during 1931." Shepherd advised fellow believers to support "worthy colored preachers" who could plant black congregations across the South, and Marshall Keeble emerged as the most effective of those "worthy" black evangelists by

baptizing over one thousand people during that year. Keeble, however, was no Father Divine, or Sweet Daddy Grace-like figure. He became the black preacher whom white leaders were looking for to help them achieve their church-planting goal. Keeble, the right man in the right place at the right time, occupied a void that white leaders in Churches of Christ sought desperately to fill.[15]

Furthermore, whites in Churches of Christ felt comfortable in inviting Keeble to their towns because of his nonthreatening demeanor and passive posture on race relations. Anglo members of Churches of Christ granted black people their exclusivistic doctrine—but not their embracing love. While white Christians may have contributed as much to the rise of African American Churches of Christ in the South as did their black compatriots, the Keeble strategy did not soon lessen the racial divide of Churches of Christ in the South; it simply functioned within it.

Today African American Churches of Christ number 130,709 adherents in 1,230 congregations across the nation, with 80,385 members and 896 congregations in the South. The North counts some 35,198 black members in 161 congregations and approximately 15,126 congregants in 173 churches in the West.[16] Marshall Keeble was largely responsible for the emergence of this religious group. This study, then, seeks to tell the compelling story of how Keeble, clearly the twentieth century's most potent and influential preacher in African American Churches of Christ, leagued with generous, zealous, and well-meaning white supporters to create the not unique paradox of two fellowships in one religious tradition. As Keeble's story unfolds, it reveals how his strategy accommodated the racial divide and unintentionally perpetuated the theological discord that lingers today between whites and blacks in Churches of Christ, while at the same time informing the broader understanding of the nation's racial, social, and religious complexities.

1
The Making of a Black Evangelist

1
"I Had Rather Rely on God's Plan Than Man's"

Marshall Keeble and the Missionary Society Controversy

> Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.
>
> —Acts 5:29

The 1870s cast a series of extraordinary challenges before African Americans. While emancipation from slavery and the passage of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments signaled the arrival of better days for newly freed blacks, the physical assaults of the Ku Klux Klan, the Hamburg Massacre in South Carolina on July 4, 1876, and the westward migration of blacks from Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, and Tennessee portended the erosion of African Americans' civil rights in the New South. As one former slave testified poignantly before a Senate Committee: "In 1877 we lost all hopes . . . we found ourselves in such condition that we looked around and seed [*sic*] that there was no way on earth, it seemed, that we could better our condition" in southern states.[1] W. E. B. Du Bois assessed Reconstruction more succinctly: "The slave went free; stood for a brief moment in the sun; and then turned again toward slavery."[2] The era of Reconstruction, initially replete with joy and promise for ex-slaves, ended abruptly with crushed hopes and aborted dreams. In this dismal and turbulent milieu emerged Marshall Keeble.

Born on December 7, 1878, in Rutherford County, Tennessee, Marshall Keeble Jr. was the son of Robert and Mettie Keeble. Details of Keeble's ancestry remain obscure, but the 1850 national census for free inhabitants of Rutherford County listed Edwin A. Keeble, a lawyer, with a net worth of $800. Attorney Keeble, originally from Virginia, had relocated to Tennessee where he met and married Mary, with whom he fathered five children:

James, Lallie (?), Edwin Jr., Thomas, and Walter. Edwin A. Keeble Sr., probably a relative of Horace P. Keeble, also an attorney in Rutherford County, owned real estate valued at $4,000. Horace and his wife, Cassandra, by 1860 had amassed a property value of $27,000 and a personal net worth of $14,000. The family holdings included five male and five female slaves, and likely both Marshall Keeble's grandfather and father numbered among these bondsmen.[3]

After emancipation the Keeble household consisted of Marshall and Mary Keeble, the paternal grandparents of young Marshall. The elder Keeble worked as a farmer while his wife served as a housekeeper in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. In 1870 the Keeble offspring consisted of eight children: D. Marshall (age twenty), Robert (sixteen), Nancy (fourteen), Milton (eleven), James (eight), Eliza (four), George (two), and Mar (one). The four older children hired out as farm laborers and the younger four stayed at home. A decade later, D. Marshall and Robert Keeble had families of their own. Twenty-seven-year-old D. Marshall, the husband of twenty-four-year-old Hattie, fathered two-year-old Lizza, while twenty-three-year-old Robert married twenty-two-year-old Mettie, who gave birth to Marshall Keeble Jr.[4]

The Keeble clan, slave and free, nourished a strong commitment to one of the nineteenth century's most dynamic religious developments, the Restoration Movement. Barton W. Stone, Thomas Campbell, and Alexander Campbell had joined with other reformers in the early nineteenth century to launch this work, variously referred to as Disciples of Christ, Churches of Christ, and Christian Churches. Seeking to return Christianity to its roots, their efforts emerged as one of the largest Protestant bodies of the era, and the Keeble family's connection to this movement predated the Civil War. Marshall Keeble Jr. later noted that his grandfather subscribed to the *Gospel Advocate,* a prominent journal of the movement, which doubtlessly played a role in leading the younger Keeble into Churches of Christ.[5] The pages of another of the movement's papers, the *Christian Standard,* show that both his grandfather, Marshall Keeble Sr., and his uncle, D. Marshall Keeble, actively participated in the Christian Church in the early 1880s. Proceedings of a church convention in Rutherford County, Tennessee, listed Marshall Sr. and D. Marshall as elders and delegates of the congregation in Murfreesboro.[6] Even though the younger Marshall Jr.'s spiritual linkage to the Stone-

Campbell Movement preceded the Civil War, he also grew up under the influence of a devout Baptist mother.[7]

In the early 1880s Robert Keeble relocated his family to Nashville, Tennessee, where he worked for John B. Ransom and Company, a wholesale lumber and planing mill business.[8] Mrs. Keith N. Slayton, a close friend of the Keeble family, described Robert Keeble as a man of dignity and integrity who left his son Marshall an important legacy of honesty and rectitude. Robert Keeble, wrote Slayton, "left neither silver nor gold when he died, but he left his family a much greater and more lasting heritage—that of quiet dignity and honest self-respect." Mrs. Slayton recalled her own mother's and grandfather's description of Robert Keeble as a man "always neatly dressed, and always wearing a stiff white collar."[9]

Robert Keeble, more than an unassuming well-dressed black man, however, kept his young family intact during the tumultuous and frightening decades of the 1870s and 1880s, suggesting a life marked by optimism and stability. Unlike numerous disillusioned black Tennesseans who participated in the "Exoduster" movement to the West, Robert Keeble obviously believed that his and his family's future lay in the South. The stirring and melodious songs of the Jubilee Singers, whose fundraising ventures led to the erection of Nashville's Jubilee Hall in 1875, coupled with the presence of Fisk University, Central Tennessee College, and Meharry Medical College—three predominantly black schools founded in Nashville during the Reconstruction era—seemed to presage the coming of better days for African Americans in Middle Tennessee.[10] Robert Keeble infused his son with this hope and optimism; even though Marshall came to preach across the country and eventually throughout the world, he always returned to Nashville where he happily lived and finally died.

By 1896 Marshall Keeble, a Nashville resident, worked as a grocery clerk. Advancing into young adulthood he became a member of the Gay Street Christian Church under the preaching of Preston Taylor, and at age twenty-two married Minnie Womack. The young couple soon had two children, Robert (born in 1897) and Elenora (born in 1900), and although Marshall worked as a "day laborer," they welcomed into their home Samuel, Sallie, and Hattie Womack, Minnie's mother, father, and sister.[11] Keeble's father-in-law, Samuel W. Womack, would play a formative role in shaping Keeble's religious life.

Apart from Womack, however, several others contributed to Keeble's development as a Gospel preacher. His first wife, Minnie, often accompanied her husband on his evangelistic outings, buttressing his efforts with a melodious singing voice. "My wife and children were with me a part of the protracted-meeting season," he reported, "and in singing and teaching the Scriptures privately my wife rendered valuable service."[12] Again, when preaching near Brownville, Tennessee, in 1916 Keeble informed *Gospel Advocate* readers: "My wife is so much help to me in my work. She leads the song service."[13] That Minnie served in this role in a fellowship which ordinarily held that men must lead the public worship suggests the lack of capable men to lead worship. In the same year, responding to an inquirer who asked whether women could lead prayer in the worship service when men were present, editor George P. Bowser of the *Christian Echo* answered: "There is no Scripture forbidding her praying in public."[14] Annie C. Tuggle, a black educator in Churches of Christ, reported being called on to read Scripture aloud in a Memphis, Tennessee, church during John T. Ramsey's discourse. "Brother Ramsey had to depend on me to read certain Scriptures that he needed while preaching. There were no men able to help him."[15] Such testimonies as these of Keeble, Bowser, and Tuggle indicate that black Churches of Christ in the first two decades of the twentieth century struggled in a fledgling state, lacking enough literate men to handle all leadership positions.

In an effort to fill this void, Marshall Keeble took up preaching as a full-time occupation in 1914. The devoted family man sometimes spent three months or more away from home, but he always longed to have his loved ones around him. "I have been away from my family now about three months," he wrote in 1921, "and I yet have one more meeting to hold before I can be blessed with seeing them again."[16] Sadly, Keeble's Minnie died in 1932, but sixteen months later he married Laura Catherine Johnson of Corinth, Mississippi.[17] Death took another of his beloved family in 1936 as the *Gospel Advocate* reported Keeble's mother's death at the age of seventy-five. "We all hated to see her leave us," lamented Keeble, "but we know that the Lord knew best. So we know it was best for her and us, and because she is asleep in Christ."[18] Keeble survived his first wife as well as their five children, two of whom died in infancy. Clarence died after being electrocuted at age ten, and daughter Beatrice passed away in 1935, followed by Robert in 1964.[19]

Keeble's perseverance on the evangelism field amid these family tragedies attests to his moral and spiritual fortitude in the face of such blows.

Marshall Keeble had no formal training to help him work through such difficulties or prepare him to achieve success. His was a completely informal education. White leaders in Churches of Christ certainly influenced Keeble's development as a Gospel preacher. Three white men in Churches of Christ played seminal roles in shaping his ministerial growth, including David Lipscomb, a formative voice in the southern wing of the Stone-Campbell Movement through his editorship of the *Gospel Advocate.* Keeble gained important moral and theological insights by regularly digesting Lipscomb's paper. Writing in 1918 he commented: "So I am still reading it [the *Gospel Advocate*]. May God bless and lead those in whose hands the paper is to remain, and may it go forth blessing the world as it did when that great and noble servant, David Lipscomb, lived."[20] A year later Keeble again praised Lipscomb for putting "a coal of fire among the brethren before God took him, which will never die."[21] That "fire" was one of zeal and biblical knowledge, which stirred Keeble himself and which he in turn spread throughout the South.

Another white evangelist, Nicholas B. Hardeman, president of Freed-Hardeman College in Henderson, Tennessee, helped mold Keeble's preaching career. Keeble first met Hardeman in 1918 when the former conducted a Gospel meeting, a series of sermons through several consecutive evenings, in Henderson. "On the last night Brother N. B. Hardeman and others came out and made remarks in the meeting. This was my first time to meet Brother Hardeman, and, in my judgment, he is a fine, Christian man."[22] In 1920 Keeble commended Hardeman who "has never failed to do all he could to encourage us in the work." By securing places for Keeble to preach to black southerners, Hardeman proved a great source of support.[23]

The third preacher who particularly influenced Keeble's maturation as a public speaker was the "mail-carrier preacher," Joe McPherson. When McPherson conducted a "protracted meeting" in Nashville in 1914, Keeble attended, absorbing valuable information and inspiration. This citywide evangelistic campaign, which lasted for one month and which McPherson directed, indelibly imprinted Keeble's homiletical evolution. "In this meeting," Keeble recalled, "I copied every lesson Brother McPherson preached;

and though he is dead, I am still preaching his sermons, and these lessons are still bringing men to Christ."[24] "Although Brother Joe McPherson has gone from us," Keeble wrote in 1920, "his labors and his influence among us still live." A year later Keeble again praised McPherson, who "did more toward teaching me how to preach than any man I ever heard."[25]

Even though white influences touched Keeble to a significant degree, black preachers and other leaders clearly wielded more decisive affect on his development as an evangelist. Keeble's spiritual development as a preacher derived fundamentally from Samuel W. Womack, his father-in-law; the ardent black evangelist, Alexander Campbell; and George P. Bowser, a black educator and preacher of considerable repute. These three men collaborated at the "mother church,"[26] the Jackson Street Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee, where Keeble "sat at the feet of such men."[27] Keeble, however, especially marked Womack and Campbell as "the two old heroes who have struggled and fought hard to establish a pure worship in Nashville."[28] By "pure worship" Keeble clearly meant worshiping without musical instruments and evangelizing without missionary societies. Keeble assumed an anti-instrumental and anti-missionary society stance through the influence of Womack.

Born a slave in Lynchburg, Tennessee, young Samuel grew up in the tumultuous decade of the 1850s and gained his freedom with the North's Civil War victory. Womack first heard the Gospel in 1866 and received baptism into the Christian Church at the hands of a white preacher, T. J. Shaw, "the man with the old Book in his head."[29] In the 1870s and 1880s Womack read and contributed to the *Christian Standard,* exulting that the "STANDARD has found its way to my house, and it is all one could hope for."[30] More than an avid reader of Christian literature, Womack emerged as a leader among black Disciples of Christ. In 1880 he told fellow black believers of his plans to preach in west Tennessee, urging, "I am now preparing to make a few visits through the Western part of the State, preaching, and to see what can be done for a State meeting this year. Therefore, allow me to say to the brethren in Tennessee, wake up, and let us rally together once more."[31] *Christian Standard* accounts further portray a man who was busily strengthening a fledgling congregation in Little Rock, Arkansas, strategically organizing a consultation meeting for the Christian Church in the same community, and aggressively cultivating interest for a general convention for black Disciples

of Christ in Memphis.[32] While working in Memphis, Womack in 1884 expressed his desire to enroll in the recently established LeMoyne College, lamenting: "I regret very much that I cannot make this city my home, in order to attend this school; but Nashville is supplied with fine schools."[33] Womack finally chose to remain in middle Tennessee, even though continuing his itinerant preaching.

By the late 1890s Womack, through the influence of David Lipscomb and the *Gospel Advocate,* had shifted his focus away from Isaac Errett and the *Christian Standard* because of differences over interpretation of biblical teachings. Keeble noted that Womack delighted visiting the "*Gospel Advocate* office, because, he said, he was always made welcome by the whole staff. Whenever he got puzzled over any passage of scripture, he would always have a conference with old Brother David Lipscomb during his life time."[34] While neither man ever commented on the details of their exchanges, it can be properly conjectured that the white editor of the *Gospel Advocate* turned the black evangelist away from missionary societies and instrumental music in worship, for Womack withdrew from the Disciples of Christ and aligned with Churches of Christ.

By the century's turn the Restoration Movement had experienced a growing internal division between those congregations, often called Disciples of Christ or Christian Churches, who encouraged instrumental music in worship and favored the organization of missionary societies, and those congregations, usually referred to as Churches of Christ, who opposed these as unscriptural "innovations." When Preston Taylor, a wealthy entrepreneur and preacher for the Gay Street and Lea Avenue Christian Churches in Nashville, Tennessee, allowed "innovations," Alexander Campbell persuaded Womack and his family to withdraw from the "digressives." Womack rigidly opposed pursuing evangelism through missionary societies as a violation of biblical teachings. "The Gay Street brethren," assailed Womack, "it seems to me, are wanting to do like other folks. Brother Smith, of Kansas City, Mo., is with them and is promoting all of the society fads. I love the old way and am trying to get nearer every day."[35] When raising funds for the Jackson Street Church of Christ in Nashville in 1902, Womack pointed out: "We have no entertainments, no clubs, no ladies' aid societies; but we believe in meeting these obligations through the church, the God-given institution provided for all his work."[36]

Like many of his white comrades in Churches of Christ, Womack viewed evangelism through missionary societies as contrary to God's will because of the absence of precedents in the New Testament. When asked why he opposed using instruments in worship and preaching through missionary societies, C. E. W. Dorris, a white educator in Churches of Christ, compared his rejection to a smallpox epidemic. While residing in Franklin, Tennessee, where smallpox spread, he observed that doctors vaccinated people who did not have the disease in order "to keep the disease off." Dorris explained that "This is why I preach against organs and societies where neither is used in the worship. I desire to keep off the disease."[37]

J. W. Atkisson, a white leader in Churches of Christ, linked the believer's relation to the missionary society and instrumental music in worship to one's relationship with Christ. "The question is not one of organ or no organ, of missionary society or no missionary society; it is a much graver matter. It is this: Shall I follow Christ or men in religion?"[38] Womack, committed to following Scripture, worked tirelessly to wipe out the church's debt of $1,090 in accordance to "the New Testament way."[39] Later that summer he noted that $262.93 had been received and paid on the Jackson Street property, "without the aid of any kind of innovation."[40] Black self-help accompanied white philanthropy. More importantly, Womack determined to adhere strictly to his perception of scriptural teachings. "I know of no way taught in the Book to succeed in the work, but to work, talk, and trust God by doing what he says, just as he says it."[41] This staunch opposition to missionary societies, which Womack inherited from white cohorts, was transmitted to Keeble.

Marshall Keeble carried the rejection of missionary societies and musical instruments through his evangelistic endeavors across the New South. In 1920 Keeble acknowledged that Womack "first got me to see that I was wrong while working with the 'digressives,' "[42] proponents of missionary societies and instruments in worship. He further credited Womack with establishing more congregations and doing "more to keep 'digressivism' out of this State than any colored man I know of anywhere; and had it not been for the instruction he received from such men as Brother David Lipscomb and Brother E. G. Sewell, he could not have succeeded as he has."[43]

With his spiritual mentor Womack, Keeble held that evangelizing through missionary societies contravened God's will. Instead, he believed that such efforts should be financially empowered only by like-minded individuals

or congregations. Shortly after launching his own evangelistic ministry he wrote, "For three years I have labored to reach my people with the gospel, and judging from the results, I feel that I have done my duty, and now I am entering into my fourth year's work with a desire to do more than I have ever done. I have been asked a number of times by brethren who favor the plan the 'digressives' have to support the evangelist, how I am supported, and my answer is, God will provide; for in the commission Christ promises to be with one who will faithfully carry the message, and I had rather rely on God's plan than man's." In the same report Keeble, in spending three arduous years wholly evangelizing black southerners, informed *Gospel Advocate* readers that he had traveled 16,757 miles, preached 872 sermons, received $1,931.92 in donations, and produced 359 baptisms. "I hope this report will prove that the loyal brethren will support the work without the aid of any human institution."[44]

The following year Keeble again summarized his evangelistic accomplishments, this time over a four-year period, noting that he had traveled 23,052 miles, preached 1,161 sermons, baptized 457 people, and reclaimed eighty-six lost sheep. "I give these figures," Keeble pointed out, "to prove that the work can be done without the aid of any human organization. I have always believed that the work could be done by the church and now I know it can."[45] He kept this conviction of the unscripturalness and ineffectiveness of missionary societies throughout his career. After proudly announcing that he baptized 1,071 people in 1930, Keeble suggested, "This shows that we do not need the missionary society to do the work of the church."[46] He was committed not only to carrying out evangelism through the agency of the local church, but also was willing to trust that God would meet his material needs through the generosity of Christians.

Another driving force behind Keeble's evangelistic work was his otherworldly perspective. African American Churches in the early twentieth century tended to have compensatory or otherworldly concerns and, at the same time, political preoccupations. The former focused on heaven, the world unseen beyond this visible world; the latter addressed political issues and social injustice faced by blacks on a daily basis.[47] Keeble focused narrowly on otherworldly matters, which thereby led him to downplay civil rights issues. Indeed his favorite hymn was "Hold to God's Unchanging Hand," a song composed by F. L. Eiland in 1904.[48]

Time is filled with swift transition,
Naught of earth unmoved shall stand,
Build your hopes on things eternal,
Hold to God's unchanging hand!
Trust in Him who will not leave you,
Whatsoever years may bring,
If by earthly friends forsaken,
Still more closely to Him cling!
Covet not this world's vain riches,
That so rapidly decay,
Seek to gain the heav'nly treasures,
They will never pass away!
When your journey is completed,
If to God you have been true,
Fair and bright the home in glory,
Your enraptured soul shall view.[49]

This hymn, composed during an era of racial and social oppression, lingered in Keeble's heart as he witnessed the physical brutality inflicted upon countless African Americans and as he personally experienced the social stigmatism of being a black man in the Jim Crow South. The writings of Paul, Christ's apostle, helped shape Keeble's otherworldly focus, inspiring him "to leave everything to follow Jesus and proclaim his word. The apostle Paul exhorted Timothy not to entangle himself with the affairs of this life; and to be successful in the evangelistic work, I believe a man ought to give himself wholly to the work, and God will bless his labors."[50]

The most important person, however, in molding Keeble's otherworldly outlook remained his beloved mentor, Samuel W. Womack. "I am a young preacher endeavoring to make a success in life," Keeble admitted in 1918, "and if I can just make the man that Brother Womack is, I will be thankful. His success in life, in a material way, has not been very great, but I have reference to the great treasures he is laying up in heaven."[51] Womack had taught Keeble to depreciate material, social, and political matters and to focus on "things eternal" and "heav'nly treasures," emphasizing the essentiality of otherworld priorities. In Keeble's mind Womack lived and modeled his favorite song, "Hold to God's Unchanging Hand."

The columns of the *Gospel Advocate* reveal the potent influence Womack exerted on Keeble's development as an evangelist. In 1908 Womack reported that Keeble preached at the East Nashville Mission and later mentioned that Keeble served as treasurer of the Jackson Street Church of Christ.[52] In 1910 Keeble baptized three people at the Jackson Street congregation and stirred interest in evangelism.[53] The next year Keeble gave "a talk along the line of giving for mission workers, and the church made an offering for Brother A. Campbell and the writer [Womack], and we were all made to feel happy."[54] In 1913 Womack informed *Gospel Advocate* readers that both Marshall Keeble and Alexander Campbell "made very strong talks to the churches."[55] The next year Womack, after hearing his son-in-law preach in Cookeville, Tennessee, rejoiced: "It was a source of pleasure to me to be there and hear this young man preach and to spend the time this way with those brethren and sisters."[56] Womack continued: "I do not know of any of the colored preachers of the church of Christ that are doing a greater work than this young man."[57] By this time Keeble had committed his life to the evangelization of African Americans.

Even though Keeble's mother-in-law had reportedly said he was not "preaching material," his father-in-law had evaluated the young man differently.[58] Womack sensed something special about his "promising" son-in-law, perceiving in him the potential to become, under appropriate tutelage, an exceptional preacher. Keeble himself laid no claim to self-construction, happily realizing that he owed his meteoric rise to prominence among Church of Christ preachers to both white and black mentors. From David Lipscomb, Keeble gained a sure knowledge of Scripture; in Nicholas B. Hardeman, he found a moral supporter; and Joe McPherson taught him the art of constructing sermons; by studying the life of black champions such as Samuel W. Womack and Alexander Campbell, Keeble acquired a high ecclesiology as well as an otherworldly viewpoint. With such a diverse cast of strong Christian supporters behind him, Keeble boldly announced in 1917 that "I have given up all that I might preach the gospel to my people,"[59] and then the South's most formidable black evangelist of the twentieth century turned to his life's work.

2
"The Greatest Missionary in the Church To-day"
The Philanthropy of A. M. Burton

> Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.
>
> —1 Timothy 6:17–19

During the Progressive era northern white philanthropists often funneled substantial amounts of money to improve life for both whites and blacks in the postbellum South. Among these, George Peabody, John F. Slater, John D. Rockefeller, and Anna T. Jeanes stood as notable benefactors to the war-shattered region. Peabody, after amassing a fortune in England and America, gave more than $3.5 million for the advancement of education in the South between 1867 and 1914, while Slater, a textile industrialist from Connecticut, established a $1 million fund in 1882 to uplift emancipated blacks through Christian education. Between 1902 and 1909 John D. Rockefeller, whose beneficence created the University of Chicago, contributed $53 million toward the education of black and white southerners. On a lower financial level Anna T. Jeanes, daughter of an affluent Philadelphia businessman, contributed $200,000 to the General Education Board to help improve black schools in rural communities across the South. As scholar John Hope Franklin has noted: "The philanthropists contributed substantially toward bringing about a new day for education in the South."[1]

Such currents of generosity perhaps stirred to action Andrew M. Burton, the premier benefactor of Marshall Keeble and African American Churches of Christ. Born into modest circumstances in 1879 in Trousdale County, Ten-

nessee, Burton used his minimal education and meager savings to found the Life and Casualty Insurance Company of Tennessee in 1903. Burton's business goals included the education of southern whites and blacks in "modern ideals of health, thrift, and personal moral improvement."[2] Seven years later Burton received baptism at the Highland Avenue Church of Christ in Nashville, beginning a lifelong involvement in Christian philanthropy.[3] This devout and affluent Christian invested a large portion of his wealth in black evangelists who crisscrossed the South planting new congregations. Burton's benevolence and Marshall Keeble's effective preaching fueled the rise of African American Churches of Christ across the New South.

The Burton-Keeble relationship strikingly mirrored, in some ways, that of Julius Rosenwald and Booker T. Washington. Born in Springfield, Illinois, in 1862, Rosenwald grew up in a devout Jewish family and in Chicago partnered with Aaron Nusbaum and Richard Sears in 1895 in creating the catalog retailer Sears, Roebuck and Company. From 1909 to 1924, Rosenwald presided over the corporation, developing it into a merchandising giant. Rosenwald first learned of Booker T. Washington by reading his *Up from Slavery,* and in 1911 the two men formally met. The Sears executive, after touring Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, then joined the board of trustees of Washington's school for southern blacks. The following year Rosenwald pledged $25,000 to the school before giving impressive amounts of money to the Utica Normal and Industrial School in Mississippi, the Berry School in Georgia, Snow Hill School in Alabama, Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, Meharry Medical School in Memphis, Tennessee, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Prior to Rosenwald's death in 1932 he had underwritten the construction of over 5,300 schools for blacks in the South.[4]

That white philanthropists generously endowed black uplift projects across the South did not necessarily mean they viewed African Americans as social equals. Rosenwald asserted in 1911: "What interests me particularly is that we have a problem to deal with: namely, bringing about a condition whereby the whites do what they can to make of the Colored people a decent, respectable element, if not from a sense of justice, at least in self-defense. Equality is furtherest [*sic*] from my mind, but a nearer approach to justice toward these people must, in my opinion, be brought about through one method or another."[5] A. M. Burton worked diligently to provide moral,

spiritual, and intellectual improvement for black southerners, but never publicly disavowed the racist structures that oppressed and demoralized them. Instead, his generosity sustained a system that accommodated separate black congregations and restricted black students to their own substandard schools. In such ways white philanthropists ordinarily assisted African Americans within the context of contemporary racial and social mores.

In this respect the Burton-Keeble collaboration perhaps most closely resembled the relationship between Richard Boyd and James M. Frost. Boyd, a former slave, rose to the presidency of the National Baptist Publishing Board, the denomination's organization in Nashville, Tennessee, which provided religious materials for black congregations. Frost, a white preacher from Kentucky, chaired the Sunday School Board of Southern Baptists from 1896 to 1916, and during his tenure the board's assets soared from $53,000 to $760,000. The Boyd-Frost partnership illustrates how effectively a white leader and a black cleric could collaborate to accomplish their respective goals even in a carefully segregated culture. One analyst of the Boyd-Frost cooperation has pointed out: "The relationship between the heads of the two agencies exemplified how white and black southern Baptists could cooperate on specific projects even within the segregated southern religious world. Frost offered funds, technical advice, printing presses, and literature to Boyd's publishing firm."[6] Burton, as a Nashville businessman, no doubt studied the Boyd-Frost relationship in his own city and perhaps learned how to cooperate and collaborate with black evangelists such as Keeble without violating Jim Crow codes.

As early as 1914 Burton had publicly expressed his concern for the spiritual plight of African Americans. Taking seriously Christ's mandate to "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation," and burdened with a sense of duty and guilt, Burton contended that "We will surely meet with his righteous condemnation if we fail to point out the strait [*sic*] and narrow way that leads to life eternal, and more especially if those we need to reach lives within a stone's throw of our homes and places of business. The [N]egro to-day occupies in some respects the same place in the minds of white people that the Gentiles world held in opinion of the Jewish race when Peter and Paul began their missionary labors." Burton commended white Christians who helped plant four small black congregations in Nashville, but he insisted that without support such fledgling churches

were "prone to wander from the teachings of the Bible," citing as an example a young black preacher who required the " 'holy kiss' as a church ordinance." Burton insisted that "The negro and his spiritual needs is a question now squarely before the church of Christ, and it must be met. What shall we do that they may be saved?"[7]

The Christian businessman, having expressed his interest in black southerners, took his own first steps to assist them by planning an extended "meeting among the colored people" at the Jackson Street Church of Christ in Nashville and asked Joe McPherson, a white preacher, to conduct the campaign.[8] These plans thrilled black evangelist Alexander Campbell, who proclaimed: "A great religious awakening is now in prospect."[9] When the three-and-a-half-week preaching effort ended, Burton labeled it "a success in every way from the very start." He rejoiced at the twenty-seven baptisms, "all grown men and women," applauding McPherson's sermons as well as the instruction black preachers received. Burton also personally appreciated the meeting's impact: "The writer can truthfully say that he thinks that no one was more benefited or built up, spiritually, than himself." He deemed the event "one of the greatest and most beneficial movements ever started by the brotherhood in Nashville."[10]

Burton intensified his concern for his black neighbors, contributing to the needs of a number of African American ministers. In 1913 John T. Ramsey, a black preacher in Memphis and in Dallas, reported receiving money from Burton,[11] and the next year, Samuel W. Womack wrote: "I extend sincere thanks to Brother A. M. Burton for his contribution for mission work."[12] Several weeks before Womack died in the summer of 1920, Burton and A. B. Lipscomb visited him and "read the Scriptures to him and prayed with him. Although very feeble, he was highly lifted up by the visit of these good men." The two white leaders also gave the black minister a "liberal contribution to help to care for him in his last days among us."[13]

Alonzo Jones, a black preacher from Chattanooga, Tennessee, happily acknowledged that Burton repeatedly met his material and monetary needs. "I am glad to report that A. M. Burton remembered me with the value of sixty dollars as a contribution to me in my work for the Master."[14] While preaching through Alabama, Tennessee, and West Virginia, in 1923 Jones informed *Gospel Advocate* readers that "Brother A. M. Burton has contributed liberally to my necessity,"[15] and the assistance continued. Recalling his ministe-

rial activities for 1924, Jones commended Burton, who "has liberally contributed to my necessity, for which I thank him,"[16] and reported the subsequent year that "During the last four years Brother A. M. Burton has liberally contributed to my necessity, for which I thank him."[17]

Marshall Keeble admired Burton as a "Christian man," who "never talks much in a public way, but his life tells what he is,"[18] and in early 1921 thanked Burton and other white Christians who "remembered me during the holidays."[19] That fall, while preaching in Utica, Mississippi, Keeble acknowledged that Burton "is supporting me in this meeting. May God give us more men like this good man!"[20] He later explained that since white believers in Utica could not support an evangelist, they asked Burton "to send some colored preacher into this section." "Brother Burton asked me to go," wrote Keeble, "so I consented to go."[21] In 1922 and 1923 Burton sent books and "a nice Bible"[22] to Keeble, who had preached throughout Tennessee, and in 1924 Burton underwrote Keeble's evangelistic trip to Washington, D.C. "Brother A. M. Burton has agreed to pay my railroad fare here, round trip, for which I am very thankful." He also sent a "very comforting and encouraging letter" when Keeble fell ill in Huntsville, Alabama.[23] The following year, reporting that Burton had sent him a check before Christmas, Keeble remarked that "Brother Burton for years has helped me in my work. I have never had to ask him to help me in my work; he just sees what I am trying to do." While preaching in Lebanon, Tennessee, Keeble acknowledged that "Brother A. M. Burton sent me a check covering my railroad fare and some over." These continuing displays of generosity prompted Keeble's perception of a partnership. "To my mind, Brother A. M. Burton is the greatest missionary in the church to-day. If it were not for him, much of my work would have to go undone."[24] Keeble, laboring among people largely receiving little more than subsistence incomes, understood the financial importance of Burton and other white Christian philanthropists; without them his evangelistic journeys would have been impossible.

Beyond such spiritual concerns, Burton also worked to improve the intellectual growth of black southerners. In the winter of 1916, at the suggestion of the educator and journalist David Lipscomb, he visited the Putnam County Industrial School, which the black leader George P. Bowser had founded just two years earlier in Silver Point, Tennessee. Touched by the diligence of illiterate freedmen who gave "substantial encouragement to the

education of the younger generation of their race," Burton urged white Christians to support the school economically. "The devotion of these ex-slaves impressed me more clearly than anything else that it is our Christian duty to help put the school on a self-sustaining basis. They have certainly been trying to teach the word of God under many disadvantages and among more trials and tribulations than anything I have ever witnessed."[25]

Samuel W. Womack praised Burton and other white leaders who manifested "great interest in our school work among the colored people," and Burton's desire to build an institution for African Americans in Tennessee inspired his black counterparts "to fall in line" and to not "give up the school at Silver Point." "Brother Burton's efforts," Womack continued, "should be encouraged. Let us give him our hearty cooperation. It is not just now this good man is beginning his attention to the work among us. He has long manifested his interest in us otherwise."[26] Burton believed that education with a Christian underpinning was the key to giving southern blacks spiritual training and temporal hope.

While aiding African American educational efforts, Burton never forgot the "mother church" of black Christians, Nashville's Jackson Street Church of Christ. In 1927 he arranged to widen the reach of Keeble's sermons in Davidson County.[27] "On March 13, through the kindness and love of A. M. Burton, we were privileged to broadcast again over station WLAC, at Nashville. So many of my own race who would never come to our services at the meetinghouse have complimented the program."[28] Modern technology coupled with Burton's liberality broadened Keeble's outreach to the black community in Nashville and its environs.

A man of moral rectitude, Burton pledged in his 1928 New Year's resolution to "feed my soul on good and wholesome thoughts," but also "to make my daily life speak for righteousness," and "to increase the happiness in the lives with whom I come in contact, either directly or indirectly."[29] Following up this promise with action, he empowered Keeble's evangelistic efforts in Mississippi, Arkansas, and Missouri. "Brother A. M. Burton assisted me while here [Kosciusko, Mississippi]."[30] The white benefactor, when helping Keeble preach in Arkansas, surprised the black evangelist by sending funds beyond the requested amount. "Brother A. M. Burton agreed to pay my railroad fare to Fort Smith; but when the check came, it was twice the amount of my fare. Brother Burton has stood by me in my struggle to proclaim God's

word."[31] As he preached in southeast Missouri, Keeble received Burton's "check for fifty dollars to help me in this work," and thanked "God for such friends."[32] Blacks in Jackson, Mississippi, Keeble reported, "highly praised" Burton "because he assisted them in getting established" in the 1920s.[33]

Burton continued his philanthropy through four decades. In 1939 Keeble acknowledged the divine inspiration that motivated Burton's assistance, which at the time had endured through twenty-five years. "While I was struggling on the field God sent A. M. Burton to help me in the work. He came at a time when the road was hard and the clouds hung low. For years this good man sent me all over this country, and as a result thousands were baptized and dozens of churches established. He tells me he has never regretted a single dollar that he invested in this missionary work."[34] Christian education also benefited from Burton's largesse. Keeble reported that Burton gave $50,000 to the Nashville Christian Institute, a K–12 school for blacks which Keeble helped lead from 1942 until its demise in 1967. The death of Burton in the same year also signaled the end of Keeble's school.[35]

Marshall Keeble understood that in the Jim Crow South black schools and black congregations alike depended on the financial sustenance of white believers. As did Julius Rosenwald, Keeble digested Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery.* Keeble knew the book "from lid to lid," learning "how Booker T. Washington raised money for his school from white people. And Keeble years later would follow suit in raising money for the Nashville Christian Institute."[36] But Alexander Campbell, the fiery black preacher and cofounder of the Jackson Street Church of Christ in Nashville, also tutored Keeble in gaining white monetary support. "Dear white brethren," Campbell wrote in 1909, "some of the loyal colored brethren have the zeal, the whole truth, and the courage to do the right thing, and you white brethren who are loyal have the zeal, the whole truth, the courage, and the money."[37]

Keeble echoed this reality in 1953 when white leaders A. R. Holton, Ike Finley, B. C. Goodpasture, and A. C. Pullias gathered to celebrate Keeble's seventy-fifth birthday. Keeble particularly singled out A. M. Burton for praise. "All of this causes me to see how helpless and dependent I am. Without friends we are helpless and I hope I can be meek and humble in the sight of God and man. In my evangelist efforts A. M. Burton became interested more than forty years ago and he has assisted me abundantly. Both white and colored churches have called me to hold meetings all over this great

country and thousands have been baptized and hundreds of congregations established as a result."[38]

Keeble realized that without Burton and other white benefactors, it would have been largely impossible for him to travel, to preach, and to plant black Churches of Christ throughout the race-ravaged New South. Burton's support made possible both Keeble's rise and the mushrooming of African American Churches of Christ across the Southland. Keeble understood as well that white philanthropists would never succor a black preacher who exhibited the traits of a "new Negro"; only those African American ministers who complied with Jim Crow racial etiquette could expect any assistance. Keeble, after thanking Burton and other white contributors to his birthday party, then advised young black clerics, admonishing them to "preach the word of God faithfully, live a clean life, be meek and humble and God will send you friends and finally give you a crown that fadeth not away."[39] The generosity of white leaders and the "humility" of black clergy went hand in hand, for Keeble knew that "humility" in the minds of whites in the segregated South meant strict compliance with Jim Crow statutes and practices.

Regardless of any personal feelings Marshall Keeble might have harbored toward white domination in his South, he valued highest the preaching of the "pure gospel." And he shared the evangelistic vision with A. M. Burton. In 1954 Keeble spoke of Burton's dreams. "A. M. Burton often says that he hopes to live to see at least five hundred Negro preachers scattered over America preaching the gospel." Certainly Burton's concern for the souls of black people enabled Keeble to preach and teach, and so to give birth to myriad spiritual sons and daughters throughout the South and beyond. In 1956 the *Gospel Advocate* praised Burton for his constancy in supporting Keeble, noting: "Brother Burton entered into a friendship and Christian fellowship with this great gospel preacher that last to this day, and he has assisted him financially in carrying the gospel to his people all these years."[40] That same year Athens C. Pullias, a white leader in Churches of Christ, estimated that Burton and his wife had contributed ten million dollars to Christian missions and Christian education.[41]

A. M. Burton shared the spirit of philanthropy exampled by George Peabody, John F. Slater, John D. Rockefeller, Anna T. Jeanes, and Julius Rosenwald. Burton perhaps mirrored best the work of Rosenwald. With Rosenwald, Burton endeavored to uplift black southerners so that they could in

turn help themselves; and Burton's philanthropy, like that of Rosenwald, was not pointed at erasing prejudice and breaking down racial barriers in a segregated society. Indeed, when the black evangelist R. N. Hogan, who as a boy lived and worked with Burton, was asked if he thought the white philanthropist was "prejudiced," he answered: "Yes, I do. Because if he was not he would have not given me a room in the basement."[42]

Notwithstanding Hogan's criticism of Burton, the white benefactor contributed substantially to the emergence of African American Churches of Christ in the South. Furthermore, unlike Julius Rosenwald, a devout Jew from the North, Burton was a Christian from the South. He demonstrated his passion for the souls of black folk by lavishing empowering monetary gifts on the black evangelist Marshall Keeble, whose dynamic preaching accomplished what Burton alone could not have done. The "greatest missionary" in African American Churches of Christ was, ironically, neither a black man nor a white man but a curious merger of white philanthropist and black proclaimer.

3
An Old Negro in the New South
The Heart and Soul of Marshall Keeble

> The South laments to-day the slow, steady disappearance of a certain type of Negro,—the faithful, courteous slave of other days, with his incorruptible honesty and dignified humility.
>
> —W. E. B. Du Bois, 1903

> Many Southerners look back wistfully to the faithful, simple, ignorant, obedient, cheerful, old plantation Negro and deplore his disappearance. They want the New South, but the old Negro. That Negro is disappearing forever along with the old feudalism and the old-time exclusively agricultural life.
>
> —Ray Stannard Baker, 1908

Immediately following the Civil War, white southerners began concocting romantic notions of the "faithful" slave or the "old Negro." Virginia author Thomas Nelson Page dubbed the younger generation of black southerners, who were untrained and undisciplined by slavery, as "rude and insolent," but he placed the "old-time Negroes" on a pedestal, by claiming that "whatever they may think of 'the Negro' of to-day, there is scarcely one who knew the Negro in his old relation who does not speak of him with sympathy and think of him with tenderness. The writer has known men [who] begin to discuss new conditions fiercely, and on falling to talking of the past, drift into reminiscences of old servants and turn away to wipe their eyes."[1] Unlike the "new Negro," supposedly assertive, aggressive, and defiant, the "old Negro" exemplified the time-honored virtues of order, fidelity, and humility. Such romantic notions helped southern whites place a kinder face on their brutal institution of human bondage; in this construct whites could better imagine slavery as a benevolent system.

White southerners, hating the present, but cherishing the vanished past,

automatically scorned—and often savaged—those blacks who behaved as if they considered themselves the equals of whites. But blacks who, though free, displayed submissive, nonthreatening attitudes seemed to pose no challenge to continued white supremacy. That white members of Churches of Christ imbibed the corollary of the old Negro and the new Negro can be seen in the testimony of John M. McCaleb and E. F. Acuff. McCaleb, a white minister in Churches of Christ, upbraided a young black coachman who called a daughter of a white Christian man "'Bessie' in the familiar style of her own white brother." "I believe I voice the sentiment of the brotherhood generally," McCaleb protested, "when I say that he was out [of] his place. That upstartish disposition, especially among the younger negroes in which they vainly try to be white people with people, has done much harm." Yet Acuff, a white leader in Churches of Christ, published a letter in the *Gospel Advocate* from Wesley Smith, a "faithful old Negro," whose house in Lynchburg, Tennessee, perished in a fire. Acuff urged believers to aid Smith financially.[2] Marshall Keeble garnered plaudits and support from southern whites in Churches of Christ not only because of his dynamism in the pulpit, but also because they endowed him with the stamp of the "old Negro" as they witnessed his meek and unassuming deportment.

Keeble moved and worked as an evangelist in a complex and precarious world. Any assertion or abrasiveness on the part of a black man was deemed unacceptable by the white Jim Crow South, and could easily be punished by lynching. Such seemingly innocuous behaviors on the part of blacks as visiting a white front door, acquiring literacy, or excelling above a white person in any fashion white society judged as serious offenses. Benjamin E. Mays, a black resident of South Carolina, recalled violating two Jim Crow dictums in his segregated community when he knocked on a white man's front door in Orangeburg, and then called a black man "mister." "The man of the house," Mays remembered, "called me a 'black s. o. b.' and warned me about ever coming to his front door. He made it clear that no *Mister* Kearse had worked there but 'Isaiah worked here; and if you want to see me go to the back door.'"[3] In one southern community as two white men, a southerner and a northerner, walked from a train depot, they observed two black men, one sleeping and the other one reading a newspaper. The visitor from the South viciously kicked the black man with the newspaper. When the white northerner astonishingly inquired, "I don't understand it. I would think that

if you were going to kick one you would kick the lazy one who's sleeping." The native southerner retorted: "That's not the one we're worried about."[4] Prudent whites and blacks alike understood that literacy opened paths to freedom and independence, so a learned black man represented a threat to the South's social order. In the Mississippi Delta racial custom even prohibited black motorists from passing white drivers on unpaved roads "because the black man might stir up dust that would get on the white folks."[5]

Keeble well understood his complex and complicated environment of middle Tennessee, the South, and beyond; therefore, he and many other black southerners, in order to survive and enjoy some degree of peace in an unjust and brutally segregated culture, wore in the words of the poet Paul Laurence Dunbar "the mask."

We Wear the Mask
We wear the mask that grins and lies.
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,—
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleness . . .
We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
But let the world dream otherwise,
We wear the mask![6]

Dunbar's 1897 poem does not suggest that African Americans were weak and cowardly; instead, it intimates that they sought some control over their own destiny by suppressing their deep aversion for racial discrimination. Dunbar proffers a dolorous glimpse into the black psyche even as he shows that African Americans often resorted to subversive methods to survive the Jim Crow environment.

Marshall Keeble understood that his survival and success as an itinerant preacher depended largely on his compliance with the codes of segregation. He had learned, in the words of playwright Richard Wright, the "Ethics of Living Jim Crow." A native of Mississippi, Wright acquired a "Jim

Crow education," which compelled him "to lie, to steal, to dissemble." "I learned," Wright added, "to play that dual role which every Negro must play if he wants to eat and live."[7] Like Wright, Keeble complied with the implacable canons of segregation, suppressing any disaffection with racial injustice in order to garner the only available financial support, that from white Christians, which would enable him to plant black churches. Living and working in a culture ruled by racist violence and lynch law offered a black preacher few options.

To survive in the vicious world of segregation many black southerners created a type of parallel universe. African Americans in Nashville, Tennessee, through their own churches and their own folklore, shaped what one scholar called "a world-within-a-world." "In his folklore, and as he passed on the wisdom of his people from one generation to the next, it was a world in which through wit, ingenuity, guile, cunningness, and humor the weak triumphed over the strong." The folklore of black southerners included such stories as those about Br'er Rabbit, Br'er Wolf, Br'er Tiger, Br'er Fox, Br'er Possum, and the Tar Baby. These tales, often filled with exaggerated notions and playful lies, always portrayed an innocent victim who vanquished "more powerful enemies" through trickery and because "he is on the side of God."[8]

Keeble, a lifelong resident of the South who sought to be "on the side of God," doubtlessly imbibed these tales and applied their lessons in his own dealings with his white counterparts. Schooled by the life of Booker T. Washington, Keeble mastered the skills of living in the racist South. Washington's *Up from Slavery* taught him thrift, diligence, and the racial protocol of the New South.[9] Keeble, together with black residents in Nashville, placed their "faith in the hard work and turn-the-other-cheek philosophies of Booker T. Washington, social Darwinists, and the Christian church."[10] Washington's leading biographer has written of two Booker T. Washingtons: "the public one eager to please others, and the private one with purposes of his own."[11] Similarly there existed two Marshall Keebles. Floyd Rose, Keeble's understudy at the Nashville Christian Institute, recalled an episode in Detroit, Michigan. Before a predominantly black audience, Keeble praised Martin Luther King Jr., affirming: "If it hadn't been for Dr. King, we'd still be riding on the back of the bus. Thank God for Dr. King!" But later that day when the audience had become mostly white, Keeble expressed: "Thank

God for the white brethren! Thank God for the white brethren! Hadn't been for them we would still be running around in Africa naked."[12]

That many African Americans in the Jim Crow South nurtured such dual personalities is well attested. The Yale psychologist John Dollard noted that some black Mississippians displayed a "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" persona. "[The black Mississippian] has a kind of dual personality, two roles, one that he is forced to play with white people and one the 'real Negro' as he appears in his dealings with his own people. What the white southern people see who 'know their Negroes' is the role that they have forced the Negro to accept, his caste role."[13] W. E. B. Du Bois had even more perceptively probed the souls of black people in 1903. "To-day the young Negro of the South who would succeed cannot be frank and outspoken, honest and self-assertive, but rather he is daily tempted to be silent and wary, politic and sly; he must flatter and be pleasant, endure petty insults with a smile, shut his eyes to wrong; in too many cases he sees positive personal advantage in deception and lying. His real thoughts, his real aspirations, must be guarded in whispers; he must not criticize, he must not complain."[14]

Du Bois vividly revealed the psyche of most black southerners in the Jim Crow era. Keeble, too, closed his eyes to the violence lawless white mobs inflicted on black innocents. He personally endured verbal insults and physical assaults, accepting the subordinate "place" white believers assigned him, while drawing back from public criticism of whites in Churches of Christ who supported the Jim Crow system. This outward display of "humility" endeared Keeble to white believers.

Keeble had become the most visible African American preacher in Churches of Christ by the 1930s when the author and editor Benton C. Goodpasture published Keeble's *Biography and Sermons.* The key to Keeble's "power and success," according to Goodpasture, was "his humble and prayerful walk with God." "He is not made proud and boastful by his success and the many complimentary things the white brethren say to him," Goodpasture explained, "but rather made the more humble and the more grateful to an All-wise Father for enabling him to be used for good. He realizes if he should cease to be meek and humble he would be bereft of his strength as Samson was when he was shorn of his hair."[15] Keeble's lifelong supporter A. M. Burton similarly singled out his modest demeanor as a principal cause of his success. "In my opinion, his humility, his prayerful life, and his fearlessness in

proclaiming the truths of the Bible are responsible for the great good that he has done." Burton urged white evangelists to imitate Keeble's example of modesty. "I feel sure that many of our white brethren would increase their visible results very materially if they were more prayerful and just as humble and unassuming as is Brother Keeble." In the same volume Nicholas B. Hardeman maintained that Keeble's effective evangelism stemmed from his "simplicity and humility, plus his ability to tell the story."[16]

In 1933 Keeble impressed D. B. Whittle, a white leader of the Church of Christ in Palmetto, Florida, with both his courage and meekness. Whittle commented that Keeble's sectarian opponents had "threatened to burn the tent and tried to make him close the meeting by making different kinds of threats, but, as usual, it did not affect him." Death threats failed to deter Keeble, who "preached the gospel to large crowds of both white and colored in a humble, Christlike spirit."[17] A year later Whittle applauded both Keeble and John R. Vaughner, who contributed to the proliferation of black Churches of Christ in the Sunshine State. "Keeble and Vaughner are a great pair of yokefellows, and are doing a wonderful work among their people. They are good, humble Christians, and fear not to follow God's counsel in all they say and do."[18]

White southerners commonly defined "meekness" and "humility" as functions of blacks' acquiescence to segregation's dictates. Keeble's definition and understanding of these terms, however, differed from that of most whites. The black evangelist interpreted meekness and humility to mean the Christian's ability to submit to verbal and physical attacks. "We must learn to show meekness when we are attacked by our enemies," wrote Keeble. "Meekness gives us great power and shows people that we have the Spirit of Christ. When anyone smites us we are ready to strike back. This is not the spirit of meekness."[19] Keeble assumed his mild disposition from his father-in-law Samuel W. Womack. After marrying into the Womack family, Keeble commented: "If there ever was a Christian anywhere, this old servant is one. While I am young, I am trying to live humble and meek like him, and I thank God for the impression his life has made on me."[20] When Womack died in the summer of 1920 Keeble praised him as a man "who never spoke rashly or angrily."[21] In similar fashion Keeble never retaliated when verbally and physically abused.

These personal traits of patience and meekness spilled over into Keeble's

preaching, and he understood their role in his success as an evangelist. When a professor from Lane College in Jackson, Tennessee, attacked Keeble "to show to the crowd that I was teaching false doctrine," Keeble dealt with his opponent calmly and politely. "When he was through, I followed him with nothing but the truth; and when I extended the invitation seven souls came forward and made the good confession. I am more convinced since holding this meeting that sectarianism must be fought with a humble and meek spirit."[22] Keeble's humility and meekness were genuine and authentic, character traits he perceived to be mandated by the Christian Bible.

White leaders in the South, however, used such terms as "meek" and "humble" in a distinctively southern context. Meekness and humility, in the white South, meant essentially that a black man must remain in his white-assigned "place," refusing to challenge the traditional segregated social order of the New South. A writer to the *Gospel Advocate* (with initials W. E. B.) observed that Keeble "is humble in all things, and free of any offense in his attitude toward the white brethren."[23] Unlike the abrasive "new Negro," Keeble personified the enduring qualities of fidelity and humility of the "old Negro," and in 1941 when the eminent white preacher Foy E. Wallace Jr. rebuked white and black Christians who transgressed racial and social barriers, Keeble replied with a submissive letter. Wallace in turn commended Keeble, affirming: "This letter is characteristic of the humility of M. Keeble. It is the reason why he is the greatest colored preacher that has ever lived." To Wallace, Keeble's greatness as a black evangelist lay not necessarily in his eloquence but in his willingness to stay in his "place." "Both Keeble and his disciple, Luke Miller," Wallace applauded, "know their place and stay in it, even when some white brethren try to take them out of it."[24]

H. H. Adamson, a white preacher in Michigan Churches of Christ, similarly praised Keeble not only for his preaching skill, but also because he stayed in his place. "The conduct of Brother Keeble and his singer, Brother Lee, was one hundred per cent," Adamson reported in 1939. "They knew their place and never fudged a fraction. Not a few white preachers could learn of them."[25]

White Churches of Christ supported only those black preachers who displayed the Keeble-like attributes of meekness and submissiveness, and black congregations, whose members worked in a Jim Crow economy, lacked the necessary resources. When white believers in Florida aided Luke Miller,

Keeble wrote that "The white brethren are much impressed with his humble, meek, Christlike disposition."[26] Similarly white leaders in Paris, Texas, commended Shelton Gibbs I, for "a spirit of consecration and humility. He is firm in his preaching, making no sacrifice of the truth."[27] James L. Lovell, an avid supporter of black preachers and black congregations, compared his friend Richard N. Hogan to Keeble, appraising: "Brother Hogan has anything beat that I have ever heard, and he is just like Brother Keeble, humble as can be (otherwise I could not work with him)."[28] Joe Morris, a white minister in Huntington, West Virginia, rejoiced after a Keeble meeting yielded eight baptisms, and applauded William Lee, Keeble's songleader, as "humble, faithful, and true."[29] In short, black evangelists in Churches of Christ who displayed Keeble-like humility as whites defined the term and who conformed to Jim Crow mandates won approbation and a degree of financial support from white Christians.

When Keeble died in 1968 white Christians consistently lauded his humble demeanor. Basil Overton, a white leader in Tennessee, cited Thomas Moore's definition of humility. "Humility is that low sweet root from which all heavenly virtues shoot." Overton then quoted Henry David Thoreau, "Humility, like darkness, reveals the heavenly lights" applying this to Keeble. He added that Keeble "was clothed with humility just as the Holy Spirit instructed him to be. (1 Peter 5:5–7)."[30] H. A. Dixon believed that "humility of spirit and undertaking of humanity made Marshall Keeble a challenging individual,"[31] while Lambert Campbell judged that Keeble "taught humility by his life,"[32] and Albert Gray recalled him as "humble and down to earth. That made him great in God's sight."[33]

Southern whites venerated Keeble because he never openly sought change in social and political structures; he never commented on the infamous Scottsboro case while preaching in Alabama; never denounced the KKK's brutality he encountered in Florida while establishing black congregations; never publicly celebrated the Brown decision of 1954; never overtly supported the efforts of the NAACP, the SCLC, the SNCC, or any other civil rights organization intent on eradicating Jim Crow in the South. Keeble never applauded the work of Martin Luther King Jr. before predominantly white audiences, nor did he denounce the horrific murder of Emmett Till or the hundreds of other lynchings common in the South throughout his

life. Karl W. Pettus in 1968 analyzed Keeble's method of work among southerners as that of a reconciler. "He was at peace with all men everywhere. He didn't march for school integration, but he worked and spent himself for most of his life for Christian education." Keeble succeeded as a black evangelist in a predominantly white fellowship, Pettus maintained, for the very reason that he "never led a march or demonstration, peaceful or otherwise. He was never connected with a riot."[34]

Comparing the work of Marshall Keeble with the practices of civil rights activists, Reuel Lemmons, editor of the *Firm Foundation,* observed: "He [Keeble] never led a riot; he never burned out a block of buildings; he never marched on Washington. But he marched toward heaven from the day he obeyed the gospel, young in life, and following him a great throng of peaceable people—black and white—and arm in arm, in the common bond of true brotherhood are headed that way." Pettus juxtaposed the death of Keeble and the assassination of Martin Luther King. "No flag was flown at half-mast in his honor. He wasn't eulogized by our nation's political leaders and political office seekers. He never won the coveted *Nobel Prize*."[35]

The ideology of Lemmons and Pettus evidently typified the thinking of most southern whites in Churches of Christ concerning race relations in the Jim Crow era. Most Caucasian believers felt comfortable with black preachers such as Keeble, who refused to challenge the New South's social order, but shunned African American ministers such as Martin Luther King Jr., who protested against racial injustice. Keeble's refusal to criticize racism in American society also distinguished him from some of his contemporary black preachers within his fellowship. Samuel Robert Cassius, a black evangelist in Churches of Christ who worked mostly outside the South, consistently excoriated the paternalism and racism he detected among white Christians, railing: "So, after all, even our religion is a great trap of ostracism into which we have run, to be shut up like rats in a trap."[36] Many white believers, scoffed Cassius, embraced the black man as a "spiritual equal," but rejected him as a "social outcast," as spiritual equality failed to translate into social equality.[37] Cassius further objected to white believers' use of the derogatory terms "Nigger" and "Darkey" in the "House of God on the Lord's day."[38] Keeble, however, appeared unoffended by such words, cautioning that one must "never [*sic*] get mad about being called a 'nigger.' If you do,

you are resenting him [the white man]."[39] What Cassius viewed as pejorative and degrading to black Americans, Keeble saw as disrespectful to his white counterparts. Of course Keeble labored primarily in the South, drawing his support from southern whites; had he chosen the path of racial reform at the 1914 outset of his career, his preaching journey would doubtless have been short-lived or detoured to northern states.

In 1920 when C. E. W. Dorris, the white superintendent of the Southern Practical Institute in Nashville, insisted that black students enter the school building through the back door, G. P. Bowser, another black co-laborer with Keeble, firmly opposed the practice and the school closed abruptly. Bowser's stance in the face of Jim Crow customs cost him extensive white philanthropic support. A decade after the Bowser-Dorris affair, F. B. Shepherd, a Texas preacher, saw Bowser, who "had barely enough clothes to cover him, and they were decidedly threadbare."[40] Bowser's protest against segregated practices among Christians cost him essential monetary and material support, curtailing his evangelistic efforts. Yet Keeble, compliant with racist mandates, received monetary support from whites, which enabled him to preach for more than fifty years to black southerners.

R. N. Hogan, a Bowser protégé who preached mostly in the West, emerged eventually as a potent critic of white Church of Christ schools that refused admission to African American students. "It is almost an insult," lamented Hogan in 1963, "for a Negro to ask to be admitted into David Lipscomb College in Nashville, Tenn. Yet it is supposed to be operated by Christians; what reason can David Lipscomb, Harding, Freed Hardeman, Florida Christian . . . and other such schools who are refusing to allow Negroes to be trained in their schools, give for such practice, but sheer prejudice and hate?"[41] While Cassius, Bowser, and Hogan, who worked little in the South, generated some monetary support from whites in Churches of Christ, they never garnered the assistance and accolades granted Marshall Keeble, and their careers in the South never approached that of Keeble.[42] Cassius, Bowser, and Hogan typified the assertive and abrasive traits of the "new Negro," unafraid to challenge white racism, and they preached mostly outside Jim Crow's domain. But Keeble's "humble" disposition, his unwillingness to rock the boat of race relations in southern Churches of Christ, and his ability to exemplify the qualities of an "old Negro" in the New South gained him steady support from white Christians, which helped to ensure his unprece-

dented success as a black evangelist in his chosen fellowship and in his native region.[43]

To label Keeble as an "Uncle Tom," however, is to oversimplify a complex man living in a complex culture. To suggest that he was not socially or politically conscientious is to fail to take him seriously and to ignore the subtlety of the man and the complexities of his times. He did, indeed, on occasion manifest political and racial views out of tune with Jim Crowism. In 1948 Keeble, while speaking at David Lipscomb College's annual lectureship, compared Franklin D. Roosevelt's "fireside chats" to God's written word. "Now, then, when he would make those fireside chats he was not a well man, he would go to bed early and about 12:00 you would hear the announcement telling you that this is Mr. Roosevelt by transcription. Mr. Roosevelt speaks in Washington in the White House. What do you make out of that, Bro. Keeble? We today don't need the baptism of the Holy Spirit for we have God's word by transcription. We have the record."[44]

Even though Keeble used a political illustration to emphasize a theological argument that present-day Christians had no need for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the subtext suggests that Keeble, who like many other African Americans probably had Republican leanings in his earlier years, transitioned into the Democratic party in the 1930s because of Roosevelt's symbolic racial gestures in creating the so-called Black Cabinet, as well as his raising the economic hopes of black Americans through New Deal programs.[45]

In 1950 Keeble addressed a white audience at segregated Abilene Christian College in Texas, applauding white Christians for their interest in the black man. "It's the interest of the church of Christ that has missionaries in Africa, it's the interest of the church of Christ in America that sent Brother [Edward W.] McMillan and all the missionaries to Japan after they had stabbed us in the back. That's fine. I believe these missionaries have forgot that attack at Pearl Harbor. The gospel of Christ will knock out of us all the prejudice and malice we have against any man. It will knock it out." He concluded his speech with candor and a frank, though diplomatic, rebuke. "May the grace of God dwell in your heart and may the grace of God cause you to look upon no race as being inferior, but let's make him what he ought to be and lift him on a higher plane that Jesus can bless you and give you a crown that fadeth not away."[46] In this bold, spiritual admonition Keeble

had spoken from an otherworldly perspective, but his concern was with how contemporary Anglo Christians viewed African Americans.

When writing in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, Harry Kellam, a former student at the Nashville Christian Institute, compared the civil rights leader and Keeble. Kellam recalled that Keeble hated racism and segregation with a passion. "Some brethren called Marshall Keeble an Uncle Tom because he never openly spoke out against racism in the manner Dr. King did," wrote Kellam. "Nonetheless, I lived in the NCI dormitory with 'Pops' and Sister Keeble for several years. I observed and became well acquainted with this man and I guarantee you; he dislike[d] segregation as much as you, I or Dr. King. He always told us and others that the way to handle segregation was to wipe it out with the word of God. And this was what he did."[47]

Kellam further explained that in 1963 some NCI students marched with other black students from Tennessee State University and Fisk University with Keeble's approval.

> I'll never forget what this great man did in 1963 when the NCI student body was called upon to participate in a civil rights march downtown [Nashville]. We were warned by then President Cato, and all other staff and teachers not to demonstrate. Since our board of directors were the same as David Lipscomb's board of directors, we were sternly warned not to participate in the sit-ins. As president of the student body, I discussed the matter with the students and it was decided by a majority that we would march. For a week, Brother Keeble received pressure from the staff and supporters of the school to demand that NCI not demonstrate.
>
> Never once did Marshall Keeble ask us to go against our will. Instead he admonished us to "do what we felt best." We marched along, with Tennessee State, Fisk, and other schools and that resulted in desegregation of all restaurants downtown.[48]

On April 20, 1963, William Moore, a twenty-five-year-old white Baltimore native and postman, participated in several "Freedom Walks" seeking equal rights for black southerners. Three days later a Klansman in Ala-

bama assassinated Moore. President John F. Kennedy characterized Moore's murder as an outrage and offered "the services of the FBI in the solution of the crime." To memorialize Moore's death, over one hundred students from Tennessee State University and Fisk University marched from the latter school to downtown Nashville, convinced that protests in Alabama were linked to their cause in Tennessee. Harry Kellam and other NCI students joined hands with John Lewis, a Fisk student and future U.S. congressman, to participate in this march to desegregate the city of Nashville.[49]

The following year, Mark Tucker, a graduate of David Lipscomb College, spoke at NCI's chapel service. After his speech Tucker noted that Keeble "was fretting" over the 1964 presidential election, which touted Lyndon B. Johnson, a Texas Democrat, against Barry Goldwater, an Arizona Republican. The black evangelist understood the significance of the election, as he "spoke of freedom, recounting years of slavery, struggles for the right to vote, the right to educational and economic opportunity, the unfettered right to an integrated society. He longed for a prophet to lead his people to freedom; he likened Johnson to Moses." With tears flowing from his eyes, Keeble begged the Lord not to "put Mr. Goldwater on us. If necessary, he said, he and his people could 'take' Mr. Goldwater. They had, after all, taken slavery."[50]

Two years later Denny Crews, Tim Tucker, and one other David Lipscomb College graduate hosted Keeble in Massachusetts and asked him his views on race relations and segregation in schools and colleges in Nashville. Keeble initially evaded the question, accusing "his Yankee host of being an outside agitator" and responding: "Why do you want to mess with this subject?" Crews, the northern host, then inquired more directly: "Brother Keeble, do you ever preach that segregation as it exists in the churches of Nashville is a sin?" Keeble, according to Tucker, wheeled and asserted: "Every time I can get away with it." Keeble's response startled Tucker. While in Massachusetts, Keeble had also stood outside the house where President John F. Kennedy was born and praised the slain chief executive. Knowing that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 had virtually restored to African Americans in the South the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, Keeble then asserted: *"All this we have now, he* (Kennedy) *was the starting of it* [*sic*]." These bold assertions astonished Tucker

and changed the course of his life from a builder of a "Southern reactionary Republican party in the heart of Churches of Christ" to an evangelist of "America in light of the new opportunities the Sixties have opened up."[51]

Such evidence attests that Marshall Keeble was more complex than many of his contemporaries as well as students of his life have realized. Keeble, a deeply religious man, was also a passionate and prudent man. He cared deeply for the social and political plight of African Americans, even if he often kept those feelings locked inside his bosom. Yet he keenly understood that his survival as a black man in a segregated society was perilous and that his support as a black preacher in a white-dominated religious fellowship depended on his ability and adroitness in evading racial conflict as best as he could. While many of his white supporters and admirers viewed him as an exemplar of the "old Negro," Keeble scarcely fits this description. His overarching goal always remained the preaching of God's word to as many people—black and white—as he could reach. Any other end he was willing to forego.

No coward or weakling, Keeble understood white people better than they understood him. As James Weldon Johnson, author of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man,* observed in 1912: "This gives to every coloured [*sic*] man, in proportion to his intellectuality, a sort of dual personality; there is one phase of him which is disclosed only in the freemasonry of his own race." "I believe it to be a fact," Johnson continued, "that the coloured people of this country know and understand the white people better than the white people know and understand them."[52] Like most blacks in the segregated South, Marshall Keeble knew what white southerners wanted, an "old Negro" in the New South; therefore, he successfully passed himself as such to win the souls of black folks and white folks as well. But he was not as simple as many supposed him to be.

II

The *Gospel Advocate* and the Theological Formation of African American Churches of Christ

4
"It Does My Soul Good When I Read the *Gospel Advocate*"

Marshall Keeble and the Power of the Press

> All that we know about God we learned from the white man, and all we know about God's word we learned from a white man's Bible. Our ideas of right and wrong are the white man's ideas of right and wrong.
>
> —Samuel Robert Cassius, 1918

As Marshall Keeble roamed through the South in his preaching ministry he always remained closely linked to the *Gospel Advocate,* a weekly journal that had a profound impact on the theological formation of black Churches of Christ in the twentieth century. When Keeble established churches he immediately tied his new converts to the *Gospel Advocate* by subscriptions to the paper and its Sunday school literature. In 1924 Keeble explained: "After establishing new congregations, the next thing I do is get them to order the Quarterlies published by the Gospel Advocate Company."[1] Two decades later Keeble had earned membership in the Gospel Advocate One Hundred Club by securing one hundred or more subscriptions to the paper. Keeble was the only black preacher so honored.[2] By adding black subscribers to the *Advocate,* Keeble expanded the paper's readership and indoctrinated the readers, and those whom they influenced, into the journal's interpretation of the Bible, especially the New Testament. Keeble gathered the black sheep, but the *Gospel Advocate* white editors fed and nurtured them on a diet of rationalism and exclusivism.

Founded in 1855 by Tolbert Fanning and William Lipscomb, the *Gospel Advocate,* after a brief Civil War hiatus, resumed publication in 1866 in part to counter the more progressive influence of Isaac Errett's *Christian Standard.* In 1909 the historian W. T. Moore noted that "the Disciples of Christ do not have bishops, they have editors."[3] After the Civil War two "editor-bishops," David Lipscomb and Tolbert Fanning, helped lead Churches of

Christ across the South away from those who became known as the Disciples of Christ or the Christian Church, advocates of musical instruments in worship and evangelism through missionary societies. The historian Richard T. Hughes has noted, "Not only was his [David Lipscomb's] *Gospel Advocate* the principal brotherhood periodical circulated in Middle Tennessee, but Lipscomb used the *Advocate* to shape perspective and to influence the brothers and sisters toward his understanding of biblical truth. In the *Advocate* he fought numerous battles over issues ranging from missionary societies to settled pastors, and from musical instruments in worship to theological liberalism."[4]

African Americans, too, felt the "power of the Press," as they came under the influence of journals connected to the Stone-Campbell Movement. In 1879 the *Christian Standard* was the first paper among the Disciples of Christ to set aside a special section, "Our Colored Brethren," for black writers to address black concerns. Preston Taylor, black leader of the Mount Sterling, Kentucky, Christian Church, oversaw this unique column. Charles L. Loos, an important educator among white Disciples, praised the column and recognized "the mighty burden of duty resting upon us all as Christians towards the African race in our land." He then admonished: "And to the STANDARD let me say—watch well over this new column in your field. Keep it strong, active, and on the advance; see that *its* standard be borne high and ever gallantly unfurled. Its present bearer, Bro. Taylor, is doing his office well, and shows himself worthy of his place."[5]

In 1895 the *Christian Leader,* a journal established by John F. Rowe in 1886 in Cincinnati, Ohio, began accepting regular contributions from Samuel Robert Cassius, a black preacher in Oklahoma. Two years later, after he participated in a convention in Panama, Nebraska, Cassius became embroiled in controversy between "loyals" (opponents of missionary societies and musical instruments in worship) and "progressives" (supporters of missionary societies and musical instruments in worship), as he concluded that some Christians "based their loyalty on 'papers' rather than Christ." Some white leaders threatened to withhold monetary aid from Cassius because he wrote articles for the *Christian Leader.* The papers for which preachers wrote and members subscribed to often became litmus tests in the Restoration Movement for loyalty or disloyalty to Scripture. In a religious movement lacking denominational structures or directional assemblies, the journals played

seminal roles. "We judge a man," Cassius wrote sardonically, "by the company he keeps."[6]

Cassius launched his own paper, the *Industrial Christian,* in the late 1890s, but it failed as he juggled simultaneously attempts to establish a school, the Tohee Industrial School, and to manage a paper.[7] In 1902 G. P. Bowser, a contemporary and co-laborer with Cassius, founded the *Christian Echo* for African Americans in Churches of Christ. This black-controlled paper, however, never matched the circulation of the *Gospel Advocate* until the second half of the twentieth century. From 1939 to 1950 Keeble edited the *Christian Counselor,* a monthly journal "devoted to the Preaching of the Gospel of Christ in Purity and Simplicity." Keeble's journal existed eleven years under the auspices of white editors of the *Gospel Advocate.* While blacks in Churches of Christ variously attempted to produce their own papers, the *Gospel Advocate* always exerted a profound impact on the theological mindset of black leaders and members.[8]

Many African American evangelists who helped establish Churches of Christ in the southern states readily acknowledged their reliance on the *Gospel Advocate.* In 1911 Alexander Campbell, a leader of black congregations in middle Tennessee, noted: "We use the Advanced Gospel Quarterly, written by Brother [Edwin A.] Elam. I still advise all my people to use the Quarterly." Campbell appreciated the *Gospel Advocate* materials because of their "pure teaching" and because they were "so easily studied."[9] John T. Ramsey, a minister to black Texans, acknowledged that he looked forward to reading the *Gospel Advocate.* "I rejoice when the day comes for my Gospel Advocate. I am never too busy to read it."[10] In 1918 Ramsey called the journal "the best and safest paper among the brotherhood to-day, and we cannot do without it."[11]

Samuel W. Womack, Marshall Keeble's father-in-law and mentor, acknowledged that he began reading the *Gospel Advocate,* the *Religious Historian,* and the *American Christian Review* immediately after the Civil War. "Among the first papers I began to read were the Gospel Advocate and the Historian and the Christian Review (formerly published by Brother Franklin and now called the 'Apostolic Times')."[12] Here Womack was mistaken, as Benjamin Franklin's *American Christian Review* was changed to the *Octographic Review* from 1887 to 1913 before its name was changed to the *Apostolic Review* from 1914 to 1939. Notwithstanding Womack's error, he further

observed that his "owners took these papers about the close of the war between the North and the South or just afterwards. As my father was then a strong Methodist, they would let him have these papers to read. A great impression was made on his mind."[13] Of the three journals, the *Gospel Advocate* had the most influence on Womack's life. "For fifty or more years I have been hearing the Gospel Advocate read and reading it myself. I do not know of any paper that has made the fight for the truth that it has made. It has been a great source of learning by which the truth has been made plain to me." He singled out two editors, David Lipscomb and E. G. Sewell, whose writings and "lives, have been so helpful to me."[14]

The *Gospel Advocate,* according to Marshall Keeble, consoled his father-in-law during his last days. "Brother Womack has been a subscriber for the Gospel Advocate for years, and although too feeble to read it himself, he has me to sit by his bed and read it over to him, and it seems to be a source of comfort to him yet, as it has been in the past."[15] The following year Ella McDavid, an African American woman in Alabama, indicated that she, also, had digested the *Gospel Advocate* for forty-five years. McDavid's father, in failing health, insisted that she and her sister "read it to him, and pay his subscription. No Christian family should be without the Gospel Advocate."[16] W. U. Benton, a black believer in Holland, Georgia, attested that the teaching of the *Gospel Advocate* and the preaching of various white evangelists "led me into the kingdom of God."[17]

Keeble, too, unabashedly affirmed that white leaders in Churches of Christ, through their periodicals and Bible school materials, shaped the theology of their black counterparts. In 1916 Keeble commented that the white Christian philanthropist Andrew M. Burton supplied the black Jackson Street Church of Christ in Nashville with "G. Dallas Smith's Bible drill, furnishing books and some one to teach the class, and, in my judgment, it will be the means of a good many seeing the truth."[18] Keeble two years later observed more specifically that black leaders Samuel W. Womack and Alexander Campbell regarded the *Gospel Advocate* as a second Bible. "Brother Womack and Brother Campbell say that the Gospel Advocate has been second with them, and the Bible first."[19] The principal leaders of black Churches of Christ read and interpreted Scripture through the lenses of the *Gospel Advocate.* Such perspective affected not only how they viewed theological issues such as missionary societies, instruments of music in worship, baptism,

and the work of the Holy Spirit, but also how they regarded other religious groups, as the next chapter will show.

Keeble's own familiarity with the *Gospel Advocate* dated from his childhood, acknowledging that "it has been a great help to me in studying the Bible. I have been reading it ever since I learned to read." "My grandfather took it until his death; then, after I married into Brother Womack's family, I found it there. So I am still reading it, and may it go forth blessing the world as it did when that great and noble servant, David Lipscomb, lived."[20] In 1920 Keeble praised the paper for furnishing spiritual strength. "Spiritually, the Gospel Advocate has given me strength. No can read its pages regularly without growing stronger in the faith of the Lord Jesus." Even when he journeyed far from home on extended preaching tours, he kept up his reading. "My wife sends it to me each week; and when it comes, I never stop reading until I have read it through." Keeble advised all "to read this paper. I am glad to see the Advocate standing so firm on the truth, and I am praying to see the brethren who have it under their management will live long so the world can be benefited and bettered by their strong articles."[21]

Throughout the 1920s Keeble lavished more praise on the *Gospel Advocate*. "It does my soul good when I read the Gospel Advocate." The paper's teachings encouraged the black evangelist, and its reports about the successful preaching of other ministers inspired him. "The first thing I look for is 'At Home and Abroad,' because I can see where the brethren are hammering away with the truth and thousands are being brought to Christ; and then I think of how few negroes are given the chance to hear the pure gospel, and I tremble."[22] In 1923 he reported that the journal positively affected all the churches he planted. "All of the missions that I have established are now using the literature published by the Gospel Advocate Company, and that is why they are all growing stronger each day."[23] Four years later Keeble again recommended the "Gospel Advocate and the Bible-study literature published by the Gospel Advocate Company at all the places I establish the cause of Christ, because I consider them the very best." After planting a congregation of black Christians in Tampa, Florida, Keeble expressed gratitude that the "Gospel Advocate Publishing Company sent their Sunday-school literature for the first quarter free, and I am so thankful to them." Convinced that black disciples could securely digest such materials, Keeble continued: "When I can get people to begin with this kind of literature, I feel

that they are safe, because the brethren who get up these helps are men who have spent years studying God's word."[24] In 1928 Keeble asserted that "the Gospel Advocate is getting better and better," viewing the *Advocate* editors as "watchmen on the wall." "A good many of the white brethren," Keeble indicated, "are paying for the paper to be sent into colored homes. This is mission work."[25] From Keeble's perspective, the literature of the *Gospel Advocate* was invaluable to black novices' understanding of spiritual matters.

In the 1930s black clerics in Churches of Christ continued their dependence on the instruction and inspiration given through the *Gospel Advocate.* Luke Miller, a Keeble convert from Decatur, Alabama, praised the publishers of the *Gospel Advocate* who "sent the Gospel Quarterlies to each of the new congregations free. We are greatly strengthened when we study these lessons got out by those good brethren." Miller added that the Tennessee publication enhanced his own faith. "Every time I read the Gospel Advocate, I get stronger in the faith."[26] During the same decade Keeble credited the *Advocate*'s former editors, David Lipscomb and E. G. Sewell, with shaping the theological mindset of the cofounders of Nashville's Jackson Street Church of Christ, Alexander Campbell and Samuel W. Womack. "These two brethren," Keeble observed, "were very largely influenced by David Lipscomb and E. G. Sewell," the two editors who exerted much of their influence through the pages of the *Gospel Advocate.*[27] In 1936 Paul D. English, a black evangelist in Alabama and Tennessee, received help preparing his sermons from J. Roy Vaughn, a white minister in Montgomery and a frequent contributor to the *Gospel Advocate.* "Brother Vaughn was much help to me, and many of the sermons I preached I learned from him."[28] L. H. Alexander, a Keeble protégé and a black preacher in Lubbock, Texas, similarly added that he "was helped and encouraged by F. B. Srygley and E. G. Collins, of the Gospel Advocate, and by M. Keeble."[29] When Jesse Brown, an African American preacher in Lakeland, Florida, announced the completion of a new church building, he thanked white Christians for their encouragement, and hoped that the " 'Conversion' edition of the Gospel Advocate will have a wide circulation."[30] The sermons and lessons delivered to black congregations by black preachers, originated in white Churches of Christ, and passed through the *Gospel Advocate* conduit.

Keeble, consequently, viewed white leaders as shepherds who guided and protected black flocks whether by direct counsel or through the *Gospel Advocate*'s pages. After preaching and visiting churches in Port Arthur,

Texas, and in Mobile and Montgomery, Alabama, Keeble observed concerning the first city: "The white brethren are still looking after the work here." After leaving Montgomery, Keeble commented: "At all of the places visited the white brethren are interested in, and watching after, the work of my brethren. This keeps the wolves from entering the fold and destroying the young."[31] More pointedly, in the summer of 1939 F. B. Shepherd, a white evangelist in Churches of Christ and writer for the *Gospel Advocate,* reported that Luke Miller recently ended a meeting in Bryan, Texas, "for his race under the direction of the white church here." After Miller conducted the first successful preaching campaign, which resulted in the establishment of a black congregation of thirty members the previous year, Shepherd appointed Lonnie Smith, an African American minister, who "will continue with this group under the oversight of the white congregation."[32] Keeble and other black ministers ardently preached the Gospel and planted congregations throughout the New South, but white men, largely through the writings of the *Gospel Advocate,* solidified them and infused them with their understanding of the New Testament.

At the end of the 1930s Keeble further lauded *Gospel Advocate* writers. "It seems that all of the writers of the Gospel Advocate are getting better and better, and I am feasting as I read and reread their wonderful articles. I hope Brother Srygley will be writing many more years."[33] Keeble especially commended the *Gospel Advocate*'s section "We Are Brethren," which promoted cordiality and unity among Churches of Christ. "You are now doing the greatest work of your life, and such articles as you are now giving us in your editorials are sure to make us all appreciate the Gospel Advocate more and more. I have been a subscriber of the Advocate for thirty-five years, and all of the editors have been my friends." Keeble also attributed his prominence in Church of Christ circles to the *Gospel Advocate*'s endorsement of his work as an evangelist. "The paper has always indorsed [*sic*] my work, without the help this paper has given me, but few people would have known me."[34] In 1956 Keeble again credited the *Gospel Advocate* for his fame as an able evangelist, as the paper's interest in his preaching success led to additional invitations. "For nearly fifty-five years the ADVOCATE has been reporting my work and caused the brethren all over the brotherhood to call me for meetings." "I will always be thankful to the ADVOCATE," Keeble continued, "for their unselfish attitude toward me and my race."[35]

The *Gospel Advocate* generated interest in black evangelists apart from

Marshall Keeble. John Harris, after converting from Catholicism to Churches of Christ, frequently contributed to the *Gospel Advocate*. In 1959, Harris acknowledged: "I thank the GOSPEL ADVOCATE for publishing my articles. I have received calls for meetings because of them." He added unreservedly: "I recommend the ADVOCATE to every human being on the face of the earth."[36] Later that year Harris acknowledged that the *Gospel Advocate* not only gave him visibility among white and black Churches of Christ but also admitted the paper's impact on his own preaching. "May God bless the ADVOCATE for the great work it is doing for the brotherhood. I love the ADVOCATE."[37]

In the 1960s Harris, who ministered to black Churches of Christ in Mississippi, Tennessee, and Alabama, noted his own indebtedness to the *Gospel Advocate*. "I have been receiving the GOSPEL ADVOCATE for ten years and have learned much about God's word by reading it. It rightly divides God's word."[38] He later affirmed: "The ADVOCATE gets better every week. I learn much about preaching and difficult scriptures by reading it. I have been subscribing for it for over ten years. Every home in the world should have the ADVOCATE."[39] The paper often published Harris's sermon outlines, and like Keeble he received invitations as results of the paper's noting his work. "I have received many calls for meetings because of these articles appearing in the ADVOCATE."[40] Basking in the benefits he derived from the journal, Harris exclaimed: "God's richest blessings be upon the ADVOCATE."[41]

So wide was the journal's influence that Harris had to decline preaching invitations because of the excessive calls he received and thanked J. Roy Vaughan, a white leader in Churches of Christ, for the "outstanding work he has done and is doing for that great paper. May God bless him richly for correcting our many badly-written articles."[42] In 1964 Harris again lauded the journal, stating: "The GOSPEL ADVOCATE is the world's greatest religious paper." He further commended: "I want to also thank the GOSPEL ADVOCATE for the many sermons and the many articles that they let me put in this wonderful paper. May God bless everybody connected with the GOSPEL ADVOCATE."[43]

In a religious fellowship that boasted its lack of denominational centralism and that insisted on congregational autonomy, Christian journals had come to play an inordinately important role in preserving and even formulat-

ing doctrinal conviction. The testimonies of Keeble and other black preachers illustrate how the *Gospel Advocate* helped shape their sermons and their understanding of Scripture. African American evangelists often gave reports of their missionary sojourns, as they planted congregations throughout the South, and these announcements in turn brought pride to black ministers who found their names and work circulated in a prominent white journal. Furthermore, these reports led to black preachers receiving "calls" from white leaders in Churches of Christ to plant separate black congregations in their communities. White editors of the *Gospel Advocate* reaped generous rewards as well, for through these black preachers they enlarged their readership and disseminated their exclusivistic theology among their black neighbors in the South, the very people some Caucasian Christians despised in the societal context.

5
"The Bible Is Right!"
The Theology and Strategy of Marshall Keeble

> If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.
>
> —1 Peter 4:11

Marshall Keeble's theology, which he imbibed fundamentally from white leaders in Churches of Christ and which he then reflected in his sermons, eventually formed the theological platform from which southern African American Churches of Christ emerged. Although Keeble himself left few writings for posterity, in 1931 B. C. Goodpasture assigned Connie Alderman of Valdosta, Georgia, to transcribe Keeble's homilies, and these discourses furnish essential insight into the theology of both this dynamic evangelist and the black congregations he spoke into existence. This chapter explores how Keeble and other black ministers in Churches of Christ viewed the Bible, understood the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life, emphasized baptism for the remission of sins, and argued for the exclusivity of the Church of Christ, even as they embraced as wayward believers those who were aligned with the Christian Church.

Authority of Scripture

In his sermon "The Power of the Written Word," Keeble underscored the importance of seekers coming "to Jesus as the Bible directs." Keeble held a high view of Scripture, placing the Bible and the Holy Spirit on the same plane. Refuting Pentecostals who claimed "the working of the Holy Ghost independent of God's word," Keeble asserted: "I am one of those that believe that all the power is in the word of God and if you ever get any power to do anything for Christ, it must come through the written word."[1] Keeble's

conviction that God's power (or God's Spirit) was inseparable from the written word stems from the influence of Alexander Campbell, Tolbert Fanning, and David Lipscomb. In his 1843 debate with the Presbyterian theologian Nathan L. Rice, Campbell affirmed: "*In conversion and sanctification, the Spirit of God operates on persons only through the Word* [*sic*]."[2] One Campbell interpreter has noted that, more precisely, Campbell believed that it was not "the Spirit *in* the Word which converts, rather it is the Spirit *with* the Word."[3]

The perspective that God's Word worked in conjunction with God's Spirit carried over into the twentieth century. In 1906, when asked about the Holy Spirit in a Christian's life, David Lipscomb remarked, "The word of God is the seed of the kingdom, in which the Spirit, that gives life, dwells. The abiding presence of the Spirit is obtained through receiving and cherishing the word of God in the heart."[4] F. B. Srygley, also a longtime editor of the *Gospel Advocate,* argued: "Though the Holy Spirit quickens the dead sinner into spiritual life, he does it through his word as a means."[5] R. N. Hogan, a prominent black preacher in Churches of Christ, expressed in 1970: "Everything that the Holy Spirit says to us is through the word that has been revealed by the Spirit and written by the apostles."[6] Reacting to Pentecostals who insisted that the spiritual gifts of healing and speaking in tongues extended to modern Christians, Hogan reiterated this view fourteen years later. "We do not need those spiritual gifts today, for everything that pertains to life and godliness is revealed to us through the written word. . . . Our knowledge is limited to the written word: we only know what is written, and our salvation depends upon our faith in, and obedience to, that which is written."[7] This view of the Holy Spirit's work in a believer's life had been articulated specifically to refute Pentecostals' arguments, and Keeble and other black leaders in Churches of Christ clearly replicated this position initiated by white leaders in Churches of Christ and used it in their frequent confrontations with Pentecostal teachings.

Keeble's sermon, "Been to Worship, But Wrong," similarly accentuated his conviction of the Bible's centrality. "Make up your minds, the Bible is right. You can go home and fuss all night, the Bible is right. You can go home and have spasms, the Bible is right." Forrest Neil Rhoads has commented that Keeble's emphasis on "the Bible is right" appealed to his audiences and critically impacted their thinking. "Gentlemen, you can't get

around it, might as well come clean, the reason why the people obeyed the Bible at Valdosta after they discovered it, is because it's right."[8] This emphasis on the Bible as the one source of God's truth led Keeble to conclude that those outside the fellowship of Churches of Christ did not follow God's will and so erred fundamentally.

After announcing his subject, "Five Steps to the Church and Seven Steps to Heaven," Keeble promised to "deliver this lesson like the Bible teaches it." He then indicted his listeners who groped in spiritual darkness because they neglected studying the Holy Scripture. "What is the matter with the people of today? There can only be one conclusion and that is they are not reading their Bibles. They are not searching the Scriptures." Keeble also censured clergymen who elevated emotionalism above the reading of the Bible.

> And so it is with masses of the people at large today, the preacher gets up and preaches. He takes his text in the Bible and he leaves it pretty soon and into the cemetery he goes. He preaches your mothers', fathers' and all your dead kinfolks' funeral and Oh! The shouting that takes place over that old cemetery gospel. That's not found in the Bible. And you have your mouth wide open sitting in the churches like these birds, only you are blind spiritually and, like the birds, you don't know what you are eating. You ought to take time and examine what you are eating. You are in a serious predicament. Had you been reading, you would have been in a Bible church. Had you been reading, they never would have gotten you to the mourners' bench. Had you been reading, you never would have prayed for pardon. Had you been reading you never would have got up and told that tale that Jesus told you "Go in peace and sin no more." You made that stuff up on account of not reading.[9]

Certainly Keeble and other African American preachers in Churches of Christ absorbed Campbellian rationalism, which denounced emotionalism and placed the highest value on reading Scripture almost as a scientific textbook. At the core of the Restoration Movement lay the concept that through the some eighteen hundred years since Christ had established his church, deep strata of accretion had come to obscure, even to distort, the Lord's intended structure. Churchmen had laid down centuries of traditions and

man-made doctrines, creating churches fundamentally human in design, so the Stone-Campbell leaders attempted no reform of extant denominations—this they considered impossible. Rather they sought what they termed "restoration," that is, a replication of the church they discerned in the New Testament writings. They framed their purposes around the idea of discarding all practices or beliefs not specifically found in New Testament language: "Where the Bible speaks we speak; where the Bible is silent we are silent" became their oft-repeated formula.

Since the New Testament never mentioned a seeker at a "mourner's bench" or told of a believer giving a personal testimony of an encounter with Jesus, Keeble and other preachers in Churches of Christ decried those practices. It seemed, then, important to Keeble that near the end of his sermon "Who Will Be Able to Stand?" he must urge his audience to "go home and search your Bibles—dig down and find you a rock to build your house on, every bit of this doctrine of men is sandy." He demanded "chapter and verse for teaching sinners to pray for pardon . . . chapter and verse for getting religion . . . for professing religion . . . for telling your experience . . . for voting on candidate[s] for baptism . . . for teaching sinners they are saved before baptism . . . for baptism because you are saved."[10] Keeble held that a preacher must unabashedly argue for the inerrancy and infallibility of the Scripture while rejecting the nonbiblical teachings of men.

Ecclesiology

Keeble's view of the Scripture molded his understanding of the church. Like most of his white and black mentors, Keeble linked the church of the New Testament with Churches of Christ in the United States. While exalting the Church of Christ, Keeble denounced denominational organizations as lacking scriptural endorsement. He understood such statements of Jesus in Matthew 16:18, "Upon this rock I will build my church," as expounding a narrow view of the church. In a sermon he called, "The Power of the Written Word," Keeble, while preaching in Valdosta, Georgia, asserted: "What is the matter you all don't like it when I say 'Upon this rock I will build the Baptist Church?' " This statement angered Baptist listeners in Keeble's audience. "Listen at that grumbling! 'Upon this rock I will build the Methodist Church.' " Keeble believed that Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Pente-

costals, and other groups who deviated from the "written word" were not Christians; only members of the Church of Christ comprised the one true church.[11]

Keeble's pointed teaching concerning other religious groups doubtlessly perturbed some adherents in Churches of Christ. In 1954 Keeble responded to those critics: "Some do not like for the preacher to call the names of the sects around us, and they go to the elders and ask them to 'fire' the preacher if he doesn't stop calling the names of the sectarian churches. And if the elders refuse to let the preacher go, they split off or divide the church and go down the street a little ways and start another congregation." While Keeble failed to mention specific places where church splits occurred, his remarks indicate that some in his fellowship felt uncomfortable with his denunciation of their religious neighbors. Yet Keeble insisted: "Do they love the sects more than they love their own brethren?" and further encouraged fellow evangelists in Churches of Christ "to fight the sectarians and the false doctrines they teach and call their names so they will know whom we are fighting."[12]

The following year Keeble reemphasized his exclusivistic posture, arguing that those outside the Church of Christ can not baptize in Jesus's name. "John the Baptist did not baptize in any name. He did not and could not baptize in the name of Jesus Christ, and I am convinced that churches today that Jesus did not build cannot baptize in the name of Christ. Only those in the Lord's church has the right to do this [*sic*]." Rejecting religious groups' contention that "the name is not important," Keeble gave both Acts 4:12 and Matthew 16:18 a narrow interpretation. "It is his church and his church should wear his name. When we become members of this church we need not worry, for we know that it will never be rooted up." The Church of Christ, Keeble maintained, was "blood bought, rock bottom and Holy Ghost filled. Thank God."[13]

Baptism

Following the example of Alexander Campbell, who first enunciated publicly in his 1823 debate with the Presbyterian minister W. L. McCalla that baptism was for the remission of sins, Keeble similarly expounded in his sermons that water baptism transformed one's spiritual station. When elaborating on Acts 8:26–39, Keeble observed: "Now, right there I am going to

make this statement, that you can't preach Jesus, you can't preach a complete Christ without getting into some water." Keeble derided religious groups that held contrary views of baptism. Concerning Pentecostals, Keeble asserted: "The Bible teaches 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism;' but Brother Sanctified teaches three baptisms, baptism in fire, baptism in water, and baptism in the Holy Ghost. Brother Sanctified is overloaded with baptism." Concerning Methodists, Keeble declared: "The Methodist has three kinds—he will sprinkle you, pour you or immerse you." He went on to chide Baptists as well. "Brother Baptist has been buried, but he is worse off than Brother Methodist because, after he got buried and wringing wet with water, he doesn't know what it's for. Went off and wringing wet and don't know what it was for."[14] By stressing that one must receive the right baptism, for the right reason, in the right church, and in the right manner in order for his conversion to be valid, Keeble merely echoed John Thomas's nineteenth-century tenet that one must understand the significance of baptism before being accepted by God. Thomas, a preacher-physician who left behind a small sect known as the Christadelphians, anticipated the advent and argument of Austin McGary, a rough-and-tumble white preacher from Texas, who in 1884 founded the *Firm Foundation* to refute David Lipscomb's views on rebaptism.[15]

In another homily, "Five Steps to the Church and Seven Steps to Heaven," Keeble reiterated the import of baptism. Arguing that Pentecostals incorrectly contended that the Holy Spirit sanctified people, Keeble instead insisted that the "written word" set apart God's people. Keeble referred to his own baptism at the hands of Preston Taylor, a reputable black minister of the Gay Street Christian Church in Nashville, Tennessee, and to Ephesians 5:25–26. "I got sanctified nearly 39 years ago, it will be in October. I was baptized and washed in water and I knew that I was sanctified and cleansed with the 'washing of water by the word.' "[16]

In another discourse, "Nothing Too Hard for the Lord," Keeble recounted his mother's baptismal experience in urging his listeners to submit to biblical baptism. "And so friends, I want to tell you about my precious old mother, and you need to do like I did. Instead of following my mother into things that she couldn't read in the Bible, and neither could I, I went and learned the Bible as best I could and obeyed the gospel and then went back and tried to get my mother." Keeble wrote letters to his mother, a Baptist, to call "at-

tention to her mistakes, religiously." One Sunday morning, when Keeble was preaching at the Jackson Street Church of Christ, his mother responded to the invitation and received baptism. Keeble reflected: "And I don't think, of the almost six thousand I have baptized in the last few years, that I ever did a greater work than I did when I took hold of my mother and buried her in baptism for the remission of her sins."[17]

In the same message Keeble appropriated the Old Testament story about Naaman to accentuate water baptism for salvation. Naaman, a leper, received instructions from God's prophet Elisha to wash seven times in the Jordan River in order to get rid of his leprosy. "The same Bible that says God healed him, and the same Bible that says Elisha gave him the message, that same Bible tells us what God healed him with—that water in the Jordan. Water did it." Keeble further explained that God "used water and you haven't got a thing to do with it. You here asking me what is in the water?" Keeble answered his own question firmly and frankly: "None of your business, you get in there yourself and then you will be in Christ." He appealed to both the Old Testament and the New Testament to emphasize that God gave "pardon in baptism for remission of sins," and maintained this doctrinal posture throughout his ministerial career.[18] In the same fashion Keeble founded all his doctrinal positions in biblical writings, a stance endorsed by his mentors both black and white.

Marshall Keeble: A "Radical Exclusivist"

The Gospel Keeble disseminated throughout the South was a radical exclusivistic Gospel. Radical exclusivists maintained that God rejected those who received baptism without understanding that it was "for the remission of sins," and that baptism is efficacious only for those mature enough to grasp its purpose. When such people learn the true purpose of baptism, they must be rebaptized; this baptism made them Christians and placed them within the fellowship of Churches of Christ. Those who refused such baptism could not be counted as Christians. Beyond this, those who had been baptized in other churches must be rebaptized upon entering Churches of Christ, regardless of their earlier understanding of the rite. Keeble drew his radical exclusivism from such white editors of the *Gospel Advocate* as Tolbert Fanning and William Lipscomb. Some leaders within Churches of Christ, such

as T. W. Brents, Benjamin Franklin, Moses Lard, David Lipscomb, James A. Harding, and E. G. Sewell, held that those who believed, repented, and received baptism were saved, regardless of the denomination in which they had originally been baptized; such persons were Christians and needed no rebaptism. Keeble and the spiritual progeny he sired in the New South endorsed the former position.[19]

Despite Keeble's adherence to radical exclusivism, however, he displayed a certain theological ambivalence when it came to members of the Christian Church. Keeble himself, baptized by Preston Taylor, a Christian Church preacher, was never rebaptized after coming into Churches of Christ, and in his Gospel meetings he did not insist upon rebaptizing those from the Christian Church who responded to his message. In 1935 Keeble, after conducting an extended meeting in Tyler, Texas, reported baptizing fifty-five people and receiving five from the Christian Church.[20] After Keeble planted what is now the North Tenneha Church of Christ in Tyler, E. W. Anderson, a native of Henderson, Texas, and a convert of T. H. Merchant, assumed preaching duties at the new congregation and reported "ten additions—nine baptized and one from the Christian Church."[21] Anderson, who received biblical and ministerial training at a Disciples of Christ school, Jarvis Christian College in Hawkins, Texas, obviously believed that members of the Christian Church were true followers of Jesus but who erroneously worshiped with instrumental music and mistakenly endorsed evangelism through missionary societies.

The belief that members of the Christian Church were merely "estranged brethren"[22] in need of restoration not baptism pervaded African American Churches of Christ in the 1930s and 1940s. Luke Miller informed supporters in 1930 that he baptized ninety-five people "and received ten from the Christian Church."[23] Eight years later Miller's two-week meeting in Greenville, Texas, engendered twenty-eight additions, "five of whom were from the Christian Church."[24] Some white believers welcomed adherents from the Christian Church without rebaptism into Churches of Christ. In 1913, E. M. Borden, a white preacher in Little Rock, Arkansas, recalled that during a "prayer meeting" there were three responses: "One brother confessed his faults, one came to us from the Digressives, and one man presented himself for baptism, which was performed on Thursday night, making [him] the first one baptized in our new baptistry [*sic*]."[25] The term "digressive"

was a common reference to a member of the Disciples of Christ or Christian Church.[26] F. B. Shepherd, a white minister in Bryan, Texas, reported in 1939: "Our meeting closed with nineteen immersed and several others persuaded to leave the Christian Church and come back home."[27]

In 1935 R. N. Hogan, a passionate black preacher in Churches of Christ, created a commotion near Longview, Texas, where he persuaded several members of a Christian Church to walk out and take "a stand with the loyal body of Christ." This course of action, Hogan reported, "caused things to get pretty hot around there, and quite a lot of threats were made. They ordered us not to come back, but about 500 stood up for me to return, and we were back the next night." Even though the leaders of the local Christian Church "put the law" on Hogan, he returned, preached, and "kindly walked out, and took with us ninety-five of their members including two preachers."[28] Hogan viewed these members of the Christian Church as followers of Christ who had merely lost their way by worshiping with instruments of music and who needed no re-immersion.

G. P. Bowser, Hogan's mentor and a prominent black evangelist who had also transitioned from the Christian Church into Churches of Christ, espoused the same view. In 1942 when a reader of the *Christian Echo* asked whether people in the Christian Church should be rebaptized into the Church of Christ, Bowser replied emphatically: "No. The Christian Church is part of the Church of Christ, has the same doctrine. . . . Those baptized in the Christian Church 'for the remission of sins,' are scriptually [*sic*] baptized, hence members of the Church of Christ." Bowser quickly added: "They should, however, separate themselves from the innovations of the Christian Church, or they are under condemnation."[29] Asked the same question later Bowser reaffirmed: "If baptized into the Christian Church, it is scriptural as they are a part of the church of Christ—our digressive brethren."[30] Both Keeble and Bowser welcomed into their fellowship those from the Christian Church, but insisted on rebaptizing those from Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal churches, and other denominations that did not teach the essentiality of baptism for salvation.

That black leaders in the early twentieth century cordially accepted members from the instrumental Christian Church into the a cappella Church of Christ without re-immersion suggests that they understood that both religious groups had descended from Alexander Campbell and his co-reformers.

In 1898 Samuel Robert Cassius insisted that when Catholicism began to eclipse Protestant Christianity in the early nineteenth century, God raised up Alexander Campbell to show people the way of the Lord. "It was then came Alexander Campbell, that great man of God—for if there has ever been a man in America sent of God, he was one; sent not to start a new religion, but to show men that they were going slowly but surely away from God and heaven, and drifting surely into Catholicism and hell; and you all know that the influence of that man's voice in the wilderness of sin and sectarianism was so loud and far-reaching that it arrested the attention of every denomination, and brought them back to the Bible and God."[31] Cassius likely had in mind Campbell's 1837 debate with Catholic Bishop John B. Purcell in Cincinnati, Ohio. The Campbell-Purcell discussion not only strengthened Campbell's position as a prominent religious figure within his own fellowship, but it also marked him as a champion in the broader world of American Protestantism.[32]

G. P. Bowser similarly lionized both Thomas and Alexander Campbell as instruments of God. After referring to the emergence of the Catholic Church, Bowser noted: "It was then that [Thomas] Campbell, whom it seems was inspired of God, came to call people back to the Bible and teachings of the Apostles. Then his son, Alexander Campbell, the greatest preacher, writer, and restorer of his day, worked hard to do the same. Regardless to the stigma 'Campbellites,' we are due the Campbells much honor; unhesitatingly challenging our critics to point the one thing taught by the Campbells, that we as a religious group accept for doctrine, that we can not turn to the pages of Holy Writ and find."[33] Later G. E. Steward, another Bowser understudy and noted preacher in black Churches of Christ, lectured on Bible study and sermon preparation during an annual lectureship, citing Alexander Campbell as a worthy exemplar: "In reading the history of Alexander Campbell as a preacher, it was said that he had a little room built out in his yard that didn't have any windows in it. He would go out there and spend several hours studying. It did not have any windows in it because he did not want anything to detract his attention. We know of the great work he did as a preacher and you have read his great writings."[34] Even though an accident blinded Steward in his teens, he somehow had learned many details of Campbell's life and efforts. Perhaps by listening to lectures and recordings about the nineteenth-century reformer, Steward had gained inspiration to

challenge black preachers to deepen their study of God's word. (Campbell's place of study in Bethany, West Virginia, actually had windows in the ceiling so he would get "light from above.")

In 1973 J. S. Winston, an eminent historian and church-builder in black Churches of Christ, penned a series of articles under the heading, "Why Are There Not More Churches with Elders among the Black Brethren as among the White Brethren of the Church of Christ?" In responding to the question he had framed, Winston first noted that the Stone-Campbell Movement began among white southerners before spreading to African Americans. He further explained that access to formal education enabled white congregations to develop leadership much earlier than did their black counterparts. "To understand why there are more Churches among the white brethren, with Elders and Deacons," wrote Winston, "we must first consider that the 'Restoration Movement' of the Church of Christ had its beginning with the white brethren over 140 years ago." Singling out Barton W. Stone, Thomas Campbell, and Alexander Campbell, Winston noted that these men "preached the New Testament Doctrine and established Churches in Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee." Alexander Campbell, he continued, ranked among the first leaders to see the "great need for prepared and qualified men to preach and defend the doctrine of the New Testament, so he organized a College in Bethany, Virginia. As more and more able men were prepared for the ministry, Churches of Christ for the white people multiplied greatly in the states of Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, and other bordering states of the South." Other white leaders in the Stone-Campbell Movement followed Campbell's lead in establishing good schools, but these served only white students. Thus Winston concluded: "It stands to reason that through their extensive religious educational program they should have more prepared, qualified men to serve in their ministry as elders and deacons, plus able teachers."[35]

Some black leaders in Churches of Christ, however, have been careful to seek origins which antedate Alexander Campbell. In 1954 Jacob McClinton, a fiery black preacher in Indianapolis, Indiana, declared: "Most sectarian preachers have *misrepresented* Alexander Campbell. He never claimed to be the originater [*sic*] of the church of Christ. The church of Christ was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ and Alexander Campbell was not living at that time."[36] McClinton categorically insisted

that Churches of Christ were the direct spiritual descendants of New Testament Christians who had nothing to do with Alexander Campbell. The point should perhaps be noted here that McClinton argued not against Campbell's theology but in opposition to any notion of Campbell as the founder of a new denomination.

In 1984 Jack Evans and Floyd Rose, spiritual descendants of Marshall Keeble and African American leaders in Churches of Christ, debated a variety of theological issues. One of their chief propositions was whether Churches of Christ were heirs of the religious movement launched by Alexander Campbell in the nineteenth century. Rose readily acknowledged Campbell as a spiritual father of Churches of Christ and that the split between Disciples of Christ and Churches of Christ, formalized in 1906, marked the beginning of "the church of Christ *as I knew it.*" Evans, however, vehemently rejected Rose's argument, asserting: "I am a Christian FIRST—a member of the church purchased by the blood of Jesus (Acts 20:28), which existed nearly eighteen hundred years before the birth of Alexander Campbell or Walter Scott. The church *AS I KNOW IT* did not originate in America in 1906, but in the mind of God, and was begun on the earth in the city of Jerusalem over 1950 years ago (Acts 2:1–47)."[37] Two years later Evans admitted that African Americans in Churches of Christ were not "ignorant of the 'Stone-Campbell restoration movement,'" but that "black Christians do not equate Stone, Campbell, et al., with Paul, Peter, John, and the other writers of Holy Scripture." "Black Christians," Evans added, "have taken seriously the 'Restoration' slogan 'Speak Where the Bible Speaks and be Silent Where the Bible is Silent."[38] By attempting to elevate the Bible above Restoration leaders, Evans paradoxically linked black Churches of Christ with Thomas Campbell, the person who apparently coined the phrase, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."[39]

Regardless of any finely crafted disputations over origins and indebtedness, Keeble in 1938 stood admiringly and appreciatively at Alexander Campbell's grave in Bethany, West Virginia.[40] And notwithstanding the divergent historical perspectives and theological understandings, Keeble's exclusivistic posture affected his view not only of churches but also of social and political issues. Keeble preached an otherworldly Gospel that engaged American culture only peripherally and did not address the social issues of his day. Keeble's otherworldly theology and its broad influence meant that during

the civil rights era African American Churches of Christ, like their white counterparts, had little voice or presence. In some respects, the black evangelist imbibed what the theologian H. Richard Niebuhr has labeled a "Christ against culture" typology, which inspired Christians to shun political involvement.[41]

If Marshall Keeble absorbed a "Christ against culture" perspective, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. embraced a "Christ of culture" typology that urged believers to fulfill their "social calling."[42] Furthermore, when the former proclaimed "the Bible is right," he elevated the Scripture as a divine blueprint to denounce what he perceived to be man-made traditions and practices, but the latter appropriated the same dictum as a tool to eradicate racial, social, and economic ills. In a 1967 speech King asserted: "Let us go out realizing that the Bible is right: 'Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' This is for hope for the future, and with this faith we will be able to sing in some not too distant tomorrow with a cosmic past tense, 'We have overcome, we have overcome, deep in my heart, I did believe we would overcome."[43] Keeble's Bible combated what he viewed to be religious error, which subsequently erected walls of division between whites and blacks. Keeble himself once lamented to a close friend that the "Negro didn't like my religion, and the white man didn't like the color of my skin."[44]

Keeble inherited his scriptural, ecclesiological, and soteriological views largely from white ministers who wrote for the *Gospel Advocate.* To this theological perspective he added a combative and confrontational style of preaching, one remarkably appealing to his audience.[45] Far from being a systematic theologian, Keeble adhered to the straightforward religious concepts laid down in the principles of the Restoration Movement. But at the same time he was the essence of systematization when it came to the methodology he utilized through his years of "stirring up the South." He carefully developed and assiduously carried out a plan of action endorsed by his repeated and unparalleled successes. First, Keeble always began the new year by conducting a protracted meeting for his home congregation, the Jackson Street Church of Christ in Nashville. "It has been the custom for several years for M. Keeble to conduct a meeting for his home congregation—Jackson Street Church, Fourteenth and Jackson Streets, in Nashville—around the turn of the year," the *Gospel Advocate* reported in 1941.[46] Next, during the winter

months Keeble usually received a "call" or invitation from a white Christian or a white congregation, which arranged for him to evangelize their African American neighbors. These plans included paying all Keeble's expenses. Third, before Keeble arrived in a southern city, white Christians would canvass black neighborhoods, inviting African Americans and advertising the meeting. Then, Keeble, after having arrived in the community, ordinarily stayed with a black family. If no African American Church of Christ family was available, Keeble resided with a reputable black "sectarian" family. Fifth, Keeble preached to a racially segregated audience and baptized black candidates, but white seekers received baptism at the hands of white preachers. When Keeble and other black and white members assembled for a protracted meeting, they ineluctably paid homage to both the God of heaven and to a "god of segregation."[47]

Sixth, Keeble's dynamic preaching usually resulted in the planting of a black church in the southern town. Keeble, after leaving the newly established congregation, then added that church to the *Gospel Advocate*'s subscription list. The paper's white editors thereby shaped the theology of these new black Churches of Christ. Finally, Keeble returned later that same year or the one following to solidify the fledgling congregation, or at least he sent one of his "sons" to stabilize the recently planted church. With minor exceptions, this constituted the Keeble strategy. Armed with both an exclusivistic doctrinal posture, an aggressive mindset toward other religious groups, and an extraordinarily effective methodology, Keeble marched throughout the South baptizing thousands and planting black Churches of Christ across the entire region. After giving birth to a host of spiritual sons and daughters in southern cities, Keeble passed on to them the same teachings he himself had received from his white mentors, teachings grounded in the dictum that "The Bible is right."

III
The Paradox of White Racism and White Philanthropy in Churches of Christ

6
"The White Churches Sponsored All of This Work"

Marshall Keeble and Race Relations in Churches of Christ

> The American Church of Christ is Jim Crowed from top to bottom. No other institution in America is built so thoroughly or more absolutely on the color line.
>
> —W. E. B. Du Bois, 1929

In 1931 Marshall Keeble enjoyed perhaps his greatest year as an evangelist, baptizing over one thousand black southerners. His preaching also converted many whites, all of whom went to the white churches and were baptized by white colleagues and subsequently attended white congregations. Keeble quickly attributed his successful preaching tours to the beneficence of white believers also: "The white churches sponsored all of this work." Keeble's comment reveals a salient aspect of his evangelistic system, as white Christians made it possible for him to preach throughout the South. This is not to say, however, that blacks in Churches of Christ neglected the support of their own preachers and churches, rather in the racist system of the South blacks remained on the lowest rung of the economy's ladder, lacking in disposable income. And in the first half of the twentieth century, most black evangelists served fledgling congregations newly born into the Restoration Movement; thus, they understood the necessity of relying on their white counterparts for financial support. Samuel Robert Cassius, a ministerial colleague of Keeble's, spoke frankly in 1922: "I have not gone to the white churches because I liked to preach to white folks. I went to them to get aid that I might go to my own race. There was nowhere else to go."[1] Marshall Keeble understood this same reality.

Keeble's preaching career reveals three important ramifications of his distinctive circumstances. First, white benefactors in Churches of Christ regularly contributed to African American evangelists and their churches.

Second, Keeble, identifying the "call of the white brethren" with the "call of God," answered the requests of white Christians who yearned to see their black neighbors saved, and his response led to the emergence of African American Churches of Christ throughout the South. Third, while Keeble preached a theologically exclusive Gospel that denied the legitimacy of other religious groups and a racially inclusive Gospel that embraced racially mixed audiences and won black and white converts, he received the bulk of his financial support from Caucasian Christians. Amid this racial interaction and collaboration, Keeble and his white supporters scrupulously complied with the social customs of the Jim Crow South, as white racism accompanied white benevolence.

The legalization of segregation in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), the brutal lynching of scores of black men, and the proliferation of poll taxes, literacy tests, and grandfather clauses virtually stripped African Americans of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendment protection and effectively reduced them to what the scholar Rayford W. Logan has called "third-class citizenship." But long before visible "Whites-only" signs appeared in society at large, they first surfaced invisibly in American Protestant churches. Indeed, most white congregations supported segregation—a brutal and unjust system that oppressed blacks. Marshall Keeble consequently encountered racism and segregation not only in the secular spheres but also in religious contexts when preaching to segregated white and black audiences of Churches of Christ across the South, yet he accommodated the unjust system by refusing to denounce or reject it. Keeble and his white supporters in the South happily complied with segregation—"the not-too-distant cousin of slavery"—to save the souls of black Americans.[2]

Marshall Keeble among White Saints in Tennessee

As he preached throughout states of the old Confederacy, Keeble hewed carefully to the racist norms of time and place. Preaching in Bellbuckle, Tennessee, in 1916, he thanked white Christians, who were anxious to preach to their black neighbors, and who, according to Keeble, exemplified an authentic Christianity. "The white brethren and sisters knew that the three or four colored disciples here were unable to feed us while here, and they would send cabbage, potatoes, milk, canned fruit, butter, meat, chickens, etc., and

Sister Mingle sent over baked cakes and homemade light bread." Keeble offered this as evidence of genuine faith. Such generosity encouraged Keeble, who prayed that such practices might serve to stir similar concerns in others just as they prompted him to "grow stronger and more faithful in discharging my duty and carrying the gospel to my people."[3]

The following year Keeble commended Anglo Christians in Cookeville who attended church faithfully, and he thanked God, who "put it into the hearts of the white brethren to reach down with the gospel and bring up this fallen and neglected race of mine."[4] From Cookeville, Keeble moved over to Henderson, where he found only a handful of black disciples, but many white Christians. Bose Crooms, his wife, Parthenia, and their two children were the four black disciples Keeble first met in Henderson. After renting a Methodist Church, preaching four nights, and baptizing four people, Keeble acknowledged that the white brethren had zealously lent essential support, including that of a white preacher who encouragingly spoke on behalf of Keeble's work.[5]

Keeble reported receiving a letter from a white Christian in New Mexico in the spring of 1918, who asked him to conduct a meeting in Trenton, Tennessee. Keeble acknowledged God as the source of the whites' concern and urged his fellow blacks to draw inspiration from this.[6] During that summer Keeble traveled again to Henderson, Tennessee, but black Baptists and Methodists who had earlier allowed Keeble to use their building refused to grant him access. Nicholas B. Hardeman, a white leader in Henderson Churches of Christ, then arranged for Keeble to conduct the meeting a few miles outside town in the schoolhouse used by the area's black community. After baptizing sixty-nine people during the three-week meeting, Keeble acknowledged: "The white brethren did all they could to assist us in the meeting." He praised Hardeman's Christian commitment, expressing appreciation for the generous support of other whites as well.[7] Near year's end Keeble revisited black Christians in Bellbuckle and Cookeville. In the former place Keeble noted that African American believers prepared to erect a meetinghouse in the spring, and "Brother W. R. Mingle, a white brother, is still laboring with them." In the latter city Keeble reported that the white congregation in Cookeville had aided the black congregation in "every way."[8]

Keeble and T. H. Busby, a black preacher and song leader in Churches of Christ, collaborated the next year in Sparta, home of a moribund Af-

rican American congregation. The white brethren had erected an excellent building for their black co-religionists, but it had lain disused for over two years. Keeble succeeded in reviving the work, and blacks met regularly under Busby's leadership. The efforts of white believers impressed Keeble, who averred that they remained willing to continue their assistance.[9]

After preaching in Sparta and Lebanon, Keeble revisited Henderson where the black Church of Christ had increased from four members in 1917 to almost one hundred in 1919 and now planned to erect a building. The numerical growth pleased Keeble, but the white support touched him as well. "I have never met better white people than those at Henderson." Twelve responded to Keeble's preaching, and he judged the aid of white brothers and sisters as essential to the success of his work there.[10] Later in the year Keeble, after rehearsing the increase of the black congregation in Henderson, again applauded white Christians for their assistance in all phases of his past work and their willingness to continue helping. Keeble also complimented white believers in Tullahoma, Tennessee, who helped build a fine meeting place for their black counterparts, and as before, he found in this inspiration and encouragement to continue his preaching.[11]

Through the 1920s Keeble continued these lavish words of praise for white Christians. In Detroit, Michigan, preaching and convalescing there with his son, Keeble received "boxes" and "money" from several churches. He especially thanked W. R. Mingle, his loyal white collaborator in Bellbuckle, Tennessee, who for four years "has given me a nice pig to raise and also contributed regularly to me. He has done more to encourage me in the work than any one else."[12] Keeble appreciated that so many whites in Churches of Christ showed interest in having the Gospel preached to African Americans in their communities. He drew strength from their interest in people of his race, an active interest manifested in their many calls to him offering to bear the expenses if he would come to their communities for extended preaching sessions among African Americans. Convinced that only the pure Gospel could release his race from "the clutches of sectarianism," Keeble urged white believers to continue their interest and aid to the work among the blacks.[13]

White Christians in Tennessee appeared eager to comply with Keeble's wishes. He attended a highly successful meeting with white leaders of the White Chapel Church of Christ, and Keeble singled out a "white brother,"

Todd, who provided sound advice for the work's advancement. Todd ensured Keeble of help from the white brethren should the blacks reciprocate with worthy lives.[14] Keeble also praised "loyal white churches" in Memphis upon learning that they had made the first payment on a "nice building" and planned to "see that the colored church has a permanent place to worship God according to the Scriptures." "May God bless these white Christians," exclaimed Keeble, "who have turned their attention to my people. If there is any place in the world where the negro needs the gospel it is Memphis." Keeble implored *Gospel Advocate* readers to take note of the actions of white Memphians and hoped that others would devote similar energies to this effort.[15]

The concern of white leaders prompted Keeble to preach to African Americans in Murfreesboro in 1922.[16] Even though the meeting gained no visible results, Keeble lauded white Christians for their liberality. The white church not only supported Keeble, but also did so in a liberal fashion. The Murfreesboro whites had backed up their desire with generous financial support. At the same time Keeble commended black believers in Murfreesboro whose hospitality had created a happy atmosphere for his work.[17] When speaking among black people in Obion, Keeble praised the "white brethren and sisters [who] attended each night and helped to support me while there," as well as all who heartily cooperated with him all across the South.[18]

Six years later white brethren in Waverly, Tennessee, called Keeble to preach to his people, and during a two-week effort he baptized seventeen people. "The white churches in and around Waverly arranged for this meeting through Brother Thomas J. Wagner. I have never worked with a man that inspired me more than Brother Wagner."[19] Not a lone operative, however, Wagner joined a number of other white believers who had wholeheartedly sustained Keeble's initial campaign in Waverly.[20] Returning to the town in October of 1929 Keeble discovered that the white brethren of the county had combined their efforts to erect a building for the use of the fledgling black congregation.[21]

Keeble found assistance also from the white congregation in Henderson during the 1920s. After recounting the increase of that city's black church from 4 to 160 members, Keeble sought to distribute credit: "If we had not received the fellowship of the white brethren and sisters, we could not have accomplished such a great work. These white brethren and sisters have been

faithful in attending the services, and many of them say they learned the truth through my preaching."[22] Keeble often referred to his experiences in Henderson as an example for other white Christians in the South in urging that white southerners talk with their black servants about the Gospel, opening their hearts to God's truth.[23] He reported in 1925 that African American Christians in Henderson now worshiped in a new church building, the finest in the area for blacks. Even though just nine years old, the church had become perhaps the largest in the black brotherhood.[24] Keeble credited the rise of this church in large degree to assistance from white believers who had worked faithfully with him at Henderson.[25]

Throughout the next decade Anglo Christians in Tennessee maintained their interest in reaching black people with the Good News of Jesus. In 1933 F. B. Shepherd, a white preacher and a writer for the *Gospel Advocate,* announced that white disciples of Chattanooga had supported Keeble in a four-week meeting, providing him with a large tent and its equipage; they also provided funds to pay the preacher and singer and covered all other expenses as well. The joint black-white effort led to fifty-five baptisms and eight restorations. Even before this campaign Chattanooga whites had built a church edifice for the use of black disciples.[26] A few years later white believers in Columbia encouraged the work among the blacks in their city. E. L. Barnes, minister to the African American congregation in Columbia, reported that white Christians "have helped me in every way since I have been here."[27] In 1939 Keeble again mentioned blacks and whites in Henderson, Tennessee, as collaborating to help a young African American church struggling to pay off their building's mortgage.[28]

During the following two decades, whites in the Volunteer State's Churches of Christ continued their involvement in developing congregations for blacks. In 1940 Keeble, while preaching in Sparta, told *Gospel Advocate* readers that "Interest grew so great that the white brethren had to stop trying to seat all who came." In addition, the influx of white people attracted curious black neighbors.[29] White brethren supported a tent meeting in Shelbyville that same year which yielded eleven baptisms, stirring a level of interest greater than any seen in Shelbyville before.[30] In the fall of 1940 Keeble commended the white members of the Union Avenue Church of Christ in Memphis for reaching out to African Americans, bringing many black Memphians to

Christ. The cooperation between white and black ministers in Memphis produced seventy-one baptisms and eleven restorations, a concerted effort by all the black and white congregations in the city.[31]

A decade later Keeble informed the *Gospel Advocate* readership that two of his students at the Nashville Christian Institute (NCI), David Shanks and Alvin Simmons, preached in Springfield and Spring Hill, Tennessee, respectively. Both young men, Keeble proudly reported, received support from white congregations.[32]

Whites' interest in preaching among blacks meant, however, no slackening of their support for the South's Jim Crow culture. When white people responded to Keeble's sermons, white leaders carefully adhered to policies and practices mandated by the "god of segregation." When an Anglo man in Martin, Tennessee, desired baptism after hearing Keeble, he "was baptized by one of the white brethren."[33] In 1927 Keeble's preaching converted some white people who said then they would attend the white churches.[34] Anglo believers who received the Gospel truth from a black man commonly sought to be immersed by a white leader. Although Keeble ordinarily worked with a white preacher who performed the rite of baptism, at times white respondents told him they would go to a white church for their baptism.[35] In a curious paradox of the Jim Crow South, the intimacy of touching and the inherent submission involved in the rite of baptism could not be tolerated by whites enveloped in a racist culture.

Through his long career Keeble preached a racially inclusive Gospel to racially segregated audiences. The Jackson Street Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee, Keeble's home congregation, reserved a section for white Christians,[36] and when white Churches of Christ in nearby Old Hickory sponsored a Keeble meeting for African Americans, Keeble noted that the congregation there supported the meeting with their presence, "half the space being reserved for whites."[37] Keeble's evangelistic reports frequently reiterated the careful comments he made of his 1940 meeting in Franklin. "Two colored people were baptized. One white lady was converted and was baptized by Rollie Polk (white)."[38] Later that year Keeble and William Lee, a noted black song leader, baptized twenty-one people and a cooperating white preacher baptized the four white respondents.[39] While many whites in Churches of Christ throughout the former Confederate states worked

diligently to free black southerners from the bonds of sins by dispatching Marshall Keeble to preach the Gospel, they could not extricate themselves from the shackles of segregation.

Marshall Keeble among White Saints in Alabama

Like their religious comrades in Tennessee, white Christians in Alabama showed a spirit of concern for the souls of their black fellows. In 1920 Keeble called white believers in Tuscumbia, Alabama, "as fine a set of Christians as I ever met. They rendered valuable assistance in every way possible."[40] The next year Keeble applauded the white churches' missionary zeal, and while delighted to see white believers passionate about spreading the Gospel to all nations, Keeble urged them not to forget their African American neighbors "right at your door." In a chiding tone Keeble elaborated: "To use all the time and money to reach the foreign nations, and neglect your cooks, house girls, farm hands, chauffeurs, and nurses, I think, is a sad and serious mistake; because if we can get the gospel to those who serve your homes and care for little ones, you can put more trust in them, and save them from ignorance of the blessed gospel of Jesus Christ." Keeble did not oppose foreign mission work, but he wanted Anglo Christians to make black Americans a priority as well, so he praised white Tuscumbians for arranging for him to preach to their black neighbors. Keeble's admonition reflected the scolding tone of Samuel Robert Cassius, who angrily reminded white saints with "You have Africa at your door."[41]

In concern for this nearby Africa, white members of the West End Church of Christ in Birmingham furnished a tent and invited Keeble to preach to their city's blacks. Keeble deemed the meeting a sterling success. During the first week Keeble preached and led the song service. But with this dual assignment tasking Keeble's vigor, his white brothers brought in W. C. Graves as song leader for the meeting's balance, and Keeble applauded this sensitivity of the white brethren. While anxious to assist a black evangelist disseminate the Gospel among African Americans, white disciples carefully adhered to Alabama's segregation codes. They paid Keeble's board in the home of a black Baptist family, burdening Keeble only with the task of evangelism. An appreciative Keeble, unfazed by and accustomed to such arrangements, held that "If we had more white brethren like Brother Graves and

those whom he worships with at West End, my race would soon be lifted out of darkness."[42]

Keeble returned to Birmingham the following year, praising W. C. Graves and J. H. Davis, white leaders who met with the new converts every Sunday to give them "tender and careful training." When revisiting Birmingham Keeble debated a Pentecostal preacher on the issues of baptism by water, foot washing, and the Holy Spirit's work. White Christians attended the debate in large numbers and greatly appreciated "my humble effort to present the truth." Such consistent support from Anglo Christians prompted Keeble to praise the West End Church as the Spirit-filled church, unequal in this regard with any of his experiences.[43]

Keeble later told *Gospel Advocate* readers that white Christians in Birmingham planned to purchase property to erect a building so that the black members would have their own building.[44] He thanked Anglo Christians for their collaboration and cooperation, and by the next summer the black congregation in Birmingham had grown from zero to nearly one hundred members. The white saints had already paid half the cost and promised to pay the balance. Keeble maintained that "these white brethren are setting a fine example for any church to do mission work among my people."[45] By 1925 black believers in Birmingham had erected a new edifice worth $2,000 debt free. The West End congregation continued to assist them in paying off their debt and continued with aid in other ways as well. In its constant regard the Birmingham church was without peer in Keeble's wide experiences.[46] While lavishing praise upon white believers for their cooperation, Keeble never referred to the secular plight of fellow African Americans in Birmingham, most of whom worked as "beasts of burden" in coal mines, nor did he comment on the rigid segregation that permeated Alabama's coal-mining community and the state beyond.[47]

White Christians in Sheffield invited Keeble in 1926 to conduct a three-week tent meeting. After baptizing nine people, including a Methodist pastor and his wife, Keeble reported that the "white brethren and sisters encouraged me in every way they could."[48] During the following two years the same congregation brought Keeble to Sheffield and shared in his evangelism. "The white people attended in large numbers and helped to support me," Keeble wrote, and a white leader "gave me a nice suit of clothes. He has always assisted me in whatever way he could."[49]

Whites of the Poplar Street Church of Christ in Florence in 1926 launched a seven-year effort to have the "pure gospel preached to the negro, who stands greatly in need of proper teaching."[50] This commitment convinced Keeble that the "white Christians in this section mean to see that the cause of Christ is permanently established among my people." After receiving a new suit from a white sister, Keeble added that she had done the same before, and he thanked God for such white friends. He then appended a telling comment, which revealed much of Keeble's rationale for his unprotesting acceptance of the South's racial mores. "If it were not for the white Christians, I could not do for my race what I am doing."[51]

Keeble continued to move about Alabama in the 1930s, despite the controversial Scottsboro case. In 1931 two white women, Victoria Price and Ruby Bates, accused nine young black men of raping them. An all-white jury found the "Scottsboro boys" guilty and sentenced eight of them to death. Upon learning that the accusers' charges were false and that the Scottsboro boys had received inadequate counsel, the Supreme Court ordered a new trial, and by 1950 the last of them had been released. Keeble, while traversing Alabama and other southern regions, certainly knew about this controversial case, and it probably made him even more conscientious about complying with segregation's code. Notwithstanding the fact that the Scottsboro incident revived ubiquitous stereotypes of the black rapist and despite the fact that the controversial case soured race relations across the nation, Keeble continued to work diligently and closely with white southerners.[52] He baptized eighteen people in Florence in 1934 and acknowledged: "I am grateful to the white brethren for their efforts to preach the gospel to my people."[53]

From 1936 to 1939 white Alabamians continued to solicit Keeble to preach to African Americans and to flock to hear him themselves. He worked effectively in Mobile, converting thirty-nine people in 1936 and leaving a congregation of forty-three. To minister to this new flock Keeble helped install a young Georgian, James Cooper, whom the white brethren undertook to support.[54] Two years later Keeble returned to Mobile with a tent meeting, drawing a thousand people, half of them white, to each evening's service. M. B. Myers, a white member of the Highland Church of Christ, loaned Keeble a public address system, which allowed the Gospel to enter homes where it would otherwise have gone unheard.[55] Later that summer white believers arranged for Keeble to preach on their local radio station for six evenings.[56]

In 1939 he conducted a tent meeting in Gadsden, where several hundred people came to hear him each night.[57] Sixteen baptisms resulted, including a Baptist deacon and an eighty-year-old man. Two white people who responded received baptism from "Brother Smith (white) the same hour of the night."[58]

The interest of white Churches of Christ in Alabama in reaching out to their black fellow citizens continued through the 1940s and 1950s. Keeble preached in a two-week meeting in Rogersville in 1942, baptizing five and restoring one as "the white brethren sent trucks about eight miles north and south of Rogersville to bring the colored people to the meeting." To secure the black congregation's permanency, the whites arranged to erect a building as well.[59] During the same year, Keeble immersed seven and reclaimed three in Huntsville in an effort financed by area whites who also paid for local air time to broadcast Keeble's sermons.[60] A dozen years later, Keeble revisited Huntsville, where two white congregations "turned their radio program over to us and this astonished the colored people of Huntsville. The white brethren attended the meeting in great numbers, and many colored brethren came from villages and cities for miles around."[61] This pattern was replicated and enhanced in Sheffield in 1956 as white Christians bought air time to broadcast each evening service, bringing Keeble's messages to additional thousands, a first in his experience.[62]

The financial assistance of white Christians led directly to the emergence of a large number of black Churches of Christ in Alabama, empowering Keeble's evangelistic efforts in that state with their time, money, and presence. Keeble in turn bestowed a lofty compliment on white Churches of Christ in Alabama: "I think Alabama is in the lead in doing mission work among my race, and I hope and pray that the white churches in other States will do a greater work along this line. When the white churches in Alabama call a colored preacher to preach the gospel of Christ, the white brethren make it a rule to attend all of the services to see that it is done right, and this encourages the colored people to come." White paternalism melded with white benevolence as white leaders attended and supervised Keeble's meetings to ensure that they were "done right," that is, in accordance not only with biblical teachings but also with racial practices. Keeble, ever mindful of his primary goal, accommodated the racism he encountered from whites in Churches of Christ, and he always considered white attendance at his cam-

paigns a key drawing power, stirring greater interest and response among African Americans.[63]

Marshall Keeble among White Saints in Florida

Yet if the presence and support of white Christians in Alabama inspired Keeble, that of white Floridians impressed him even more. Keeble invaded Florida in 1927 when white believers in Tampa invited him to preach to African Americans. "The white church here called me to work with my people. S. F. Morrow and several other white brethren and I distributed bills yesterday," heralding a meeting that produced ninety-nine additions to the church there. The Gary Church of Christ in Tampa had sponsored the effort, intending a three-week meeting, but the crowds and interest became so great that Keeble stayed and preached for five weeks. As soon as Keeble's preaching yielded several black converts, white disciples, in compliance with Jim Crow practices, laid plans to build a separate meeting place for African Americans.[64]

Keeble soon announced plans to preach again in Tampa. "The white churches there are anxious to have me come and teach my people who are in gross darkness."[65] Impressed by Keeble's first effort, P. G. Millen, a white minister in Florida, prayed that "other white churches of Christ throughout this land of ours may be constrained by the results of the Tampa meeting to have the gospel preached to the negroes, who have been miserably misled. Brethren, their blood will be upon us if we do not send the gospel to them."[66] His second three-week meeting in Tampa led to thirty-three baptisms, and Keeble commented that white Christians in Tampa had erected a church building for black Floridians.[67] T. A. Northcut offered a more detailed description of how black and white Christians in Florida collaborated in building a place of worship for African Americans:

> Members from the different congregations in Tampa and vicinity came together to discuss financial matters, to get some move on foot that would enable us to build them a house. After some discussion, Brother S. F. Morrow suggested that we all get down to business and say what each one would do. One brother said: "I will furnish the concrete blocks for the foundation." Another said: "I will furnish the sills

> and sleepers." Another furnished the flooring, while others furnished the roofing. One brother gave a hundred dollars and later forty dollars more. Brother Price Billingsley sent a check for thirty dollars, and several smaller sums were received, some being donated by the colored brethren. Labor was donated by both white and colored. Times were hard and money scarce; but we met on Thursday, and the following Wednesday night they met in the house for prayer meeting. Both white and colored worked hard, and all seemed well pleased with their efforts. These colored people are proving to be willing workers.[68]

The excitement in Tampa spilled over into Lakeland in 1929 when Anglo believers called Keeble to preach to African Americans. "When I arrived there," Keeble recalled, "three very kind white brethren met me at the depot and carried me to a very nice place, where I was to make my home." Keeble, in accord with segregation practices, stayed with a black family, the husband a Methodist, the wife a Baptist, and the son—none of whom attended any church—and Keeble converted all three. Because interest in Keeble's preaching grew so quickly, white leaders extended the two-week meeting to four. "Several of the white brethren," according to Keeble, "used their cars to carry these people to the water to be baptized and then to carry them home with their wet clothes on. To work with such people is uplifting and inspiring." Special inspiration came as well from a white brother, who led the singing until the conversion of a black song leader, who thereafter conducted the song services. White Christians also came from such towns as St. Petersburg, Plant City, Tampa, and Mango to add strength to the meeting, which ended with sixty-five baptisms.[69]

The success at Lakeland prompted white Churches of Christ in St. Petersburg to invite Keeble to preach to their black neighbors. Keeble's six-week meeting ended with ninety-two conversions. The white Church of Christ there encouraged the campaign by sending their minister to speak while another used his truck and car to bring people to the meeting each evening. Brother Anderson, a white Christian, led the song service for several nights. Keeble left his recent convert from Decatur, Alabama, Luke Miller, to guide the new believers at Lakeland, Tampa, and St. Petersburg.[70]

Throughout the 1930s white saints in Florida repeatedly invited Keeble to teach the Word of God to African Americans. In early 1930 Keeble ex-

tolled the efforts of Florida's white disciples as unsurpassed in their devotion to missionary outreach to African Americans.[71] He later wrote: "The Plant City church of Christ (white) called me to labor here among my people, and I am glad to say that I never labored with a more Christlike people in all my life." This campaign concluded with 35 baptisms,[72] but in the fall of 1931 in Bradenton, Keeble held one of his most successful meetings, baptizing 287 people under the auspices of several white churches.[73] The following January, D. B. Whittle, a white Christian who managed the campaign, happily announced that the black church in Bradenton counted 432 members in a brick-and-tile building that seated 600 people and was served by four local preachers.[74]

Moving on to Tampa, Keeble baptized sixty-four persons in April 1933 and marveled that God had worked through him and his companions to convert over twenty-five hundred Floridian blacks in just six years. He then added: "All of this mission work was done by the white churches of Florida."[75] With this foundation, three years later Keeble rejoiced that there were twenty thousand black members of Florida Churches of Christ and in 1938 he noted that white Christians arranged for him to preach in West Palm Beach and Fort Myers to African Americans.[76] "For over thirty years the white churches have been calling me to establish churches among my people, and God has wonderfully blessed our efforts." He called down God's favor on the white churches for working unstintingly with him to bring salvation to the black race.[77]

Marshall Keeble among White Saints in Kentucky

Marshall Keeble ranged across the region and unfailingly encountered white Christians eager to support his work among black southerners. As early as 1918 white Christians in Kentucky expressed interest in the spiritual welfare of their black neighbors. E. L. Jorgensen, a white preacher for the Highland Church of Christ in Louisville and a passionate supporter of black Christians, made it his duty to "win souls for Christ, let them be white or colored."[78] A year later Keeble preached in Sugar Grove, Kentucky, baptizing four and restoring one to the faith. As in his other meetings, he attracted large numbers of whites, and those who responded to his preaching awaited baptism at white hands.[79] Segregation's convoluted canons permitted white

southerners to hear the most profound truths from the lips of a black evangelist, and bow to a black preacher's logic to abandon the faith of their white fathers, but they forbade them from receiving baptism from black hands.

Throughout the 1920s white believers in Kentucky maintained concern for the spiritual plight of black people. In 1921 the white Church of Christ in Murray summoned Keeble to preach to African Americans, and when he arrived he found that the white Christians had already sent out advertisements announcing the meeting and had erected an electrically lighted tent. Keeble, rejoicing over the evangelizing opportunity, prayed God's blessings on the white Christians who made this possible.[80] After the successful campaign closed, the white believers used their influence to secure the local schoolhouse for blacks to worship in and to mentor them in their Christian growth.[81] In November of that year Keeble's eighteen days in Sugar Grove resulted in two baptisms.[82]

A year later Keeble returned to both Murray and Sugar Grove and reported that white Christians at the former place attended "every service to instruct and guide them [new Christians] in their worship." Keeble also mentioned that Coleman Overby, a white minister, often preached for the new black Christians as well in seeking to establish the black work permanently. Keeble spent four days in Sugar Grove preaching amid African Americans, receiving "a nice box of good things to carry home," and great encouragement concerning the work among his people.[83]

In 1928 white parishioners in Hopkinsville asked Keeble to labor among African Americans. He reported that after Sunday afternoon services the "white brethren took their cars and spent at least two hours distributing handbills in every colored home. This caused my people to wonder, because they had never seen white people so interested in having the pure gospel preached to them." Such efforts resulted in seventeen baptisms, and the white Christians agreed to meet with the new black Christians every afternoon to teach them more about the new way of life to which they had pledged themselves.[84]

Whites' interest in black Kentuckians continued into the 1950s. In 1935 Keeble told of the Twelfth Street Church of Christ in Bowling Green sponsoring a meeting for African Americans in a local warehouse where the installation of a loud-speaker system projected his sermons widely.[85] He immersed a man and his wife, each over ninety years old, amid great rejoicing.[86] Four

years later Keeble returned to Hopkinsville, where the white congregation organized another meeting for African Americans, and Thomas J. Wagoner (white) worked alongside Keeble in the campaign.[87] In 1952 Keeble preached again in Hopkinsville, and the white minister stepped aside so Keeble could use his radio time each day, reaching listeners who might otherwise never visit the tent.[88]

Marshall Keeble among White Saints in Texas

Keeble's reach extended to the farthest corner of the old Confederacy because of the support he garnered from white believers in Texas. In 1929 white Christians in Houston underwrote Keeble's three-week meeting, one that engendered eleven confessions and three restorations. "All the white churches in Houston supported this meeting in every way they could," but Keeble especially commended Dr. Asa H. Speer, who "led the song service every night. He is so anxious to see that all hear the gospel." Keeble also thanked all the white ministers in the Houston area who shared Dr. Speer's concern with evangelization among Houston's black citizenry.[89] Five years later the Heights Church of Christ, together with others, brought Keeble back to Houston, where he baptized thirty-two people. "The white brethren stood by us while we held up Christ." Even though the black evangelist received great support and encouragement from white believers in Houston, black and white southerners conscientiously complied with the social customs of Jim Crow. On the last night of Keeble's meeting in Houston, twelve confessed their belief in Christ, six of them white women. As usual, white brethren stood by to complete what Keeble had begun.[90]

Whenever working in southern states or in those adjacent to the Old South, Keeble invariably had white leaders to immerse white candidates. He preached and baptized twenty-three people in Lawton, Oklahoma, and noted that "Whenever white people respond to the invitation in our meetings, I always get some white brother to take their confession and baptize them."[91] Like the apostle Paul, who reported that "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase," Keeble, the consummate team player, showed no urge to immerse white seekers.[92] He understood that Jim Crow America would forbid the intimate and submissive contact required by baptism.

In Mexia, Texas, Keeble preached and baptized six people, including a Baptist minister in July 1935. "White brethren," Keeble wrote, "attended the Mexia meeting from miles around."[93] Two months later Keeble reported fifty-five baptisms and twelve restorations at the Christian Church in Tyler where blacks and whites attended from far distances.[94] Sometimes white Texans showed more interest in Keeble's preaching than did blacks. In Stephenville more Anglo believers attended his meeting than did African Americans, who never numbered more than twenty-five at any session.[95] Keeble found similar support in August 1936 in Wichita Falls, where his campaign ended with twenty-two baptisms, as three white congregations lent backing to the effort.[96]

The following year Keeble established a church in Greenville after baptizing seventeen people. M. C. Franklin, a white leader for Churches of Christ in Greenville, reported that in this first Gospel meeting for his town's African Americans, several of the county's congregations had combined their efforts.[97] Keeble, supported by Anglo disciples, also evangelized in Huntsville and converted two people in "a mission meeting supported by the white church," especially by Ted Norton, the congregation's minister.[98] In 1937 Keeble preached in Overton, where he received three confessions and baptized two, with the support of nearby New London's white church, ministered by R. L. Colley.[99] Keeble revisited Paris, Texas, where weather conditions forced the meeting to move inside and there were no baptisms. Keeble happily announced, however, that this "work was started by the white church five years ago, and the white brethren are still greatly interested in it, the elders are still watching over it."[100]

In 1939 Keeble returned again to Texas, revisiting several black congregations. In Paris he noted that the "white church is still interested in the colored work which it started," and in Ennis he discovered the "white church arranging to build a house of worship for the colored brethren." In Bryan, Keeble found that the "white brethren have a mission work begun for the colored people, and mean to see that a strong colored church is established," while in Houston he rejoiced when he saw that white members of the Heights Church of Christ "had just completed a nice place of worship for the colored church."[101] More than merely initiating black evangelistic efforts by inviting Keeble to preach, white Christians in the Lone Star State worked to sustain the congregations created by this joint effort.

The 1940s, with war-induced instability, saw some slackening of these ventures, although white Churches of Christ continued to invite Keeble to Texas either to plant or to stabilize black congregations. Keeble closed a meeting in 1940 with ten baptisms and one restoration in Port Arthur, Texas, a work begun and still sustained by the Sixth Street Church and its preacher O. C. Lambert. The message Keeble bore spread to the neighboring cities of Orange, Texas, and Lake Charles, Louisiana, all under aegis of Port Arthur's whites.[102] In the fall of that year Keeble, still in Texas, called his meeting in Dallas "one of the greatest, in many respects, that I have ever held." Blacks and whites swelled the attendance among the crowds. Once again Keeble spoke over the radio instead of the white minister who ordinarily held forth.[103] The next May Keeble returned to Dallas where he immersed thirteen and reclaimed one. "The meeting," Keeble claimed, "was greatly encouraged by all of the white churches, who are supporting three colored preachers in this field," and their joint efforts brought thousands of black Dallasites to Christ each year.[104]

Leaving Dallas, Keeble traveled south to Bryan, conducted a three-week meeting, and baptized twenty people. "The white churches supported this meeting," Keeble explained, and white Christians there "began this work three years ago, and they have never given it up." In July 1941 Keeble evangelized in Wellington for two weeks, planting a black Church of Christ through seventeen baptisms at "an open-air meeting, with floodlights like they have at the baseball parks," supported by the white churches. A year later Keeble returned to Wellington, baptizing four and restoring two. He found there a new building that white brethren had supplied. On August 30, 1942, Keeble closed a "great meeting" in Wichita Falls, where the area's white congregations had established work among the black citizens some seven years previously.[105]

Marshall Keeble among White Saints in Georgia

The states of the Deep South of course drew Keeble's white-sustained efforts. In 1926 Price Billingsley, a white preacher in Churches of Christ and a frequent contributor to the *Gospel Advocate,* invited Keeble to Summit, Georgia, for a preaching effort.[106] Later Keeble conducted a month-long tent meeting in Valdosta, yielding 163 baptisms. The white Christians, Keeble an-

nounced, "arranged for this meeting, and they gave me their support in every way possible." The church in Valdosta also purchased copies of the New Testament and distributed them to black visitors, and the Central Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee, provided pamphlets, while B. C. Goodpasture sent leaflets. "The white church," Keeble summarized, "was greatly inspired over this work. I left the white brethren busy arranging for a place for them to worship, and they also want a colored man to come there and locate so he can keep the work going."[107] Keeble reported in 1937 that a black church in Atlanta gained strength under the preaching of A. C. Holt; white churches there sustained their interest in the work begun some years earlier.[108]

Marshall Keeble among White Saints in Louisiana

Some white churches in Louisiana also proved their concern for the souls of blacks when in 1940 white parishioners in Bastrop appealed to the readership of the *Gospel Advocate* "to send a good colored preacher here." Two white leaders, Jack Hawkins and a Brother Goble, had reached out to the black residents of Bastrop, but they believed that African Americans preferred to hear a "gospel preacher of their own race." But the congregation in Bastrop found none to share their concerns, and the call went unanswered. Not until the next decade would white Christians undertake serious evangelistic efforts among Louisiana's blacks.[109]

In 1952 Ira North and the white Church of Christ in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, launched a massive campaign among African Americans of that city. White Christians purchased newspaper and radio advertisements for three weeks, and "some fifty white disciples," North reported, "visited colored homes and distributed thousands of handbills. Fifty-six ladies volunteered to call the colored residences and give a personal invitation to the meeting," while others placed window cards with black businesses in Baton Rouge. At the same time Marshall Keeble and his coworkers spoke on a local radio program. The three-week campaign produced fifteen baptisms and led to the establishment of a black Church of Christ in Baton Rouge.[110]

Downriver in New Orleans, Keeble noted that white Christians there furnished a black minister, Russell H. Moore, for the African American congregation. Keeble credited white believers with sustaining black fledg-

ling churches, asserting that "Whenever the colored churches are established the white churches never let them suffer for the need of a good preacher to teach them and to bring others to Christ." Keeble recognized, however, the paucity of extensive effort in the state, which he called one of the most neglected areas of the nation.[111] When evangelism did occur in the era of segregation, however, white and black Christians collaborated to establish separate congregations.

Marshall Keeble among White Saints in Mississippi

Keeble might well have applied his remark to Louisiana's neighbor, Mississippi. In 1921 R. L. Sweeney, a white Christian in Utica, wanted his black friends to hear sound preaching, but lacking sufficient funds, he contacted A. M. Burton, who enabled Keeble to preach among African Americans in Utica. Even though there were no visible results, Keeble spoke each night to several hundred black students of the Utica Institute. He especially thanked Sweeney and his wife for their hospitality and prayed for God to bless them.[112]

A decade later, the white Church of Christ in Jackson invited Keeble to their city. The white Christians initially rented a church building owned by Pentecostals, but when Keeble turned "the light on their false teaching," the Pentecostals rescinded the agreement. The white disciples in Jackson then secured a Methodist building for the three-week meeting, which garnered twenty-seven baptisms, including the Baptist minister and his wife. Keeble commended C. B. Thomas, the white evangelist, and his white congregation for their eagerness to disseminate the "pure gospel."[113]

December 1931 found Keeble in Ripley, where his preaching campaign garnered ten baptisms. "The white church there called me to teach the pure gospel to my race," and white leaders in the town provided encouragement. The Anglo Church of Christ in Ripley, Keeble elaborated, "was anxious to have the colored people taught the pure gospel. The white brethren there treated me with the spirit of Christ."[114]

In August 1938 Keeble launched a two-week meeting in Tupelo. "J. W. Dunn assisted us greatly," Keeble noted, "and all the white brethren attended from Tupelo and near-by places." Like their neighbors, white Christians in Tupelo delighted to see the souls of black folk saved, but chose not to worship with African Americans on a regular basis; yet they quickly laid

plans to build a separate meeting place for the black converts.[115] Four years later Keeble returned to Tupelo, preached the Lord's Word, baptized seven people, restored one, and reaffirmed the white Christians' concern for their black co-religionists. A new building for them affirmed this continuing interest.[116]

Marshall Keeble among White Saints in Arkansas

In yet another of the ex-Confederate states, Arkansas, Keeble mined a similar level of interest. He had first visited the state as an evangelist in 1921, journeying to Center Point to work under the auspices of the white church there, whose members attended each nightly meeting.[117] Eight years later the white church in Fort Smith called Keeble to teach area blacks. Keeble praised white saints who sought to save black people from "the yoke of sectarianism," and he thanked God for their great missionary zeal and enthusiasm.[118] He conducted dual meetings at Little Rock and nearby Conway in 1934, both sponsored by white churches,[119] and the Little Rock white churches periodically supported his campaigns into the 1950s.[120]

Racism, however, tainted the white believers' "great missionary spirit," for when Keeble had closed the Fort Smith meeting with eighty-one African American baptisms, the white Dr. Billingsley received the confessions of the three white people who responded.[121] Powerful and pervasive Jim Crow practices in the South meant that whites who heard the pure Gospel from a black man and responded to it must be baptized not by the black proclaimer but by a white coworker. Even though many white Christians yearned to evangelize African Americans, they were equally satisfied to maintain segregated churches. Marshall Keeble, in choosing to use his preaching ability in cooperation with white Christians, had no option but to work within the proscriptions of the Jim Crow culture, one implacably cohered by lynch law. And white believers, regardless of what their private attitudes toward segregation might have been, were irresistably bound by the South's malevolent system.

Marshall Keeble among White Saints in South Carolina

As in the rest of the South, white Christians in the Carolinas sought Keeble's skills. In 1925 Keeble received a call from G. F. Gibbs, a white minister of

the Judson Street Church of Christ in Greenville, South Carolina, who "arranged for this meeting for my people, and he and the congregation that he labors with are doing all in their power to establish the work among the colored people."[122] Keeble's tent-meeting yielded twelve baptisms, and Gibbs baptized the whites who responded to him. Apart from such occasional visits, Keeble had few opportunities in the Carolinas, and it appears that most of the growth of African American Churches of Christ in South Carolina did not occur until the early 1950s, when Wilton H. Cook, a spiritual grandson of Keeble, preached successive meetings and revitalized congregations there.[123] The importance of Keeble's influence remains uncertain, and equally unclear is the role played by the black Churches of Christ/Disciples of Christ along the Carolina seaboard. This group, after obtaining their independence from whites in the Stone-Campbell Movement as early as 1870, formed their own distinctive congregations, making the practice of foot-washing a distinguishing practice. The presence of these "Churches of Christ" may have vitiated Keeble's evangelistic efforts in the Carolinas.[124]

Marshall Keeble among White Saints in West Virginia

In West Virginia, however, Keeble saw more visible results. In 1938 he preached for two weeks in Moundsville, once again attracting more white hearers than blacks. "Many whites who had never heard the pure gospel came just to hear a colored man, and became interested and did not miss a night." Keeble thanked Boyd Fanning, the white minister in Moundsville, who made his time in West Virginia a pleasant experience. From Moundsville, Keeble traveled to Charleston, where three white preachers had planned a two-week meeting. The considerable black population there, unfamiliar with Keeble's message, initially showed some reluctance, but eleven soon responded. A white preacher stood at hand to baptize the three white converts.[125]

Jim Crow among the Saints

Even though whites in Churches of Christ across the New South showered attention and material support on Keeble and the black congregations he established, Anglo Christians could not disentangle themselves from Jim

Crow's iron web. In 1907 a group of white Christians in Bellwood, Tennessee, vehemently opposed Mr. and Mrs. Edwin A. Elam, who brought a black girl to their all-white congregation. S. E. Harris, a member representing the disgruntled group, insisted that he did not object to the girl's worshiping God; instead, he and several other members resented her presence in a white church when "there is a convenience [*sic*] place for her to go of her own race." But Elam, president of the Nashville Bible School (later David Lipscomb College) and a writer for the *Gospel Advocate,* maintained that it would be a great injustice to send the girl "alone to the negro church" and expose "her to the temptation of such weakness and sins as are common to her race." He concluded that God is impartial, but the person who objects to worshiping with a black person is partial.[126]

David Lipscomb, a major figure in Churches of Christ and a sympathizer and supporter of African Americans, intervened in the dispute and stressed that Christ abolished all walls of "separation and division." Lipscomb's biblical understanding as well as his personal encounters with African Americans shaped his view of race relations and inspired him to argue for integrated congregations in a segregated era.[127] Lipscomb's stance against racially segregated congregations was unique among Churches of Christ, and it did not prevail. The Harris-Elam dispute remains instructive, showing that while some whites in Churches of Christ welcomed blacks into their congregations, others did not want them, viewing them with disdain and contempt.[128]

Most white southerners vigorously objected to mingling with blacks in both secular and religious contexts, fearing that such free interaction would arouse black men to pursue sexual liaisons with white women and "seek a place in the social circle."[129] Foy E. Wallace Jr., a native Texan and an editor of several Church of Christ journals, viewed as inseparable the teachings of Jesus Christ and the social customs of Jim Crow. In 1941 Wallace castigated white preachers who attempted "to make white folks out of the negroes or negroes out of the white folks." An implacable segregationist, Wallace denounced white women who became so "animated over a certain colored preacher as to go up to him after a sermon and shake hands with him holding his hand in both of theirs." Wallace also upbraided white Christians who provided housing for black preachers, and admonished Keeble "to teach these negro preachers better than that, even if we cannot teach

some young upstart among the white preachers. Their practices will degrade the negroes themselves. It is abominable."[130] White leaders in Churches of Christ trusted black evangelists such as Keeble with their souls, but not with their women.

Keeble, in responding to Wallace's article, thanked him for his advice and vowed "to conduct myself in my last days so that you and none of my friends will have to take back nothing they have said complimentary about my work or regret it."[131] The Wallace-Keeble exchange divulges the former's arrogance and jealousy as it reveals the latter's accommodation and humility. Keeble without doubt detested Wallace's racial hubris, but he suppressed his rage to maintain the trust and support of the white Christians, who made possible his outreach to blacks. Perhaps more importantly, the Wallace-Keeble dialogue illuminates the spirit of segregation and accommodation that coexisted with what Keeble called a "great missionary spirit."[132]

Other black evangelists had less patience with racism than did Marshall Keeble. In 1949 Ernest W. Vaughner, a black preacher in West Virginia, rebuked white Christians for allowing their racial prejudices to frighten them away from the Great Commission. Branding the racial attitudes as "scarecrows," Vaughner pointed out that many whites in Churches of Christ refused to reach out to black men, saying "they will want to marry our daughters." Vaughner then challenged white believers to view African Americans through the eyes of God: "Dear friend, any place you see a man, you see the image of God. Some of the finest souls on earth may be found back in the alley or across the tracks—not because they choose to be there, but because they have no other choice." In light of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Vaughner asked: "Has the white Gentile forgotten his past condition? Why has he erected *another wall of partition* between himself and his darker brother?"[133] Vaughner understood that few whites in Churches of Christ appeared eager to embrace African Americans as social and spiritual equals, and he deprecated their thinly disguised racism.

Floyd Rose, a dynamic preacher who studied under Keeble and traveled with him in the 1950s and 1960s, recalled the racism in Churches of Christ in the South.

> I remembered all of those years when I traveled with Marshall Keeble as a boy preacher through Arkansas, Texas, Mississippi, Georgia, Ala-

> bama and Florida. In the tradition of Booker T. Washington, Brother Keeble attracted large crowds of whites whom he never offended; although in some instances, the audience was segregated by a rope which was drawn down the center aisle of the tent—white on the one side and blacks on the other side.
>
> At the close of the sermon, the white preacher was invited to stand in front of the whites with hands outstretched to receive the whites; Brother Keeble stood in front of the blacks to receive the blacks who might receive Christ. It was ironic in one instance we could not use the baptistery in the white Church of Christ. We had to take the black candidates to the local black Baptist Church. We had not only used hymn books which they had printed and sang songs that they had composed, we were baptizing in a pool that they had built; and at the same time we were telling them that they were "going to hell so fast that they would get a ticket for speeding."[134]

Rose delineates the spirit that evidently permeated whites in Churches of Christ who considered themselves "the only Christians," even while blatantly contradicting themselves by insisting that black seekers be immersed in a black Baptist building. Jim Crow mores appeared concomitant with following Jesus Christ in the minds of most whites in southern Churches of Christ who refused to delve too deeply into their practices.

Yet black preachers such as Vaughner and Rose were not alone in discerning and censuring racism in white Churches of Christ. In 1960 Dr. Carl Spain, a Bible professor at Abilene Christian College, remembered inviting African Americans to attend a white Church of Christ in a southern community. The black visitors experienced a cold reception, which prompted Spain's ire: "I shall never forget the agony on their faces when white Christians made it very plain to them they were out of place and glared at them like a Jew would have looked upon a 'Samaritan dog.' The Negroes left the assembly of the saints. It seemed that the saints couldn't pray or sing just right as long as there were 'niggers' in the church house."[135]

Such critics as Rose and Spain, however, stood clearly in the minority, and their comments came in the latter stages of Jim Crow reign. While most white Christians appeared happy to see a black man preach to blacks

and even to whites and to win converts from both races, they remained unwilling to welcome black Christians into their physical house of God. As one scholar of religion has noted, most southern white Christians failed to recognize a Christian "social ethic."[136] They refused, consequently, to challenge a system that brutally oppressed all blacks, including black believers. Jim Crow reigned among the white saints, and the extraordinary successes of Marshall Keeble always stood apart from this pivotal social issue. Throughout his career Keeble held a single-hearted focus on reaching "this fallen race of mine," and he steadfastly enjoyed the support of white Christians in this quest.

7
Stirring up the South
Marshall Keeble and Black Denominations in the South

> Bro. Keeble was as brave as a lion and as humble as a lamb. [Religious foes] were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.
>
> —Annie C. Tuggle

Upon hearing Marshall Keeble's preaching, the Methodist pastor Oswell L. Aker abandoned his life-long religious tradition in Sheffield, Alabama, in 1926. Aker, who had been a preacher and member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church for thirty years, together with his wife, Nancy, then collaborated to serve and stabilize black Churches of Christ in Florida, Texas, and Alabama. Keeble's conversion of the Methodist leader "stirred the town greatly," just as he disrupted and disturbed so many other southern communities through his long career.[1] With an assertive preaching style buttressed by debating skills, Keeble fearlessly confronted Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal leaders, rebuking religious groups whom he believed had deviated from the Word of God, snatching thousands out of what he denounced as man-made churches. Keeble unflinchingly stirred up blacks and whites in the New South as both a preacher and a debater, leaving behind a host of African American Churches of Christ.

To imagine, however, that it was only Keeble's combative preaching and persuasive debating which led droves of black listeners into the fold of Churches of Christ is to oversimplify his chaotic and turbulent religious and racial world. Keeble benefited in part from an unstable religious environment in 1914 when he launched his career as a full-time evangelist. The 1916 U.S. Religious Census identified nearly 3 million black Baptists; almost half a million members of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church[2]; 257,169 adherents of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ), 245,749 communicants of the Colored Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church; and around 50,000 black Pentecostals.[3] Keeble inevitably encountered these groups as he traversed various southern communities.

A relatively brief training period for prospective ministers coupled with the denomination's emotional content and its institutional equality attracted so many black adherents that independent African American Baptist churches emerged in the antebellum South.[4] Just after the Civil War in 1866 African American Baptists united to form the Consolidated American Baptist Missionary Church. By the end of the nineteenth century, black Baptists had begun publishing their own journal, the *National Baptist Magazine,* and organizing their own convention, the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. Despite numerical and financial growth, black Baptists struggled in their quest for social visibility and respectability in the face of white racism, engendering what one scholar has called a "frustrated fellowship." Furthermore the 1915 dispute between black Baptist leaders R. H. Boyd and E. C. Morris over the control of the National Baptist Publishing Board in Nashville split the national convention the following year. Some black Baptist parishioners in Oklahoma and other places, disheartened and disillusioned by the controversy, became inactive.[5] Keeble, a former Baptist before transitioning into the Stone-Campbell Movement, knew something of these troubles firsthand and perhaps swayed several languishing black Baptists to be baptized into a fellowship that appeared to more peaceful and more stable.

Black Methodists organized the first African American denomination in the early nineteenth century. Richard Allen, a former slave, served as bishop of the AME Church until his death in 1831, and eight years later the denomination's black membership had reached eight thousand.[6] After the Civil War Henry M. Turner, a former U.S. Army chaplain and a fiery, astute politician in Reconstruction Georgia, helped build and expand the AME Church in the South until his death in 1915. While a skillful church builder, Turner's declaration that "God is a Negro," his ordination of a female preacher, his call for blacks to go back to Africa, and his fourth and controversial marriage caused friction among black Methodist parishioners.[7]

Other blacks in the South adhered to the Colored Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church. Originally part of the white Methodist Episcopal Church, African Americans separated into their denomination in 1870. Chief among the early and most influential leaders were Isaac Lane, a former slave who eventually served as a bishop for forty-one years, and C. H. Phillips, a native of Milledgeville, Georgia, who held Episcopal office from 1922 to 1930. Unlike the popular and well-liked Lane, the gifted and intelligent Phillips

evoked little fondness among CME members or ministers.[8] Upset because Phillips appointed inept delegates to oversee Methodist churches in Alabama, a parishioner from that state denounced him as indifferent and self-centered, claiming that the "personal pronouns I, ME, MINE are his holy words, and overshadow all else in his vocabulary. Without the use of these words he cannot talk or even preach a sermon with more than a dozen distinct sentences." The protester, labeling Phillips's oversight of his state as "Rome under Nero—The Dark Age of Alabama," concluded that "I never realized or saw such illwill [*sic*], strife, hatred as now rages in Alabama."[9]

But Phillips's supporters evaluated the bishop's administration as a "constructive one from all angles[;] in appointments he has given men what they merited." They congratulated Phillips for "not lowering [his] dignity to answer these anonymous spurious articles," and praised him as "a servant of God for his churches and [who is] standing for the right."[10] The political struggle in Alabama's CME congregations attests to the degree of dissatisfaction felt by some black Methodists with their leadership and fellowship. Marshall Keeble's simple, plain, parabolic, rational, yet exact sermons about God's plan of salvation—namely, baptism for the remission of sins and congregational structure, the ordaining of elders and deacons—proved tantalizing to black Methodist parishioners shaken and wounded by ecclesiastical conflict. Keeble observed that he always labored to "make my sermons plain so men and women can easily understand the gospel without excitement."[11]

Appealing to such disgruntled black Baptists and Methodists in the South, Keeble encountered as well black charismatic groups. Established in Lexington, Mississippi, in 1897 by the former Baptist minister Charles H. Mason, the Church of God in Christ sought to reclaim the doctrine of distinctive spiritual sanctification, attracting many black followers. In 1906 Mason attended the pivotal Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, California, afterward citing the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the source of his speaking in tongues. When Mason imposed this practice on his church, a large number of his flock withdrew, forming the Church of Christ (Holiness), U.S.A.[12] The Mason-C. P. Jones schism suggests again the uncertainty or even confusion troubling many African Americans over theological concerns, and such affairs in Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia typify the religious disarray common in the black South.

Marshall Keeble's opposition to denominational organizations, his implacable hostility toward the emotionalism of glossolalia, his insistence on the simple rite of baptismal immersion "for the remission of sins," together with his invariable mantra that "the Bible is right" brought order and clarity to confused people seeking to escape the chaos that disturbed black congregations across the South. This inconsonant spiritual environment created a fertile ground for Keeble's message, which drew countless African American Baptists, Methodists, and Pentecostals to Churches of Christ.

Yet if the South's religious climate was unsettled, even greater volatility disturbed its racial atmosphere. Demagogue politicians relying on race-baiting to win votes exacerbated the South's racial and social milieu for electoral profit. James K. Vardaman, chosen governor of Mississippi in 1904, consistently and viciously spewed anti-black sentiment in his speeches. While advocating certain progressive reform measures, Vardaman insisted that African Americans should be barred from education since an even rudimentary knowledge might stir up their ambitions to vote, hold office, and challenge the racial status quo.[13] Other southern politicos commonly mimicked Vardaman's virulent racism. Hoke Smith, governor-elect of Georgia in 1906, campaigned on the promise to disfranchise African Americans and haunted audiences with "Negro rule" rhetoric. Shortly after his election, white mobs in Atlanta killed four prominent black citizens, "climaxing the year and a half during which Smith had stirred up hatred. A man of culture and family, he had made acceptable the demagoguery of James K. Vardaman and Ben Tillman."[14]

A year after Keeble committed himself to full-time evangelism, a controversial movie, *Birth of a Nation,* appeared in the nation's theaters. Based on Thomas Dixon's 1905 novel *The Clansman,* the film portrayed African American men as venal politicians and vicious rapists and glorified the Ku Klux Klan as the savior of white civilization and especially white womanhood. This inflammatory film, lauded by President Woodrow Wilson as "writing history with lightning," inspired William J. Simmons, a former Methodist minister, to organize a second Klan, one that was anti-black, anti-Catholic, and anti-Jewish. This terrorist organization, with which Marshall Keeble would have several brushes, further poisoned the racial atmosphere in the South and beyond, prompting many black southerners to immigrate northward, helping transform the racial conundrum from a regional to a national affair.[15]

When World War I ended, elated and prideful black soldiers came home from Europe, only to have their hopes and even lives crushed under the increasingly heavy and brutal weight of white oppression. In the summer of 1919 race riots erupted in Texas, Illinois, Tennessee, Nebraska, and Arkansas, leaving a sanguinary wake of enormous amounts of property damage, shattered lives, and annihilated hopes.[16] The poet Claude McKay lamented the plight of African Americans in this blighted era.

> What though before us lies the open grave?
> Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
> Pressed to the wall, dying but fighting back![17]

This "dying but fighting back" would last well beyond the century's midpoint.

Standing on ground soaked in the blood of African Americans lynched by lawless white mobs and often denied religion's succor by instable churches, Marshall Keeble "fought back" in his own unique way. Rather than contending physically or entering the political arena, he took up the gauntlet in verbal and theological contests against his religious adversaries, urging love upon both black and white alike. Keeble inherited a tradition of debating in the American Restoration Movement reaching back to Alexander Campbell. This leader's five debates in antebellum America, now little remembered, confronted skeptics, Catholics, and Presbyterians, establishing Campbell as a staunch champion of the Disciples of Christ as well as a premier defender of Protestantism in the United States.[18] African American preachers in Churches of Christ, building on Campbell's foundation of argumentation and debate, challenged those who differed from their theological views. Early black preachers in Churches of Christ such as Samuel Robert Cassius and the appropriately named Alexander Campbell absorbed the debating spirit and techniques from their white counterparts and transmitted it to their young successors such as Marshall Keeble.[19]

Keeble in stirring up the South imbibed Campbell's polemical skills, traversing southern communities, refuting and disputing with all those whom he believed preached and promoted false religion.[20] The racial oppression and mutable religious environment of Marshall Keeble's South spelled opportunity for a young preacher able and bold enough to advance his ideas of the pure Gospel in so volatile a culture.

Stirring up Tennessee

In 1917 Keeble arrived in Henderson, Tennessee, where he met four black Christians, the Bose Crooms family. Keeble's passionate sermons in Crooms' house produced sixty-nine baptisms, thirty-nine of that number white people. He planted the Oak Grove Church of Christ, calling it "the first church of Christ that I as an evangelist began in a destitute field." Within two years the Oak Grove membership increased to over one hundred adherents as Keeble conducted nine consecutive protracted meetings in Henderson, leaving behind a still-extant church.[21]

In 1919 Keeble, invited to preach under a tent in White Haven, Tennessee, kindled the ire of some black listeners. "The tent was put up in a hotbed of sectarianism," Keeble asserted, "and I, in the name of the Lord, sowed the seed of the kingdom of Christ. It made some awfully angry, but some seemed to enjoy listening to the gospel."[22] The campaign underscored Keeble's potent and disturbing presence and preaching.

Through the 1920s Keeble often debated black Methodists in Tennessee. While he preached in Jackson, Methodist ministerial students and professors at Lane College tried to expose Keeble as a false evangelist. Keeble patiently yet boldly stood his ground and reportedly prevailed. "One of the professors attacked me one night and attempted to show to the crowd that I was teaching false doctrine. When he was through I followed him with nothing but the truth; and when I extended the invitation seven precious souls came forward and made the good confession." This meeting counted fifty-eight baptisms all told, and the encounter with Methodist ministers convinced Keeble that "sectarianism must be fought with a humble and meek spirit." This Jackson congregation that Keeble planted in 1927 still flourishes as the East Jackson Street Church of Christ.[23]

Keeble returned to Jackson in the winter of 1928 at the behest of a white listener who objected to the black evangelist's preaching and promised to "find a colored man that could show by the Scriptures that I [Keeble] was teaching false doctrine." Keeble readily accepted the challenge and met with G. T. Haywood, a Pentecostal preacher, who asserted that contemporary believers received baptism with the Holy Spirit just as did the first-century disciples. Keeble affirmed three propositions: that the Bible taught there was "only one baptism to make Christians, which is a baptism in water"; that

the "baptism of the Holy Ghost ceased after the household of Cornelius received it"; and that "miracles ceased when 'that which is perfect' came." After addressing these three propositions Haywood immediately departed, and Keeble offered to debate one of Haywood's fifteen ministerial protégés and supporters in Jackson. All declined.[24]

In the Haywood debate Keeble adhered to the biblical interpretation forwarded by leading preachers and the white editors of the *Gospel Advocate*. In a church shunning extracongregational organization and authority, editors of widely read religious journals and eminent preachers wielded exceptional influence in Churches of Christ. Keeble noted that white preachers such as Will J. Cullum, a leader of Nashville's Central Church of Christ and the minister for the same city's Highland Church of Christ, "stood by me in this battle for the advancement of God's kingdom on earth. All seemed to be pleased with my humble effort." Many white supporters deemed the exchange between Keeble and Haywood "one of the most orderly debates that they had ever heard."[25]

In the 1930s Keeble, after a five-day visit to Henderson, Tennessee, returned to Nashville where a flood had damaged homes in the black section of that segregated city. Nashville's white Central Church of Christ asked that the Jackson Street Church of Christ "feed the colored flood sufferers" with the aid of the white church. As the women of the congregation cared for the flood victims' physical necessities, Keeble addressed their spiritual needs. "While these sisters prepared the food I taught the Bible, and found that they were also hungry for the Bread of Life. Central Church provided the food, and the colored sisters prepared and served it." Keeble thanked the white congregation for allowing black Christians to participate "in such a great work," but his own primary goal remained dispensing spiritual bread to African Americans.[26]

At the same time Keeble just as eagerly fed white southerners, a singular achievement in an era of racial segregation enforced by lynch law. In the summer of 1940 Keeble and the song leader Fred Lee created waves of enthusiasm in drawing increasing throngs to their protracted meeting in Sparta, Tennessee. "Interest grew so great," Keeble reported, "that the white brethren had to stop trying to seat all who came. It was the interest that the white people took in the meeting that stirred such a great interest among the colored people." The excitement of white Christians aroused the curi-

osity of black Spartans, and the meeting concluded with seven baptisms. Keeble similarly attracted large biracial crowds while preaching under a tent in Shelbyville, Tennessee. "The white brethren said that it was the greatest interest they had ever seen in Shelbyville," as the protracted meeting closed with eleven baptisms and one restoration.[27] Whites, drawn by Keeble's singular preaching talents, could attend his campaigns comfortably, since he carefully skirted all race issues.

But in a South where a visceral racism cast its pall, even Keeble's race passivity could at times attract hostility. Later in 1940 in Ridgely, Tennessee, a white listener strode to the front during the invitation song and "struck Keeble a staggering blow on the left side of his head with brass knuckles. Keeble was stunned for a moment but recovered," got up, re-gathered himself, and "turned the other cheek," demonstrating what the theologian H. Richard Niebuhr has called "radical humility." Despite the unfortunate episode, Keeble's Ridgely meeting pulled in a throng of three thousand each night, both black and white, and produced twenty-one baptisms of both races. "The white brethren came from miles around, some coming from Kentucky, Missouri, Arkansas, and all near-by towns."[28]

Ordinarily, however, Marshall Keeble's opponents confined their hostility to the sphere of argumentation. In August 1940 white Christians in Memphis, Tennessee, invited Keeble to preach, furnishing funds and a large tent while Keeble delivered the sermons. Crowds increased nightly, but a "Baptist preacher attacked what we preached three nights, and the truth prevailed." The well-attended meeting ended with sixty-one baptisms.[29] Keeble continued unsettling religious orthodoxy in the Volunteer State with his preaching and debating, drawing large crowds of both white and black listeners, leaving behind fledgling black congregations, and repeating this forceful pattern throughout the southern states.

Stirring up Alabama

Marshall Keeble had begun roiling the religious waters in Alabama in the early 1920s. His preaching in Birmingham in 1921 so disturbed a Methodist cleric that he "attacked the teaching I was doing; but when I humbly answered him with God's word, a young woman came forward and made the

great confession, and from that time on interest was high." Keeble's preaching skill combined with his debating prowess to stir the minds of his listeners, and when the Birmingham meeting concluded, forty-five individuals had confessed their faith in Christ and received baptism. Most of the converted were Pentecostals whom Keeble had taught "how to become really sanctified, they were all baptized for the remission of sins. So the hall where they worshiped was turned over to us, and the brethren and sisters will worship there until they can buy them a house in which to worship God according to his word."[30] Ten months later Keeble returned and happily noted the Birmingham congregation "faithfully keeping house for the Lord." "It is wonderful," Keeble elaborated, "to see how strong this church is, when we remember that about ten months ago they were all Methodists, Baptists, and so-called 'Holiness' people."[31] A man of many parts while conducting the Birmingham meeting, Keeble had boarded in a Baptist home, disputed with a Methodist preacher, and transformed an entire Pentecostal church into a Church of Christ.

Three years later Keeble revisited Alabama and met "a Baptist woman who wanted to hear the pure gospel preached, near Plantersville." The woman drove Keeble to her house where he proclaimed the Word before her, her husband, and seven others. "Next day this woman asked me to baptize her, which I did. I left her rejoicing in Christ." Keeble also preached in two Baptist churches where the "people seem to be hungry for the truth. This is a fine field, and the harvest is ripe."[32]

Keeble's evangelism also yielded success in Florence, Alabama. There Keeble delighted the local white Christians with his concern for "having the word of God taught to a race that now stands greatly in need of proper teaching. Thank God for the interest that is now being manifested in having the word of God taught to a race that now stands in the clutches of sectarianism." Keeble believed that the "pure gospel" not only had power to rescue people from false religions but that it also possessed the force to prevent crime. "The only thing that can successfully stop crime is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Let us preach the word."[33] Keeble's "pure gospel" transformed men spiritually, even as it altered their life patterns. White paternalists in Churches of Christ would have heartily appreciated the black evangelist's assessment.

Keeble apparently accomplished his most impressive Alabama church-planting work in Birmingham. In 1928 he reported preaching to large crowds in the city, observing: "This is a fine field. Sectarianism is strong here, but the people are willing to be taught."[34] A decade later Floyd H. Horton, a white leader in Birmingham Churches of Christ, applauded Keeble for baptizing fifty people and founding a black congregation in the Woodlawn community.

> I have never heard better preaching than Brother Keeble did during this meeting. He is so humble that it is an inspiration to be associated with him. To be around Brother Keeble you learn that you do not have to go around with your fist doubled up and a frown on your face in order to preach like Paul, nor do you have to wear a horse face and be a "sissy" in order to have the spirit of Christ. He is like a lamb in his dealings with his fellow men, but like a lion when it comes to preaching the gospel and defending the cause, and this is the spirit of Christ. Those who come into the church under the preaching of Brother Keeble do not come in thinking that they are just swapping denominations, but they come in knowing and believing that the church of Christ is the only church that offers salvation to the world.[35]

While the "lamb" refused to disturb the racist status quo, the "lion" unsparingly refuted the teachings of those whom he believed to be in religious error. Keeble maintained that those in Churches of Christ comprised the one true church, and he carried this conviction energetically into such states as Florida.

Stirring up Florida

Marshall Keeble first stirred up the Sunshine State in 1927 when he campaigned in Tampa. At the meeting's outset a block of seats had been reserved for white listeners, "but interest got so high the white people got out and gave all the seats to my people." Rather than miss the opportunity the whites "sat in their cars" to hear the messages. Keeble's preaching flourished in ninety-two baptisms, including four "sectarian preachers," but four Baptist clerics challenged the Tampa gathering by attacking Keeble's messages.

So he "gave them thirty minutes apiece each night to show that I was wrong, and each time it proved a great victory for the truth."[36]

More threateningly, while evangelizing in Florida Keeble again encountered the Ku Klux Klan. The hooded terrorists strode into Keeble's Jacksonville Gospel meeting and demanded "all the white people [move] outside the tent," and watched as the crowd docilely complied and Keeble resumed his sermon.[37] By the mid-1920s the Ku Klux Klan in Florida enrolled perhaps 60,000 members. Stonewall Jackson No. 1 in Jacksonville was the state's first chartered klavern in 1920, and Olustee No. 20 in St. Petersburg had the third-largest Klan group in the same decade. Since all determined to enforce a racist, segregated social order in the South by lynch law if necessary, it was inevitable that Keeble would come face to face with the KKK. But despite his brush with this terrorist organization in Florida, Keeble left behind black congregations that still exist: the Tenth Avenue Church of Christ in Bradenton, the Westside Church of Christ in Jacksonville, the Sixth Street Church of Christ in Lakeland, and the Twentieth Street Church of Christ in St. Petersburg.[38]

Stirring up Kentucky

Keeble poured less of himself into the Upper South state of Kentucky, yet still achieved creditable results. After he preached an afternoon sermon in Hopkinsville, white Christians climbed into their cars, drove into black neighborhoods, and "spent at least two hours distributing handbills in every colored home." This show of care piqued the black community's interest and "caused my people to wonder," Keeble reflected, "because they had never seen white people so interested in having the pure gospel preached to them." Such concern led to the establishment of a black Church of Christ in Hopkinsville (now the Campbell Street Church of Christ).[39]

In 1929 Keeble returned to Hopkinsville and baptized five more people. Although proud that the small congregation still thrived, he lamented: "Sectarianism has got such a start that it is very hard to turn the current; but if a preacher will go into these sectarian strongholds and roll up his sleeves and go at it, the walls will fall." Keeble, as always, insisted that the Gospel must be preached both "in love and boldness."[40]

These two traits marked Keeble's frequent forays into the more populous Lone Star State. He enjoyed considerable success in Texas beginning in the fall of 1929, with a three-week meeting in Houston, leading to eleven new converts.[41] Three years later he revisited Houston and with financial assistance from white believers, Dr. Asa H. Speer and the Heights Church of Christ, preached in an extended tent meeting on the corner of West Dallas and Gulf Link Streets. The Houston campaign engendered eighty-one baptisms, and when Keeble departed T. H. York, an evangelist from Nashville, Tennessee, supervised the newly established congregation. Returning in 1934 Keeble baptized thirty-two people, enlarging the membership of what is now Houston's Fifth Ward Church of Christ.[42]

In the summer of 1935, Keeble closed a protracted meeting with twenty-six baptisms in Waco, where Jesse Washington, a handicapped black man, had been brutally lynched and burned eleven years earlier. After planting the Hood Street Church of Christ in Waco, he then moved on to Tyler.[43] A white church called Keeble there to plant a black congregation, and his preaching produced fifty-five baptisms, including a lawyer and three clerics. There were twelve restorations "from the Christian Church," but Keeble never demanded that respondents from the Christian Church to be rebaptized.[44] His perspective on this theological point likely stemmed from his own experience, for Keeble himself received baptism at the hands of the Christian Church minister Preston Taylor in the 1890s; after aligning himself with Churches of Christ Keeble never sought rebaptism.

In 1936 Keeble and his longtime song leader Fred Lee worked together to evangelize the community of Stephenville, Texas, at the behest of a white evangelist who arranged Keeble's meeting there. Although Keeble ordinarily had white attendees, on this occasion more whites than blacks attended the assemblies. "At no time during this meeting did we have over twenty-five colored people present." Even though disappointed over the small number of black hearers, Keeble rejoiced when a black Baptist and a black Pentecostal received baptism. "We left them happy in Christ."[45]

During the same year Keeble and Lee collaborated again in Wichita Falls, where they taught and baptized twenty-two people and restored six more. Two white congregations of that city, the Polk Street Church of Christ and

the Tenth and Austin Streets Church of Christ, organized and supported the extended effort. The white ministers, E. B. Wallace and L. S. White, noted Keeble, "encouraged us much. They have made arrangements for a colored man to come and labor for one year. Thousands attended this meeting." During the months following, Keeble planted a black church in Greenville with seventeen baptisms, "the first time the Gospel has ever been preached to the colored people of Greenville. The meeting was a missionary effort on the part of several white congregations of the county." Greenville, set in a region notorious for its racism, boasted a sign over its main street proclaiming itself "The Blackest Land—the Whitest People," and nearby Sherman had in 1930 been wracked by a race riot so violent that it forced the governor to declare martial law.[46] White Christians, although eager to see black people converted, did not want them in their local congregations and instead accommodated the segregationist practices common across America's South and beyond.[47] The black congregation Keeble established in Greenville with aid from white Christians still exists today as the Eastside Church of Christ.

Complying with Jim Crow precepts paradoxically went hand in hand with leading African Americans to Jesus Christ. In 1942 Keeble reported baptizing four people and restoring two more in Wellington, Texas. "That church was established by the white church last year," Keeble acknowledged, "and I was surprised to find it in the new building. It also has a home for the preacher. The white church made this possible. It is supporting the colored preacher."[48] The largess of white Christians in Texas and the other former Confederate states made possible the rise of black Churches of Christ. White generosity, however, inevitably came tainted with racial bigotry, as Anglos scrupulously paid obeisance to the "god of segregation." This racism did not erase the concern of white believers for black Americans' spiritual welfare, nor diminish Keeble's indefatigable labor. Without this vitiated philanthropy, the course of African American Churches of Christ in Texas would doubtlessly have been radically different.

Stirring up Louisiana and Arkansas

Always careful himself to avoid provoking racial conflict but never abandoning his resolute campaigning, Keeble traveled in 1936 to New Orleans, Loui-

siana, for a protracted meeting in a one-room building on Thalia Street. The sortie into the Cresent City resulted in the establishment of what is now the Louisa Street Church of Christ. After a hiatus of some fifteen years Keeble, aided by Ira North and other white believers in Baton Rouge, returned to Louisiana, baptized sixteen people, and planted a black congregation in that community. That African American body is now the Thirty-second Street Church of Christ.[49] Keeble entered Louisiana's northern neighbor Arkansas as a full-time evangelist in 1921, when he preached in Center Point. Eight years later at the invitation of the white Church of Christ in Fort Smith, he answered the call and converted eighty-one people including three whites. This congregation's first resident minister, G. P. Bowser, lent the church stability through his strong preaching and erudite teaching. Bowser later established his Bowser Christian Institute in Fort Smith, which served a black constituency until 1946.[50] Keeble evidently encountered neither religious nor racial conflict in his brief forays into Louisiana or Arkansas. Mississippi, however, with its grim tradition of lynching reaching from the Reconstruction era up through the 1960s, presented a different scenario.

Stirring up Mississippi

Keeble touched on Mississippi as early as 1921, but tangible results came only a decade later.[51] He received an invitation from C. B. Thomas, a white evangelist for the West Capitol Street Church of Christ, to preach in Jackson. There Keeble endured doctrinal assaults from Pentecostal, Baptist, and Methodist preachers before baptizing twenty-seven people. The meeting began in a black Pentecostal church building but ended abruptly when the group shut Keeble out. "Three nights were all the 'Sanctified' people could stand of the doctrine taught by the apostles. Four of their preachers attempted to show that I was teaching false doctrine; but in the spirit of love I turned the light on their false teaching, and they ordered us out of their meetinghouse." Expelled from the Pentecostals' house of worship, Keeble's preaching campaign found haven in a black "Methodist meetinghouse." "This meeting resulted in twenty-seven baptisms—five of them preachers, two Baptists, two Sanctified, and one Methodist. I also baptized the man and his wife with whom I lodged."[52] Keeble's host, a Baptist minister, then preached for the newly established church. The Jackson effort followed a

pattern Keeble frequently employed throughout his career. He would receive a "call" from a white minister or congregation then stay with a black family during the meeting. White Christians admired and eagerly sought Keeble's talents, gladly welcoming him into their communities to evangelize African Americans, and attending the gatherings themselves. But at the same time they refused to host him in their own homes or allow him to preach in their own church buildings as Jim Crow principles held firm in Jackson and throughout the South.

Keeble then advanced his work beyond Jackson. He left that city for Ripley and planted a black church there when "ten precious souls were baptized." Just as white disciples had called Keeble to Jackson, the same happened in Ripley. "The white church there called me to teach the pure gospel to my race. Brother Walker, the white minister, encouraged me very much."[53] The black congregation Keeble gathered in Ripley remains as the Terry Street Church of Christ. In 1937 he returned to Tupelo, conducted a two-week meeting, baptized three people, and strengthened a black church he had planted three years earlier. Keeble also heard black cleric J. Roy Vaughan debate a Baptist cleric there, calling the dispute "one of the greatest treats of my life. Brother Vaughan knows how to take care of sectarian preachers. I am more convinced than ever that debates like this one are a blessing to the church."[54] Keeble, however, would be forced to find different blessings in Georgia.

Stirring up Georgia

Keeble navigated the fiery and formidable presence of the Ku Klux Klan while preaching in Georgia. The second Klan, preoccupied with maintaining the South's racist infrastructure, addressed a broad range of issues. The Georgia Klan boasted a membership of 15,000 adherents when Keeble began traversing the state in the 1920s, and it was inevitable that Keeble would encounter Georgia's terrorists. According to J. E. Choate, Keeble's "most terrifying experience" with the Ku Klux Klan occurred in Summit, Georgia. There in 1926 twenty-five klansmen rushed into the school building where Keeble was preaching and thrust a note at him, ordering that he read it aloud. The message read: "The Ku Klux Klan stands for white supremacy. Be governed accordingly." Immediately Keeble extemporized: "I have always

known the white man is superior. . . . They brought us from Africa and have lifted us up." Choate praised Keeble for his understanding of "white psychology," calling his comments a "flash of genius." Keeble quickly added: "Now you treat these white folks right and they'll treat you right. They are your friends and they'll take care of you."[55]

Keeble understood how to move through the troubled currents of the South. A transient preacher roiling the South's segregationist waters would not likely have survived, but certainly would have left behind a situation sure to flash into racist violence directed against black residents. Instead, Keeble followed a course of behavior that courted no violence toward his hearers in the Klan-shadowed South where virulent racism maintained its odious sway. In the face of encounters with the Ku Klux Klan, Keeble still planted viable congregations in Georgia. After being called by the white Church of Christ in Valdosta in 1930, he closed a meeting with 166 baptisms, establishing what became the Woodlawn Forrest Church of Christ, and the same year he founded what is now the West End Church of Christ in Atlanta.[56]

Keeble's response to the Klan in Georgia and Florida and the assault he suffered in Tennessee underscore his courage in disregarding personal well-being to secure the spiritual welfare of his hearers, just as his unrelenting boldness in opposing what he deemed to be false teachings illuminates his resoluteness in preaching the "pure gospel." He had found himself in a religious environment responsive to the teachings he espoused, and he crafted techniques of evangelism designed to elicit positive reactions from his audiences. At the same time Keeble learned to work within the dangerous racial context of his South, effectively touching both blacks and whites with his message.

With both tact and temerity Marshall Keeble accomplished his southern mission despite those blacks who criticized his religious doctrines and those whites who were implacably hostile to his race, improbably drawing crowds of both white and black listeners to his campaigns in the segregated land. Successful in states such as Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, and Texas he achieved far less, however, in the Carolinas and Virginia. In those states which Keeble left virtually untouched, his spiritual sons found success. Generally unrecognized and accorded little credit, his ecclesiastical children played a vital role in continuing the growth and development of African American Churches of Christ in the South.

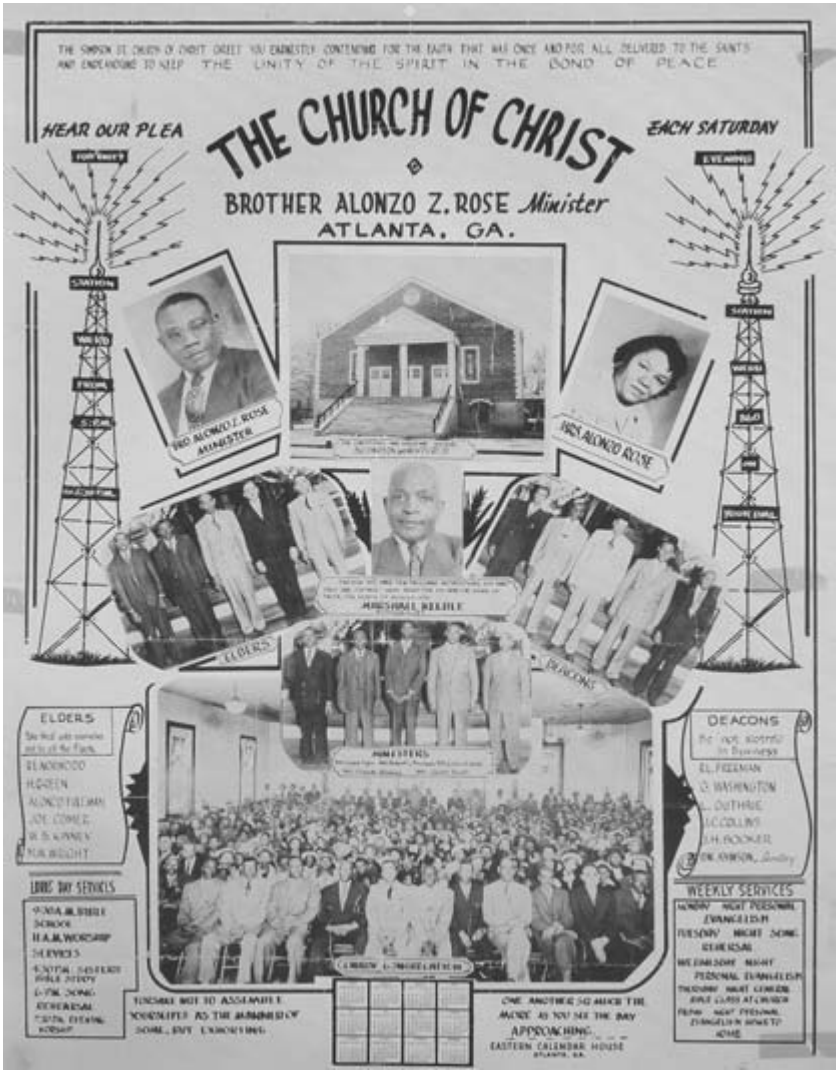
Marshall Keeble mentored and trained several young men at the Nashville Christian Institute, who themselves emerged as effective evangelists in Churches of Christ. Here Keeble (*center*) is pictured with Robert Woods and Fred Gray (*front row*) and Hassen Reed and Robert McBride (*back row*). (Photo courtesy of Dr. Mark Tucker.)

Paul M. Tucker (1914–2000), a native of Tennessee, gave material and spiritual support to Marshall Keeble in 1945 when the black evangelist planted the Fourth Street Church of Christ in Natchez, Mississippi. Tucker was one of many white ministers in Churches of Christ who supported Keeble's work in the South and beyond. (Photo courtesy of Dr. Mark Tucker.)

Jimmie L. Lovell (1896–1984) cast his support behind several African American preachers in Churches of Christ, especially R. N. Hogan. Here Lovell is seen standing by his car and several copies of the *West Coast Christian.* (Courtesy of Patsie Trowbridge, daughter of Jimmie L. Lovell.)

Marshall Keeble (1878–1968) was inarguably the most influential black preacher in twentieth-century Churches of Christ. After committing himself to fulltime evangelism in 1914, Keeble traversed the United States and the world proclaiming the "pure gospel." (Courtesy of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, Tennessee).

Theophilus B. Larimore (1843–1929), a native Tennessean, was not only a well-known preacher among white Christians, but he also gave black preachers such as Marshall Keeble his material and moral support. (Courtesy of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, Tennessee.)



This calendar, which circulated among members of the Simpson Street Church of Christ, Atlanta, Georgia, significantly places Marshall Keeble at the center. Keeble established the Simpson Street congregation in 1930. (Courtesy of the Simpson Street Church of Christ, Atlanta, Georgia.)

Marshall Keeble baptizing in the Manatee River, in Bradenton, Florida. (Courtesy of *Collier's: The National Weekly.*)

8
The Great Triumvirate

Marshall Keeble, A. L. Cassius, R. N. Hogan, and the Rise of African American Churches of Christ beyond the South

> Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor . . . And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.
>
> —Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

Marshall Keeble worked primarily through the states of the old Confederacy, but at times he reached beyond his beloved South. A paucity of documentation, however, obscures his evangelistic efforts outside his native region. While Keeble planted far fewer churches in the North and in the West, still his periodical meetings in these parts of the country drew enormous crowds and helped stabilize and strengthen fledgling black and white congregations founded by other ministers.

African American Churches of Christ in northern and western cities owed their emergence essentially to a trio of black preachers: Marshall Keeble, Amos Lincoln Cassius, and Richard Nathaniel Hogan. In 1955 James L. Lovell, a prominent white editor in Churches of Christ, acknowledged the pivotal work of this trio in asserting: "In all the churches and the hundreds of leaders I have known in the past 50 years, three men stand out, men whom I dearly love, respect, and upon whose faith I would pin my hopes of eternity—Marshall Keeble, Amos Cassius, [and] Richard N. Hogan."[1] Lovell's testimony reveals not only his admiration for these three black ministers, but also points up their effective collaboration in building black congregations outside the South.

A complex set of issues had combined to drive African Americans out of the South. Yearning for economic improvement, desiring to escape the

physical brutality of racial discrimination, eager to reunite with friends, approximately two million black southerners left the South for urban centers in the North in the First and Second Great Migrations in the 1920s and the 1940s. One black immigrant from Palestine, Texas, testified in 1917 that "our southern white people are so cruel we collord people are almost afraid to walke the streets after night [*sic*]."[2] Writing from Houston, Texas, that same year, a black man told the *Chicago Defender,* an influential black paper founded by Robert S. Abbott, that he would work in either Chicago or in Philadelphia. "I don't Care where so long as I Go where a man is a man."[3] The primary destination of many black travelers was Chicago, the "Promised Land," the "Land of Hope."[4] As African Americans transitioned from the South to the North and less often the West, they brought with them their rage and their religion.[5]

African Americans in Churches of Christ, caught up in these currents of immigration, also joined the Chicago exodus. In 1916 J. Tom Daniel and his wife, natives of Nashville, Tennessee, relocated to Chicago and there helped organize the first black Church of Christ in the city. Details of Daniel's life remain sketchy, but he, with countless other African Americans who read the *Chicago Defender*'s glowing announcement about economic opportunities, had imbibed these reports and headed north. Annie C. Tuggle, a zealous educator in black Churches of Christ from Tennessee and a close friend of the Daniel family, professed the lure of Chicago. "Very early in life I remember something was said about the City of Chicago in Illinois that interested me very much. My father and mother both liked to read the newspapers and something was going on there that caused much commenting throughout the neighborhood where we lived. First of all it was a great manufacturing center and jobs were easy to get and pay on the jobs was great."[6]

On May 20, 1917, Daniel, joined by G. P. Bowser, his wife, Fannie, and their two children, organized the first black Church of Christ in Chicago, "the beginning of loyal worship among the colored people in Chicago."[7] Like other fledgling religious groups who found their way to the windy city, Daniel's small group gathered in a storefront until the congregation could erect a more traditional place of worship.[8] "So far," Daniel explained, "we have about eight who have agreed to meet on Bible principles. Sister Bowser is a great help to Brother Bowser in the work. He is doing some of as good

preaching as I have ever heard."[9] Daniel then requested: "Brethren, pray that much good may be accomplished in this wicked city. We would be glad for any colored disciples coming to this city to come in with us."[10]

In 1926 Marshall Keeble went to Chicago and preached for Daniel's small flock. "I am much encouraged with the outlook at Chicago," Keeble reported. "Brother J. T. Daniel, the elder, and Brother Patty, who preaches for them, are doing a great work in that wicked city." Keeble pointed out that "the membership of this congregation is composed mostly of members from the South, and are all strong in the faith." He listed his daughter, Beatrice, and his mother-in-law, Sallie Womack, among the recent arrivals from Tennessee. Keeble commended the nine-year-old congregation for growing "slowly, but firmly," but he pessimistically added that it "is a hard struggle in large cities to get people to believe the Bible."[11] Keeble's words suggest that he felt greater comfort and confidence preaching in the confines of the more rural South.

The next year fire destroyed the storefront church building in Chicago, obliging Daniel to move the congregation into his home, calling it the Maypole Avenue Church of Christ. Daniel's flock of sixty members then purchased property on the same street, "very glad to be in our new house." But their shepherd warned that "after the children of Israel crossed the Jordan they could not sit down, because they had run their enemies out. So we must run our enemies out before we can own this lot. Our enemies are our debtors." White Christian friends in the South such as Tennessee's S. P. Morrow helped raise funds for the Maypole congregation.[12]

In 1928 Alonzo Jones, a black preacher from Chattanooga, preached two weeks in Chicago, finding "the congregation wide-awake" under "their faithful elder," J. T. Daniel. Jones's sermons produced five baptisms and two restorations.[13] In 1931, stirred by a desire to plant a black Church of Christ in Chicago's southside, Tennessean Levi Kennedy collaborated with R. N. Hogan, an Arkansas resident and G. P. Bowser protégé, in launching a mission work on Fifty-first Street. Two years later Marshall Keeble returned to Chicago, "drawing good crowds." In the early 1940s, however, Kennedy led the church in purchasing land and in erecting a building on Michigan Avenue. This congregation in 1971 relocated to Sheldon Heights under the leadership of Samuel Jordan and flourishes there today.[14] This brief and incomplete historical sketch of the origins of African American Churches of

Christ in Chicago suggests that while Marshall Keeble contributed to the growth of the first black congregation, G. P. Bowser and his spiritual sons accomplished most of the work.

In 1927 three women, Laura Gambles, Lizzie Harris, and Ethel Kirby, founded the first black Church of Christ in Toledo, Ohio. Realizing their need for spiritual assistance, Kirby contacted G. P. Bowser, who advised her to notify "the white brethren." Over the next eight-year period, the small congregation gained other members, probably benefiting from the arrival of new black immigrants from the South. "Sister A. Taylor and children were added, and afterwards Sister Mamie Farris and family moved here, and this group was determined to keep the church going." In 1935 the white congregation in Toledo called Bowser, whose ardent preaching yielded fourteen baptisms, giving the small, struggling church a great boost.[15]

As in the South the pattern of white beneficence continued in the North. An elder of the white Church of Christ helped Bowser travel to Toledo and arranged for the black congregation to get their building a "new roof" for a "very small fee." In 1944 the Vance and Ewing Street Church of Christ in Toledo hired G. P. Holt, grandson and understudy of G. P. Bowser, as its regular minister. Holt's dynamic preaching and leadership increased the church's membership to over one hundred and empowered the congregation to "tear down the old building and began our new building."[16]

In 1952 R. W. Carvin, a Keeble convert from Georgia who had become a minister in Canton, Ohio, invited the Nashville evangelist to preach there. Impressed that Carvin had "the endorsement of all the churches in that section," pleased that black Christians in Canton planned "to erect a better building soon," and delighted to see people whom he had baptized in the South remaining faithful, Keeble announced that "the outlook is good in Ohio." He then reported that Christians came from "miles around," including Rochester, New York; Akron, Cleveland, Columbus, and Zaneville, Ohio; as well as Fairmont and Wheeling, West Virginia, to support the meeting.[17] Three years later Keeble worked with the Adams Avenue Church of Christ in Cleveland where "all of the churches of Christ in that city cooperated." With nine baptisms and nine restorations, he commended Alvin Simmons and J. S. Winston for "doing a great work there."[18]

In 1960 Keeble preached at the Washington Heights Church of Christ in New York City, collaborating with white song leader Pat Boone, baptiz-

ing one person, restoring one person, and collecting $700 for the Nashville Christian Institute. "Brother Keeble is loved by all for his years in the Master's service," announced Howard U. Johnson, a participant in the New York meeting. "Great crowds still follow Brother Keeble. He was with us eight days and at each service the building was filled."[19]

Keeble also drew large crowds in the West. He first traveled to California in 1924 to conduct a meeting in Oakland with D. C. Allen, a black minister for the local congregation. Samuel Robert Cassius deemed Keeble's meeting a failure "as far as conversions were concerned," but he noted that "it did have the effect of attracting the attention of the colored people to the simple, plain Gospel of the Son of God."[20] Cassius also applauded A. M. Burton, who enabled Keeble "to come here and hold a meeting," and who gave "liberally toward the purchase of this property."[21]

A decade later A. L. Cassius, Samuel Robert Cassius's son, arranged meetings for Keeble in Modesto, Los Angeles, Santa Ana, and Fresno.[22] In 1935 the Nashville evangelist, while in Fresno, reported that he was "about to capture a Baptist Church."[23] He particularly commended the unity among Churches of Christ in California, singling out Hugh Tiner and William S. Irvine, white ministers there who "encouraged me much" and allowed the black evangelist to speak on their radio programs. Altogether Keeble's preaching tour in the Golden State engendered eighty additions. "Many calls have come for mission meetings among my people from white churches all over the country," Keeble testified. "The kingdom is spreading."[24]

In 1941 Keeble returned to the Los Angeles area and conducted a three-week meeting at the Compton Avenue Church of Christ, commending A. L. Cassius for "doing a great work. His clean life among them has caused all to appreciate him. All of the white churches encouraged our efforts." He also noted that a chef and his wife from Pepperdine College were baptized.[25] A decade later Keeble, with two NCI students, revisited California on a three-week preaching tour.[26] Even though he reported no baptisms, he thanked Christians in southern California for a $600 donation to his school.[27]

Marshall Keeble also made his presence felt in Oklahoma in 1934 when he planted a church in Lawton with twenty-three baptisms, eleven of whom were white. "The white brethren sponsored the meeting, and were pleased with the results. They estimated that twelve hundred to five thousand attended the services. The whole city was aroused."[28] Keeble returned to the

city twenty years later and expressed "great pleasure to be called back for a meeting and meet old friends. Large crowds attended every night in an open-air service." The meeting closed with twenty-eight responses. "All the white churches had fellowship in this meeting."[29] Even beyond the borders of the South, Keeble continued to rely on white believers for support.

Keeble exerted his influence in Arizona as well. In the winter of 1935 the black evangelist strengthened a fledgling congregation in Phoenix which A. L. Cassius had established the previous fall.[30] Keeble's Phoenix meeting attracted so many white listeners that they "crowded out the colored," B. W. Copeland noted. "Some fifteen colored and ten whites were baptized as the result of his powerful gospel appeals. Brother Dunn helped in the meeting, taking the white confessions."[31]

Keeble drew crowds in Hobbs, New Mexico, as well, where he and two NCI students conducted a meeting. "Many disciples from far and near," reported Charles J. Anderson, "attended each evening to hear Brother Keeble, a wonderful gospel preacher. Several responded to the gospel call. We thank God also for the wonderful Christian spirit that was exhibited by our white brethren."[32]

In 1936 Marshall Keeble and the song leader William Lee combined efforts in Kansas City, Missouri, and baptized twenty-two people. Keeble lauded the "white ministers in Kansas City" who "did everything possible to make the meeting a success."[33] The next year a Keeble meeting in St. Louis, arranged by white Christians there, produced ten baptisms.[34] In West Plains, Keeble, after having been "called by the white church to hold a meeting" for African Americans, ironically though not usually, affected more Anglos than blacks. "The brethren estimated the crowds from one thousand to fifteen hundred. Twenty-one were baptized and five restored, all of them white." With mixed pessimism and optimism, Keeble commented that "no colored people obeyed the gospel, but many of them heard the pure gospel."[35] In the sharply segregated South, and even beyond, white leaders could not call a Marshall Keeble to preach for their own—white—churches, but they could, and regularly did, summon the great black evangelist to speak to their black fellow citizens. And then whites regularly flocked to their seats in the racially divided audience—all in keeping with Jim Crow's curious canons. The Gospel—and segregation—was for all.

A Keeble campaign in Wichita, Kansas, in 1932 generated forty-seven

baptisms.[36] White congregations in Wichita cooperated with Keeble to plant the African American congregation there. By 1937 the black church produced by this joint effort had its "own building," home to some one hundred members.[37]

Even though Keeble left a profound imprint on various congregations in the West, A. L. Cassius and R. N. Hogan left a far more lasting impression. In 1920 blacks in Los Angeles, California, numbered 15,579, but increased to 38,894 in 1930, and 63,774 a decade later.[38] As in the first Great Migration to the North, blacks moved west for a variety of reasons. The promise of economic betterment and the desire for social equality clearly lured many African Americans to the Golden State.[39] As black southerners relocated to California and other western states between the wars, they brought with them their cultural baggage, as they sought security in a precarious world. A. L. Cassius and R. N. Hogan, who like Keeble preached a simple, yet stern message about God's plan of salvation, appealed to countless people now culturally dislocated and residing in a new and strange environment.

Amos Lincoln Cassius was the son of a former slave, born in 1889 Sigourney, Iowa, but he grew up in Oklahoma Territory, as his father Samuel Robert Cassius, a pioneer black preacher in Churches of Christ, moved there in 1891. At age twenty Amos enrolled in the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, studying under the eminent George Washington Carver. He later returned to Oklahoma where in 1914 he told his father that he was "studying hard that he might be able to keep the name of Cassius alive as a gospel preacher."[40] That same year, Amos, while working as a chef in Chicago, Dallas, and Houston, married Beulah Middleton in Mineral Wells, Texas. After a brief stint in the military, Cassius moved to Los Angeles in 1919, and three years later he and his father planted the first black Church of Christ in southern California, the Compton Avenue Church of Christ.[41]

A number of black Churches of Christ sprang from Compton Avenue. Calvin Bowers credits A. L. Cassius with developing the Compton Avenue congregation into a "solid congregation," and then using it "as a base from which to launch evangelistic efforts in other parts of the state and nation."[42] Cassius taught that once a congregation had exceeded a membership of three hundred, it should devise ways to establish another church. Such a strategy led to the creation of such new entities as the Avalon Church of Christ in Los Angeles.[43]

Cassius's influence extended beyond California. In 1934 he conducted a "mission meeting" among African Americans in Phoenix, Arizona, leading to a congregation of twelve people. "Twelve members of the Christian Church," Cassius added, "promised to attend services," and he later noted that "During the meetings in Phoenix nearly every active member of the Christian Church came to the Church of Christ, some demanding baptism."[44] Three years later Cassius put together a historical sketch of the congregation, commenting that white and black Christians collaborated to plant the church in Phoenix. He credited white leaders, especially William S. Irvine and G. A. Dunn, for their encouragement. Cassius pointed out as well that William Lee, a song leader from California, and Marshall Keeble worked together to strengthen the struggling congregation.[45]

In 1937 James L. Lovell recommended Cassius to white Christians in Hobbs, New Mexico. Cassius's meeting left behind a new congregation including two who came from the Christian Church. Clarence C. Gobbel, preacher at the local white congregation in Hobbs, provided weekly supervision over the fledgling congregation, while Lucius H. Alexander, a Keeble convert who was ministering in Lubbock, Texas, traveled monthly to strengthen the newly planted church.[46] Cassius also conducted a meeting in Clearview, Oklahoma, in 1938, persuading the preacher and all the members of the Christian Church to shift their allegiance.[47] Fifteen years later the church's regular minister, Charles J. Anderson, reported that the congregation in Hobbs was "progressing in a good way." He also announced that Cassius had visited and "delivered an inspiring sermon."[48]

But Amos Lincoln Cassius reached beyond planting and developing churches; like his father, Samuel, he worked in Christian journalism, assisting Marshall Keeble in editing the *Christian Counselor,* a journal aimed at giving religious instruction to African American Churches of Christ. In 1946 editor of the *Gospel Advocate,* B. C. Goodpasture, cast his support behind Cassius's editorial efforts: "Brother Cassius, of Los Angeles, is energetic and untiring in his efforts to get the gospel to his race. He is a faithful gospel preacher. Just now he is trying to secure one thousand subscriptions to the Christian Counselor, our paper for the colored brethren."[49] But despite Goodpasture's plea and Cassius's efforts, the black paper folded in 1950.

Notwithstanding A. L. Cassius's distinguished ministerial career, R. N. Hogan clearly exerted the greatest influence on the emergence of African

American Churches of Christ in the West. Born and reared near Blackton, Arkansas, Hogan, after his father's death, lived with his grandparents until they placed him under the tutelage of G. P. Bowser. With Bowser's careful grooming, Hogan received biblical and ministerial training in the Silver Point Christian Institute in Silver Point, Tennessee. From 1916 to 1919 young Hogan earned some renown as the "boy evangelist" for his role in converting over seventy people. After marrying Maggie Bullock in Tennessee, Hogan enjoyed brief preaching stints in Tennessee, Arkansas, Kentucky, Michigan, and Illinois. By the end of 1936 Hogan, then working with a congregation in Muskogee, Oklahoma, had established eleven churches and baptized approximately one thousand people.[50]

The following year Hogan's preaching career shifted course radically when his path crossed that of James L. Lovell. After serving in World War I, Lovell, a white Tennessean, worked as a salesman for the Dupont Corporation in Denver, and in 1924 moved to Salt Lake City, where he met and married Vivian Dorothy Peterman. After a dozen peripatetic years, Lovell and his family returned in 1936 to Denver, where they resumed worshiping at the South Sherman Church of Christ. There Lovell poured his energy into niche journalism with a biweekly paper, the *California Christian.*[51] In the spring of 1936, A. L. Cassius returned to Denver to resuscitate a listless black church with ten baptisms and three restorations. The white congregation, under Lovell's prodding, helped purchase a "nice stone building" in "the heart of the colored district." With an aesthetically pleasing building and a zealous membership, the black congregation now lacked only "a preacher of their own race." "Brother Keeble," Lovell entreated, "we are down on our knees begging you and the other colored ministers to get us a man for Denver."[52] The answer to Lovell's plea was R. N. Hogan.

Called to preach a meeting in the Mile High City, Hogan's two-week meeting in the spring of 1937 ended with twenty-five baptisms, "including three white people and one colored preacher." Lovell called the effort "one of the most successful meetings in the history of the work in Colorado both from the standpoint of additions and attendance." He further acknowledged that "I had heard most of the leading white preachers of the church and many of our colored preachers, but hearing Brother Hogan lifted me to new spiritual heights. My soul was stirred. I thought of the years that I had proposed to be a worker for Jesus and the little I had ever done toward sav-

ing the souls of the colored people—my people." After the Denver revival, Hogan asked Lovell to direct his evangelistic campaigns, and Lovell immediately began booking and arranging Hogan's meetings and "assisting him in saving the souls of the Negro race."[53]

In Lovell's opinion, Hogan was the "greatest preacher in the church," weighing not only his ability to affect black lives, but also his talent for reaching Anglos with equal effectiveness. "He not only converts the people of his race, but does more to stimulate the work in the white churches than a white minister would do. He is educated, has a brilliant mind, preaches like one sent from God, and yet is as humble as Brother Keeble."[54] For Lovell, the evangelization of African Americans seemed self-redemptive. By assisting Hogan he would indirectly uplift the very people he had neglected so badly during his youth. "I thought then of my life as a Christian—how little I ever did to assist the colored people in the South, where I was born, in finding Jesus. . . . Even to this very day the gospel has never been preached to the colored people in my home forty miles north of Nashville, yet we have white churches of Christ every five miles throughout the country. When I heard Brother Hogan I wondered if God would use me in being a missionary to the people of my childhood days—people I have always loved so well—the most loyal, the kindest hearted people of the world? How could I be a missionary?"[55]

Lovell's unflagging passionate appeals to white believers throughout the nation generated generous support, empowering Hogan to purchase a tent and trailer for planting churches in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Utah. In 1934 Hogan, then a local minister in Muskogee, Oklahoma, echoed Marshall Keeble's frequent praise of white Christians for their interest and involvement in black outreach. "Through the aid of white churches," Hogan reported, "I have been enabled to baptize over three hundred to date this year. I am happy that hundreds of my people who have been blundering about in gross darkness are finding light." Alluding to Ephesians 4:14 he explained that African American Christians were "no more children tossed to and fro with the sleight and cunning craftiness of men, thanks to the interest of the white brethren."[56] With Marshall Keeble, R. N. Hogan clearly understood that his success as a black evangelist depended on the generosity of white Christians.

Two years later Hogan preached in Langston, Oklahoma, an all-black

town established in 1890 by Edwin P. McCabe, a black politician from Kansas.[57] Hogan converted forty-one people to the Lord, "forty by baptism and one from the Christian Church." The baptized included the town's mayor, the postmaster, a Methodist preacher, a Baptist song leader, a Baptist deacon, five schoolteachers, and an unchurched woman.[58] In nearby Guthrie, the state's former capital, Hogan's preaching engendered sixty-two additions, "fifty-eight baptisms and five from the Christian Church." He then added that "ten of those baptized were white people." Like his co-laborer Marshall Keeble and his mentor G. P. Bowser, Hogan demanded no rebaptism for those who came to the Church of Christ from the Christian Church; and again like Keeble, Hogan's preaching swayed both blacks and whites into God's kingdom. After noting that J. S. Winston had assumed leadership of the newly planted congregation in Guthrie, Hogan pointed out that "this meeting was sponsored by the white church at Guthrie."[59]

In 1938 Hogan planted a church in Oklahoma City with 105 additions, and returned the next year, winning ninety-four more converts, "practically all of them by baptism." With almost 260 now meeting in a "new church house," George C. Hatcher, a white supporter of black missionary work, applauded Hogan as "one of the best gospel preachers in the brotherhood, and does not hesitate to preach the word." Hogan extended his influence throughout middle Oklahoma as his meetings "helped every congregation in this city."[60]

Hogan also made contributions to the spiritual and numerical growth of churches in Kansas. In 1936 his indoor meeting in Wichita generated "nine baptisms and one confession of faults. One of the number baptized was a 'Sanctified' preacher." He especially commended G. K. Wallace, who "gave me a good tent, and the colored congregation gave me a good trailer to carry it on, for which I am indeed thankful."[61]

All this, however, only presaged more impressive work in southern California. In the spring of 1937 A. L. Cassius and leaders of the Compton Avenue Church of Christ arranged to bring Hogan to Los Angeles.[62] After Hogan's preaching secured forty-five baptisms and five restorations, Cassius called it "the greatest gospel meeting we have ever had." During the meeting Hogan debated a Pentecostal preacher, and "After the debate his opponent made the good confession and Brother Hogan baptized him."[63] The church resulting from this effort became what is now the 110th and Wil-

mington Avenue congregation, the second oldest black Church of Christ in southern California.[64]

The following year Hogan returned to Los Angeles not as an itinerant evangelist but to serve as minister of a storefront church on Forty-eighth and Compton, another congregation he had established in 1937. James L. Lovell, Hogan's principal supporter, reported that within a two-year period, the black evangelist had baptized 113 people, six of whom were preachers, and planted two new congregations, adding that "this does not include numbers of white people baptized by the white churches as a result of his preaching."[65] As the congregation outgrew its facilities, Hogan in 1945 approached his friend George Pepperdine, founder and CEO of the Western Auto Supply chain of stores, seeking a $5,000 loan for down payment on a building. Hogan and his flock repaid the ten-year loan within ten months. In 1953 Hogan's congregation relocated to larger facilities, becoming the Figueroa Church of Christ in Los Angeles. Hogan served as minister to the Figueroa congregation for almost sixty years, even as he evangelized and established churches throughout the country.[66]

In the fall of 1938 Lovell informed *Gospel Advocate* readers that Hogan had baptized almost "300 souls this year, and converted at least another hundred added to the white churches." After reporting that Hogan had planted two churches in Los Angeles and congregations in Sherman, Texas, and in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Lovell urged fellow Christians to cast their support behind the black cleric. "Now we hope to get churches and individuals to contribute toward transportation and support of Hogan. His work is being operated upon a businesslike basis, and few men are doing more to save the lost than this Christian man."[67]

In 1940 Hogan conducted a meeting for African Americans in Bakersfield, California. With assistance from R. A. Hartsell, a white minister of the same city, Hogan's meeting attracted crowds as high as three thousand. The outreach effort concluded with seventy-eight baptisms, thirty-five white people and forty-three black. Among those converted were a Methodist preacher who was "holding meetings in Bakersfield at the time he surrendered to the truth," and a Baptist deacon who "surrendered as a result of a debate that we had with his pastor during the meeting." Hogan particularly expressed high regard for A. L. Cassius, who "has done a great work in Bakersfield, and I hold Brother Cassius in the highest esteem."[68]

As Hogan moved into the 1950s and beyond, he focused his attention and energies more locally on shepherding and stabilizing African American Churches of Christ, assuming the leadership of the *Christian Echo* paper in 1951, a year after his teacher and mentor G. P. Bowser died. As a spiritual son of Bowser, three things marked Hogan as unique and distinct from the spiritual sons of Marshall Keeble, who will be examined later. First, Hogan constantly railed against racial discrimination practiced by white administrators in Church of Christ schools who denied admission to African Americans. Sensing that white Christians objected to integration because of the age-old fear of black men interacting with white women, Hogan explained: "The fact of the matter is, that about all Negro men in the Church of Christ just want to be the White man's brother and not his brother-in-law."[69]

Second, in 1967, when the Nashville Christian Institute closed with its assets diverted to the traditionally black David Lipscomb College, Hogan disparagingly referred to the transaction as the "Grab of the Century,"[70] and thereafter moved in a more independent direction, no longer relying extensively on white support for his evangelistic endeavors. After NCI's closure Hogan continued giving his support to Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas, but he rebuked white believers who supported the black school "to keep the Negro out of their so-called Christian (?) schools and knowing that they are doing wrong in the sight of God, they support S.W.C.C. to soothe a guilty conscience."[71]

R. N. Hogan also exhibited a certain degree of theological separation from Cassius, Keeble, and white leaders in Churches of Christ who insisted that elders wielded more authority than the evangelist. Hogan, in contrast, argued that the evangelist held a more dominant position. Batsell Barrett Baxter, a white preacher and educator in Churches of Christ, affirmed that "the eldership is the highest place which man may achieve in the Lord's church. Everyone else, including preachers, is to serve under their guidance, for they 'exercise the rule' and 'have the care of souls' (Hebrews 13:7, 17)."[72] Hogan, however, contended that the preacher possessed equal, if not more, authority than elders. Citing another text in Ephesians 4:11, he maintained that since evangelists are mentioned before pastors and teachers, Christians must respect "the divine order." "If it were not for the work of the evangelists," he continued, "the elders would have no place to elder and the teachers would have no place to teach." Hogan interpreted Hebrews 13:17 to mean

that "both the evangelists and elders [should serve] as rulers in the Lord's church. Neither is over the other, but are workers together in the Lord."[73]

That Hogan and other black ministers have refused to subordinate the preacher to the authority of elders reflects a cultural practice inherent in the African American community.[74] In West Africa, blacks venerated their priest as the spiritual, social, and political leader of their people. In antebellum America, the black preacher replaced the West African priest as "the healer of the sick, the interpreter of the Unknown, the comforter of the sorrowing, the supernatural avenger of wrong."[75] Black parishioners looked to their preachers—not elders or deacons—for guidance and solace during the eras of slavery and segregation. James Farmer, a civil rights leader from Texas, proffered a fitting summary of the role and impact black pastors have on their black sheep, observing: "The black preacher, especially in the South, is king in a private kingdom. Whether learned or ignorant, he is both oracle and soothsayer, showman and pontiff, father image to all and husband-by-proxy to the unattached women in the church and others whose mates are either inadequate or missing. More than a priest, he is less only than God."[76] Farmer, in part, spoke for Hogan and other African American preachers in Churches of Christ.

Despite Hogan's move in an independent and somewhat more controversial direction, his bond with James L. Lovell, Marshall Keeble, and A. L. Cassius only strengthened with the passing years. Hogan, a native black southerner, was most effective in planting churches in the West; Lovell, also a transplanted white southerner, ardently supported black evangelists and reached across racial barriers in an era of segregation; Keeble, even though enjoying greater success in the South, did work as a church-stabilizer in northern and western states; and Cassius, while coediting the *Christian Counselor* with Keeble, helped plant black congregations in California, New Mexico, and Arizona. Regardless of the divergent paths of their respective ministerial careers, they cared deeply for one another, but more important, they passionately treasured the souls of white and black folks.

IV
The Legacy of Marshall Keeble

9
Marshall Keeble's Sons

> For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ I have begotten you through the gospel.
>
> —1 Corinthians 4:15

Marshall Keeble's greatest legacy may well have been the company of spiritual sons he left behind who perpetuated his work of planting, edifying, and solidifying black Churches of Christ throughout the South. African American Churches of Christ owed their rise not only to the efforts of Keeble, but also to the indefatigable corps of young men whom Keeble baptized, instructed, and charged with an evangelistic mission. Keeble acknowledged as much in 1956. "Hundreds of gospel preachers have been trained and developed into useful servants of our Savior. Among these are John Vaughner and Luke Miller. I have always thanked God for these great men and many others."[1] Keeble transmitted his passion for soul winning to other black preachers who themselves crisscrossed the South, preaching the Gospel and baptizing people into the "one true church." Some of Keeble's sons may even have exceeded their father in the work of conversion.

Luke Miller no doubt stands as Marshall Keeble's most influential "son." Born in Alabama in 1904, Miller moved to Decatur after the premature death of his father, and as a teenager he heard Keeble preach and then he received baptism into Christ. Quickly recognizing the young man's potential, Keeble "helped and encouraged him [Miller] as a father does his son," and the youthful Miller often traveled with him as apprentice to the master.[2]

As his evangelistic load increased, Keeble looked for ways to grasp the growing opportunities. As Miller's talent emerged Keeble named him to help stabilize black Churches of Christ in the South. Taxed by constant preaching calls too numerous to fulfill, Keeble began dispatching Miller in his stead, and the youthful evangelist soon fashioned his own reputation. G. F.

Gibbs, a white preacher in Greenville, South Carolina, knowing that Keeble was inundated with invitations, invited Miller instead, announcing in 1927: "Brother Luke Miller, a young colored preacher, of Decatur, Ala., is expected to be here on June 4 for a period of effort among his people. Christians of this part will try to make his stay profitable for Christ."[3]

Two years later P. G. Millen, a white Florida cleric, reported to *Gospel Advocate* readers that Miller received an assignment to work with three congregations in Lakeland, St. Petersburg, and Tampa. "The three congregations, with the assistance of many of the churches, have secured the services of Brother Luke Miller, of Decatur, Ala., for the next year, his time to be divided equally between Lakeland, Tampa, and St. Petersburg. Brother Miller is a young man who was converted by Brother Keeble eight years ago." White Christians came to esteem Miller for the same reason they admired Keeble: He was a man of humility and intelligence, one who grounded his message firmly in Scripture and firmly opposed denominationalism. "He [Miller] is very bright and apparently very humble, and he has the boldness and courage to denounce sin in 'high places,' and that is what it takes to show sectarianism that they are wrong." Millen referred to Miller as a "noble proclaimer of the pure gospel to his people," and of course Keeble himself endorsed his first apprentice as a "fine young man, and the white brethren are proud to have him here."[4]

When Keeble returned to Tampa in the spring of 1930, he commended the maturing Miller for "doing a great work, which is greatly appreciated by both white and colored people. He has been here about seven months and has baptized forty-six precious souls." Keeble also lauded the young man's wife, Mattie Lee Miller, as a "wonderful helpmate in the work." A short time later Keeble remarked that Miller's evangelistic labor was "making a wonderful impression on both the white and colored brethren," and after a meeting in Lakeland resulted in 25 baptisms, Keeble referred to Miller as "the young evangelist working in this State. The white brethren are much impressed with his humble, meek, Christlike disposition." Clearly justifying Keeble's confidence, Miller baptized 105 people in 1930, fruits of his effective preaching.[5]

More than a dynamic preacher, Miller often led the singing in Keeble's meetings. Miller traveled extensively with Keeble as an evangelist and song leader, and Keeble commented appreciatively that "Luke Miller, who con-

ducted the singing with me for several years, is doing excellent work as a preacher." Even though Miller excelled at leading songs, he left his greatest mark as a preaching minister as time and again after establishing a congregation, Keeble called on Miller to stay behind to lend it stability. After Keeble planted a black Church of Christ in Valdosta, Georgia, white believers appealed for the ministerial services of Miller. "The white church at Valdosta, Ga.," wrote Miller in 1932, "had me to move to Valdosta and work with the young church that had just been established by Brother Keeble." After two years in Georgia, Miller moved on to Paris, Texas, where he worked with a fledgling congregation Keeble had earlier planted. "I am now laboring with the colored church established by Brother Keeble here. The white church called me."[6] Miller worked independently as well typified by his establishment of a black congregation in Corsicana, Texas, with 216 baptisms in 1933.

Health problems, however, at times diminished Miller's effectiveness. In 1934, stunned by the sudden death of his song leader in the midst of a meeting, Miller fell critically ill. A saddened Keeble announced that "Luke Miller was stricken ill, and doctors despair for his life. Shock and excitement over the sudden death of his singer from a heart attack was the immediate cause, at least, of his illness." Miller's mother "sent to Paris, Texas, for him, and had him brought to her home at Decatur, Ala." Keeble encouraged readers of the *Gospel Advocate* to send monetary aid to defray Miller's medical expenses. "He led the singing for me for years," Keeble added, "and has since been a successful evangelist. His life has been honorable and his example has been for good."[7]

By the summer of 1935 Miller had recovered and returned to Port Arthur, Texas, where Keeble had founded a black congregation of forty-one people. The white Sixth Street Church of Christ in the city called Miller "to work with these babes in Christ," but did not expect Miller "to do much work," since he continued to recuperate from his sickness. "I am thankful for such friends, also for the prayers and letters of friends during my illness," wrote a grateful Miller.[8]

With his mentor Keeble, Miller credited white Christians for making it possible to disseminate what he called the "pure" Gospel. In 1937 when Miller preached in Holdenville, Oklahoma, baptizing eight people, he thanked C. B. Thomas, "a great and good man, [who] encouraged me so much, also

the white church helped and encouraged me very much." White believers in Beaumont, Texas, invited Miller to preach to African Americans, twelve of whom "obeyed the gospel," and in nearby Orange, Miller's messages produced three confessions. "G. W. Bass (white) is the minister for the church here, and he is certainly a great help to me. He is a real worker for the Lord." Miller similarly commended O. C. Lambert, the preacher for the Sixth Street Church of Christ in Port Arthur as "a wonderful man and one of the best preachers I know. He has done so much for me and the colored work."[9] Lambert and his congregation gave Miller monetary and spiritual support as the black evangelist recovered from his illness, and they built a building for black Christians to worship in. The generosity of Lambert and other Anglo Christians illustrates how white believers could aid black brothers and sisters and yet maintain segregated congregations.

In 1938 Miller conducted a protracted meeting in Lake Charles, Louisiana, baptizing twenty-one people. "I was called there by the young white church started there by two young preachers, Brethren Badget and Marsh, of Port Arthur. The Sixth Street Church helped to support me in this mission meeting." During the same year, Anglo Christians in Bryan, Texas, helped Miller plant a black congregation of thirty people there. F. B. Shepherd, the white minister in Bryan, noted that Miller's sermons affected both Caucasian and African American listeners. "This is the second meeting of the kind in which the brother [Miller] has been with us. His work this year was superb, and many whites, besides the colored, heard him and were convinced of the truth of his preaching."[10] In racism's continuing paradox, whites who could not trust blacks to sit next to them on a bus did place their eternal destiny in the hands of these same blacks.

Three years later white Christians in Jacksonville, Texas, brought in Miller to evangelize their black neighbors. He preached for two weeks under a tent on Main Street, and "over 80 people obeyed the gospel and were baptized. They were baptized on a Sunday afternoon in Pierce's Pond that was used as a public swimming pool." As with others throughout the South, disciples in Jacksonville then assisted the black congregation in securing its own place of worship. "The white Church of Christ congregation helped financially to get a church building on Lincoln Street." After meeting for several years in this facility, the black saints moved to another building and became

known as the Border Street Church of Christ, the enduring product of Miller's preaching.[11]

In the spring of 1951 Miller converted eleven blacks and several whites in Weslaco, Texas, and reported that "Many came out of a curiosity and learned the truth and were baptized. I am thankful to the white church there for calling me and encouraging me so wonderfully." Seven years later he told *Gospel Advocate* readers that the white Church of Christ at Linden, Alabama, sponsored his meeting in Thomaston and thanked John T. Smithson for his support in both Alabama and Monroe, Louisiana, where the former had planted a church several years earlier. "May God ever bless him and other great white preachers who are having the gospel preached to my people."[12]

In addition to working as a song leader, evangelist, and church stabilizer and planter, Miller often debated religious opponents, following his mentor's lead. In 1952 Churches of Christ in Miami, Florida, pooled their resources to send Miller to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to debate Bishop S. C. Johnson, founder of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, "a fast-growing Pentecostal sect." W. Ray Duncan, a Miller supporter and witness to the debate, applauded Miller's work. On the first night, over two thousand people attended the first debate in the old Wanamaker church building in Philadelphia. A loud and boastful Johnson claimed that he could "stop any man's mouth in five minutes," but he kept Miller waiting for almost two hours before calling off the debate. On the second night Johnson showed up but ended the debate within an hour. "So far as we can see Mr. Johnson is completely devoid of honesty and fairness, and were it not for the good done to others it would be useless to debate him. . . . All of us here believe the debate accomplished much good."[13] Miller effectively imitated the debating skills of his spiritual father, Keeble, as he moved through his ministerial tasks.

Marked by the time-honored traits of humility, sincerity, and fidelity, and unwilling to challenge directly the region's racist mores, Luke Miller earned broad support from white Christians in the South. Their generosity enabled him to expend his remarkable talents across the South and beyond, founding new black congregations, and strengthening struggling ones. No other of Marshall Keeble's spiritual sons—and perhaps not even Keeble himself—could match Miller's baptismal list of some ten thousand souls.[14] His me-

lodious singing, potent preaching, and mild disposition endeared him to southern whites and blacks alike, earning him a prominent place in the pantheon of great preachers.

Keeble could take equal pride in John R. Vaughner, another of his impressive and influential disciples. Vaughner responded to the preaching of Keeble in Birmingham, Alabama, in the mid-1920s, and shortly after his conversion began working as an itinerant preacher in the South. In 1930 he reported baptizing eight people in Jackson, Tennessee; thirteen in Blackton, Arkansas; four in Capleville, Tennessee; and ten in Fort Smith, Arkansas. A year later Vaughner preached for three weeks in Bartow, Florida, and immersed thirty-eight people. "This is a new field," he reported, "the gospel was unknown among my people in that city."[15]

In the fall of 1931, when Keeble's preaching engendered 281 responses in Bradenton, Florida, he remarked: "John Vaughner, a young man I baptized, did all of the baptizing." After the founding of this congregation in Bradenton, Vaughner preached there for two years, and in 1934 informed the *Gospel Advocate* readership that the black church in Bradenton had increased from 287 members to 700 with a "nice building that will seat about eight hundred, and a home for the preacher." With such achievements Vaughner emerged as a noteworthy coworker of Keeble's. D. B. Whittle, a white leader of the Church of Christ in Palmetto, Florida, applauded Vaughner's evangelistic fervor. "The Bradenton Church is two years old, and is still growing fast. Through the efforts of this church several other churches have been established within eighty miles of Bradenton by John Vaughner, who works for them in spreading the gospel." Keeble and Vaughner, Whittle affirmed, made a "great pair of yokefellows, and are doing wonderful work among their people. They are both good, humble Christians, and fear not to follow God's counsel in all they say and do."[16]

Because of his humble demeanor Vaughner, like Keeble, won the support of many white Christians in the South. In October 1939 Vaughner founded a black congregation in Alachua, Florida, by baptizing forty-three persons, "three of them preachers. This was a mission meeting sponsored by the white brethren." Vaughner returned the next fall for a meeting "also supported by the white brethren," explained Vaughner. "I thank God for the white brethren who are reaching out their hands to help a blinded and misled people." After baptizing fifteen people, one of them a "so-called 'Ho-

liness' preacher" and a ninety-one-year-old man, in Crystal River, Florida, Vaughner acknowledged that "I was called there by the white church at Lecanto, Fla. These are fine people. They did everything they could to get the truth to my people." Vaughner also planted a Church of Christ among blacks in Gainesville, Florida, where "the white brethren supported him."[17]

Simplicity and sincerity characterized the preaching of John R. Vaughner, and one observer believed that he was "one of the most successful ministers in the field because of the simplicity in which he presents the truth. It has been said if Brother Vaughner is not able to show a person the way of salvation the case is almost hopeless." White leaders in Wheeling, West Virginia, validated this judgment by inviting Vaughner to preach to African Americans in their community in 1937. Elders O. B. Truax and L. R. Merritt vividly described Vaughner's effectiveness. "Those of us who heard Brother Vaughner through this meeting are agreed that for clearness, force, and simplicity we have never heard the primary principles of obedience to the gospel better presented. His homely illustrations carried great weight and were to the point." The two elders highly recommended that other congregations call on Vaughner, convinced that "any congregation desiring a preacher to do evangelistic work among the colored people will not be disappointed if it secures the services of John R. Vaughner."[18]

Together with his spiritual father Keeble, Vaughner understood the essentiality of gaining white financial assistance in a region where blacks enjoyed little disposable income, and he returned to Wheeling for a meeting the next year, thanking white believers for their aid. The meeting "was supported by the white church. Interest was high. Crowds of both races attended." The campaign produced thirteen baptisms, eleven blacks and two whites. "One preacher was in the number. . . . The white church stood behind us in a fine way."[19]

Near the year's end Vaughner received more praise after his tent meeting in McMinnville, Tennessee, when T. Q. Martin, a white churchman in the town, noted:

> People came in truck loads and school bus loads for miles around in different directions. He was heard by as many white people as colored ones. Many of the whites who heard him were practically nonchurchgoers [*sic*]. Vaughner has a comprehensive grasp of Bible truth, and

> can make as clear the distinction between dispensations, covenants, shadow, and substance as any one whom I have heard. His father in the gospel, M. Keeble, says of him: "There are none among us more able than John Vaughner [*sic*]." He is soon to devote all of his time to evangelistic work, and will do a great work wherever he goes. His greatness is in his simplicity, and he delivers his message with great power.[20]

During the subsequent year Vaughner and Keeble collaborated for three weeks in Fort Myers, Florida. The twenty-one-day meeting generated a great deal of interest especially when four preachers from other churches publicly disputed their sermons. Keeble reported, however, that fifteen people confessed Christ and received baptism. "Among the number were two preachers who had preached false doctrine over forty years."[21]

Through the 1940s and 1950s Vaughner continued to accelerate the rise of black Churches of Christ in the southern states. In the summer of 1940 Vaughner evangelized in Huntington, West Virginia, immersing 21 people. In 1947 he proclaimed the gospel in Hopewell, Virginia, where he baptized 144 African Americans, including all the members of a local Baptist Church along with their minister. This Baptist preacher then enrolled in the Nashville Christian Institute, a school for black evangelists, before relocating as a minister in Miami, Florida. Vaughner himself went to Miami in 1952 and led 4 people to the Lord, 2 whites and 2 blacks. One white convert was a Baptist preacher who broke with southern racism by insisting on being "baptized by Brother Vaughner the same hour of the night."[22]

Vaughner also taught his own family members and baptized his brother Ernest, who followed Vaughner into the pulpit. But in 1953 a grief-stricken Vaughner mourned his brother's untimely death. Tom W. Butterfield, a white leader of the Church of Christ in Parkersburg, West Virginia, eulogized Ernest. "While a very young man, Brother Vaughner heard the gospel of Christ and obeyed it at the hands of his brother, John R. Vaughner. He [Ernest] has been a faithful gospel preacher for many years and was largely responsible for the church being established among the colored people in Wheeling, W.Va., while he lived there."[23]

By 1960 John Vaughner's health began to fail. Marshall Keeble announced to readers of the *Gospel Advocate* that Vaughner's physical condition had so deteriorated that he was "now unable to work." This inability to continue

preaching, Keeble reported, left him "in a great financial strain," so he asked Churches of Christ throughout the nation "to come to his aid." "Hundreds of people and many churches are indebted to Brother Vaughner who did so much for them during his active years."[24] John R. Vaughner proved an exceptional Keeble protégé, perhaps second only to Luke Miller in effectiveness in planting and fortifying black churches across the New South.

Marshall Keeble also counted many former denominational preachers among his spiritual sons. Oswell Lamor Aker, a native Georgian, met and married Nancy F. Tisdale, an Alabama native and student at Walden University in Nashville, Tennessee. Aker held a Methodist church pulpit until he heard Marshall Keeble preach in 1926 in Sheffield, Alabama. "The white brethren in Florence, Alabama," recorded chronicler Annie C. Tuggle, "were so impressed with Brother Aker that they encouraged him to work with the congregation established by Brother Keeble, in Sheffield, only after he had been in the Church of Christ four months."[25]

In 1933 Aker moved to St. Petersburg, Florida, serving as minister to the black congregation of that city. While preaching there he immersed thirty-six people, then baptized nineteen more in Tampa. By the early 1940s Aker had baptized over six hundred people, including seven preachers and one bishop, working among churches in Alabama, Texas, and Florida. Tuggle described Aker as a "brother and companion to all who need encouragement, and a close friend to Brother M. Keeble. Their love for each other is like the love of Jonathan and David." Aker added to his outreach in 1951 by contributing articles to the *Gospel Advocate* in the column "Among the Colored Brethren," as the former Methodist preacher had emerged as a noteworthy leader in black Churches of Christ.[26]

Similarly Lonnie Smith, whom Marshall Keeble converted in 1932, earned a role as an influential minister and song leader in African American Churches of Christ largely in the state of Texas. Smith began assisting Keeble as a song director. "Brother Smith travels with me," Keeble noted in 1933, "conducting the singing, and is preparing to preach."[27] Keeble's tutelage again proved effective as Smith soon launched his own preaching career.

By the end of the 1930s Smith had assumed leadership of a black congregation in Bryan, Texas. Under the auspices of F. B. Shepherd and other white Christians, Luke Miller had established this church in the summer of 1938, and the following year returned to Bryan and preached a "splendid meet-

ing." Shepherd then reported: "Lonnie Smith will continue with this group under the oversight of the white congregation." In 1946 Smith once more teamed with Miller in Cameron, Texas, to establish a church in that town. Jack Southern complimented the duo's evangelistic abilities. "Luke Miller preached, and Lonnie Smith of Bryan led the singing; it was one of the greatest meetings I have ever seen conducted anywhere." According to Tuggle, Smith was "one of the meekest men in all the earth," and such a trait endeared Smith to black believers and marked him as trustworthy in the eyes of white southern saints.[28]

Another of Marshall Keeble's spiritual sons worked primarily in Mississippi. Born in Georgia, James Lorenzo Cothron responded to Marshall Keeble's dynamic preaching in 1931 and soon followed Keeble's path. He first ministered to a black Church of Christ in Bradenton, Florida, before returning to his home state where he gathered a flock in College Park. In 1938 and 1939 Cothron reported making twenty-seven disciples in both College Park and East Point, crediting white Christians for his success. "The white congregation at East Point assisted much in these meetings. They are also largely responsible for us getting the lots and material with which to build a meetinghouse at College Park."[29]

Cothron, however, accomplished his greatest evangelistic work in the state of Mississippi. Marshall Keeble, after establishing a black church in Natchez in 1945, subsequently recommended Cothron to nurture and develop the congregation. Two years later Paul M. Tucker, a leader of the white Church of Christ in Natchez, noted: "The Natchez white church assumed the obligation of financing Cothron's work. We could not see our way clear to do so, but the need was so great there was no turning back." Tucker added that in two years Cothron baptized more than twenty people. He further explained that while the white disciples assumed Cothron's personal support, the black congregation worked to purchase their own building. "The colored church has bought a well-located lot, and is paying for it without aid of the white church. The evangelist is supported by the white church on the condition that the colored church pay for its lot and build its building. Then it will be expected to support its own evangelist."[30] Anglo Christians in Natchez did not wish to control Cothron and the black church; they simply complied with the customs of paternalistic segregation by helping African Americans obtain their own separate facility.

Cothron preached widely in other parts of Mississippi, including Vicksburg, where in 1946 he planted a black congregation. Paul Tucker reported that "Eight were baptized, one of whom had been a Baptist preacher. Cothron has had debates with Adventists and Baptists, and he has preached some in Jackson and Brookhaven, Miss." Tucker also announced plans for Cothron to hold extended meetings in Roxie and Wilkinson. The white brethren in Natchez invested four thousand dollars in planting black congregations through the efforts of Cothron. "But the responsibility is more than the Natchez Church can carry," Tucker explained. "The Natchez elders are glad to supervise the work and to handle all funds sent for the purpose, but more funds are sorely needed." White congregations, engrossed in their own building programs in the post–World War II era, struggled financially to plant and erect places of worship for African Americans. "The plea is not a selfish one," Tucker insisted, "not for ourselves in any sense, but on behalf of the Southern Negro, who needs and is calling for the gospel of Christ."[31]

In 1951 Cothron announced that he had ended a meeting in Wilkinson with three baptisms, "including a ch[o]ir member and a deacon of a popular religious group." He quickly added: "The white disciples are a blessing to the work of the Lord there among my race." Later that year he preached in Merigold, producing forty conversions. "The meeting got so hot we were compelled to go three weeks." Like his mentor, Cothron regularly praised Anglo Christians for their support. "This meeting was sponsored by the church (white) in Cleveland, Miss. We were also encouraged by the attendance from Park's Chapel (white), near Merigold." Cothron added that "T. B. Craddock (white), a very zealous disciple of the Cleveland Church, heard me in Greenville last year and invited me to come for this meeting." After evangelizing in Port Gibson, Cothron reported that "This meeting is sponsored by the churches (white) in Natchez and Vicksburg. These two churches have been a blessing to me ever since I came to this state seven years ago."[32]

Cothron successfully established a small country church near Kosciusko, Mississippi, despite frigid weather which forced him to close a meeting there abruptly. He again credited white believers who "were deeply interested in getting the gospel to those of my race. I have never seen elders any more faithful, and in earnest about the work of the Lord there."[33]

In 1952 Cothron, while ministering primarily to the East Woodlawn Church of Christ in Natchez, continued nurturing other black flocks in

Mississippi. He also raised funds for the fledgling church in Port Gibson "to buy a tent to use for a meeting place." After preaching in Woodville and Wilkerson, Cothron wrote appreciatively that "The white disciples in that section have done much to get the pure gospel to my race and as the result there are twenty-four members at Wilkerson, Miss., and Woodville. We thank God daily for this." The next month Cothron returned to his preaching roots by attending the Nashville Christian Institute Lectureship in Tennessee, reconnecting with his old mentor. "It was a blessing to be in the presence of Marshall Keeble and to enjoy his wise advice, based upon his long experience. As one white brother remarked, the affair was like charging a battery."[34]

In the spring of 1952 a reinvigorated Cothron traveled to the capital of Mississippi to disseminate the Good News about Jesus. In Jackson, Cothron verbally skirmished with three Pentecostal preachers who claimed "to have been baptized with the Holy Ghost as were the apostles and able to speak with tongues and do signs and wonders." The night following the debate, Cothron baptized one of the ministers and his wife. Upon returning home Cothron received a call from a white Christian who asked him to visit her black maid. Cothron taught and then immersed both the cook and her husband into Christ. Cothron exclaimed: "We thank God daily for such Christian men and women among the white people who are making sacrifices, giving moral support and financial aid to us in this great mission field."[35]

Cothron resigned as minister of the East Woodlawn Church of Christ in Natchez in 1953 and returned to Norcross, Georgia, shifting his ministry to protracted meetings. "The church there [Natchez] desired a full-time preacher and due to my tent meetings I was unable to serve them." Cothron recommended Archie Smith of Lafayette, Louisiana, to succeed him. No longer restricted to a local congregation, Cothron roamed freely, planting churches throughout the Mississippi Delta. "In a meeting at Cleveland, Miss.," Cothron reported, "sponsored by the white brethren, seventeen were baptized and seven were restored. To God be all the glory." This congregation of twenty-four members, preparing to purchase property, collected $142.75, and "A white brother gave us $100." "We plan to build a house as soon as possible," announced Cothron. During the summer of 1953 Cothron founded a church in Smithdale by baptizing thirteen adults. "The white disciples in this area were wonderful in supporting this meeting."[36]

Later that same year the peripatetic Cothron returned to Mississippi to plant a black church in Ruleville where white Christians in nearby Cleveland arranged for Cothron "to get the gospel before my race." After baptizing ten people in Ruleville and immersing five more in Dossville, Cothron exclaimed: "I thank God daily for the white disciples who have stood by me in my work. Without them I could not have done what I have accomplished."[37] Cothron, like his mentor Keeble, well understood the value of white financial support, for it was this support that enabled dynamic black preachers to advance the cause of Christ by planting separate black congregations.

In December 1953 Cothron, answering the summons of Anglo disciples, preached six nights in a Christian Church and founded a church in Mound Bayou, Mississippi. Cothron praised Miss Roxie Sneed, who gave the congregation "three lots. They have been recorded and deeded to the trustees. There is no white congregation here, this being the oldest Negro town in America and no white people live here." After gathering the flock in Mound Bayou, Cothron determined to house them, so he pleaded with *Gospel Advocate* readers to assist. "Brethren, if any of you reading this article have a missionary zeal to do something to help struggling Christians to keep alive that little spark of fire of the New Testament church, here is your chance. We have the foundation laid for the meetinghouse at Mound Bayou and some materials on the ground for framing, but we fear we will have difficulty in getting enough materials to get it to the point we can save what we have." His plea resonated with *Advocate* readers, and a few months later Cothron thanked donors for their response and added: "We have the top on the building and are now putting down flooring. We do not know where and how we will get the ceiling, plumbing or lights." Five months later Cothron recorded three baptisms in Kosciusko, six in Cleveland, and one in Rosedale, Mississippi. He happily noted: "Most of these were baptized in our nice baptistery in our building at Mound Bayou. The white disciples have stood by me wonderfully in these places."[38]

Many black Churches of Christ in Mississippi owed their existence and stability to the indefatigable toil of James L. Cothron. As an understudy of Marshall Keeble, Cothron left an indelible mark on African American Churches of Christ in his part of the South. And like Keeble, he birthed spiritual sons of his own. Among others, Cothron taught and baptized G. G. Jones of Atlanta, Georgia, and Bonnie Matthews of Wichita Falls, Texas, in

the 1930s. Both men became able ministers: Jones in Chicago, Illinois, and Matthews in Atlanta, Georgia, and Cothron spoke with "great praise of his two sons in the gospel."[39]

Shelton T. W. Gibbs Sr., another productive Keeble disciple, hailed from Jacksonville, Florida. He attended a Keeble meeting in Tampa, heard the Lord's Word, and received baptism in 1928. By the 1930s Gibbs, after brief preaching stints in Florida and Alabama, had relocated to Texas as an evangelist. In 1935 the white elders of the Lamar Avenue Church of Christ in Paris praised Gibbs as a godly and competent preacher. Four years later, S. C. Kinningham, a white leader in Center, Texas, commended the ministerial work of Gibbs, who conducted a meeting in his town. "This congregation sponsored a meeting for the colored people of this city that closed last week, with Shelton T. W. Gibbs, of Ennis, doing the preaching. Twenty-eight were baptized, and plans are now being made to secure for them a building in which to meet and a preacher to work with them regularly."[40]

By the 1950s Gibbs, now ministering to the North Eighteenth Street Church of Christ in Muskogee, Oklahoma, continued to evangelize in various parts of the nation. In 1951 his preaching produced two conversions in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, a congregation he had established a year earlier with eighteen baptisms. He reported that "Fifteen (colored) were baptized and three white persons. They have bought a lot and built a beautiful stone meetinghouse." Gibbs enthusiastically lauded white Christians, who "worked hard to get the cause established among my people. The kindness of the white disciples in that vicinity will long be remembered by me."[41] He also reported ministerial success in nearby Kennett, Missouri, with ten conversions. He again attributed his achievement as a preacher to Anglo believers. "This meeting was sponsored by the white church there for the few colored members that meet in Brother Haywood's home. The white brethren stated that they have in mind helping them secure a church home."[42] As did father Keeble, Gibbs understood the rise of black churches in a deeply segregated South hinged on white support and generosity.

But all this depended fundamentally on the ability of black preachers such as Gibbs to attract and mesmerize large audiences. The work ethic and skill of African American ministers leagued with white financial aid to make possible the growth of Churches of Christ, and certainly Gibbs did his part. In 1953 Robert F. Lawyer, minister of the black church in Kennett, Missouri,

lavished praise on Gibbs. "We have not had so powerful a gospel preacher here before among the colored brethren. He is truly a man of God, and preaches the gospel in its purity and yet fearlessly." Lawyer then announced plans to invite Gibbs back next year, and he recommended that "Any congregation wishing to use a sound gospel preacher for a meeting would do well to get S. T. W. Gibbs, Sr."[43]

Gibbs gave black Churches of Christ not only his charismatic and church-planting ability but also his sons to the preaching ministry. In 1951 Gibbs remarked that two of his sons, Benjamin F. Gibbs and S. T. W. Gibbs Jr., had become active preachers. "My sixteen-year-old son, B. F. Gibbs, did a great job leading the song services. Let us pray that he will some day make a great preacher, like his elder brother S. T. W. Gibbs, Jr." Gibbs happily acknowledged that he owed "his success as a minister to Brother M. Keeble, John R. Vaughner, Luke Miller and Sear (white)." These men taught and inspired Gibbs in God's work, and in turn he passed the torch to his own sons.[44]

Another Keeble son from Florida was William Whitaker, born and reared in Tampa, who first heard Keeble and received baptism at his hands in the 1920s. Whitaker soon turned to preaching, and in the early 1930s left Florida to serve the new church Luke Miller had founded in Corsicana, Texas. This congregation grew to over four hundred members before Whitaker moved on to Paris, Texas. From Paris, Whitaker later moved to Montgomery, Alabama, and helped create five new congregations in that state. In 1942 he left Montgomery and served temporarily as a minister in Oklahoma. By the 1950s Whitaker had settled in Tupelo, Mississippi, where he worked with the North Green Street Church of Christ. Even though he committed himself to the development of the North Green congregation, Whitaker also traversed the Magnolia State planting and reviving black Churches of Christ. In 1954 he baptized forty-three people and established the Westside Church of Christ in Houston, Mississippi. Five years later he rejuvenated a black congregation in Booneville, reporting: "By the help of the white Christians in Booneville, Miss., we have started the work there again. About fifteen years ago a church was there, but died for lack of attention." In 1973 Whitaker relocated to Laurel, Mississippi, to minister to the Southside Church of Christ." Loyal to the Restoration Movement and well-versed in Scripture, Whitaker was one of the many stabilizing forces Keeble left behind.[45]

Marshall Keeble's extensive lineage reached across the South in the form

of a spreading number of preachers. Cathey C. Locke, born near Thyatira, Mississippi, received baptism at Keeble's hands. After moving to Memphis, Tennessee, in 1936, Locke began preaching a year later. In 1944 he moved west to Dallas, Texas, to serve the Ninth Street Church of Christ (now the Cedar Crest Church of Christ). When Locke first arrived in Dallas, the congregation consisted of approximately one hundred members, but by the time of his death, its membership had increased to almost one thousand. Locke, while ministering at the Cedar Crest church, received repeated calls from Anglo believers to preach to their black neighbors. White leaders in Greenwood, Mississippi, asked Locke to conduct a meeting, and his visit resulted in the creation of a black church there in 1948.[46]

Tennessean Lucius Hodge Alexander was taught and baptized by Marshall Keeble in 1926, then he entered the ministry two years later. In 1936 Alexander helped plant a church in Bandana, Kentucky, with eight baptisms. According to Charles L. Houser Jr., "Alexander's voice carried well in the open air. He preached the truth to several white people who will not go to hear any of the white preachers—because of prejudice." Alexander's greatest contribution to the development of black Churches of Christ, however, lay in west Texas. He helped mature congregations in Lubbock (1936), Abilene (1937–1943), and Midland (1944–?), and wrote frequently for the *Gospel Advocate*.[47] Alexander's articles in that journal reflect the exclusivistic posture and narrow ecclesiology that permeated and still pervades in African American Churches of Christ to which Marshall Keeble's influence gave birth.

Another Keeble disciple, Alabaman C. L. Caperton, after serving in World War I, returned home and married Fannie Perry. In 1930 Caperton heard the Gospel, was baptized by Keeble, and eight years later began preaching in Heskel, Oklahoma. In 1942 he went to Atoka, Oklahoma, where he immersed forty-eight people and restored fourteen more. In his relatively brief preaching career Caperton reportedly planted seventeen churches and helped erect thirteen church buildings. He served as the minister of the East Third Street Church of Christ in Chattanooga, Tennessee, until his death in 1955.[48]

A more widely experienced Keeble protégé, Fleming A. Livingston, was born and reared in South Carolina. After moving to Florida, he heard Marshall Keeble's "pure gospel" and received baptism in 1931. Livingston soon began preaching in Florida before moving on to Lawton, Oklahoma.

From his home in the Sooner State, Livingston came by invitation of white Christians to Vernon, Texas, to evangelize African Americans. In the summer of 1935, his protracted meeting produced twenty-six baptisms, resulting in the establishment of a black Church of Christ there. R. L. Colley, a white leader in Vernon, appreciated Livingston as a "great gospel preacher" who would "take care of the truth among his race anywhere." While preaching in Vernon, Livingston debated a Pentecostal preacher who "tried to establish his prayer theory with him in debate, but made a poor 'out.' Several made the confession the same night of the debate."[49] Such public religious discussions made Livingston's meeting more appealing to outsiders and contributed to the rise of black Churches of Christ in Texas.

In 1936 Livingston relocated to Wichita Falls, Texas, assuming leadership of a black congregation planted by Marshall Keeble a month earlier. From his home in Texas, Livingston traveled widely, preaching and converting people in Bradenton, Florida, and in Lubbock, Corsicana, and Vernon, Texas. Faithful to his heritage, Livingston credited white Christians for his evangelistic success in these cities, especially Wichita Falls. "I could not have done the little good accomplished in the above meetings but for the white disciples in Wichita Falls, where I am laboring with my race. The Tenth and Austin Streets and Polk Street congregations have stood behind me fully."[50]

By 1941 the membership of the black Church of Christ in Wichita Falls had increased to seventy-two people, and in January of that year Livingston and his black flock erected a "new building" for $1,056.81. "The colored church paid $50 on the lot and $50 on the building." Two white congregations, the Tenth and Austin Church of Christ and Buchanan Street Church of Christ, however, paid the balance. At the dedicatory morning services, black ministers Livingston, E. W. Anderson, and S. T. W. Gibbs delivered messages; at the afternoon service, white preachers Robert C. Jones and J. R. Waldrum "made short talks." Jones concluded: "With this nice, new house in a good location, we believe the church is in a position to do great things for Christ among the colored people of Wichita Falls."[51] In Jim Crow Texas as throughout the South, black and white Christians cooperated while scrupulously complying with segregation codes.

Livingston, following the pattern of his spiritual mentor Keeble, stayed frequently on the move, advancing the "pure gospel." He worked as an evangelist in Fort Worth, Haskell, Knox City, Burkburnett, and Plainview,

Texas, respectively. After a long and productive ministerial career with black Churches of Christ, Livingston died in 1969 in Seattle, Washington. O. L. Anderson eulogized him, stating: "I speak of Evangelist F. A. Livingston, U.S.A. Don't ask me where he lived, for he lived where he was called; even living in the hearts of individuals. The world was his audience and the gospel was his Text."[52]

While most Keeble protégés such as Livingston imitated their teacher in their preaching careers, few had so unlikely a background as John Henry Clay. Louisianan Clay, an understudy of both Marshall Keeble and Luke Miller, in his youth had displayed talent as a dancer, singer, and comedian. As a young man Clay moved to Port Arthur, Texas, where in 1937 he responded to Marshall Keeble's preaching. Luke Miller then trained Clay as a preacher and song leader at the newly formed congregation in Port Arthur. Miller later recommended Clay for preaching assignments in Hobbs, New Mexico, as well as Jacksonville, Neches, and Palestine, Texas, in the 1940s. Clay accomplished his most productive work, however, in Decatur, Alabama, altogether establishing thirty-six congregations in eleven states, thirteen in Alabama.[53]

In addition to these men, Marshall Keeble baptized and trained many others who matured as successful and influential preachers in black Churches of Christ.[54] All across the states of the former Confederacy Marshall Keeble shaped the lives of these black men, who in turn led others in the growth of the Church of Christ. Keeble's power to inspire so many men to enter the ministry attests both to his preaching ability and leadership skills in combination with his magnetic personality. To Keeble and his spiritual sons must go the lion's share of human credit for founding and then strengthening African American Churches of Christ all across the New South and beyond.

10
Marshall Keeble's Grandsons

> Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.
>
> —Psalm 127:4–5

Marshall Keeble's extraordinary talents and captivating personality not only gave birth to a host of spiritual sons who preached throughout the South, but they in turn sired spiritual grandsons who carried forward the pure Gospel across the land. Keeble molded the lives of scores of young men who matriculated at the Nashville Christian Institute, a K–12 school for black youth. Significantly, while most of Keeble's grandsons readily imbibed his theologically rigid doctrine of exclusivism, as children of a different era they uniformly rejected his social and racial accommodationism. By this Keeble's grandsons distinguished themselves from his sons, a contrast that emerged even in their time of training.

A culture of racism coupled with the attendant economic difficulties it imposed made it difficult to establish stable educational institutions for African Americans in the South. In 1920, when the white superintendent of the Southern Practical Institute in Nashville, Tennessee, a school for blacks, required that black students enter the building through the back door, the black leader G. P. Bowser protested the practice and the white trustees summarily closed the school. African American leaders in Churches of Christ soon surfaced plans to create a "Nashville Christian Institute" to educate young blacks. Samuel Robert Cassius, a black minister who had earlier attempted to build such a school in Oklahoma, served as financial representative for this dream institution.[1] Black leaders in Churches of Christ wanted to lift up their people, but they lacked sufficient financial power, so not until 1939 when white benefactors stepped forward did the Nashville Christian Institute (NCI) materialize.

Shortly after the establishment of the Nashville school, Marshall Keeble assumed the role of president. He continued his primary work as a traveling evangelist, but also took on fundraising and recruiting responsibilities for the NCI, showcasing students who displayed impressive biblical knowledge and exceptional speaking ability before white and black audiences in the South. Keeble and these spiritual grandsons crisscrossed southern states, preaching, soliciting support, and gathering funds for the new school. Although "Keeble and his boys" collected the gifts, the white-dominated board controlled both the money and the curriculum.[2]

The launching of the Nashville Christian Institute stirred a degree of controversy, however, as some white residents in Nashville refused to give the school a cordial welcome. Resistance arose largely due to the school's proposed location as white members of the nearby Twelfth Avenue Church of Christ feared that their congregation "would be crippled in a short time because of the loss of much of our present membership and the hostility of the public to the Church of Christ (white or colored) if this Negro school were established." In spite of these objections the school opened in 1939, and by 1944 A. M. Burton, as chairman of the board of directors, announced that the board had accumulated $60,000 to buy a "more suitable building." They also wanted to purchase a thousand-acre tract of land in nearby Sumner County to "promote an agricultural project along with the Bible-school work, but the white citizens near that community protested its location, held mass-meetings, and gave it much unfavorable publicity." The recalcitrance of these whites forced the board to settle for placing the institution in northwest Nashville in "an old discarded city school."[3]

That same year Burton suggested that a two-week Bible training course also be offered periodically for working African American preachers. In the inaugural short course, forty black preachers from six southern states gathered on the NCI campus to receive instruction from white leaders such as B. C. Goodpasture, A. C. Pullias, J. Roy Vaughan, S. H. Hall, H. Leo Boles, and others. In addition to these men who taught biblical study courses, Burton specifically singled out Mrs. Lambert Campbell, who "taught public speaking, and she is as near perfect as any teacher can be. Sister Campbell (white) gives her services to the school." In appreciation for her work, the NCI board offered Mrs. Campbell a one-hundred-dollar gift, but she re-

fused, asking that it be given "back to the school to start a fund for those to draw on who are not able to pay their way."[4]

Upon the course's completion the white teachers, according to Burton, sent the black preachers home "rejoicing over the wonderful things they learned about the word of God. They said they were better prepared for their work." While Burton did not identify the African American preachers who attended the training session, he emphasized that "We tried to teach them that they must learn to be pure, humble, and patient, so they would be examples to the world."[5] The NCI attempted not only to educate adolescent black youth (Keeble's grandsons), but also to better equip and benefit older ministers (mostly Keeble's sons) to preach and teach effectively to their own congregations, their own people.

White leaders in Churches of Christ controlled the NCI curriculum, shaping the manner in which African Americans viewed the Bible and how they presented it to fellow black southerners. At the same time white instructors could co-mingle biblical definitions of Christian traits with ones appropriate to the South's racism, ensuring that their black counterparts remain "pure" (not mingle with white women), "humble" (stay in a place of subordination), and "patient" (not disturb the status quo of segregation). They wanted these black evangelists to imitate their spiritual father, Marshall Keeble.

Keeble himself reported in 1944 that the Nashville Christian Institute had an enrollment of 150 pupils and that fifteen of these were preparing for the ministry. After noting that A. M. Burton had given the institution $50,000 "to make it one of the greatest Christian assets in the world," Keeble added that the school employed seven teachers and that its monthly expenses exceeded $1,000.[6]

At the close of 1944 Keeble announced that twenty-three NCI students had been baptized, "most of them coming out of sectarian families." The school then counted 175 students from the city of Nashville and approximately sixty boarding students. "The outlook is good," claimed Keeble. "About twenty of our students are preparing for the ministry." These young men delighted Keeble, who urged *Gospel Advocate* readers to support NCI and "help us make the school a blessing to the world by sending us a liberal donation, and please pray for us. I am so anxious to see this school run-

ning in a permanent way before the Lord calls me from this earth."[7] Keeble viewed "his school" as an evangelistic tool through which he could reach African Americans by broadening his corps of grandsons, and he envisioned a long life for the institution.

Two years later the *Gospel Advocate* reported that the Nashville Christian Institute had grown to three hundred students and eleven teachers, and it enjoyed full accreditation from first through twelfth grades. Three of Keeble's grandsons, William Robinson, Leroy Blackman (both from Decatur, Alabama), and Hasson Reed (from Atoka, Oklahoma), accompanied him on a seven-state southern preaching tour that year. Before delivering a sermon in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Keeble allowed his three protégés to display their biblical knowledge and their speaking skills. The young men astonished the audience with their composure and their recitation of Acts chapter 2. P W. Stonestreet, who witnessed the exhibit of talent, reported a telling dialogue:

> William, do you know all of the second chapter of Acts? Brother Keeble asked last night.
>
> "Yes sir," William answered, dutifully.
>
> Do you know, Leroy? Brother Keeble turned to his other young evangelist.
>
> Leroy thought that one over for a while, then said, defensively: "No, but I know all the fifth chapter of Matthew."[8]

The exchange between Keeble and his "boy preachers" revealed how effectively Keeble and the other instructors at the Nashville Christian Institute had instilled the importance of Scripture memorization. Such emphasis not only grounded students in the Bible but also dazzled Keeble's audiences and sharpened their interest in the education of black youth in Nashville. Beyond this, Keeble's Chattanooga meeting resulted in thirty-one baptisms, six restorations, and a seven-hundred-dollar collection for his school.

In the fall of the same year the *Gospel Advocate* began referring to the Nashville Christian Institute as "Keeble's School." J. W. Brents, a white instructor at the school, informed supporters that 350 students had enrolled for the semester. "So far as I know, this is the most substantial effort ever made to train and develop young men and women of the colored race to teach and

preach the gospel to that long-neglected people." In Brents's opinion, the NCI provided spiritual guidance to black youths and proffered an answer to the race question in America. "Such teaching as is being done here will do more to solve the race problem than any other. The Bible is being taught to every pupil daily."[9] Ironically, even though perhaps most thought of the NCI as "Keeble's School," white teachers, through their distinctive impartation of biblical teachings, exerted great impact on the black students' minds. Certainly Keeble shared the theological perspective of his white cohorts in this joint effort.

In the fall of 1946 Brents noted that sixty out of the 350 learners were preparing to preach the Gospel and pointed out that some white churches "adopted a boy to see that he is cared for while learning to preach. It is hoped that others will do this." Under such arrangements white congregations' financial support enabled many black students to study at the Nashville Christian Institute. The following month Keeble took a group of students to the white Central Church of Christ in Birmingham, Alabama. After the young men sang hymns and delivered sermons, the crowd was "amazed at the good work being done for the colored children in that institution."[10]

The *Gospel Advocate* applauded the work of Marshall Keeble and the Nashville Christian Institute for training black students "to do better service for the Master." The paper still heaped even more praise on the white communications instructor, Mrs. Lambert Campbell. "The contribution of Sister Campbell to the Negro race is even greater. . . . The greatest angle of her contribution, however, is to the kingdom of God. For the inexperienced she writes the sermons and speeches which they deliver. She has probably written more sermons than any preacher among us. They are sound scripturally and strikingly adapted to the psychology of the Negro race."[11] As this white Christian woman assisted black preachers in the composition of their speeches and sermons, she probably helped shape the theology of black Churches of Christ.

The NCI continued its work until 1967, graduating over three thousand young black students. A changed southern society had, by the late 1960s, been forced to open its institutions to both blacks and whites, ending the need for traditionally black schools such as the NCI. But throughout the school's short history Marshall Keeble had continually trained young preachers and provided them with vital on-the-job experience.

In the early part of June 1947, Keeble and three of his grandsons had invaded Albany, Georgia, and advanced the "pure Gospel." A *Gospel Advocate* reporter observed that three boys, William Robinson, Leroy Blackman, and Timothy Blair (Alabamans, all and ranging from ages nine to twelve), "preached the gospel in a wonderful manner, showing so clearly the influence of good training, and a comprehensive study of the grandest Book of all ages." The ardent declamations of Keeble and his boys dealt denominationalism a "staggering blow," leading to forty-two baptisms.[12]

Later that month Keeble announced that many white Churches of Christ had invited students from the Nashville Christian Institute "to render programs, so that they could see our work in action." After witnessing the young people's talent for themselves, many participating congregations contributed "as much as $2,000 a year to help us develop these fine boys so that God can use them to bless the world." Some of the young men filled pulpits every Sunday "as far away as Memphis, Birmingham, Louisville, and Cincinnati." Keeble himself saw the school as an opportunity to perpetuate his legacy of evangelism. "Brethren, I appeal to you to help us develop these boys for the age that is confronting us. I am now sixty-eight years old, and I am struggling to leave hundreds of strong preachers after I am gone." He considered the NCI as pivotal, filling "this land with real gospel preachers, who will not be ashamed to tell the story of the cross."[13]

Keeble closed a ten-day meeting in Gainesboro, Tennessee, with sixteen baptisms, seven blacks and nine whites, and six restorations. Two of his grandsons, Otis Boatwright and William Robinson, impressively assisted him during this Gainesboro campaign. "Although they are only eleven and twelve years old," a reporter noted, "they are a credit to the cause of Christ as well as to the Nashville Christian Institute, in which they are students." The school received a $290 donation.[14]

In the fall of 1948 Keeble and his grandsons spent five weeks in Glasgow, Kentucky, pouring out the Gospel message. "There has never been anything to equal it in southern Kentucky," quipped reporter A. R. Hill. A student at the NCI directed the congregational singing, and "Everyone enjoyed the song service, and the people appreciated Smith's [the song leader's] part in the success of the meeting." Joe Henry Hawthorne (age thirteen), William Robinson (thirteen), and Richard Hickerson (fourteen)—all students at the NCI—spoke ten minutes each and astounded the listeners with

their scriptural knowledge. "The unusual ability of these children in preaching the truth was remarkable. People commented on their poise and self-confidence." Hill concluded that "Everyone who heard these boys speak realizes that the Nashville Christian Institute is doing a wonderful work in developing gospel preachers of the future. Keeble is making it possible for them to have the actual experience now." Keeble, in turn, credited their Bible teacher, J. W. Brents, and their speech instructor, Mrs. Lambert Campbell, for their expertise.[15]

In December 1948 the *Gospel Advocate* devoted several pages to highlighting the accomplishments of the Nashville Christian Institute. The journal recorded that within a nine-year period the school had enrolled students from twenty-eight states, not all of them mere youths. It cited the example of Wilton H. Cook, a thirty-year-old former Baptist preacher from Prince George County, Virginia, who converted to Churches of Christ after hearing the preaching of John R. Vaughner. Cook, upon graduating from the Nashville Christian Institute, moved to Miami, Florida, where he served the Liberty Church of Christ for several years.[16] Such stories doubtlessly stirred even greater interest and support for Keeble's school.

The same edition of the *Gospel Advocate* featured several endorsements from friends of the Nashville Christian Institute. "In addition to acquiring a modern education, the students are preparing themselves to go out into the world and lead others of their race to Christ. What a glorious way to serve!" A local researcher, Thurman Sensing, also lauded the school as contributing to the "fullest possible development of the Negro within his own race." W. E. Brightwell, a staunch supporter of the NCI, analyzed the school as a missionary project, observing: "Turning hundreds, and eventually thousands, of thoroughly-trained preachers loose in this country who are pledged to simple New Testament Christianity is far and above the greatest contribution that could be made to that race, assuming, of course, that we shall continue as we have begun—to promote and aid the colored churches to become strong in the Lord."[17]

At times the Nashville Christian Institute and the nearby whites-only David Lipscomb College interacted and collaborated during an era of legal segregation. In 1949 white students at David Lipscomb College raised $3,812 in support of the black institution, and in the spring of the same year students from the NCI staged its annual commencement in the white college's

new auditorium. Keeble thanked Batsell Barrett Baxter and Wendell Clipp, faculty members at Lipscomb College who, "through the students," raised over five thousand dollars for the NCI. "Our colored boys and girls stand greatly in need of Christian education, and I believe that in my old days the brethren, white and colored, are going to make this school what it should be before the Lord calls me home."[18]

In 1950 Keeble took several of his students to Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas, a Church of Christ–related school for black students which G. P. Bowser had established a few years earlier. Keeble and his students "were kindly received and entertained." During this trip Keeble met other influential black leaders in Churches of Christ such as G. E. Steward, Levi Kennedy, C. C. Locke, and Paul Settles.[19] Because white Church of Christ schools in the former Confederate states such as Abilene Christian College, Harding College, and David Lipscomb College then barred black students, many of Keeble's grandsons would eventually enroll in Southwestern Christian College.

In 1953 white students from David Lipscomb High School brought gifts and food for the female students at the Nashville Christian Institute and distributed candy to all the younger enrollees of Keeble's school. The next day another group of young people from David Lipscomb High School "brought shoes, shirts, and other wearing apparel for the ten boys who were not going home for the Christmas holidays, and oh, how happy they were!"[20]

Keeble not only brought his students along on his preaching tours, but he also afforded them opportunities to publish brief articles and sermon outlines in the *Gospel Advocate.* These writings reveal their youthful understanding of Scripture as well as how their instructors at the Nashville Christian Institute shaped their perception of God, the church, and salvation. In 1951 Alvin Simmons, Jesse Reese, and Arthur Fulson Jr. each contributed articles to the *Gospel Advocate.* In April of that year Lester E. Means, another NCI student, wrote an article entitled, "The Church Is Not a Denomination," which reflected the ecclesiology he acquired from white instructors and Marshall Keeble. Means wrote: "I am sometimes asked if I believe that people have to be members of my church to be saved? My friend, if you mean by that question, do I believe that people have to be members of the church of which I am a member, I unhesitatingly answer, yes."[21]

The decade of the 1950s also saw preachers from the Nashville Chris-

tian Institute beginning to fill pulpits in the South. After a white congregation in Springfield, Tennessee, called Keeble for a tent meeting, he sent one of his students, David Shanks, to oversee the newly gathered flock. White churches also began summoning Keeble's grandsons to hold revivals. In 1952 the white church in Spring Hill, Tennessee, invited Alvin Simmons to preach among their city's black residents, and his "strong sermons" yielded twenty-one baptisms. "The great work that these students are doing," wrote Keeble, "makes me see more and more the need of trained workers in the kingdom of God."[22]

In 1954 Kelly K. Mitchell, another NCI pupil, preached at the Green Street Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee, and converted seventeen people. A Green Street member, L. T. Thompson, called Mitchell a "well trained" and "humble servant of God." During the same year Arthur Fulson Jr. planted a black Church of Christ in Benton, Arkansas, with ten baptisms. The church members soon purchased two lots, erected a comfortable church building, and hired NCI graduate Fulson as their regular preacher. Keeble, in the fall of 1956, proudly reported that several NCI students held meetings during the summer, singling out Floyd Rose and Jack Evans. "A little boy about fifteen held a tent meeting at Toledo, Ohio, and baptized nine. His name is Floyd Rose. Jack Evans held several meetings and other boys preached for churches during the summer."[23] As Keeble's grandsons contributed to the growth and crystallization of black Churches of Christ in the United States, other young graduates of his Nashville school went on to lead distinguished lives in secular occupations as well.

Fred Gray was born in 1930 in Montgomery, Alabama. He completed the third grade there before enrolling in the Nashville Christian Institute at age twelve. During his five years at the school in Nashville, Gray developed a number of lasting friendships while receiving a "good college preparatory education" and also touring the South with Keeble as a "boy preacher." After graduating from the NCI, Gray earned a degree at Alabama State College (now Alabama State University) in Montgomery, and then completed a law degree at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio.

Growing up in a Jim Crow South marked by rigid segregation enforced by stark violence, Gray secretly pledged to "destroy everything segregated that I could find." Upon returning to Montgomery with his empowering law degree, Gray worked with E. D. Nixon, Rosa Parks, and Martin Luther

King Jr. in challenging segregated busing laws in Alabama. Gray's involvement with the civil rights movement catapulted him to national prominence, and in 2002–2003 he became the first African American to be named president of the Alabama Bar Association. In 2004 he received the Thurgood Marshall Award in recognition of his achievements and contributions to the civil rights of African Americans.[24] Without doubt Keeble himself hated segregation, but his compliance with its precepts helped garner financial support from white believers and helped shield the black southerners whom he taught from the murderous ire of violent racists. At the same time his moderation allowed him to preach even to whites and convert many of them in a segregated South. What Keeble felt, his grandson Gray, moving in a different era, executed.

Hailing from Valdosta, Georgia, Arthur Lee Smith Jr., one of sixteen children, attended the Nashville Christian Institute before enrolling at Oklahoma Christian College where he earned a B.A. degree. From there, Smith went on to Pepperdine University, receiving an M.A. degree in communications, which included a thesis on the rhetoric of Marshall Keeble. Smith then earned his doctorate from UCLA, becoming deeply involved in the civil rights movement as well. He chaired the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in southern California, and in reaction to the racism prevalent in American society changed his name to Molefi Kete Asante. Beyond a simple name change, his consequent involvement in civil rights reform moved him toward Afrocentric views. One of the founders of the Afrocentricity movement, Dr. Smith/Asante, established the first doctoral program in African American Studies at Temple University and has written extensively on the African American experience, hoping to "free the earth of intolerance, prejudice, racism, and ethnic animosities." Asante's academic career suggests his rejection of both Keeble's doctrine of religious exclusivism as well as his practice of racial and social accommodation.[25]

It is likely, however, that Asante's theological exclusivism, which he inherited from his spiritual grandfather Marshall Keeble as a young student at NCI, in part influenced his perspective on race in America. Indeed Asante has espoused a racial version of Keeble's religious legalism and exclusivism by locating Africa and Africans at the center of the intellectual world. Just as Keeble placed his understanding of Scripture and his insistence that the members of the Church of Christ comprised the only Christians at the cen-

ter of the religious world, Asante has similarly extolled Africans and African Americans to the exclusion of all other ethnic groups. In short, what Keeble emphasized theologically Asante now stresses racially.

Asante's racial views have not gone without criticism from black Americans. In 1989 Jack Evans, a fellow student with Smith/Asante at NCI, publicly repudiated what he called his colleague's deification of Africa and African ancestors. Evans explained:

> He used to be one of the "boy preachers" who traveled with the late Marshall Keeble. . . . He left Christ, and has become quite renowned in academe. He wrote a book on "Afrocentricity," which says, in essence, that the African culture should be the center of the African American's life. And this concept has even become a religion with him. He believes in the deification of ancestors and that the black African's heritage should be the center of his life. He and I have corresponded over the years. And he has informed me that he has found his roots, which are in Africa and, therefore, has changed his name to Dr. Molifi [*sic*] Kete Asante, with his actual beginnings being in Africa. I said to him I know him only as Arthur Lee Smith, with his beginnings being in Valdosta, Georgia. I know who he is.[26]

Unlike Asante, who embraced "Afrocentricity," Evans explained that "Christ is the CENTER of my life. He controls my thoughts. That is why I believe in CHRISTOCENTRICTY."[27]

Following rather more closely his spiritual grandfather's path, Jack Evans at age fifteen had received baptism at the hands of Paul Settles, an influential black preacher in Churches of Christ. Born and reared in Houston, Texas, Evans began preaching at age sixteen. After having attended the Houston public schools for nine years, he enrolled at the Nashville Christian Institute, studied under Marshall Keeble, and upon completing his courses in 1957, entered Southwestern Christian College, graduating two years later. Unable to attend segregated white Church of Christ–related schools in the South, Evans received a B.A. degree from Eastern New Mexico University in 1961 and an M.A. degree in History from the University of Texas at El Paso (then Texas Western) in 1963. His master's thesis developed "The History of Southwestern Christian College." After serving as an instructor and dean at

Southwestern Christian College, Evans became president of his alma mater in 1967, a year before Marshall Keeble died.[28]

After Keeble's demise, Evans emerged as one of the premier preachers and debaters in African American Churches of Christ. Evans, who also came under the influence of R. N. Hogan, a vocal opponent of segregation in Church of Christ–related schools in the 1950s, fused the doctrinal exclusivism and the racial militancy nonprevalent in most African American Churches of Christ. A vivid example of Evan's aversion to racism emerged in his 1974 debate with Vernon L. Barr, white pastor of a Missionary Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. Barr maintained: "The Holy Scriptures teach that it is against God's will for members of the black race and members of the white race to intermarry." Evans sharply refuted Barr's proposition, asserting: "What these white racists don't want and what they are trying to wrap Bible authority around is the tactic to keep the black man away from the white woman. (Amens) I'll tell you this, when a black man and a white woman marry, come together and have sexual relations, they PRODUCE AFTER THEIR OWN KIND, they don't produce chickens (Laughter); THEY PRODUCE OTHER HUMAN BEINGS!"[29]

While repudiating racism, Evans maintained a rigid doctrinal posture of theological exclusivism. When Barr appealed to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to justify his arguments about racial separation, Evans retorted: "Don't try to resurrect King to save your hide. . . . You never depended on King before. You have always fought everything in civil rights for which he stood." While repudiating Barr's racism and defending King's civil rights stance, Evans emphatically labeled Dr. King as a false prophet in religious matters.

> King was no deity. Martin Luther King was a man just like I am. (Amens) When it came to religious doctrine, KING TAUGHT SOME OF THE SAME FALSE DOCTRINE THAT MR. BARR TEACHES. Don't you think that I am afraid to say it, Mr. Barr. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., WAS NOT A GOSPEL PREACHER! (Amens and Amens) He was NOT a gospel preacher. (Amens) Sure, I supported his social beliefs about the equality of all men, because I believe that, King or no King. But when it comes to doctrine about salvation of the souls of men, KING TAUGHT

> FALSE DOCTRINE. (Amens) Yes, it was "a King" who did more for all people throughout the world, but it was KING JESUS! (Amens)[30]

Evans's affirmations reveal the complexity confronting African American Churches of Christ in dealing with the civil rights movement. They reflect as well the apolitical perspectives of white pioneer preachers in the Stone-Campbell Movement, such as Tolbert Fanning and David Lipscomb, who elevated man's spiritual needs above his social requirements. Keeble imbibed this ideology and transmitted it in turn to the young black preachers who matriculated at the Nashville Christian Institute. Keeble's spiritual descendants certainly reaped the varied benefits of Dr. King's pioneering career, yet because of their theological posture of legalism and exclusivism, they depreciated the theological views of the very man who helped open the doors of white Church of Christ schools, congregations, and other white entities that had previously denied them admission. True to their exclusivist beliefs, many African Americans in Churches of Christ even refused to recognize Dr. King as a Christian. After an assassin's bullet took the civil rights leader's life, Roosevelt Wells, a noted black preacher in Churches of Christ, reportedly said: "Of course, we all know that Dr. King was *not* a Christian."[31] King remained, for some, a secular rather than a religious paragon.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination yielded a more positive assessment of the slain civil rights leader's life and work from Calvin Bowers, an influential black preacher and educator in southern California. "While many of us will not agree with the theological point of view which he [Dr. King] represented, we cannot deny that in many ways he identified with the teachings of Christ. He taught love and non-violence, and he gave his life to show that this method could work."[32]

The ambivalent social and political context of the Churches of Christ informs the career of another Keeble grandson, Floyd Rose. Born in Georgia, he came from a family of preachers, with father, uncle, and three of his brothers serving as Church of Christ ministers. Rose's sister Sylvia became one of the most prolific songwriters in the history of African American Churches of Christ. Rose attended the Nashville Christian Institute, learning from Marshall Keeble, J. W. Brents, and Otis Boatwright. Rose recalled participating in Keeble's meetings in the South, but the racial discrimination

and religious hypocrisy he saw in southern Churches of Christ profoundly disturbed him.[33]

Rose reflected on his experiences in his book, *Beyond the Thicket,* delineating his unsettling racial experiences as well as his transition from a church-focused to a Christ-centered preacher. His involvement in the civil rights movement and his introspection changed Rose's view of his religious neighbors. "By 1970," confessed Rose, "I recognized that my salvation was not dependent on their damnation. They didn't all have to be lost for me to be saved." This new perspective inspired Rose to "treat all men as I wish to be treated without regard to race, creed, color, or denominational affiliation." Extricating himself from the legalism and dogmatism he inherited from his grandfather Keeble and his white instructors, Rose focused on advocating social justice and service to all men.[34]

In 1979 Rose pulled away from Churches of Christ and established the Family Baptist Church in Toledo, Ohio. The church experienced astronomical growth within a short period of time. Rose acknowledged: "I officially became identified with the Baptist church; and on May 5, 1979, my wife and I, along with a former member of the Ridgewood Church [of Christ], organized Family Baptist Church, Toledo's fastest growing church." R. N. Hogan, one of the leading preachers in African American Churches of Christ, lamented what he saw as Rose's false doctrine, having "fellowship with denominational churches" and "inviting them into the fellowship of the Church of Christ."[35]

In breaking with his patriarch's theological views Rose enjoyed little company from among the coterie of Keeble's students, and in 1984 and 1985 Evans and Rose, grandsons of Marshall Keeble, held two public debates. The first of these took place in Terrell, Texas, on the campus of Southwestern Christian College, the second in Toledo, Ohio. Before the verbal exchanges took place, however, both men published books. Rose's work, *Beyond the Thicket,* chronicled what he described as his personal journey from legalism to love. Elevating "love" above "law" and "doctrine," Rose unabashedly averred: "With Jesus, the *test of real religion was not how much law one had in his head, but how much love one had in his heart.*" Rose believed that Churches of Christ were "Christians only," but he argued that they were not the "only Christians."[36]

Evans's countering effort, *Before the Thicket,* denounced Rose's book, stating: "I agree with him when he says that *Beyond the Thicket* came *through* him but not *from* him. It indeed came *through* him *from* Satan." From Evans's perspective, Rose's deviation from "the truth" occurred because of his ignorance of the Bible and his attempt to imitate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Rose, argued Evans, "was good in his mimicking of Dr. King, and still is, but *he never learned and preached the text and context of the Scripture.* And this failure to learn the Bible itself *for himself* is one of the reasons why he has fallen away from the faith." Unlike Rose, who posited an indebtedness of Churches of Christ to the theological platform of Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone, Evans maintained that the Church of Christ preceded the Stone-Campbell Movement by nearly two thousand years.[37]

Keeble's two former students also differed over the meaning of the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. For Rose, King was a true disciple of Jesus Christ; for Evans, King was a disciple of Mohandas K. Gandhi. Fighting injustice, Evans contended, did not determine a "person's relationship" with God. "Therefore, the questions to ask of any man regarding his relationship with God in this dispensation, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., are, did he obey Jesus and is he a part of the New Testament church?" Evans closed his book by pleading with Rose to "come back to the Bible and to the one faith. You need to do this for yourself, *your family,* and for God."[38]

The theological differences between the two Keeble grandsons eased in 1994 when Rose did indeed return to the fold of Churches of Christ. Yet Rose has maintained a cordial attitude toward other religious groups and has continued to champion the cause of racial and social justice.[39]

The Evans-Rose dispute, however, opens windows into several areas of disagreements among Keeble's spiritual offspring. On the one hand, Evans maintained an exclusivistic posture, arguing that the Church of Christ was the "one true church." In this regard he followed Keeble's theology. But unlike his grandfather, Evans vociferously rebukes the racist attitudes he detects in white religionists. But Rose, upon denouncing the doctrinal exclusivism of Keeble, also railed against his grandfather's legalism as well as his accommodationist racial stance.

It was, paradoxically, the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.—not Marshall Keeble—that led Evans and Rose down different theological paths. The

impact of Dr. King's sacrificial death seemingly superseded Rose's affection for Keeble, motivating him to focus on the racial discrimination persistent in American society. Evans, however, elevated the theological exclusivism of Keeble above the social activism of King, while Rose extolled Dr. King's social activism above the doctrinal legalism of Keeble. While other black preachers dealt as well with the same issues and their varied ramifications, Rose and Evans exemplify the turmoil that marked the followers of Marshall Keeble. As recently as April 2005, Rose, now president of the People's Tribunal in Valdosta, Georgia, was arrested for disrupting a city council meeting as he and his constituents sought the renaming of a predominantly black park. Rose's actions underscore his faithfulness to Dr. King's teaching as a man who, Rose argues, was a genuine follower of Jesus Christ.[40]

Another Keeble disciple who struggled to adhere to his traditional theology while seeking to advance the cause of racial equality was Franklin Florence. A native of Miami, Florida, Florence attended the Nashville Christian Institute and there came under Marshall Keeble's influence. Florence, like Rose, ardently supported Dr. King and the civil rights movement after leaving the Nashville school and beginning his preaching career in Rochester, New York. There Florence melded his theology with social activism by leading F.I.G.H.T. (Freedom, Integration, God, Honor, Truth), an organization which aimed at seeking racial justice. While he ministered to the Reynolds Street Church of Christ in the 1950s and 1960s, Florence's F.I.G.H.T. opposed the hiring practices of Kodak, joining hands with Malcolm X to derail the oppressive racist practices against blacks common in the urban North. In his adoration for Dr. King and his collaboration with Malcolm X, Florence refused to follow the course of accommodation set by his spiritual grandfather Keeble, even though he adhered to his mentor's exclusivistic theological posture, although not without a struggle.[41]

Still others of Keeble's grandsons centered on their congregational responsibilities and kept largely aloof from the efforts to broaden civil rights. Robert Woods, born in Gallatin, Tennessee, as a young man traveled with Marshall Keeble throughout the South. After finishing his studies at the Nashville Christian Institute, Woods settled as minister for the Monroe Street Church of Christ in Chicago, Illinois, effectively serving this church for forty years. Beyond his ministerial activity, Woods has served as a consultant for churches and conducted workshops and gospel meetings throughout

the United States.[42] Like Woods, Georgia's Willie Washington attended the NCI. When conducting a meeting in Vicksburg, Mississippi, in 1953, Keeble convert James L. Cothron noted that "Willie Washington, of Valdosta, Ga., and a student of Nashville Christian Institute, is with me doing a good job singing and preaching. Some say he is the best ever."[43] After graduating from the NCI, Washington received further training at Bishop College in Marshall, Texas, where he also worked with and preached for several years for a black Church of Christ, before relocating to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where he built one of the largest African American Churches of Christ, the Golden Heights Church of Christ.[44]

Another Florida church, the Liberty City Church of Christ in Miami, also drew their minister from Marshall Keeble's coterie of evangelists. In 1947 Arley E. Moore, the preacher for the Cawson Street Church of Christ in Hopewell, Virginia, invited John R. Vaughner, one of Keeble's spiritual sons, to conduct a tent meeting in that community. After hearing Vaughner preach the "pure gospel," Wilton H. Cook, a Baptist preacher, told his congregation: "All who want to go to Heaven, follow me. I am going across the street to the big tent and obey the gospel." Cook and 146 of his followers received baptism at the hands of Vaughner in Jones Lake, and Cook immediately enrolled in the NCI. After matriculating there, Cook began his ministry in Florida. He later relocated to serve congregations in Houston, Texas, devoting his efforts to preaching rather than social reform.[45]

The careers of Cook and others schooled at the Nashville Christian Institute illustrate the divergent legacy which the grandsons of Marshall Keeble left for coming generations.[46] Many of these leaders in Churches of Christ maintain a theological position closely akin to Keeble's—they see their fellowship as teaching the only "pure Gospel" and their members as the "only Christians." Others, however, have renounced that dogmatic stance of exclusivism, insisting rather that they are "Christians only." This latter group speaks of the need for a freer and wider fellowship with other religious bodies and seeks also to address the racial issues and social ills plaguing the broader African American community.

The nonpareil evangelist Marshall Keeble proved adept in training young men to follow in his preaching steps. Through most of his career he did this in the context of an era in which any noncompliance with Jim Crow dictums assured immediate and violent retribution, even horrific death. Determined

to bring salvation to those of his race, Keeble chose a "greater good" path, one which quietly accepted racial discrimination in order to preach without hindrance. Yet Keeble's younger protégés he imbued with an instinctive abhorrence for injustice, and many of these—maturing in a different era, one more open to social reform—chose a course far from Keeble's accommodationism. Others, of course, saw wisdom in placing spiritual values above the need for social justice and so continued in their mentor's way. For all of these men, Keeble's training must be credited with the opening of the hearts and minds of those who sat at his feet. Their future paths lay in their own hands, but Marshall Keeble had instilled in them the understanding that guided their choices.

Epilogue

The Church Marshall Keeble Made

> The gospel at its best deals with the whole man, not only his soul but also his body, not only his spiritual well-being but also his material well-being. A religion that professes a concern for the souls of men and is not equally concerned about the slums that damn them, the economic conditions that strangle them, and the social conditions that cripple them, is a spiritually moribund religion.
>
> —Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

While this work has sought to answer the questions raised in the prologue, certain questions must remain unanswered. Some, such as exactly how many white people Marshall Keeble converted, went uncharted due to the lack of exact record keeping. Others, involving the spiritual daughters and granddaughters Keeble sired across the United States and the roles they played in the maturation and expansion of black Churches of Christ, fall beyond the scope of this manuscript.

While recognizing its limitations, this book maintains that from 1931 to his death in 1968 Marshall Keeble clearly stood unchallenged as the most effective and renowned preacher in the history of African American Churches of Christ, a "Godsend to his people," in the words of a white believer in 1931. James L. Cothron, a black Keeble convert from Georgia, succinctly captured his spiritual father's significance in exclaiming that "Brother Keeble is a blessing to us all."[1] Keeble not only powered the rise of African American Churches of Christ in the South, but through his practical preaching and down-home wit, he also strengthened and enlarged the memberships of white congregations as well. White leaders often "called" Keeble to bless their black neighbors, but at the same time his efforts in their southern cities endowed them with the same blessings. Almost uniquely did this singular

black evangelist mesmerize both African Americans and Anglos in an era of all-encompassing segregation.

Yet any gifted preacher requires monetary support if he is to reach the widest possible audience. As a black man whose natural constituency invariably lacked disposable income, Keeble could turn only to white sources to maximize his reach. Keeble's humble disposition, which included the quiet acceptance of segregation's canons of behavior, attracted white philanthropists, chiefly A. M. Burton and B. C. Goodpasture, whose largesse enabled Keeble to traverse southern communities, leaving behind black congregations in his wake. If God empowered Keeble, then green dollars from white hands served as the means. In a curious sort of religious reciprocity, Keeble helped shape white congregations even as white leaders in Churches of Christ helped make Keeble what he became.

White Christians gave both their money and their doctrine to Keeble, who in turn transmitted the latter to his myriad spiritual sons and daughters whom he organized in black Churches of Christ in the South. Had Keeble deviated from the doctrinal line generally reflected in the *Gospel Advocate*'s pages, funding would certainly have ceased. Keeble never revealed whether or not this simple reality played any role at all in the formulation of his own theology. Certainly white supporters never had reason to doubt Keeble's commitment to the same principles they themselves championed; and of course both Keeble and his supporters drew on the same theological source, the Stone-Campbell Movement.

Following their mentor's lead, then, Keeble's sons tended to read the Bible through the lens of the *Gospel Advocate.* Like their father, they ordinarily espoused a theological posture leaning toward legalism and exclusivism. In addition, through the Nashville Christian Institute, white instructors joined Keeble in molding the minds of his grandsons who similarly preached on a theological platform that extolled members of Churches of Christ as the "only Christians," although some of the grandsons such as Floyd Rose have, of course, challenged this position. And Keeble's spiritual descendants have at times found it difficult to reconcile their heritage with the evolving perspectives on race which have come to characterize many in black and white churches and certainly the growing number of racially mixed congregations.

Racial strife and doctrinal discord have at times troubled black Churches

of Christ since the late twentieth century. Black preachers who acknowledged the religious legitimacy of those outside of Churches of Christ, such as Billy Graham and Martin Luther King Jr., were often deemed heretics; white leaders who exposed flaws and inconsistencies among black ministers were tagged as racists. To alleviate the racial tension that lingered among black and white Churches of Christ, concerned leaders organized a series of "One in Christ" conferences. The first gathering on the campus of Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas, engendered frank, honest, and at times emotional discussions concerning race and theology. These meetings led to a 1999 apology of Dr. Royce Money, president of Abilene Christian University, who confessed the error of the institution's past years of racial discrimination against African Americans. Money declared candidly: "We are here today to confess the sins of racism and discrimination and to issue a formal apology to all of you and to ask for your forgiveness. We understand from the Lord that part of repentance involves the resolve to go in a different direction in the future than we have in the past."[2]

The third conference in the series, scheduled for the fall of 2002 at the Greenville Avenue Church of Christ in Richardson, Texas, never materialized. The organizers of the gathering initially agreed to address race relations in Churches of Christ, and white leaders envisioned a dialogue focusing "across racial lines." But their black counterparts insisted on discussing doctrinal matters such as the role of women, modes of worship, legalism, and grace. Sensing that the conference had deviated from its perceived original purpose of promoting racial reconciliation and unwilling to involve the university in an affair which could be seen as an attempt to create doctrinal norms for the church, Money and the constituents of Abilene Christian University declined to attend. Angry and distraught, Jack Evans, a Keeble understudy and president of traditionally black Southwestern Christian College, denounced Money's decision to withdraw from the conference. "I know of nothing agreed to in our previous Conferences that would bind us to discussing 'racial reconciliation' in every 'One in Christ' Conference. There is more to the doctrine and spirit of Christ than 'racial reconciliation,' and for you to use this as your reason for withdrawing yourself and ACU from the 'One in Christ' Conference is almost unbelievable."[3]

Because the series was aborted, Evans maintained that race relations in Churches of Christ had not improved. "Words are meaningless if they are

not accompanied by a change in action and attitude. If we could all 'agree' in 1999 that racism was a moral wrong; why could we not even discuss, in 2002, the fact that there are some doctrines by our brethren that are scripturally wrong?" Arguing that the actions and attitude of white leaders and others reflected racism and paternalism, Evans concluded: "And, again, this entire scenario is a reflection of the fact that, regardless of our pious and verbal platitudes, we are still not 'One in Christ.' "[4] Evans's profoundly insightful words demonstrate that, at least for some, doctrinal concerns superseded and outweighed their interest in racial issues. In this affair Jack Evans typified those black preachers who hold tenaciously to Marshall Keeble's theological legacy of "radical exclusivism," but reject as vigorously his racial tradition of accommodationism.

Evans's position, however, has not gone unchallenged on the part of some black spokesmen. Floyd Rose, another Keeble disciple at the NCI, chided Evans for fostering disunity. "If you are white and you disagree with Jack Evans, you are a 'racist.' If you are black and you disagree with Jack Evans you are a 'liberal,' a 'false teacher,' or a 'heretic.' It's Jack's way or the highway." Rose concluded on a note of conciliation: "I love you Jack, and I will continue to pray for your release from the bondage of pharisaic tradition, and join the rest of us in praying, 'Lord, have mercy on us sinners.' "[5]

Here appears perhaps one of the greatest ironies of the Keeble legacy: The same elitism, antipathy, and arrogance many whites in the United States exhibited toward black people during the eras of slavery and segregation are now espoused by many African Americans in Churches of Christ. Such people despise and denounce their black religious neighbors in other churches, while they rebuke and reject white fellow Christians who accept them. This is the church that Marshall Keeble made.

This African American Church of Christ today stands at a crossroads, as many preachers and their members wrestle with the theology Marshall Keeble conveyed to them by his preaching, his writing in the pages of the *Gospel Advocate,* and through the teachings of his host of spiritual sons and grandsons. Keeble's pivotal message that Churches of Christ constitute the "one true church" and believers in Christ beyond this fellowship are doomed seems irrelevant to many African American communities plagued with economic deprivation, AIDS, gang violence, black-on-black crime, an excessive black prison population, an increasing suicide rate among black youth,

a rising divorce rate in black homes, a plethora of unwed black mothers and fathers, and the formidable obstacles of enduring racism. Unlike Martin Luther King Jr. who promulgated a balanced Gospel to address the "whole man," Marshall Keeble's messages focused on spiritual concerns, leaving to their hearers the task of applying spiritual truths to these worldly affairs.[6]

African Americans in Churches of Christ today seek the effective means of both reflecting and rethinking the message of the Bible, bringing its light to bear on the extraordinary problems that cloud their world. Biblical imperatives such as those articulated in the writings of Peter, James, John, and Paul consistently exalt a perfect Christ above an imperfect church and an immoral world, and Marshall Keeble strove to implement these principles in his time, his place. The challenge for black believers is to ensure that Keeble churches authentically reflect the perfect Christ. In one of his sermons, Keeble advised his listeners to "back up." He asserted: "The trouble with married folk is they don't know how to back up. They have a fuss and nobody is willing to back up and say 'I was wrong.' " To illustrate his point, he explained in his homely fashion: "Brethren, you just wouldn't have a car that wouldn't back up. One of the first things you taught a horse, during the horse and buggy days, was to back up."[7] Keeble might well urge African American Churches of Christ to "back up" and deal with the "whole man," his soul and his body, his spiritual as well as his material needs. In this regard, Keeble's practical wisdom remains fitting for his spiritual descendants today.

Appendix I
A Chronology of Marshall Keeble

1878	Born in Murfreesboro, Tennessee
1893	Baptized by Preston Taylor, preacher for Gay Street Christian Church, Nashville, Tennessee
1896	Married Minnie Womack, a daughter of Samuel W. Womack
1900	Withdrew from the Gay Street Christian Church
1914	Committed to full-time evangelism
1915	Published first extant article in the *Gospel Advocate*
1918	Planted first congregation, Oak Grove Church of Christ, Henderson, Tennessee
1920	Samuel W. Womack, Keeble's most influential mentor, died
1926	Baptized his mother into the Church of Christ
1930	Alexander Campbell, another influential black mentor, died
1931	Baptized 166 people in Valdosta, Georgia
1931	B. C. Goodpasture edited and published book, *Biography and Sermons of Marshall Keeble*
1932	Keeble's first wife, Minnie, died
1934	Married Laura Johnson of Corinth, Mississippi
1935	Daughter, Beatrice Elnora, died
1939	Coedited the *Christian Counsellor* from 1939 to 1949
1942	Became president of the Nashville Christian Institute (NCI)
1950	Traveled with NCI students to Southwestern Christian College, Terrell, Texas
1950	G. P. Bowser, founding editor of the *Christian Echo,* died

1954	Preached on television for the first time in Parkersburg, West Virginia
1958	Became president emeritus of NCI
1959	Participated with singer Pat Boone in two-week meeting in New York City
1960	Traveled to Africa, Asia, and Europe
1961	Published *From Mule Back to Super Jet with the Gospel*
1964	Son, Robert, died
1965	N. B. Hardeman died
1966	A. M. Burton died
1967	Nashville Christian Institute closed
1968	Marshall Keeble died

Appendix II
Churches Marshall Keeble Established in the South

Below is a list of known and documented congregations that Marshall Keeble established that remain viable in the early twenty-first century.

Alabama

Ensley Church of Christ, Birmingham (established in the 1930s)
Westside Church of Christ, Florence (date established unknown)
Sterling Boulevard Church of Christ, Sheffield (established in 1926)
High Street Church of Christ, Tuscumbia (established in 1919)

Arkansas

Ninth Street Church of Christ, Fort Smith (established ca. 1929)
Harrison and Willow Church of Christ, Conway (established ca. 1925)

Florida

Twenty-ninth Street Church of Christ, Tampa (established in 1926)
Twentieth Street Church of Christ, St. Petersburg (established in 1927)
Sixth Street Church of Christ, Lakeland (established in 1929)
Westside Church of Christ, Jacksonville (established in 1930)
Tenth Avenue Church of Christ, Bradenton (established ca. 1933)

Georgia

Simpson Street Church of Christ, Atlanta (established in 1931)
Woodlawn Forrest Church of Christ, Valdosta (established in 1930)

Kentucky
Campbell Street Church of Christ, Hopskinville (established in 1928)
Ninth Street Church of Christ, Paducah (established in 1924)

Louisiana
Louisa Street Church of Christ, New Orleans (established ca. 1936)
Thirty-second Street Church of Christ, Baton Rouge (established in 1952)

Mississippi
Parkview Church of Christ, Jackson (established in 1926)
Terry Street Church of Christ, Ripley (established in 1934)
North Green Street Church of Christ, Tupelo (established ca. 1934)
Fourth Street Church of Christ, Natchez (established in 1945)

Tennessee
Oak Grove Church of Christ, Henderson (established in 1918)
East Jackson Street Church of Christ, Jackson (established 1927)

Texas
Tudor Street Church of Christ, Paris (established ca. 1934)
Hood Street Church of Christ, Waco (established ca. 1935)
North Tenneha Church of Christ, Tyler (established in 1935)
Fifth Ward Church of Christ, Houston (established in 1929)
Welch Street Church of Christ, Wichita Falls (established in 1936)
Thomas Boulevard Church of Christ, Port Arthur (established in 1935)
Eastside Church of Christ, Greenville (established in 1937)
Church of Christ, Wellington (established in 1941)
Treadaway Church of Christ, Abilene (established in 1935)
Twentieth and Birch Church of Christ, Lubbock (established in 1932)
North Tenth and Treadaway Church of Christ, Abilene (established in 1935)
Katy Boulevard Church of Christ, Bonham (established in 1933)

Appendix III
Preachers Who Attended the Nashville Christian

Below is an incomplete list of black preachers or young men in Churches of Christ whom Marshall Keeble influenced while students at the Nashville Christian Institute. Most of Keeble's "boys" hailed from southern states.

Molefi Kete Asante [Arthur L. Smith Jr.], Valdosta, Georgia
David Benford, Gadsden, Alabama
Leroy Blackman, Decatur, Alabama
Timothy Blair, Montgomery, Alabama
Otis Boatwright, Nashville, Tennessee
Frankie Brown, McMinnville, Tennessee
Jefferson R. Caruthers, I, Midland, Texas
Wilton H. Cook, Hopewell, Virginia
Wadell Davis
W. C. Edwards
William English
Jack Evans Sr., Houston, Texas
Franklin Florence Sr., Miami, Florida
Arthur Fulson Jr., Hugo, Oklahoma
Fred Gray, Montgomery, Alabama
Willie Ray Gray, Midland, Texas
James D. Harris Sr., Obion, Tennessee
Daniel Harrison, Montgomery, Alabama
Joe Henry Hawthorne, Houston, Texas
Lovell Hayes, St. Louis, Missouri

Richard Hickerson
Dewayne James, Abilene, Texas
Jimmy James, Abilene, Texas
David Jones, Bastrop, Louisiana
Harry Kellam
Vanderbilt Lewis, Mississippi
Robert McBride, Natchez, Mississippi
Lester Means, Lubbock, Texas
K. K. Mitchell, College Park, Georgia
William Niles, Florida
Hasson Reed, Atoka, Oklahoma
Jesse Reese
William Robinson, Decatur, Alabama
Floyd Rose, Valdosta, Georgia
Jimmy Rose, Valdosta, Georgia
Marshall Keeble Rose, Valdosta, Georgia
Richard Rose, Valdosta, Georgia
David Shanks, Valdosta, Georgia
Alvin Simmons, Guthrie, Oklahoma
Eddie Smith, Valdosta, Georgia
Willie D. Sweet
Carl Taylor, Miami, Florida
Willie F. Washington, Valdosta, Georgia
William Whitaker, Tampa, Florida
Daniel Williams
Dwayne Winrow, Oklahoma
Robert Woods, Gallatin, Tennessee
Freeman Wyche, Valdosta, Georgia

Notes

Prologue

1. Eugene Lawton, *Fasten Your Seatbelts, Turbulence May Be Ahead: Soul-Stirring Sermons for Everybody* (Newark, N.J.: Lawton Publications, 1983), 100. Lawton made this insightful observation during an Annual National Lectureship for African American Churches of Christ on March 27, 1981, in Dallas, Texas.

This book focuses on Keeble's evangelistic work as well as the development of African American Churches of Christ in the South, the eleven ex-Confederate states: Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, Louisiana, Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Texas, and Arkansas. I will also examine Keeble's work in Kentucky, since he left an indelible mark there. Chapter 8 of this book explores the evangelistic work of Keeble (1878–1968), G. P. Bowser (1874–1950), A. L. Cassius (1889–1982), and R. N. Hogan (1902–1997) in both the North and in the West.

2. E. N. Glenn, "Keeble in California," *Christian Leader* 47 (May 16, 1933): 7. Amos Lincoln Cassius (1889–1982), an African American preacher, was also part of this meeting at the Central Church of Christ in Los Angeles, California.

Keeble's first wife, Minnie Womack, died in 1932. He married his second wife, Laura Johnson, of Corinth, Mississippi, in 1934.

By the terminology "pure gospel," Keeble denotes worshiping with no instrumental music, partaking of the Lord's Supper every Sunday, baptizing adult believers for the remission of sins, evangelizing through the local congregation, and organizing churches with elders and deacons.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. B. C. Goodpasture, ed., *Biography and Sermons of Marshall Keeble, Evangelist* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1966 [1931]).

6. Keeble, *From Mule Back to Super Jet with the Gospel* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1962), 11.

7. Arthur Lee Smith Jr., "A Rhetorical Analysis of the Speaking of Marshall Keeble" (Master's thesis, Pepperdine University, 1965), 4. Arthur Lee Smith Jr. changed his name to Molefi Kete Asante. See also, Matthew C. Morrison, "Marshall Keeble's Eloquence of Disarming Humor," *Today's Speech* 17 (November 1969): 17.

8. Forrest Neil Rhoads, "A Study of the Sources of Marshall Keeble's Effectiveness as a Preacher" (Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Illinois University, 1970), 201; J. E. Choate, *Roll Jordan Roll: A Biography of Marshall Keeble* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1974); and Paul D. Phillips, "The Interracial Impact of Marshall Keeble, Black Evangelist, 1878–1968," in *The Stone-Campbell Movement: International Religious Tradition,* ed. Michael W. Casey and Douglas A. Foster (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2002): 318.

9. Willie T. Cato, *His Hand and His Heart: The Wit and Wisdom of Marshall Keeble* (Winona, Miss.: J. C. Choate Publications, 1990); Tracy L. Blair, "For a Better Tomorrow: Marshall Keeble and George Philip Bowser, African-American Ministers" (Master's thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, 1996); and Darrell Broking, "Marshall Keeble and the Implementation of a Grand Strategy: Erasing the Color Line in the Church of Christ" (Master's thesis, East Tennessee State University, 2003), 75.

10. Wilbur J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941); and Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890–1940* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998).

11. Floyd H. Horton, "Praises Keeble's Work," *Gospel Advocate* 80 (November 10, 1938): 1068.

12. William E. Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African-American Church in the South, 1865–1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 96. See also, C. H. Phillips, *The History of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America* (New York: Arno Press, 1972); Clarence E. Walker, *A Rock in a Weary Land: The African Methodist Episcopal Church during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982); James Melvin Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship: The Black Baptist Quest for Social Power* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1986); and C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990).

13. Marshall Keeble was more concerned with leading black Americans to heaven

than he was in leading them to voting booths. The author accepts C. Eric Lincoln's definition of "otherworldly," which "means being concerned only with heaven and eternal life or the world beyond, a pie-in-the-sky attitude that neglects political and social concerns." See Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church,* 12.

14. Andrew Billingsley, *Mighty Like a River: The Black Church and Social Reform* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 11.

15. F. B. Shepherd, "Work among the Negroes," *Gospel Advocate* 72 (December 18, 1930): 1226; and Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 920.

16. Thanks to my graduate assistant John Vaught, who helped me compile these approximate numbers from Mac Lynn, *Churches of Christ in the United States: Inclusive of Her Commonwealth and Territories* (Nashville: 21st Century Christian, 2003). The author readily acknowledges that these numbers might be slightly off, as some black congregations might not be listed in Lynn's exhaustive work.

Chapter 1

1. Senate Report 693, 46th Congress, 2nd Session, 2:108. For a thorough assessment of the Exodusters, see Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977).

2. W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction: An Essay toward a History Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966 [1935]), 30. For a detailed study of the Reconstruction period, see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1988).

3. Free Inhabitants in the Town of Murfreesboro in the County of Rutherford for the State of Tennessee (1850); Free Inhabitants in Murfreesboro in the County of Rutherford for the State of Tennessee (1860); Slave Schedule of the Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Rutherford County, Tennessee (Microfilm Roll No. 5), 72.

4. Inhabitants in the 18th Civil District in Rutherford County, Tennessee (1870), 24; and The Tenth Census of the United States, for Rutherford County, Tennessee (1880), 314. See also J. E. Choate, *Roll Jordan Roll: A Biography of Marshall Keeble* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1974), 14.

5. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 60 (February 14, 1918): 162–163.

6. M. F. Womack, "Our Colored Brethren," *Christian Standard* (June 19, 1880): 197.

7. Little is known about Keeble's maternal grandparents, other than his mother was a faithful member of the Baptist Church until Keeble baptized her into Churches of Christ around 1926. B. C. Goodpasture, ed., *Biography and Sermons of Marshall Keeble, Evangelist* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1966 [1931]), 67–68.

8. According to Choate, *Roll Jordan Roll,* 14, Robert Keeble moved to Nashville when Marshall was four years old.

9. Mrs. Keith N. Slayton, "A Recollection of Robert Keeble," *Gospel Advocate* 110 (July 18, 1968): 454.

10. Fisk University was established in 1866. Central Tennessee College was founded in 1866 before it evolved into Walden University in 1890. Meharry Medical College was organized in 1876 to train black physicians. See Faye Wellborn Robbins, "A World within a World: Black Nashville, 1880–1915" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arkansas, 1980), 29–96.

The Jubilee Singers, after traversing the United States for eighteen months, raised $40,000.00 for the construction of Jubilee Hall. For a detailed account of the Jubilee Singers' accomplishments, see Andrew Ward, *Dark Midnight When I Rise: The Story of the Jubilee Singers, Who Introduced the World to the Music of Black America* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2000).

11. Twelfth Census of the United States, Davidson County, Tennessee (1900); and Nashville Directory (1896).

12. Keeble, "Among the Colored People," *Gospel Advocate* 59 (January 25, 1917): 93.

13. Keeble, "Among the Colored People," *Gospel Advocate* 58 (June 22, 1916): 638.

14. Bowser, "Questions," *Christian Echo* (October 1916): 4.

15. Annie C. Tuggle, *Another World Wonder* (n.p., n.d.), 112.

16. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (August 4, 1921): 748.

17. "Sister M. Keeble Dead," *Gospel Advocate* 74 (December 15, 1932): 1329.

18. Keeble, "Keeble Reports Work, His Mother Passes," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (April 2, 1936): 330–331.

19. Choate, *Roll Jordan Roll,* 18, 19, 70.

20. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 60 (February 14, 1918): 163.

21. Keeble, "An Interesting Report," *Gospel Advocate* 61 (June 12, 1919): 573. See also, Forrest Neil Rhoads, "A Study of the Sources of Marshall Keeble's Effectiveness as a Preacher" (Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Illinois University, 1970), 76–77.

22. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 60 (August 29, 1918): 835.

23. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 62 (August 26, 1920): 845.

24. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 62 (May 27, 1920): 532.

25. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (September 15, 1921): 911.

26. In 1941, Keeble referred to the Jackson Street Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee, as the "mother church among the colored people." See "Keeble to Be Here," *Gospel Advocate* 83 (December 25, 1941): 1242.

27. Keeble, "Among the Colored People," *Gospel Advocate* 59 (January 25, 1917): 93.

28. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 61 (March 13, 1919): 261. For a comparison of Samuel W. Womack (1851–1920) and Alexander Campbell (1862–1930), see Edward J. Robinson, " 'The Two Old Heroes': Samuel W. Womack, Alexander Campbell, and the Origins of African-American Churches of Christ in the United States," *Discipliana* 65 (Spring 2005): 1–20.

29. Womack, "Among the Colored People," *Gospel Advocate* 57 (December 30, 1915): 1326.

30. Womack, "Our Colored Brethren," *Christian Standard* (December 27, 1879): 413.

31. Womack, "Our Colored Brethren," *Christian Standard* (June 5, 1880): 181.

32. Ibid.

33. Womack, "Notes from Our Correspondents," *Gospel Advocate* 25 (December 10, 1884): 794.

34. Keeble, "A Great Man Gone," *Gospel Advocate* 62 (July 29, 1920): 744–745. For the role journals played in the rupture between Disciples of Christ and Churches of Christ, see James B. Major, "The Role of Periodicals in the Development of the Disciples of Christ, 1850–1910" (Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1966).

35. Womack, "Church News," *Gospel Advocate* 42 (October 25, 1900): 685.

36. Womack, "Church News," *Gospel Advocate* 44 (April 10, 1902): 237. With this statement Womack merely echoed what white leaders had argued in the antebellum period. Tolbert Fanning asserted in 1857: "The Church of God is the only divinely authorized Missionary, Bible, Sunday and Temperance Society; the only institution in which the Heavenly Father will be honored in the salvation of the world, and in through no other agency can man glorify his Maker. . . . We see not, and never have seen, how it is possible for any people professing the Christian religion to attempt to do the work of the church through merely human agencies, such as Missionary Societies, Sunday Schools, etc." Tolbert Fanning, "The Lord's Treasury," *Gospel Advo-*

cate 3 (March 1857): 69. See also Bill J. Humble, "The Missionary Society Controversy in the Restoration Movement (1823–1875)" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1964).

37. C. E. W. Dorris, "The Gospel Advocate, Organs and Societies," *Gospel Advocate* 48 (October 18, 1906): 670.

38. J. W. Atkisson, "A Progressive Age," *Gospel Advocate* 49 (October 24, 1907): 683.

39. Womack, "Church News," *Gospel Advocate* 44 (May 15, 1902): 317.

40. Womack, "Church News," *Gospel Advocate* 44 (July 10, 1902): 445.

41. Ibid.

42. Keeble, "A Great Man Gone," *Gospel Advocate* 62 (July 29, 1920): 744–745.

43. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 60 (February 14, 1918): 162–163.

44. Keeble, "Evangelistic Work for Three Years," *Gospel Advocate* 60 (January 31, 1918): 115.

45. Keeble, "Four Years of Evangelistic Work," *Gospel Advocate* 61 (January 9, 1919): 41.

46. Keeble, "Sowing and Reaping," *Gospel Advocate* 74 (January 28, 1932): 124.

47. Peter J. Paris, *The Social Teaching of Black Churches* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 1. For other important studies on the "otherworldly" and political dichotomy, see Carter G. Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church* (Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, 1985 [1921]); E. Franklin Fraizer, *The Negro Church in America* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964); and C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992 [1990]).

48. Willie T. Cato, *His Hand and His Heart: The Wit and Wisdom of Marshall Keeble* (Winona, Miss.: J. C. Choate Publications, 1990), 18.

49. Gene C. Finley, ed., *Our Garden of Song: A Book of Biography of Song Writers of the Church of Christ and Articles and Other Items of Interest of Our Worship in Song* (West Monroe, La.: Howard Publishing Company, 1980), 174–176.

50. Keeble, "More Gospel Preaching Needed," *Gospel Advocate* 58 (May 11, 1916): 482–483.

51. Keeble, "Things That We Should Be Thankful For," *Gospel Advocate* 60 (February 14, 1918): 162–163.

52. Womack, "Work among the Colored People," *Gospel Advocate* 50 (December 10, 1908): 797.

53. Womack, "Work among the Colored People," *Gospel Advocate* 52 (May 19, 1910): 629.

54. Womack, "Work among the Colored People," *Gospel Advocate* 53 (January 26, 1911): 125.

55. Womack, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 55 (February 13, 1913): 168.

56. Womack, "Among the Colored People," *Gospel Advocate* 56 (January 8, 1914): 57.

57. Ibid.

58. Choate, *Roll Jordan Roll,* 34.

59. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 59 (October 11, 1917): 996.

Chapter 2

1. John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2000 [1947]), 293–296.

2. Don H. Doyle, *Nashville in the New South, 1880–1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 58.

3. Eva Emmons, "Dedicated Lives Richly Rewarded: Brother and Sister A. M. Burton," *Gospel Advocate* 98 (January 26, 1956): 76.

4. The author is keenly aware that the analogy between the relationship of Burton-Keeble and Rosenwald-Washington has limitations by the absence of shared religious allegiance. Notwithstanding the significant differences, the Rosenwald-Washington relationship illustrates how a wealthy white benefactor could help African Americans financially but yet espouse anti-black sentiment. See Peter M. Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald: The Man Who Built Sears, Roebuck and Advanced the Cause of Black Education in the American South* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 92–96. James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 157–159.

5. Cited in Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald,* 96.

6. Paul Harvey, *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities among Southern Baptists, 1865–1925* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 244.

7. Burton, "In Behalf of the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 56 (March 26, 1914): 349.

8. Ibid.

9. Alexander Campbell, "Among the Colored People," *Gospel Advocate* 56 (April 9, 1914): 414.

10. Burton, "The Jackson Street Meeting," *Gospel Advocate* 56 (May 21, 1914): 556.

11. John T. Ramsey, "Among the Colored People," *Gospel Advocate* 55 (October 9, 1913): 982.

12. Womack, "Among the Colored People," *Gospel Advocate* 56 (March 19, 1914): 336.

13. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 62 (July 8, 1920): 678.

14. Jones, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 62 (November 25, 1920): 1149.

15. Jones, "Report of Alonzo Jones," *Gospel Advocate* 65 (September 6, 1923): 879.

16. Jones, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 67 (February 12, 1925): 161. See also Jones, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 67 (July 2, 1925): 641.

17. Jones, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 68 (March 18, 1926): 262–263.

18. Keeble, "A Great Man Gone," *Gospel Advocate* 62 (July 29, 1920): 744–745.

19. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (January 20, 1921): 78.

20. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (November 3, 1921): 1083–1084.

21. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (December 1, 1921): 1177.

22. Keeble, "Field Reports," *Gospel Advocate* 65 (March 22, 1923): 292–293.

23. Keeble, "Report of Work," *Gospel Advocate* 66 (January 3, 1924): 22–23.

24. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 67 (April 9, 1925): 354.

25. Burton, "The Prospects and Needs of the Putnam County Industrial School for Negroes," *Gospel Advocate* 58 (February 10, 1916): 132. For G. P. Bowser's significant work in the history of African American Churches of Christ, see R. Vernon Boyd, *Undying Dedication: The Story of G. P. Bowser* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1985).

26. Womack, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 62 (January 1, 1920): 22.

27. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 69 (January 27, 1927): 91.

28. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 69 (April 21, 1927): 368.

29. Burton, "My New Year's Contract with Myself," *Gospel Advocate* 70 (January 12, 1928): 29.

30. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 70 (November 22, 1928): 1120–1121.

31. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 71 (September 19, 1929): 908–909.

32. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 71 (December 5, 1929): 1174–1175.

33. Keeble, "Report of M. Keeble," *Gospel Advocate* 73 (January 8, 1931): 45.

34. Keeble, "Mission Work among My People," *Christian Counselor* 1 (August 1, 1939): 2.

35. Keeble, "A Great Opportunity," *Gospel Advocate* 86 (May 18, 1944): 341.

36. Choate, *Roll Jordan Roll,* 21.

37. Campbell, "Work among the Colored People," *Gospel Advocate* 51 (December 2, 1909): 1523.

38. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 95 (January 1, 1953): 862.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid. See also Eva Emmons, "Dedicated Lives Richly Rewarded: Brother and Sister A. M. Burton," *Gospel Advocate* 98 (January 26, 1956): 77.

41. Pullias, "What Brother and Sister Burton Have Meant to Christian Education," *Gospel Advocate* 98 (January 26, 1956): 73. J. E. Choate applauded Burton as a Christian millionaire who gave "some six million dollars to David Lipscomb College." Choate, *Roll Jordan Roll,* 10.

42. Calvin Bowers, *Realizing the California Dream: The Story of Black Churches of Christ in Los Angeles* (Calvin H. Bowers, 2001), 277.

Chapter 3

1. Thomas Nelson Page, *The Negro: The Southerner's Problem* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1904), 54, 165. See also Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865–1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 103–105; and Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890–1940* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 71, 73.

2. J. M. McCaleb, "Japan Letter: How to Reach the Colored Man," *Christian Leader and the Way* 21 (September 3, 1907): 3; and E. F. Acuff, "Faithful Old Negro Loses Home in Moore County," *Gospel Advocate* 76 (October 31, 1929): 1052. For a comparison and contrast between the "old Negro" and the "new Negro," see Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 184–185, 197–199.

3. Benjamin E. Mays, *Born to Rebel: An Autobiography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 46–47.

4. Cited in Litwack, *Trouble in Mind,* 114. See also Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

5. Cited in Neil R. McMillen, *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 11.

6. Paul Laurence Dunbar, "We Wear the Mask" [1897] in *The National Anthology of African-American Literature,* ed. Henry Louis Gates (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), 978–979. That some African Americans wore "masks" is attested by Booker T. Washington, a former slave from Virginia. Washington recalled that when African Americans sang spirituals during slavery they often disguised the meaning of the word "freedom" in their songs. Slaves wanted their white owners to think freedom "referred to the next world, and no connection with life in

this world. Now they gradually threw off the mask, and were not afraid to let it be known that the 'freedom' in their songs meant freedom of the body in this world." See Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995 [1901]), 11.

7. Richard Wright, "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow, An Autobiographical Sketch," [1937] in *The Norton Anthology of African-American Literature,* ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997): 1388–1396.

8. Robbins, "A World within a World," 287. See also William J. Faulkner, *The Days When the Animals Talked: Black American Folktales and How They Came to Be* (Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1977), 6.

9. Choate, *Roll Jordan Roll,* 21. Scholar Don Haymes has made a similar observation about Keeble's Brer Rabbit-like characteristics. See Haymes, "Marshall Keeble," in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 441–442.

10. Lester C. Lamon, *Black Tennesseans, 1900–1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977), 3. Black ministers across the South, depending on the circumstances, assumed various and complex positions on race issues. Scholar Howard N. Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865–1890* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 217, has noted that "a given minister's role varied according to his age, denomination, general background, and personality. In addition, individual pastors may have taken an accommodationist position in one set of circumstances and a protest stance in another."

11. Louis T. Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Making of a Black Leader, 1856–1901* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 45.

12. Floyd Rose, "The Real Marshall Keeble" (Tape cassette, Abilene Christian University Lectureship, 1997).

13. John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New York: Doubleday, 1949 [1937]), 173, 257. See also McMillen, *Dark Journey,* 283.

14. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 1997 [1903]), 157.

15. B. C. Goodpasture, ed., *Biography and Sermons of Marshall Keeble, Evangelist* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1966 [1931]), 12, 17, 18.

16. Burton, "M. Keeble, Colored Evangelist," *Gospel Advocate* 73 (October 15, 1931): 1289.

17. D. B. Whittle, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 75 (March 30, 1933): 307.

18. D. B. Whittle, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 76 (February 22, 1934): 193.

19. Keeble, "Meekness," *Christian Counselor* 4 (February 1943): 2.

20. Keeble, "Things That We Should Be Thankful For," *Gospel Advocate* 60 (February 14, 1918): 162–163.

21. Keeble, "A Great Man Gone," *Gospel Advocate* 62 (July 29, 1920): 744–745.

22. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 69 (October 13, 1927): 978–979.

23. W. E. B., "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 76 (June 28, 1934): 631.

24. Keeble, "From M. Keeble," *Bible Banner* 3 (April 1941): 5. See also Robert E. Hooper, *A Distinct People: A History of the Churches of Christ in the 20th Century* (West Monroe, La.: Howard Publishing Co., 1993), 271–272.

25. H. H. Adamson, "Keeble is Contagious!" *Gospel Advocate* 81 (June 29, 1939): 613.

26. Keeble, "Work in Florida," *Gospel Advocate* 72 (June 12, 1930): 574.

27. E. Couch and others, "Commend Colored Preacher," *Gospel Advocate* 77 (April 11, 1935): 356.

28. James L. Lovell to Mrs. A. J. Allen, in "The James L. Lovell Vertical File" (CRS, Abilene Christian University).

29. Joe H. Morris, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 81 (August 31, 1939): 828.

30. Basil Overton, "My Feelings about 'Roll Jordan Roll,'" *Gospel Advocate* 110 (July 18, 1968): 453.

31. H. A. Dixon, "Marshall Keeble and the College Lectureship," *Gospel Advocate* 110 (July 18, 1968): 455.

32. Lambert Campbell, "Keeble as a School Man," *Gospel Advocate* 110 (July 18, 1968): 460.

33. Albert Gray, "Brother Keeble at His Home Congregation," *Gospel Advocate* 110 (July 18, 1968): 461.

34. Karl W. Pettus, "The Memorial to Marshall Keeble," *Gospel Advocate* 110 (July 18, 1968): 449. Carroll Pitts Jr. (1924–1987), a notable black minister in Churches of Christ, pointed out that white Christians treated Keeble royally "because he did not openly oppose the segregationist practices in white churches." See Carroll Pitts Jr., "A Critical Study of Civil Rights Practices, Attitudes and Responsibilities in Churches of Christ" (Master's thesis, Pepperdine College, 1969), 72.

35. Reuel Lemmons, "Marshall Keeble," *Firm Foundation* 85 (May 14, 1968): 306; and Pettus, "The Memorial to Marshall Keeble," 449.

36. Samuel Robert Cassius, "The Race Problem," *Christian Leader* 15 (September 3, 1901): 9.

37. Cassius, "Among Our Colored Disciples," *Christian Companion* 22 (October 19, 1915): 5.

38. Cassius, "Giving Thanks," *Christian Leader* 35 (November 15, 1921): 8. See also Edward J. Robinson, "'Like Rats in a Trap': Samuel Robert Cassius and the 'Race Problem' in Churches of Christ" (Ph.D. dissertation, Mississippi State University, 2003), 164–165; and Edward J. Robinson, *To Save My Race from Abuse: The Life of Samuel Robert Cassius* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007), 123.

39. J. E. Choate, "Interview with Marshall Keeble" (Tape 2, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, Tennessee).

40. F. B. Shepherd, "Work among the Negroes" *Gospel Advocate* 72 (December 18, 1930): 1226. See also R. Vernon Boyd, *Undying Dedication: The Story of G. P. Bowser* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1985), 64–67.

41. R. N. Hogan, "Is It the Law or Down-Right Prejudice?" *Christian Echo* 58 (June 1963): 3.

42. It is noteworthy that R. N. Hogan, largely through the untiring and unselfish efforts of white editor James L. Lovell (1896–1984), did indeed collect substantial financial aid to carry out his evangelistic campaigns. In the late 1930s Lovell published a paper, *Hogan's Helper,* to assist Hogan's protracted meetings.

43. Keeble rejected the emotional religious fervor of contemporary African Americans. In 1935 when Marshall Keeble conducted a gospel meeting in Abilene, Texas, he preached before crowds of over five hundred each night, "whites far outnumbering the colored hearers." The editor of the *Optimist* noted: "Keeble rejects all time-honored darky religionisms. 'Have I got religion?' he asks. 'God fixed religion for man to do, and man goes and GETS it.'" While Keeble may have rejected the excessive emotionalism of the "old-time darkey," he yet imbibed his nonthreatening attributes of duplicity, docility, and humility. See *The Optimist* 23 (September 26, 1935): 1.

44. Keeble, "Jesus, Misunderstood" (Nashville: David Lipscomb Annual Lectureship, 1948), 126.

45. Members of the "Black Cabinet" included Mary McLeod Bethune, founder and president of Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach, Florida; Harold L. Ickes, a former president of the NAACP Chicago branch; Robert L. Vann, editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier;* and others. See Franklin and Moss, 429–431. For an excellent treatment of African Americans' transition from the Republican party to the Democratic party in the 1930s, see Nancy Weiss, *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln: Black Politics in the Age of FDR* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

46. Keeble, "The Church among the Colored" at Abilene Christian College Lectureship (Austin: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1950), 142–156.

47. Harry Kellam, "A Tribute to Two Dr. K's," *Christian Echo* 77 (January 1987): 2.

48. Ibid.

49. Raymond Arsenault, *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 496–498. See also John Lewis, *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1998), 198.

50. Mark Tucker, "Six Black Women Who Influenced My Life: A Journey in

Spiritual and Intellectual Formation," in *Restoring the First-Century Church in the Twenty-First Century: Essays on the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement in Honor of Don Haymes,* ed. Warren Lewis and Hans Rollmann (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 2005), 326–327.

51. Tim Tucker, " 'Potsherds': A Piece of Middle Tennessee Samizdat Literature," 26–27 (an unpublished paper in the author's possession). Thanks to Mark Tucker, Tim's brother, for sharing this information with me. For reference to Keeble's visit to New England, see "Marshall Keeble in New England" *Christian Echo* 61 (February 1966): 7.

52. James Weldon Johnson, "The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man," [1912] in *Three Negro Classics* (New York: Avon Books, 1965), 403.

Chapter 4

1. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 66 (November 13, 1924): 1107.

2. B. C. Goodpasture, ed., *The Gospel Advocate Centennial Volume* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1955), 297.

3. W. T. Moore, *Comprehensive History of the Disciples of Christ* (New York: Fleming H. Revel, 1909), 12.

4. Richard T. Hughes, Henry E. Webb, and Howard E. Short, *The Power of the Press: Studies of the* Gospel Advocate, *the* Christian Standard, *and the* Christian-Evangelist (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1986), 2.

5. Charles L. Loos, "Our Colored Brethren," *Christian Standard* (March 8, 1879): 76–77.

6. Cassius, "My Position on All Questions of Fellowship," *Christian Leader* 11 (September 21, 1897): 4. For a treatment of Cassius's conflict in Panama, Nebraska, see Robinson, *To Save My Race,* 71–73.

7. For an overview of Cassius's remarkable career as an evangelist, educator, editor, and race man, see Edward J. Robinson, "Samuel Robert Cassius: A Forgotten Trailblazer in Churches of Christ," *Restoration Quarterly* 48 (First Quarter 2005): 11–24. Regrettably there are no known extant copies of Cassius's paper.

8. In 1931 the *Gospel Advocate* reported that the *Christian Echo* was a "good, interesting, spicy, four-page, semimonthly paper," published by G. P. Bowser. The former paper also noted that it "seems that the paper had been suspended and started again. They need donations to help carry on." See "Reports, Again," *Gospel Advocate* 73 (November 5, 1931): 1381. This is not to diminish the significance of the *Firm Foundation,* founded by Austin McGary in 1884 in Texas. While this Texas journal enjoyed wide circulation among Churches of Christ, it did not measure up to the influence of the *Gospel Advocate.*

9. Alexander Campbell, "Work among the Colored People," *Gospel Advocate* 53 (June 1, 1911): 619.

10. John T. Ramsey, "Among the Colored People," *Gospel Advocate* 58 (January 6, 1921): 21.

11. John T. Ramsey, "An Appreciation," *Gospel Advocate* 60 (January 10, 1918): 47.

12. S. W. Womack, "Among the Colored People," *Gospel Advocate* 58 (May 25, 1916): 536.

13. Womack, "Among the Colored People," *Gospel Advocate* 58 (May 25, 1916): 536. See also David Little, "American Christian Review," *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004): 27–28.

14. Ibid. Womack, "Among the Colored People," *Gospel Advocate* 58 (May 25, 1916): 536.

15. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 62 (July 8, 1920): 678.

16. Ella McDavid, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (February 24, 1921): 199.

17. W. U. Benton, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (November 3, 1921): 1084.

18. Keeble, "More Gospel Preaching Needed," *Gospel Advocate* 58 (May 11, 1916): 483.

19. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 60 (February 14, 1918): 163.

20. Ibid.

21. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 62 (March 4, 1920): 235.

22. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (September 15, 1921): 911.

23. Keeble, "Evangelistic Report," *Gospel Advocate* 65 (July 12, 1923): 685.

24. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 69 (October 13, 1927): 979.

25. Keeble, "Work among the Colored People in 1927," *Gospel Advocate* 70 (January 19, 1928): 69.

26. Luke Miller, "The Colored Work in Florida," *Gospel Advocate* 72 (June 26, 1930): 621.

27. Keeble, "Keeble to Florida," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (March 5, 1936): 235.

28. Paul D. English, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (July 23, 1936): 714.

29. L. H. Alexander, "With Colored Lubbock Church," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (December 24, 1936): 1241.

30. W. E. Brightwell, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 80 (March 31, 1938): 304.

31. Keeble, "Keeble Reports Activities," *Gospel Advocate* 79 (November 4, 1937): 1056.

32. Shepherd, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 81 (August 10, 1939): 753.

33. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 81 (August 10, 1939): 754.

34. Keeble, "Keeble Commends Article," *Gospel Advocate* 81 (August 24, 1939): 789.

35. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 98 (May 3, 1956): 429.

36. John Harris, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 101 (August 20, 1959): 543.

37. Harris, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 101 (November 12, 1959): 735.

38. Harris, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 102 (May 19, 1960): 319.

39. Harris, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 103 (May 11, 1961): 303.

40. Harris, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 103 (November 16, 1961): 735.

41. Harris, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 103 (December 7, 1961): 783.

42. Harris, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 104 (October 15, 1962): 671.

43. Harris, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 106 (November 5, 1964): 719.

Chapter 5

1. B. C. Goodpasture, ed., *Biography and Sermons of Marshall Keeble, Evangelist* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1966 [1931]), 22.

2. Campbell, *A Debate between Rev. A. Campbell and Rev. N. L. Rice on the Action, Subject, and Design and Administrator of Christian Baptism; Also, on the Character of Spiritual Influence in Conversion and Sanctification, and on the Expediency and Tendency of Ecclesiastic Creeds, as Terms of Union and Communion* (Lexington: A. T. Skillman & Son, 1844), 611.

3. Thomas H. Olbricht, "Alexander Campbell's View of the Holy Spirit," *Restoration Quarterly* 6 (1962): 8. It is noteworthy that several leaders of the Restoration Movement, including Robert Milligan, Robert Richardson, and J. H. Garrison, argued for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit effecting both conversion and sanctification. See Byron C. Lambert, "The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 403–406.

4. David Lipscomb, "The Holy Spirit," *Gospel Advocate* 48 (November 8, 1906): 706.

5. F. B. Srygley, "The Holy Spirit in Conversion," *Gospel Advocate* 65 (April 26, 1923): 414–415. For similar views on the Word and the Spirit working together in conversion, see Alan E. Highers, "The Indwelling of the Spirit," *Gospel Advocate* 109 (February 2, 1967): 73.

6. R. N. Hogan, "The Work of the Holy Spirit," *Christian Echo* 68 (June 1970): 7.

7. R. N. Hogan, "The Operation of the Holy Spirit," *Christian Echo* 82 (July 1984): 8.

8. Goodpasture, *Biography and Sermons,* 46.

9. Ibid., 85–86.

10. Ibid., 94, 99.

11. Ibid., 30. Black preachers in Churches of Christ who held such an exclusivistic theological and ecclesiological posture often found themselves vigorously opposed by African Americans in other religious groups. G. P. Bowser, for instance, was told by one listener: "Now, you stop misleading the people. You need to get out of town with that stuff." It is unclear where G. P. Bowser was preaching when the above statement was made. Quoted in Thelma M. Holt, ed., *Life and Times of G. P. Bowser* (Nashville: Associated Publishing Company, 1964), 45.

12. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 96 (March 4, 1954): 83.

13. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 97 (March 31, 1955): 262.

14. Goodpasture, *Biography and Sermons,* 41, 43, 47. See also Keeble, "The Thief on the Cross" (Pamphlet) in CRS at Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas. For the significance of the Campbell-McCalla debate, see Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith,* 113–114.

15. Ibid., 38–39; Leroy Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement: An Anecdotal History of Three Churches* (Joplin, Mo.: College Press Publishing Company, 1981), 388–399; and Jerry Gross, "The Rebaptism Controversy among Churches of Christ," in *Baptism and the Remission of Sins: An Historical Perspective,* ed. David W. Fletcher (Joplin, Mo.: College Press Publishing Company, 1990), 297–332.

16. Goodpasture, *Biography and Sermons,* 61.

17. Ibid., 68. Keeble's testimony about his mother's transitioning from the Baptist church into the Church of Christ would place her conversion around 1926.

18. Ibid., 71, 72, 77. For other places where Keeble emphasized the essentiality of baptism for the remission of sins, see Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 95 (April 16, 1953): 238; Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 94 (November 27, 1952): 782–783; Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 95 (May 7, 1953): 286; Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gos-*

pel Advocate 96 (January 28, 1954): 78; and Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 97 (March 17, 1955): 222–223.

19. C. Myer Phillips, "A Historical Study of the Attitude of the Churches of Christ toward Other Denominations" (Ph.D. dissertation, Baylor University, 1983), 47–83.

20. Keeble, "Capture Preachers," *Gospel Advocate* 77 (September 19, 1935): 905.

21. E. W. Anderson, "Colored Work Grows," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (October 22, 1936): 1025.

22. David Edwin Harrell Jr., *The Churches of Christ in the Twentieth Century: Homer Hailey's Personal Journey of Faith* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2000), 225, points out: "In the 1920s, the Christian Church and churches of Christ were estranged brethren, not separate churches, and Homer Hailey and thousands of others moved easily from one wing of the movement to the other, having little sense that they had changed churches."

23. Luke Miller, "Sowing and Reaping," *Gospel Advocate* 73 (January 22, 1931): 88.

24. Luke Miller, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 80 (July 28, 1938): 704.

25. Quoted in Michael L. Wilson, "A History of the Church of Christ in Little Rock, Arkansas, 1900–1925" (Master's thesis, Harding University Graduate School of Religion, 1980), 34–35.

26. In 1921, Marshall Keeble, after preaching in Birmingham, Alabama, noted: "I also used God's word and brought fifteen 'digressives' to the conclusion to take a stand with us and worship God according to the Scriptures." See Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (July 14, 1921): 679.

27. F. B. Shepherd, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 81 (August 31, 1939): 828.

28. R. N. Hogan, "Another Christian Church Captured (Colored)," *Firm Foundation* 53 (April 21, 1936.

29. Bowser, "Questions," *Christian Echo* 37 (September 5, 1942): 3.

30. Thelma Holt, ed., *The Life and Times of G. P. Bowser* (Nashville: Associated Publishing Company, 1964), 17.

31. Cassius, *Negro Evangelization and the Tohee Industrial School* (Cincinnati: Christian Leader Printing, 1898), 10.

32. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith,* 35–36.

33. Bowser, "Gems for Thought," *Christian Echo* 70 (October 1974): 10. In 1988 this same article was published under the heading, "As the Editor Sees It," and was listed as written by G. P. Bowser in 1946. See "As the Editor Sees It," *Christian Echo* 88 (January 1988): 6–7.

34. George E. Steward, *Our Pulpit* (Fort Worth: Steward Publications, 1965), 26–27.

35. J. S. Winston, "Why Are There Not More Churches with Elders among the Black Brethren as among the White Brethren of the Church of Christ?" *Christian Echo* 71 (April 1973): 6.

36. Jacob McClinton, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 96 (September 30, 1954): 782–783.

37. Jack Evans, *Before the Thicket* (Jack Evans, n.d.), 6.

38. Jack Evans, "Reviewing the Garrett Forum 'Review,'" *Christian Echo* (September 1986): 4.

39. Robert Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* (Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, 1897), 1:236–237; Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement,* 143. Paradoxically, in 1957 Jacob McClinton correctly acknowledged that the slogan, "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent," "was originated by Thomas Campbell and from then until now the reformation has been in complete supremacy." Three years earlier (see note 36), McClinton had insisted that Churches of Christ had no direct connection to the Campbells. See McClinton, "This I Believe," *Christian Echo* (January 1957): 2–3.

40. Keeble, "Keeble Baptizes Preachers," *Gospel Advocate* 80 (August 4, 1938): 733.

41. H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001 [1951]), 45–82.

42. Ibid., 97.

43. Martin Luther King Jr., "Where Do We Go from Here?" [1967] in *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.,* ed. James M. Washington (New York: HarperCollins, 1991 [1986]), 252.

44. Willie T. Cato, *His Hand and His Heart: The Wit and Wisdom of Marshall Keeble* (Winona, Miss.: J. C. Choate Publications, 1990), 18.

45. Not only was Keeble's preaching style belligerent, it was also practical. Scholar Michael W. Casey has pointed out that Keeble's preaching differed from other black preachers like R. N. Hogan. "Keeble used a specific technique in his storytelling and analogies that Hogan apparently did not use: his stories or 'parables' were filled with double meanings." For example, in his sermon "Power of the Written Word," Keeble used the analogy of the importance of having a receipt (baptism) to stress a spiritual point, but also to remind blacks of whites' power and proclivity to cheat. See Casey, *Saddlebags, City Streets, and Cyberspace: A History of Preaching in the Churches of Christ* (Abilene, Tex.: Abilene Christian University Press, 1995), 148–151.

46. Keeble, "Keeble to Be Here," *Gospel Advocate* 83 (December 25, 1941): 1242.

47. Benjamin E. Mays, *Born to Rebel: An Autobiography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 83–88, 149, 251, argued that the South's deity, the "god of segregation," was "omnipresent" and "ubiquitous," manifesting itself in segregated wa-

ter fountains, segregated bank windows, segregated taxi cabs, segregated city parks, segregated courtrooms, segregated waiting rooms in hospitals, segregated elevators, segregated churches, and ending in segregated cemeteries.

Chapter 6

1. Keeble, "Sowing and Reaping," *Gospel Advocate* 74 (January 28, 1932): 124; and Cassius, "I Have Kept the Faith," *Christian Leader* 36 (January 31, 1922): 3.

2. For Rayford W. Logan's observation, see his *What the Negro Wants* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), 11. Kyle Haselden, *The Racial Problem in Christian Perspective* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), 29. The quote is from Martin Luther King Jr., *Strength to Love* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981 [1963]), 42. See also David Edwin Harrell Jr., *Sources of Division in the Disciples of Christ, 1865–1900: A Social History of the Disciples of Christ* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003 [1973]), 159; David M. Reimers, *White Protestantism and the Negro* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 25.

3. Keeble, "Among the Colored People," *Gospel Advocate* 58 (June 22, 1916): 638.

4. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 59 (August 2, 1917): 751.

5. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 59 (October 11, 1917): 996.

6. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 60 (March 28, 1918): 308.

7. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 60 (August 29, 1918): 835.

8. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 60 (December 19, 1918): 1222.

9. Keeble, "An Interesting Report," *Gospel Advocate* 61 (June 12, 1919): 572–573.

10. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 61 (September 11, 1919): 898.

11. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 61 (November 13, 1919): 1131.

12. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 62 (March 4, 1920): 235.

13. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 62 (September 16, 1920): 920.

14. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (March 31, 1921): 319.

15. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 64 (March 30, 1922): 304.

16. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 64 (May 11, 1922): 452.

17. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 64 (June 8, 1922): 546–547.

18. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 64 (August 24, 1922): 815.

19. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 70 (June 21, 1928): 592.

20. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 70 (July 19, 1928): 689.

21. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 71 (December 5, 1929): 1174–1175.

22. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 62 (August 26, 1920): 845.

23. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 62 (October 21, 1920): 1039.

24. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 67 (August 27, 1925): 837.

25. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 67 (December 24, 1925): 1240–1241.

26. F. B. Shepherd, "The Heathen at Home," *Gospel Advocate* 75 (July 13, 1933): 606.

27. E. L. Barnes, "Colored Work Prospers," *Gospel Advocate* 79 (January 28, 1937): 90.

28. Carey Brasher, "Colored Church Free of Debt," *Gospel Advocate* 81 (March 23, 1939): 282.

29. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 82 (August 22, 1940): 811.

30. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 82 (October 10, 1940): 979.

31. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 82 (November 7, 1940): 1074.

32. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 94 (July 3, 1952): 437–438.

33. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 64 (August 3, 1922): 742–743.

34. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 69 (October 13, 1927): 978–979.

35. Keeble, "Report of Work," *Gospel Advocate* 70 (September 13, 1928): 886–887.

36. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 76 (January 4, 1934): 26.

37. Keeble, "Nashville Activities," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (May 21, 1936): 500.

38. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 82 (July 4, 1940): 647.

39. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 82 (September 12, 1940): 881.

40. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 62 (November 4, 1920): 1081.

41. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (January 20, 1921): 78; Robinson, *To Save My Race,* 156–157.

42. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (July 14, 1921): 678.

43. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 64 (March 9, 1922): 232.

44. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 64 (July 13, 1922): 671.

45. Keeble, "Evangelistic Report," *Gospel Advocate* 65 (July 12, 1923): 685.

46. Keeble, "Work among Our Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 67 (January 29, 1925): 117.

47. Andrew Manis, *A Fire You Can't Put Out: The Civil Rights Life of Birmingham's Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999),

13. See also Blaine Brownell, "Birmingham, Alabama: New South City in the 1920s," *Journal of Southern History* 38 (February 1972): 21–48.

48. Keeble, "Our Messages," *Gospel Advocate* 68 (September 23, 1926): 911.

49. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 69 (November 17, 1927): 1099. See also Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 70 (November 22, 1928): 1120–1121.

50. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 68 (April 8, 1926): 336.

51. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 70 (August 9, 1928): 767.

52. Dan T. Carter, *Scottsboro: A Tragedy of the American South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969). See also Clarence Norris and Sybil D. Washington, *The Last of the Scottsboro Boys: An Autobiography* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1979).

53. T. W. Rucko, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 76 (June 28, 1934): 631.

54. Keeble, "Keeble at Stephenville, Texas," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (May 7, 1936): 452.

55. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 80 (June 23, 1938): 586.

56. Ibid.

57. Carl G. Smith, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 81 (August 3, 1939): 728.

58. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 81 (August 10, 1939): 754.

59. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 84 (October 29, 1942): 1052.

60. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 84 (November 26, 1942): 1149.

61. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 96 (July 8, 1954): 541–542.

62. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 98 (October 4, 1956): 822–823.

63. Keeble, "Field Reports," *Gospel Advocate* 65 (May 17, 1923): 495.

64. Keeble, "Our Messages," *Gospel Advocate* 69 (April 28, 1927): 392. See also Keeble, "Our Messages," *Gospel Advocate* 69 (June 2, 1927): 524.

65. Keeble, "Keeble-Haywood Debate," *Gospel Advocate* 70 (February 23, 1928): 188.

66. P. G. Millen, "Work among the Colored People in Tampa, Fla.," *Gospel Advocate* 70 (April 12, 1928): 357.

67. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 70 (April 19, 1928): 378–379.

68. T. A. Northcut, "Work among the Colored Brethren in Florida," *Gospel Advocate* 70 (May 3, 1928): 427–428. See also Ulysses Baldwin, "A Decade with M. Keeble" (History of the Restoration Movement Research Paper, 1963, in CRS, Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas).

69. Keeble, "The Lakeland Meeting," *Gospel Advocate* 71 (March 14, 1929): 261. See also P. G. Millen, "Colored Work in Florida," *Gospel Advocate* 71 (February 28, 1929): 216.

70. Keeble, "Our Messages," *Gospel Advocate* 71 (April 11, 1929): 344. See also Keeble, "Report of Work," *Gospel Advocate* 71 (May 9, 1929): 451–452.

71. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 72 (March 29, 1930): 284. See also Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 72 (April 10, 1930): 353.

72. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 72 (May 15, 1930): 473.

73. Keeble, "Sowing and Reaping," *Gospel Advocate* 73 (December 17, 1931): 1585.

74. D. B. Whittle, "Sowing and Reaping," *Gospel Advocate* 74 (August 25, 1931): 957.

75. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 75 (April 27, 1933): 403. See also Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 75 (February 23, 1933): 191.

76. Keeble, "Keeble Reports Work; His Mother Passes," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (April 2, 1936): 330–331.

77. Keeble, "Keeble in Florida," *Gospel Advocate* 80 (February 17, 1938): 163. See also Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 80 (March 31, 1938): 304.

78. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 60 (May 30, 1918): 524. In 1916 Robert H. Boll moved from New Orleans, Louisiana, to Louisville, Kentucky, where he continued publishing his important journal, *Word and Work,* which emphasized premillennialism. Keeble was obviously aware of Boll's and E. L. Jorgensen's premillennial views, which kindled a disturbance in Churches of Christ, but he, like S. R. Cassius, G. P. Bowser, and other black preachers, steered clear of this controversy. R. Vernon Boyd notes about Bowser: "This doctrine never interested Bowser very much and he knew it was controversial and too complicated to be of concern to most of the black brethren. He tended not to let it be an issue for division by coming out for or against it. . . . He felt that belief in premillennialism did not effect one's eternal salvation." See Boyd, *Undying Dedication: The Story of G. P. Bowser* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1985), 72.

79. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 61 (October 9, 1919): 997.

80. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (October 20, 1921): 1040.

81. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (November 3, 1921): 1083–1084.

82. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (December 22, 1921): 1259.

83. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 64 (March 30, 1922): 304.

84. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 70 (October 11, 1928): 981. See also the account of J. Pettey Ezell, "The Work at Hopkinsville," *Gospel Advocate* 70 (December 27, 1928): 1246.

85. H. J. Miller, "Keeble at Bowling Green," *Gospel Advocate* 77 (October 10, 1935): 978.

86. Keeble, "Sowing and Reaping," *Gospel Advocate* 77 (August 13, 1936): 788.

87. Keeble, "Keeble Has Good Meeting," *Gospel Advocate* 81 (May 25, 1939): 492.

88. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 94 (October 16, 1952): 678.

89. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 72 (January 2, 1930): 20.

90. Keeble, "Sowing and Reaping," *Gospel Advocate* 76 (May 17, 1934): 482. See also Keeble, "Sowing and Reaping," *Gospel Advocate* 76 (May 31, 1934): 529.

91. Keeble, "From the Wide Harvest Field," *Firm Foundation* 51 (June 19, 1934): 6.

92. 1 Corinthians 3:6 (King James Version).

93. Keeble, "Baptizes a Preacher," *Gospel Advocate* 77 (July 18, 1935): 692.

94. Keeble, "Captures Preachers," *Gospel Advocate* 77 (September 19, 1935): 905.

95. Keeble, "With the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (June 18, 1936): 595.

96. Keeble, "Keeble at Wichita Falls," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (September 3, 1936): 861.

97. Keeble, "Reviews Some Meetings," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (November 5, 1936): 1075.

98. Keeble, "Keeble Reviews Work," *Gospel Advocate* 79 (September 9, 1937): 861.

99. Keeble, "Keeble Reports Activities," *Gospel Advocate* 79 (November 4, 1937): 1056.

100. Ibid.

101. Keeble, "Keeble Visits Churches," *Gospel Advocate* 81 (January 5, 1939): 24.

102. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 82 (May 23, 1940): 502.

103. Keeble, "Keeble Held Dallas Meeting," *Gospel Advocate* 83 (January 2, 1941): 21.

104. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 83 (July 24, 1941): 716. See also Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 83 (August 14, 1941): 784.

105. Keeble, "Keeble Visits Churches," *Gospel Advocate* 84 (September 17, 1942): 907.

106. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 68 (March 4, 1926): 216.

107. Keeble, "From Brother M. Keeble," *Gospel Advocate* 72 (August 21, 1930): 816.

108. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 79 (March 4, 1937): 211.

109. Jack Hawkins, "Colored Preacher Needed," *Gospel Advocate* 82 (May 9, 1940): 455. Mac Lynn's compilation of Churches of Christ in the United States shows that a black Church of Christ was not established in Bastrop, Louisiana, until 1954. See Lynn, *Churches of Christ in the United States* (Nashville: 21st Century Christian, 2003), 298.

110. Ira North, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 94 (May 29, 1952): 358–359.

111. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* (June 5, 1952): 374–375.

112. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (December 1, 1921): 1177.

113. Keeble, "Report of M. Keeble," *Gospel Advocate* 73 (January 8, 1931): 45.

114. Ibid.

115. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 80 (September 8, 1938): 852.

116. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 84 (September 17, 1944): 907.

117. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (October 6, 1921): 987.

118. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 71 (September 19, 1929): 908–909.

119. Keeble, "Keeble Holds Two Meetings at Once," *Gospel Advocate* 76 (August 16, 1934): 793.

120. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 98 (October 4, 1956): 822–823.

121. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 71 (September 19, 1929): 908–909. See also James E. Laird, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 71 (September 26, 1929): 928.

122. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 67 (May 21, 1925): 501.

123. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 67 (June 18, 1925): 594. For the pioneering evangelistic work of Wilton H. Cook and James Kennedy in Greenville, South Carolina, see J. Edward Meixner, *History of the Church of Christ in Greater Greenville, S.C.* (n.p., 1978), 33–35.

124. In the 1960s G. E. Steward (1906–1979), a co-laborer of Keeble and disciple of G. P. Bowser, observed that "among the Negroes in South Carolina, they have united with the so-called Church of God and brought in foot washing." Steward may have had in mind the Churches of Christ, Disciples of Christ, which sprang up in the 1870s and flourished in the mid-twentieth century. See G. E. Steward, *Our Pulpit* (Fort Worth: Steward Publications, 1965), 200. See also William Joseph Barber, "A Historical Survey of the Origin and Development of a Rural Negro Church Group in Eastern North Carolina, 1869–1913" (Bachelor of Divinity, Butler University, 1958–1959); and Barber, *The Disciple Assemblies of Eastern North Carolina* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1966). However, the best study on black Churches of Christ, Disciples of Christ in the Carolinas is Shelia Hope Gillams, "Principle and Practice: The Quandary of African American Restorationists in History and Theology of the Church of Christ, 1850–1950" (Ph.D. dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, 2002).

125. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 80 (August 4, 1938): 733.

126. S. E. Harris, "The Negro in Worship," *Gospel Advocate* 49 (July 4, 1907): 424; and E. A. Elam, "The Negro in Worship," *Gospel Advocate* 49 (July 4, 1907): 424.

127. David Lipscomb, "The Negro in Worship," *Gospel Advocate* 49 (July 4, 1907): 424.

128. Robinson, *To Save My Race,* 60–61.

129. J. M. McCaleb, "Japan Letter: A Plea for the Colored Man," *Christian Leader and the Way* 21 (January 1, 1907): 2.

130. Foy E. Wallace, "Negro Meetings for White People," *Bible Banner* 3 (March 1941): 7.

131. Keeble, "From M. Keeble," *Bible Banner* 3 (April 1941): 5.

132. For useful comments on the Wallace-Keeble exchange, see Don Haymes at www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts.race/haymes8.html.

133. Ernest W. Vaughner, "The Need and Neglect of My People," *Gospel Advocate* 91 (November 10, 1949): 709–710. The fear of black men marrying white women pervaded American society throughout much of the twentieth century. The historian Rayford W. Logan noted: "Now, Southerners especially fear that the abolition of public segregation would result in intermarriage." Similarly, the scholar Sterling A. Brown observed: "'Would you want your sister to marry a nigger?' is still the question that is supposed to stun any white man who sponsors rights for Negroes. It stirs Negroes to ironic laughter, although on all levels they recognize the white man's fear of intermarriage as deep-seated." For Logan's and Brown's remarks, see Rayford W. Logan, ed., *What the Negro Wants* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), 28, 329.

134. Floyd Rose, *Beyond the Thicket* (Floyd E. Rose, n.d.), 13–14.

135. Carl Spain, "Modern Challenges to Christian Morals," in *"Christian Faith in the Modern World": The ACC Annual Bible Lectures, 1960* (Abilene, Tex.: Abilene Christian College, 1960), 215.

136. Samuel S. Hill Jr., *Southern Churches in Crisis* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999 [1966]), 112.

Chapter 7

1. Keeble, "Our Messages," *Gospel Advocate* 68 (September 23, 1926): 911. Tuggle, *Our Ministers and Song Leaders of the Church of Christ* (Detroit: Annie C. Tuggle, 1946), 8, reports that Aker was baptized by Keeble in Sheffield, Alabama, in 1926.

2. Paul Harvey, *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities among Southern Baptists, 1865–1925* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 228.

3. C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 82. See also Milton Sernett, *Bound for the Promised Land: African American Religion and the Great Migration* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 92.

4. Mechal Sobel, *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith*

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 85. See also Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 102.

5. James Melvin Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship: The Black Baptist Quest for Social Power* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1986), 204–205; and J. M. Gaskin, *Black Baptists in Oklahoma* (Oklahoma City: Messenger Press, 1992), 138.

6. Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience,* 50–51.

7. For an insightful treatment of Turner's significant, yet controversial career, see Stephen Ward Angell, *Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and African-American Religion in the South* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992).

8. Othal H. Lakey, *The History of the CME Church* (Memphis: CME Publishing House, 1985), 324, 392.

9. John V. Ovletrea, "Alabama Protests," *Christian Index* 56 (January 28, 1926): 12–13.

10. C. L. Finch, "Alabama Misrepresented," *Christian Index* 56 (February 11, 1926): 7; and B. W. Finch, "You Need Not Withhold My Name," *Christian Index* 56 (February 11, 1926): 8.

11. Cited in Michael W. Casey, *Saddlebags, City Streets, and Cyberspace,* 149.

12. Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience,* 80–81.

13. William F. Holmes, *The White Chief: James Kimble Vardaman* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 102–103.

14. Jon Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 101. Benjamin Tillman was a U.S. senator from South Carolina.

15. Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 175–176.

16. "Three Whites, 11 Negroes Killed in Race Fights," *Arkansas Gazette* (October 3, 1919): 1; and John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* 8th edition (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2000 [1847]), 385–390.

17. Ibid., 390.

18. Bill Humble, *Campbell and Controversy: The Story of Alexander Campbell's Five Great Debates with Skepticism, Catholicism, and Presbyterianism* (Joplin, Mo.: College Press, 1986).

19. For more on the black Alexander Campbell's 1920 debate with J. B. Booth, a presiding elder of the A.M.E. Church in Marshall County, Tennessee, see T. G. M'Lean, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 62 (April 15, 1920): 389.

20. For a discussion of Campbell's polemical influence on Keeble, see Edward J. Robinson, "'The Two Heroes': Samuel W. Womack, Alexander Campbell, and the Origins of Black Churches of Christ in the United States," *Discipliana* 65 (Spring 2005): 13–14.

21. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 61 (November 13, 1919): 1131.

22. Ibid.

23. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 69 (October 13, 1927): 978–979.

24. Keeble, "Keeble-Haywood Debate," *Gospel Advocate* 70 (February 23, 1928): 185.

25. Ibid. See also G. T. Haywood, *The Birth of the Spirit in the Days of the Apostles* (Indianapolis: Christ Temple Book Store, n.d.).

26. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 79 (March 4, 1937): 211. By 1937, the Central Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee, had established an impressive reputation for caring for the poor and needy. See Richard T. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith: The Story of Churches of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 204–207.

27. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 82 (August 22, 1940): 811.

28. For H. Richard Niebuhr's reference to "radical humility," see his *Christ and Culture* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001 [1951]), 25. Ruth Hailey, an eyewitness of the assault against Keeble, has confirmed that alcohol prompted the attack. Howard Sanford, a notorious alcoholic, died of alcohol poisoning a year later, causing many to think that God had taken vengeance on the white assailant. Special thanks to Ruth Hailey for sharing the details of the Sanford assault against Keeble (Telephone interview, January 24, 2007). See also, Keeble, "Draws Immense Crowd," *Gospel Advocate* 82 (September 12, 1940): 881. Choate, *Roll Jordan Roll,* 78–79, incorrectly places the incident in 1939.

29. Keeble, "Keeble Has Good Meeting," *Gospel Advocate* 82 (October 10, 1940): 979. As early as 1932, the all-white Union Avenue Church of Christ, Memphis, Tennessee, supported Keeble's meetings in that city. That year, Keeble, at the suggestion of Annie C. Tuggle, came to Memphis, preached the Word, and baptized seventy-five people into the all-black Lauderdale Church of Christ. See Tuggle, *Another World Wonder* (n.p., n.d.), 113.

30. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (July 14, 1921): 678–680.

31. Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 64 (March 9, 1922): 232.

32. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 67 (March 5, 1925): 233.

33. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 68 (April 8, 1926): 336. See also Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 70 (August 9, 1928): 767. In the latter

article, Keeble implies that he had established a black Church of Christ in Florence, Alabama, in 1921.

34. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 70 (November 11, 1928): 1120–1121.

35. Floyd Horton, "Praises Keeble's Work," *Gospel Advocate* 80 (November 10, 1938): 1068.

36. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 69 (June 2, 1927): 524.

37. Choate, *Roll Jordan Roll,* 68.

38. Michael Newton, *The Invisible Empire: The Ku Klux Klan in Florida* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 2001), 42–43. See also David M. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), 225–227. Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 8, attests that some whites in Churches of Christ were part of local klaverns.

39. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 70 (October 11, 1928): 981.

40. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 71 (October 17, 1929): 1000–1001.

41. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 72 (January 2, 1930): 20. While in Houston, Keeble stayed in the home of Lee and Laura Richardson, hospitable people who knew "how to treat a stranger."

42. "The History of the Fifth Ward Church of Christ as Compiled by Available Documents and Oral Statements" (n.p., n.d.). Thanks to the elders of the Fifth Ward Church of Christ (Robert Adams, Herman Brown, Leonard Patterson, Bencil Smith, and Andrew Washington) for sharing this information with me. A copy of this documented history of the Fifth Ward congregation is in the author's possession.

43. Keeble, "From the Wide Harvest Field," *Firm Foundation* 52 (July 2, 1935): 6. For an insightful look at the Jesse Washington lynching, see Patricia Bernstein, *The First Waco Horror: The Lynching of Jesse Washington and the Rise of the NAACP* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005).

44. Keeble, "Baptizes a Preacher," *Gospel Advocate* 77 (July 18, 1935): 692; and Keeble, "Captures Preachers," *Gospel Advocate* 77 (September 19, 1935): 905.

45. Keeble, "Keeble at Stephenville, Texas," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (May 7, 1936): 452. See also Keeble, "With the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (June 18, 1936): 595.

46. M. C. Franklin, "Keeble Plants Church," *Gospel Advocate* 79 (June 24, 1937): 593. For references to the racial and social conditions in Texas in the 1930s, see Bill Chambers, "A History of the Texas Negro and His Development since 1900" (Master's thesis, Texas State Teachers College, 1940), 15; and Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528–1995* (Norman: University of Oklahoma

Press, 1995 [1973]), 137. For reference to the sign which hung on a main street in Greenville, Texas, see "Greenville's Growth: Historians Give Facts from Early Days to Present," *Greenville Evening Banner* (May 7, 1950): 1.

47. Keeble, "Reviews Some Meetings," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (November 5, 1936): 1075.

48. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 84 (September 17, 1942): 907.

49. Katherine E. Barker, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 94 (August 21, 1952): 551.

50. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 71 (August 15, 1929): 789. See also Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 71 (September 19, 1929): 908–909. Thanks to Tommy Brooks for sharing an unpublished historical sketch of the Ninth Street Church of Christ, Fort Smith, Arkansas (in author's possession).

51. See Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (April 28, 1921): 411; and Keeble, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 63 (December 1, 1921): 1177.

52. Keeble, "Report of Keeble," *Gospel Advocate* 73 (January 8, 1931): 45. By 1959, the church Keeble established in Jackson, Mississippi, had relocated and had become the Woodrow Wilson Boulevard Church of Christ. See Earl Lawson, "Woodrow Wilson Boulevard Church, Jackson, Miss.," *Gospel Advocate* 111 (September 17, 1959): 607. Today this congregation is the Parkview Church of Christ.

53. Keeble, "Report of M. Keeble," *Gospel Advocate* 73 (January 8, 1931): 45.

54. Keeble, "Brother Keeble Reports," *Gospel Advocate* 80 (September 8, 1938): 852. The congregation Keeble established around 1934 in Tupelo, Mississippi, is now the North Green Street Church of Christ.

55. Choate, *Roll Jordan Roll,* 53–54. See also Nancy Maclean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 9.

56. "Woodlawn Forrest Church of Christ: Dedication Activities, January 13–17" (n.p.). Thanks to Leroy Butler Jr. for sharing this historical sketch with me (in author's possession).

Chapter 8

1. James L. Lovell, "Love Binds Us Together in Jesus Christ," *California Christian* 11 (October 1955): 2–3.

2. "Additional Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916–1918," *Journal of Negro History* 4 (October 1919): 443.

3. "Documents: Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916–1918," *Journal of Negro History* 4 (July 1919): 298.

4. James R. Grossman, *"Land of Hope": Chicago, Black Southerners, and the*

Great Migration (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989). See also Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

5. Milton C. Sernett, *Bound for the Promised Land: African American Religion and the Great Migration* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

6. Annie C. Tuggle, *Another World Wonder* (n.p., n.d.), 84.

7. J. T. Daniel, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 59 (July 12, 1917): 683. In 1900, Samuel Robert Cassius visited and preached in Chicago, Illinois, and he called the city "too wicked. The very air is polluted with sin." See Cassius, "'Cassius' among the Disciples," *Christian Leader* 14 (July 17, 1900): 4.

8. Sernett, *Bound for the Promised Land,* 160.

9. Daniel, "Among the Colored Folks," *Gospel Advocate* 59 (July 12, 1917): 683.

10. Ibid.

11. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 68 (July 8, 1926): 648.

12. J. T. Daniel, "Colored Congregation in Chicago," *Gospel Advocate* 70 (May 3, 1928): 430.

13. Alonzo Jones, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 71 (October 17, 1929): 1000–1001.

14. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 75 (July 6, 1933): 648. See also "A Historical Sketch of the Sheldon Heights Church of Christ, Chicago, Illinois" (n.p., n.d.). Thanks to Leonardo D. Gilbert, an efficient minister of the Sheldon Heights congregation, for sharing this information with me (in author's possession).

15. "The Colored Church of Christ [Toledo, Ohio]," *Gospel Advocate* 89 (December 4, 1947): 1003.

16. Ibid., 1004.

17. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 94 (September 4, 1952): 581–582. Rufus W. Carvin (1905–1973) was baptized by Marshall Keeble in 1931 in Valdosta, Georgia. Carvin established congregations in Canton, Mansfield, and Dover, Ohio. See J. S. Winston, "The Outlook," *Christian Echo* (April 1973): 9.

18. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 97 (September 8, 1955): 811.

19. Howard U. Johnson, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 102 (February 4, 1960): 79.

20. Cassius, "Being Led of the Spirit," *Christian Leader* 38 (October 14, 1924): 12.

21. Cassius, "The Church of Christ in Oakland, California," *Christian Leader* 38 (October 21, 1924): 12.

22. A. L. Cassius, "Keeble to California," *Gospel Advocate* 76 (October 25, 1934): 1033.

23. Keeble, "Keeble in Fresno," *Gospel Advocate* 77 (February 28, 1935): 209.

24. Keeble, "Brother Keeble Reports," *Gospel Advocate* 77 (March 21, 1935): 282. See also A. L. Cassius, "Keeble in the West," *Gospel Advocate* 77 (May 2, 1935): 429.

25. Keeble, "Keeble Visits California," *Gospel Advocate* 83 (May 8, 1941): 454.

26. A. L. Cassius, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 93 (February 22, 1951): 126–127.

27. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 93 (May 3, 1951): 287.

28. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 76 (August 30, 1934): 840.

29. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 99 (August 1, 1957): 495.

30. A. L. Cassius, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 76 (September 6, 1934): 864.

31. B. W. Copeland, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 77 (July 18, 1935): 693.

32. Charles J. Anderson, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 95 (October 8, 1953): 670.

33. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (July 23, 1936): 712.

34. Keeble, "Keeble Reviews Work," *Gospel Advocate* 79 (September 9, 1937): 861.

35. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 96 (September 23, 1954): 758.

36. Flem Fort, "Sowing and Reaping," *Gospel Advocate* 74 (October 20, 1932): 1149. Two of Keeble's converts during the Wichita campaign included James M. Butler and Russell H. Moore. Butler, after entering the preaching ministry, ministered to a black congregation in San Antonio, Texas. Moore flourished as a dynamic preacher while working with churches in Huntsville and Mobile, Alabama; Jacksonville, Florida; and Kansas City and St. Louis, Missouri. See Tuggle, *Our Ministers,* 30, 114; and Russell H. Moore, "Get Acquainted," *Christian Echo* 34 (November 20, 1940): 8.

37. Glenn L. Wallace, "The Work in Wichita, Kansas," *Gospel Advocate* 79 (January 28, 1937): 94.

38. Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528–1990* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1998), 223.

39. Rick Moss, "Not Quite Paradise: The Development of the African American Community in Los Angeles through 1950," *California History* (Fall 1996): 232. See also Lawrence Brooks de Graaf, "Negro Migration to Los Angeles, 1930 to 1950" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1962); and Paul Alan Smith, "Negro Settlement and Railway Growth in Los Angeles, California, 1890 to 1930" (Master's thesis, California State University, 1973).

40. Cassius, "Among Our Colored Disciples," *Christian Leader* 28 (October 6, 1914): 13.

41. Jerry Rushford, "The Dean of West Coast Preachers," *Firm Foundation* 98

(August 25, 1981): 4. The best study to date on the origins of African American Churches of Christ in Los Angeles is Calvin Bowers, *Realizing the California Dream: The Story of Black Churches of Christ in Los Angeles* (Calvin Bowers, 2001).

42. Ibid., 109.

43. Ibid., 133.

44. A. L. Cassius, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 76 (September 6, 1934): 864.

45. A. L. Cassius, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 79 (June 10, 1937): 545.

46. A. L. Cassius, "Colored Work at Hobbs, New Mexico," *Christian Leader* 51 (August 3, 1937): 15.

47. A. L. Cassius, "Field Reports," *Christian Leader* 52 (September 27, 1938): 11.

48. Charles J. Anderson, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 94 (January 31, 1952): 79.

49. B. C. Goodpasture, "Help Brother Cassius," *Gospel Advocate* 88 (December 5, 1946): 1140.

50. R. N. Hogan, *Sermons by Hogan* (Austin: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1940), vii–ix.

51. James L. Lovell, "Sponsoring Colored Work" (an unpublished manuscript, n.d.) in the Center for Restoration Studies, Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas. Hereafter, it will be cited CRS.

52. Lovell, "A Colored Preacher Sought," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (August 6, 1936): 764.

53. Lovell, "Hogan's Helper," *West Coast Christian* 2 (May 1938): 4.

54. Lovell, "Hogan Holds Meeting," *Gospel Advocate* 79 (June 17, 1937): 574.

55. Lovell, "Hogan's Helper," *West Coast Christian* 2 (May 1938): 4.

56. Hogan, "Thanks White Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 76 (December 6, 1934): 1181.

57. Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier,* 145–147.

58. Hogan, "Colored Church Started," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (September 17, 1936): 905.

59. Hogan, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (October 8, 1936): 978.

60. George C. Hatcher, "Colored Work Given Boost," *Gospel Advocate* 81 (September 14, 1939): 871.

61. Hogan, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (June 18, 1936): 593.

62. A. L. Cassius, "R. N. Hogan to Los Angeles," *Gospel Advocate* 79 (March 18, 1937): 259.

63. Robert E. Lee, "Baptizes Five Preachers," *Gospel Advocate* 79 (May 20, 1937): 477.

64. Bowers, *Realizing the California Dream,* 53.

65. James L. Lovell, "Colored Work Successful," *Gospel Advocate* 80 (June 16, 1938): 564.

66. Billie Silvey, "R. N. Hogan: From Nashville 'Boy Preacher' to Spiritual Reference Source for Christians," *Christian Chronicle* (August 1993): 7.

67. James L. Lovell, "Hogan Converts Many," *Gospel Advocate* 80 (September 22, 1938): 901.

68. L. D. Perkins, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 82 (April 25, 1940): 406; Hogan, "Hogan Has Ingathering," *Gospel Advocate* 82 (May 2, 1940): 427.

69. Hogan, "The Church and Integration," *Christian Echo* 88 (January–February 2000): 10. This article was first published in the early 1950s.

70. Hogan, "The Grab of the Century," *Christian Echo* 63 (December 1968): 1. See also Richard T. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith: The Story of Churches of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 292–295.

71. Hogan, "The Sin of Being a Respecter of Persons," *Christian Echo* (June 1959): 2.

72. Batsell Barrett Baxter, *Every Life a Plan of God: The Autobiography of Batsell Barrett Baxter* (Abilene, Tex.: Zachry Associates, 1983), 110.

73. Hogan, "The Relationship between the Evangelist and the Elder," *Christian Echo* (March 1990): 2, 7.

74. For an elaboration of the tension that has existed between preachers and elders in African American Churches of Christ, see Nokomis Yeldell, *The Big Issue: Relationships between Ministers and Elders* (Nokomis Yeldell, 1986).

75. Du Bois, *The Souls,* 152.

76. James Farmer, *Lay Bare the Heart: An Autobiography of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Arbor House, 1985), 33.

Chapter 9

1. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 98 (May 3, 1956): 429. By "sons," I mean men whom Marshall Keeble converted while conducting Gospel meetings across the South and men who later emerged as preachers in black Churches of Christ.

2. Annie C. Tuggle, *Our Ministers and Song Leaders of the Church of Christ* (Detroit: Annie C. Tuggle, 1945), 110.

3. G. F. Gibbs, "A Needed Work," *Gospel Advocate* 69 (June 9, 1927): 532. The terminology—stabilize or stabilization—suggests that men whom Marshall Keeble converted often played a vital role in working to keep fledgling black congregations alive. For example, this black congregation in Greenville, South Carolina, which Keeble planted in 1925, died within a few years because of lack of oversight and leadership; it was not resuscitated until the 1950s by W. H. Cook. See J. Edward Meixner, *History of the Church of Christ in Greater Greenville, S.C.* (n.p., 1978), 33–

35. Had it not been for the exacting toil and stabilizing efforts of Keeble's "sons," many more would have fizzled out.

4. Keeble, "Report of Work," *Gospel Advocate* 71 (May 9, 1929): 452; Millen, "The Colored Work in Florida," *Gospel Advocate* 71 (June 6, 1929): 551–552; Millen, "The Colored Churches in Florida," *Gospel Advocate* 72 (February 20, 1930): 191. Like his spiritual father Keeble, Miller imbibed an exclusivistic theological posture, which he fleshed out in his sermons. See Luke Miller, *Miller's Sermons* (Austin: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1940).

5. Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 72 (March 29, 1930): 284; Keeble, "From the Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 72 (May 15, 1930): 473; Keeble, "Work in Florida," *Gospel Advocate* 72 (June 12, 1930): 574; Miller, "Sowing and Reaping," *Gospel Advocate* 73 (January 22, 1931): 88.

6. Keeble, "Sowing and Reaping," *Gospel Advocate* 73 (September 24, 1931): 1201; Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 75 (September 21, 1933): 909; Miller, "Sowing and Reaping," *Gospel Advocate* 74 (December 29, 1932): 1386.

7. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 76 (September 20, 1934): 916.

8. Miller, "Miller at Port Arthur," *Gospel Advocate* 77 (August 15, 1935): 783.

9. Miller, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 79 (August 19, 1937): 787.

10. F. B. Shepherd, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 81 (August 10, 1939): 753.

11. Mary Sibley, "The History of Border Street Church of Christ," 1. This historical sketch is in the possession of the author, who grew up and was baptized into the Border Street Church of Christ (now the Seminary Heights Church of Christ) in Jacksonville, Texas.

12. Miller, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 93 (May 10, 1951): 301; Miller, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 100 (May 29, 1958): 351.

13. W. Ray Duncan, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 94 (September 25, 1952): 630–631. W. D. Sweet, a black minister and Keeble understudy, noted that Miller debated Johnson in Miami, Florida, before debating him in Pennsylvania.

14. W. D. Sweet, "At Rest," *Gospel Advocate* 104 (March 22, 1962): 190; Sweet, "Luke Miller Passes," *Firm Foundation* 79 (March 27, 1962): 204.

15. John Vaughner, "Sowing and Reaping," *Gospel Advocate* 72 (October 30, 1930): 1041; Vaughner, "Sowing and Reaping," *Gospel Advocate* 73 (November 12, 1931): xxxx. According to Annie C. Tuggle, Vaughner was born in Alabama. See Tuggle, *Our Ministers,* 151. Eugene Lawton, a native of Florida, noted that Vaughner was born in Georgia on December 20, 1894, and was reared in Birmingham, Alabama, where he was baptized by Marshall Keeble on December 20, 1925. See Lawton, "A Tribute to a Great Soldier of the Cross," *Christian Echo* 54 (October 1959): 1, 5.

16. Marshall Keeble, "Sowing and Reaping," *Gospel Advocate* 73 (December 17, 1931): 1585; John Vaughner, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 76 (January 18, 1934): 77; D. B. Whittle, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 76 (February 22, 1934): 193.

17. Vaughner, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 76 (October 25, 1934): 1032; Vaughner, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 77 (November 14, 1935): 1100; Vaughner, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (February 13, 1936): 164; Marshall Keeble, "Keeble Preaches in Florida," *Gospel Advocate* 79 (June 3, 1937): 525.

18. O. B. Truax and L. R. Merritt, "Vaughner Holds Meeting," *Gospel Advocate* 79 (October 14, 1937): 979.

19. Vaughner, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 80 (September 8, 1938): 851.

20. T. Q. Martin, "Vaughner Had Great Meeting," *Gospel Advocate* 80 (September 22, 1938): 900.

21. Keeble, "Two Preachers Baptized," *Gospel Advocate* 81 (March 23, 1939): 284.

22. "Activities among the Colored People," *Gospel Advocate* 82 (August 8, 1940): 763; Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 93 (January 4, 1951): 13; Carl Taylor, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 94 (June 19, 1952): 406.

23. Tom W. Butterfield, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 95 (February 26, 1953): 127.

24. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 102 (January 21, 1960): 46. I remain uncertain as to when John R. Vaughner died. Choate states that Keeble, en route to Vaughner's funeral in St. Petersburg, Florida, fell ill at the Nashville Airport. It is likely that Vaughner died a few years before Keeble expired. See Choate, *Roll Jordan Roll,* 89.

25. Tuggle, *Our Ministers,* 8.

26. Percy E. Ricks, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 76 (March 15, 1934): 266; O. L. Aker, "The Technique of Leadership," *Gospel Advocate* 93 (August 30, 1951): 557; O. L. Aker, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 94 (October 24, 1952): 695. O. L. Aker, born in 1884, passed away in 1963. See R. N. Hogan, "Obsequies of Brother O. L. Aker," *Christian Echo* 58 (November 1963): 4.

27. Keeble, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 75 (September 21, 1933): 909. In 1979, Richard N. Hogan wrote an article announcing Smith's death. There is no reference to his birth date. See Hogan, "In Memory of Bro. Lonnie Smith," *Christian Echo* (May 1979): 10.

28. F. B. Shepherd, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 81 (August 10, 1939): 753; Jack Southern, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 88 (August 1, 1946): 734; Tuggle, *Our Ministers,* 138.

29. James L. Cothron, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 81 (October 12, 1939): 969; Tuggle, *Our Ministers,* 44. In Batsell Barrett Baxter and M. Norvel Young,

Preachers of Today: A Book of Brief Biographical Sketches and Pictures of Living Gospel Preachers (Nashville: Christian Press, 1952), 1:83, Cothron lists his date of birth as January 10, 1906.

30. Paul M. Tucker, "A Plea for the Southern Negro," *Gospel Advocate* 89 (October 23, 1947): 859.

31. Ibid.

32. Cothron, "Among the Colored Disciples," *Gospel Advocate* 93 (July 19, 1951): 463.

33. Cothron, "Among the Colored Disciples," *Gospel Advocate* 93 (December 6, 1951): 783.

34. Cothron, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 94 (January 24, 1952): 63; Cothron, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 94 (March 6, 1952): 158.

35. Cothron, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 94 (May 15, 1952): 325–326.

36. Cothron, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 95 (January 15, 1953): 31; Cothron, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 95 (June 25, 1953): 399; Cothron, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 95 (July 30, 1953): 487.

37. Cothron, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 95 (May 28, 1953): 334; Cothron, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 95 (September 17, 1953): 608.

38. Cothron, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 95 (December 10, 1953): 845; Cothron, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 96 (March 18, 1954): 221; Cothron, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 96 (August 26, 1954): 678.

39. Tuggle, *Our Ministers,* 44, 85, 103.

40. Ibid., 62. Tuggle lists Gibbs's date of birth as July 17, 1899, the *Christian Echo* (August 1976): 7, lists it as July 17, 1898. See also E. Couch, W. H. Rowan, and T. J. Quinn, "Commend Colored Preacher," *Gospel Advocate* 77 (April 11, 1935): 356; S. C. Kinningham, "Colored Church Started," *Gospel Advocate* 81 (October 26, 1939): 1022.

41. S. T. W. Gibbs Sr., "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 93 (October 18, 1951): 671.

42. Gibbs Sr., "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 93 (November 1, 1951): 702.

43. Robert F. Lawyer, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 94 (January 3, 1952): 14.

44. Gibbs Sr., "Among the Colored Brethren" *Gospel Advocate* 95 (November 12, 1953): 767; Tuggle, *Our Ministers,* 62.

45. William Whitaker, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 93 (December 20, 1951): 814–815; Whitaker, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 96 (April 1, 1954): 262–263; Whitaker, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 101 (November 19, 1959): 751; and A. L. Franks, "William Whitaker, Preacher over Half a Century," *World Evangelist* (November 1982): 1, 18. William Whitaker died on February 17, 1985. See "Whitaker Is Gone," *Magnolia Messenger* 7 (March 1985): 9.

46. Marion Austin Hayes, "In the Beginning There Were Four Brethren: The History of the Sycamore Street Church of Christ" (n.p., n.d.). This document is the author's possession. Tuggle, *Our Ministers,* 100, placed the birth of Locke in 1909. See also Richard N. Hogan, "Brother C. C. Locke of Dallas, Texas Passes," *Christian Echo* (January 1980): 3.

47. Tuggle, *Our Ministers,* 10, states that L. H. Alexander was baptized by A. C. Holt. However, in 1952, Alexander reported that he was immersed by Marshall Keeble. See Baxter and Young, *Preachers of Today,* 1:12. See also Charles L. Houser Jr., "Colored Work Started," *Gospel Advocate* 78 (July 23, 1936): 716; L. H. Alexander Sr., "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 95 (March 5, 1953): 143.

48. Tuggle, *Our Ministers,* 36; Caperton, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 96 (March 25, 1954): 238–239; and Homer A. Daniel, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 97 (March 3, 1955): 182.

49. R. L. Colley, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 77 (May 16, 1935): 470; and R. L. Colley, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 77 (September 12, 1935): 883.

50. F. A. Livingston, "News and Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 80 (September 22, 1938): 903.

51. Robert C. Jones, "Colored Church in New Building," *Gospel Advocate* 83 (February 6, 1941): 143.

52. O. L. Anderson, "A Tribute to a Faithful Servant," *Christian Echo* 64 (October 1969): 3.

53. A biographical sketch of John Henry Clay appears in Pearl Gray Daniels, *The History of the Holt Street Church of Christ and Its Role in Establishing Churches of Christ among African Americans in Central Alabama, 1928–1997* (Baltimore: American Literary Press, 1997), 204–212.

54. The "many others" among Keeble's spiritual sons included James Aldridge (Paris, Texas), A. G. Brackett (Wellington, Texas), J. Milton Butler (Wichita, Kansas), Elisha Clark (Tampa, Florida), Sutton Johnson (Montgomery, Alabama), G. G. Jones (Chicago, Illinois), Nathan McClinton (Senatobia, Mississippi), Russell H.

Moore (Wichita, Kansas), C. Murray (New York, New York), A. J. Rodgers (Port Arthur, Texas), H. S. Simmons (Birmingham, Alabama), Jackson Simmons (Georgia to New Jersey), Robert Simmons (Corsicana, Texas), James H. Stewart Jr. (Ferndale, Michigan), Joel Thompson (Tyler, Texas), John Oscar Williams (Nashville, Tennessee), R. H. Yarbor (Tupelo, Mississippi), and R. H. Parker (Memphis, Tennessee). The author extracted most of this information from Annie C. Tuggle's important work *Our Ministers.* All of these ministers were reportedly baptized by Marshall Keeble and came under his mesmerizing influence. The city and state in parentheses show their place of ministerial service in the 1940s and 1950s.

Chapter 10

1. Samuel Robert Cassius, "An Appeal to the Disciples of Christ Everywhere," *Gospel Advocate* 62 (November 25, 1920): 1151. Cassius himself launched a school, the Tohee Industrial School in Tohee, Oklahoma Territory, in 1899. The school failed. G. P. Bowser established the Silver Point Christian Institute in 1907, but the school folded in 1914. See R. Vernon Boyd, *Undying Dedication: The Story of G. P. Bowser* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1985); and Edward J. Robinson, " 'Like Rats in a Trap': Samuel Robert Cassius and the 'Race Problem' in Churches of Christ" (Ph.D. dissertation, Mississippi State University, Starkville, Mississippi, 2003).

2. The board at the Nashville Christian Institute was all black in 1941, but by the 1950s and 1960s, the school had a predominantly white board. See Richard T. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith: The Story of Churches of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 292. During its existence, the NCI had a number of black instructors, including Laura Keeble, Katherin Edwards, Annie C. Tuggle, Lucille Turner, Rilla Turner, Willie B. James, Louise Lewis, and others. But white instructors controlled the theological curriculum.

3. Letter of the elders of the Twelfth Avenue Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee, to A. M. Burton, in A. M. Burton File (David Lipscomb University, Nashville, Tennessee). A part of the letter appears in Gary Holloway and John York, ed., *Unfinished Reconciliation: Justice, Racism, and Churches of Christ* (Abilene, Tex.: Abilene Christian University Press, 2003), 131. See also A. M. Burton, "Nashville Christian Institute," *Gospel Advocate* 86 (March 16, 1944): 198.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Keeble, "A Great Opportunity," *Gospel Advocate* 86 (May 18, 1944): 341.

7. Keeble, "Students Are Baptized," *Gospel Advocate* 86 (December 28, 1944): 855.

8. P. W. Stonestreet, "The Keeble Meeting," *Gospel Advocate* 88 (August 1, 1946): 731.

9. J. W. Brents, "Keeble's School Overflows," *Gospel Advocate* 88 (October 10, 1946): 974.

10. Brents, "Nashville Christian Institute," *Gospel Advocate* 88 (November 28, 1946): 1129; A. E. Emmons, "Hear Colored Students," *Gospel Advocate* 88 (December 19, 1946): 1201.

11. "Colored Singers, Speakers to Be at War Memorial Building," *Gospel Advocate* 89 (May 15, 1947): 349.

12. Phillip L. Hunton, "Keeble and Boys at Albany, Ga.," *Gospel Advocate* 89 (June 5, 1947): 398.

13. Keeble, "Nashville Christian Institute," *Gospel Advocate* 89 (June 26, 1947): 452.

14. Ralph Snell, "Colored Church Organized," *Gospel Advocate* 89 (July 17, 1947): 524–525.

15. A. R. Hill, "Keeble Meeting at Glasgow," *Gospel Advocate* 90 (November 18, 1948): 1125.

16. "Interesting Facts about the Negro School," *Gospel Advocate* 90 (December 9, 1948): 1186.

17. Ibid., 1189–1190.

18. Willard Collins, "Students at David Lipscomb Raise $3812 for Nashville Christian Institute," *Gospel Advocate* 91 (February 24, 1949): 125; "Keeble Boys to Give Program," *Gospel Advocate* 91 (May 19, 1949): 318; and Keeble, "Nashville Christian Institute Commencement," *Gospel Advocate* 91 (June 30, 1949): 402.

19. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 92 (December 21, 1950): 831.

20. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 93 (January 11, 1953): 30–31.

21. Alvin Simmons, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 93 (January 25, 1951): 62–63; Jessie Reese, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 93 (March 8, 1951): 158–159; Arthur Fulson Jr., "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 93 (March 15, 1951): 173–174; and Lester E. Means, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 93 (April 19, 1951): 253–254.

22. Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 94 (July 3, 1952): 437–438.

23. L. T. Thompson, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 96 (November 18, 1954): 918–919; Mary Louise Duckworth, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 96 (May 26, 1955): 429; and Keeble, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 98 (October 4, 1956): 822–823.

24. Fred Gray, *Bus Ride to Justice: Changing the System by the System, the Life and Works of Fred Gray* (Montgomery, Ala.: Black Belt Press, 1995).

25. Molefi Kete Asante, *Afrocentricity* (1989); Renita Burns, "Activist Heads First Black Studies Program," *The Temple News* (March 1, 2005): 1.

26. Jack Evans made these remarks during a sermon entitled "Tampering with Perfection," in a 1989 Crusade for Christ in New Orleans, Louisiana. See Jack Evans, *Sermons of the Crusades* (Jack Evans, n.d.), 2:100.

27. Ibid.

28. Batsell Barrett Baxter and Norvel Young, eds., *Preachers of Today: A Book of Brief Biographical Sketches of Living Gospel Preachers* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1970), 95.

29. Jack Evans, *The Curing of Ham: A Religious Debate on the Heart of the Racial Problems in America, Intermarriage between Black People and White People* (De Queen, Ark.: Harrywell Printers, 1976), 44.

30. Evans, *The Curing of Ham,* 77–78.

31. Rose, *Beyond the Thicket,* 13–14.

32. Calvin Bowers, "Reflections on the Death of Martin Luther King," *Christian Chronicle* 25 (April 19, 1968): 2. But some white ministers took exception to Bowers's eulogy of King, calling it "misplaced." A white minister from Glendale, Missouri, John L. Edwards, considered the civil rights activist a defiant lawbreaker. After citing James 2:9 to denounce racial segregation and after referring to Romans 13 to criticize Dr. King's activism, Edwards explained that "one sin does not excuse another. When a person defies court orders and causes disturbances like those caused by demonstrations, I believe that this is sin also." "I can not hold up Martin Luther King, Jr., as an example to follow," the white minister concluded, "for if we continue to defy law we are headed for trouble and I believe, very serious trouble." John L. Edwards, "More on King," *Christian Chronicle* 25 (May 17, 1968): 3. For a biographical sketch of Edwards, see Baxter and Young, *Preachers of Today,* 90–91.

Ray Hawk, a white minister from Memphis, Tennessee, expressed mixed views about Dr. King. After lauding him for attempting "to do something good for his race," Hawk excoriated his actions "as a preacher, or as a civil rights leader." Marshall Keeble, in Hawk's opinion, was a better model citizen than Dr. King. "I would like to see more Negro preachers like Marshall Keeble! If we had more of his kind and fewer of Dr. King's kind, the white and the Negro people would have all the rights they needed IN Christ Jesus." Ray Hawk, "Eulogy: Misplaced Praise?" *Christian Chronicle* 25 (May 17, 1968): 3. For a biographical sketch of Monte Ray Hawk, see Baxter and Young, *Preachers of Today,* 139.

Some white leaders in Churches of Christ such as preacher and educator James D. Bales viewed Dr. King as a corrupt Communist. See James D. Bales, *The Martin Luther King Story* (Tulsa: Christian Chronicle, 1967).

33. Rose, *Beyond the Thicket,* 13–14.

34. Ibid., 16, 19.

35. Richard N. Hogan, "Brother Floyd Rose Has Left the Church of Christ," *Christian Echo* (January 1980): 7.

36. Rose, *Beyond the Thicket,* 27, 35. Here Rose merely echoed a theme delineated in Rubel Shelly's *I Just Want to Be a Christian* (Nashville: 20th Century Christian, 1984).

37. Evans, *Before the Thicket,* 2, 6.

38. Ibid., 23, 24, 35.

39. See also Floyd Rose, "An Open Letter to the Brotherhood," *Christian Echo* (March–April 1994): 3. See also Floyd Rose, *An Idea Whose Time Has Come* (Columbus, Ga.: Brentwood Christian Press, 2001); and Jack Evans, *"Whose Idea Is This?": A Scriptural Refutation of Floyd E. Rose's Book* (n.p., n.d.).

40. See *Valdosta Daily Times* (April 22, 2005): 1.

41. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith,* 304–305.

42. Tuggle, *Another World Wonder,* 217. See also Tuggle, *Our Ministers,* 178.

43. James L. Cothron, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 95 (July 16, 1953): 455.

44. Carl E. Gaines and John C. Whitley, *Black Preachers of Today* (n.p., 1974), 1:69. For other articles celebrating Washington's distinguished preaching career, see France Smoot, "The Outlook," *Christian Echo* 64 (September 1974): 9; R. N. Hogan, "Thousands Attend Golden Anniversary," *Christian Echo* 84 (May–June 1994): 3; and "Local Minister Speaks with President Clinton," *Christian Echo* 84 (January 1994): 10.

45. "Interesting Facts about the Negro School," *Gospel Advocate* 90 (December 9, 1948): 1186. Thanks to Sam Cook, a son of Wilton H. Cook, a professional opera singer and professor of music at Abilene Christian University, for helping me with this biographical information.

46. For an incomplete list of other young preachers who came under Marshall Keeble's influence at the Nashville Christian Institute, see Appendix 3.

Epilogue

1. J. W. Brents, "Sowing and Reaping," *Gospel Advocate* 73 (October 15, 1931): 1300; James L. Cothron, "Among the Colored Brethren," *Gospel Advocate* 94 (June 26, 1952): 422.

2. Royce Money, "The Text of the Apology Statement" in "The Right Thing to Do," *ACU Today* (Spring 2000): 3.

3. Jack Evans to Royce Money ([2002] letter in possession of the author). This letter was also sent out to "One in Christ" invitees.

4. Ibid.

5. Floyd Rose to Jack Evans ([2002] letter in possession of the author). This letter was also sent out to "One in Christ" invitees.

6. Martin Luther King Jr., *Strength to Love* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981 [1963]), 149.

7. Cited in Norman R. Martin, "Learning to Back Up," *Magnolia Messenger* 6 (October 1983): 7.

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The Tenth Census of the United States, for Rutherford County, Tennessee. 1880.

The Twelfth Census of the United States, Davidson County, Tennessee. 1900.

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