

SPECIAL ASSEMBLY COLORED DELEGATES

April 11-13, 1944

Chicago, Ill.

G. E. Peters, Secretary
NORTH AMERICAN COLORED DEPT.

AGENDA FOR COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO STUDY WAYS
TO STRENGTHEN THE COLORED WORK IN NORTH AMER-
ICA *** APRIL, 1944

*Spring Council
April 1944*

AGENDA FOR COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO STUDY THE WAYS AND MEANS
OF STRENGTHENING THE COLORED WORK IN NORTH AMERICA

Organization

1. Status quo
2. Extend Southern plan to whole field
3. Organize conferences where the location and membership would make this possible.

Educational

1. Establish school in North of academic grade capable of development into a junior college
2. Foster development of primary schools

Medical

1. Establish medical institution in North with a view to training colored nurses
2. Continue to develop the medical work in the South

Literature

1. Colored editor
2. Church paper for colored churches

Departmental

1. Continue to train and develop field missionary secretaries to train colporteurs
2. Departmental leadership

(Stratified organization)

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SPECIAL MEETINGS--COLORED DELEGATES

April 11, 1944

G. E. Peters

We shall need the guidance and direction from the General Brethren from time to time. This is a safeguard that all our colored leaders appreciate. I am certainly glad that this is here.

In the past year we baptized and added to the colored department over 1000 souls. We made our tabulations by writing to the conference treasurers and we are proud of our membership and financial report that we have submitted to you.

In coming to this meeting I had no set thing in mind of what form of organization ought to be voted. I had a clear conviction that we should not remain status quo. I wrote to the General Conference officers asking them to tell me what they had in mind to offer as a form of organization. They had counselled among themselves, but they could not be definite in their decisions. There is one thing that I am grateful for, and that is, we didn't come here as a group of workers to make demands. We were the invited guests of the General Conference to listen to what they had proposed.

This is not the same spirit that was in the 1930 meeting. I now feel confident that the time had not come in 1930 for this enlargement. There is a spirit of unity among the colored workers, now, that did not exist, then. We must be very careful in going back to our field of labor that we give the right setting to this thing. Don't present it so that our people will become over elated and stop everything else. I think we ought to be conservative in presenting the matter. We should remember, all the way through, this thing is to propell a greater evangelism. We ought to go back to our field and assume a more careful and humble attitude than ever. All eyes will be turned upon us. We ought to go to work, and work harder for souls and missions than we have ever done before.

I have asked Elder McElhany to come and speak a few words to us. We have always looked upon Elder McElhany as a God-fearing man, and one that stands for principle. We certainly appreciate his leadership and what he has done for us.

J. L. McElhany

I think you are all conscious of the fact that I have not had time to prepare a speech. I will have to talk to you from my heart. I am very glad indeed to have this opportunity to meet with you. When Brother Peters spoke to me about coming, I felt at once that it was the thing I would love to do.

J. L. McElhany

I think those of you who were here in the large committee meeting remember my speaking of the growth and development of the colored people; especially since 1930. From that time to the present, I have watched this work with great interest. I am here to tell you that I feel happy over the way things have developed in the colored department. I have recognized for sometime that there must be some forward steps made in providing for a greater enlargement and the growth of our work. I came to this meeting with an open mind. I didn't anytime try to fix in my mind any definite thing; only that I felt we ought to plan in such a way that we should see growth and advancement for the colored work. As I listened to the speeches and counsels of our brethren, it became very clear in my mind that the Lord was leading us in the right direction. I thank God for that. If there was anything that we needed, it was the encouragement in our hearts to see that the Lord was leading.

It is wonderful to know that when something is to be done, when some situation is to be mapped out, some way the Lord just works things around so that everything in the situation goes together. I have felt that the Lord has been here with us and helped us in working out these plans. It gives me great joy in my heart, for I realize that the Lord is leading.

I think you can see very definitely that the action taken concerning the conferences is going to create a situation that will call for careful study and planning. Just by way of illustrating: The Illinois Conference has always regarded the group of colored believers as an important part of their membership. When they are set off into a conference, it will create an adjustment in the affairs of the Illinois Conference. I know they recognize the importance of the colored believers. It will take the brethren a little time to make these adjustments.

I am also conscious of the fact that all over the field in the churches the members will be very anxious to know what was done. I think it is highly proper that you should acquaint them with what was done in the right manner. In doing this, I believe you can lead the churches to deeper consecration to the Lord. Help them to realize that the Lord is leading. Help them to maintain a courageous heart, and a spirit of patience. For example: One of the lay men, here, told me we were wrong in planning for the conferences. He was especially concerned that some of the brethren would be carried away by their ambitions. I tried to help him to see that it is operating in other places and that it is working successfully. Furthermore the Lord was leading us in finding ways and means of greater advancement for the work. What are you going to do with men like this? The cooperation we receive from men like this, will largely be from the way you relate yourselves to the situation. I don't believe there are selfish ambitious men here. If anyone of you ever get in office you have a great surprise. If a man knows what leadership requires he will never run after it. The man that has it certainly has a large share of heartaches and troubles and problems to settle.

I think of the laymen who tried to attend the special pre-council meeting to which they were not invited. I told them that if it was a personal matter I could see them myself, but since this meeting was called

by the General Conference committee and they had made arrangements for this meeting, there was only one alternative for me. If they insisted on attending it, I would have to make a motion to adjourn and call a meeting of the General Conference Committee and they would decide if they could attend. There are times when we have to be firm.

At the meeting that was held in 1930 we reached certain conclusions that seemed to clarify the situation then. If the Lord give us fourteen more years to work in this world, I have no doubt the brethren will look back to this meeting held in Chicago and say that the Lord was with us in that thing, and the Lord was evidently leading.

I am hoping that as these new organizations take affect that we have the fullest cooperation and confidence of our laity. This is of inestimable value. I believe this new organization among the lay members ought to be put out of existence as soon as they go back. A lay members organization, such as this, was begun among the white people of New Jersey some years ago; but after we counselled with them they disbanded their organization.

Don't do anything that will discourage our lay members. I am going to help as many brethren as I have an opportunity to talk with. I believe the good Lord will help. Try to bring about a spirit of unity. Just as fast as the conferences ask for this commission, the General Conference will appoint the men that have been suggested and give council in these things. There are some enthusiastic people who will want the entire thing finished before next Sabbath. It will take time.

The primary purpose of existence of the church in the world is to win souls in the kingdom of God. I know you brethren will all feel that the greatest and highest privilege that can come to anyone is the winning of souls. The happiest hours that I have ever spent in this work was when I was an evangelist. I spent a number of years as an evangelist before I ever had even much to do with any of our churches. I have often felt that it was the best kind of experience that could have come to me. It is a wonderful experience.

I thank you for the privilege of talking with you and telling you a few of the things that were on my heart. I will be glad to work along and bring these things about in the most ordinary way.

G. E. Peters

We thank you very much for your remarks. We brethren have watched you very closely through your administration. We have come to realize in our hearts that you are a man of God and deeply interested in the colored work. We thank you for your patient and forbearance with us. We know we have made mistakes. Many times we have contributed to your headaches, but it was not done intentionally.

Bringing about this organization, we feel that we need experience. We need the experience of leaders like you to help us. It is our purpose to keep the objective in view. This new organization is not to push someone