

The North American Regional Department

By F. L. PETERSON, *Secretary*

For almost a half century this department has functioned as an agency of the General Conference, to prepare the hearts of men and women "for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

It was at the Autumn Council in 1909 that this department was organized to give character and dignity to the work rapidly being developed among the colored people of North America. In harmony with the cultural and intellectual advancement of the race, there was the need for stronger leadership and for better ways in which to proclaim God's last saving message to the many millions of colored Americans.

At that time A. G. Daniells, president of the General Conference, said: "I believe that under this direct effort we shall see the work in behalf of the colored people of this country go forward with greater success than ever seen before."

True to this prediction, the work has gone forward with increasing success. A sense of belonging was brought to the constituency, and a more united Christian witness was made possible.

During the past quadrennium the Lord has richly blessed the work throughout the North American field. C. E. Moseley, Jr., associate secretary of the department, and I are pleased to render to this General Conference session a report of the work that has been accomplished.

In every phase of our Regional program there has been phenomenal growth and development. Our church leaders have been placing strong emphasis upon spiritual values that give life a sense of meaning and high and holy purpose. Our chief concern is to prepare men and women for the second coming of Christ, and therefore the voice of the 227 pastor-evangelists and 29 Bible instructors, together with all the working force of the Regional Department, is heard sounding forth the last warning message in our churches, in halls, under tents, and from open "airdomes." A large number of faithful laymen are uniting their voices with our workers in making known Christ and His coming kingdom.

God has said much through His servant regarding the work that *should be done* for this people and of the part *they should have* in spreading the gospel. We read: "God sees among them precious jewels that will *one day* shine out brightly. . . . Through the grace of God the race that the enemy has for generations oppressed may rise to the dignity of God-given manhood and womanhood."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 229. (Italics supplied.) Thank God, the day here promised has long since fully broken upon us, and the Lord of glory is leading and pointing the way

step by steady step to an ever more glorious noonday!

To this end, the Regional conference organizations have increased the influence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church throughout North America and the world. Truly, our workers and work have been raised to a height of achievement, dignity, and respect that had hitherto been unknown. Throughout the organizations—



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local, union, and division—there is a togetherness and a firm determination on the part of all to draw more tightly the lines that bind us together, in order that we might present to the world a united front in the crusade against sin. Opportunities for a wider use of the several abilities and skills of our workers in the field of leadership have been provided, and our gifts from God are now being used in ever-widening areas of Christian service. Today our hopes and our sights are higher still.

Gospel Evangelism

Seventh-day Adventists have been commissioned to preach the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people; therefore, all nations and races have a contribution to make toward building up the kingdom of God and in hastening the return of Jesus.

In each of the seven Regional conferences and the Pacific Union Regional department several major evangelistic efforts have been held in the large cities and in many of the small towns and interurban areas. In some of these summer

evangelistic campaigns groups ranging from 50 to 400 souls have been baptized in a single effort. Many new churches and companies have been raised up, and a goodly number of new church buildings have been erected.

To our membership during the past four-year period 12,729 were added by baptism. The total Regional membership today stands well above 36,000.

The faithful work of the 202 literature evangelists and the consecrated, able leaders we have in the publishing field, have done much to advance the cause of the department. We believe that "God will soon do great things for us, if we lie humble and believing at His feet. . . . More than one thousand will soon be converted in one day, most of whom will trace their first convictions to the reading of our publications."—*Evangelism*, p. 693. During the past quadrennium our literature evangelists delivered \$2,170,766.30 worth of soul-saving literature.

The *Message Magazine*, the leading Negro religious journal in this country, is making its impact felt in three worthy directions. Its readers are being led to Christ, its student salesmen and saleswomen are annually earning dozens of scholarships to enable them to train for Christian service, and its earnings over the four-year period have added nearly a million dollars to the gospel treasury.

Throughout the North American Regional Department the laymen are being pressed into service, and as they obey the Lord's commission to "go . . . make disciples," He is amply rewarding their efforts with an abundant fruitage to His kingdom. Laymen accounted for 1,822 of the total accessions reported. We happily report that each of the above-named agencies has made worth-while contributions toward our total soul-saving achievement for the past four years.

Tithes and Mission Offerings

The loyalty and fidelity of the Regional membership in the Advent Movement is reflected in their liberality and faithfulness in returning to God His tithe and in their gifts and offerings for the advancement of His work. During the past four-year period 9.5 millions of dollars were paid into the Lord's treasury in tithe and \$3,474,593.27 were given to missions. In addition to this, many hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent for new church properties and for the construction of church and school buildings.

Our membership is happy to make their financial contributions toward the advancement of this great movement, both at home and abroad, but we are made immeasurably happier when called upon to send Regional believers to join the working force of our overseas divisions. Today 13 missionary recruits from our Regional forces, of whom 10 are heads of families, are now serving in a most creditable way in the Northern European and the Southern African divisions.

Christian Education and Health Services

The work of this church among Americans of color was anchored in Christian
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and health education. The rapidly expanding Oakwood College continues to lead in the field of higher education for our Regional youth, and it holds the key to the door of opportunity for a large majority of those who would enter the several fields of service in the organized work. We salute the board of directors, the college staff, the alumni, and the entire constituency for making this institution the tower of strength that it has become.

On the secondary level Pine Forge Institute and Northeastern Academy are serving well the constituencies of their respective conferences. And we can never cease to thank those scores upon scores of humble, dedicated parochial teachers who are charged with guiding our children and youth in learning.

High on the banks of the Cumberland at Nashville, Tennessee, is situated the Riverside Sanitarium and Hospital—a monument to our Lord's wish that we "prosper and be in health" even as the "soul prospereth." Within the quadrennium major improvements valued at

\$106,839 have been made at the sanitarium. This sum covered the erection of a new nurses' home and a church building where both the working staff and ambulatory patients gather for worship.

To this very strong and highly skilled right arm is soon to be added another institution of health at Orlando, Florida. This hospital comes into being through gifts and solicitations by interested citizens of both races in that southern city. The Adventists have been invited to operate this institution, and we gladly respond to another call to service from fellow citizens in need.

Looking back in retrospect upon the paths we have trod, we can but rejoice that hitherto the Lord has led us. And while we are sure that in no single area of our singular task can we boast of having achieved even our own minimum expectations, we are confident that we are headed in the right direction and that our sights are clear.

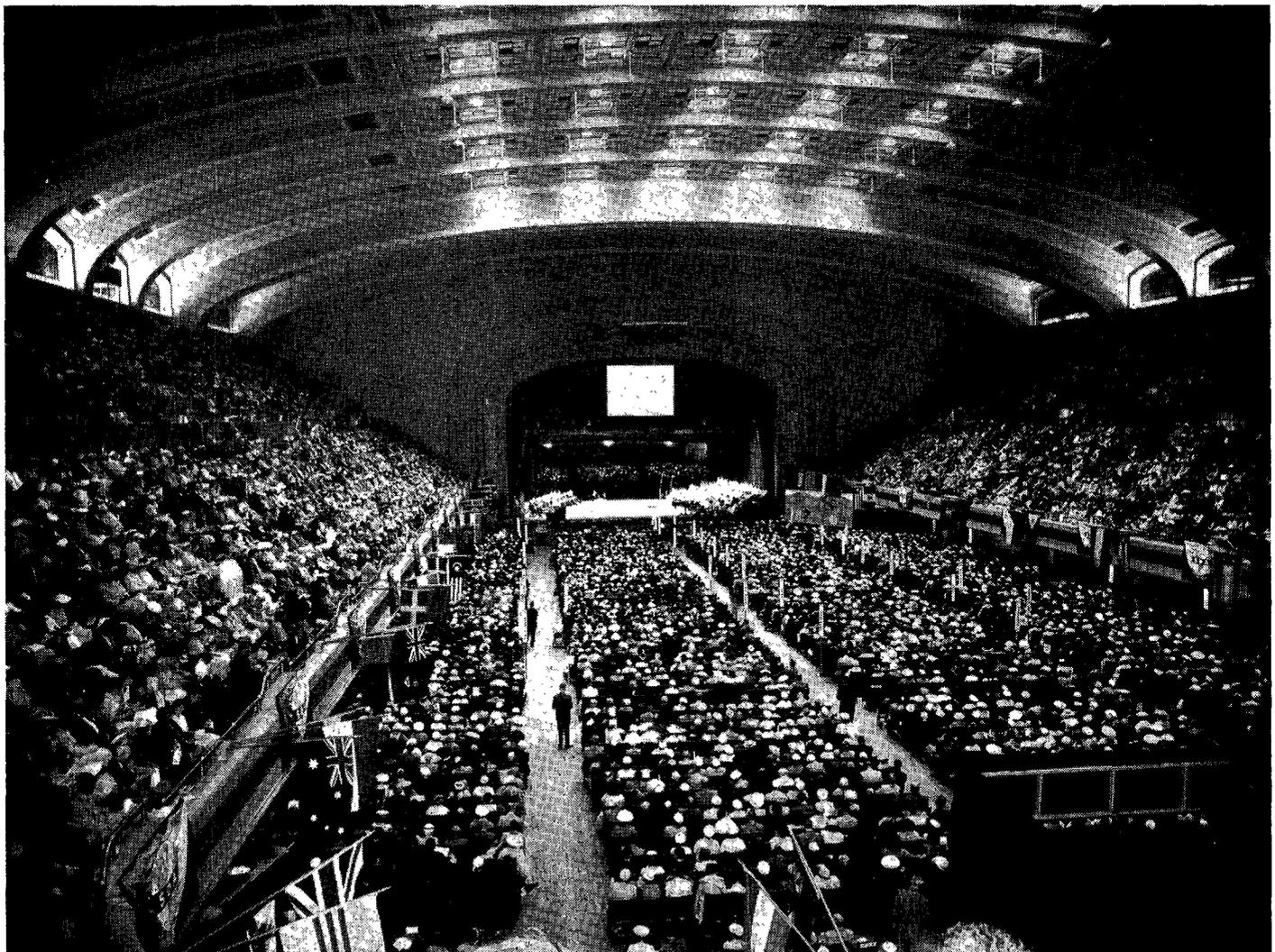
Fellow believers, our armor is on, our ranks are filling, the road to our goals is all mapped, and our Captain's orders are in hand. With courage and loyal devotion we push toward the prize, ever looking to our God to order our steps and to prosper our mission, until He says, "Well done."

The Ministerial Association

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In closing this report we would say that it is always an inspiration to meet with workers and leaders throughout the world field. In these days of international tension how wonderful it is to feel the oneness of our work. Thank God for the clarity of our objectives. To the ministry of the Advent Movement has been committed a tremendous responsibility—that of giving the greatest message of all time to the greatest population of all time, but in one of the most difficult hours of all time. Only the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit can enable us to match the challenge of the hour. The opportunities were never greater, but we must surely sense that we are rapidly moving into the final crisis of the ages. By God's grace we are to prepare a people to stand for the truth as it is in Jesus. And for this we need a stalwart and devoted ministry.

God is calling for men who are willing to leave their farms, their business, if need be their families, to become missionaries for Him. And the call will be answered.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 370.



Part of the great congregation attending the Sabbath services on June 21 in the Cleveland Auditorium. Beyond the open stage is the Music Hall, which also was full. About 14,000 were present.