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CHATHAM NOTES

Mr. Jesse Bingo spent an enjoyable week end in Detroit attending a formal party.

Mrs. Christie Lawson and daughter Lorraine of Detroit were the week end guests of Misses Lena and Leata Lynn.

Mrs. Vandusen, Mrs. Burt Shreve, Mrs. W. H. Burke and daughter Letitia are planning to attend the Voice of Christian Youth Rally to be held at the Olympia on March 21st.

THE MAN BEHIND THE ALTAR
What is wrong with the Negro church of today? What is it that has immobilized the potential potency of this great institution?

Essentially the faults of the church are directly attributable to the man behind the altar. The magnificent advances of the entire Negro people in the past several decades have left the average minister behind, have outdistanced the very men who once led the masses to the very borders of the Promised Land and then lagged behind in the forward march.

Once the chief outlet for every Negro's ambition, today the ministry is falling badly in status in the community.

With education more and more the main criterion for attainment, the average uneducated preacher (one study of 1200 found 70 per cent without college degrees) is losing influence with the community. And regrettably few college students are going into the ministry to make up for the inadequacies (less than one per cent of high school graduates expressed their intention of studying theology).

Not that there are not enough ministers. Certainly the Negro church has its share with 16.8 per cent of all clergymen. What is needed in the Negro church today is more of the brightest and most ambitious young Negroes to preach the Gospel with wisdom and to carry on the worthy heritage of great men of the cloth who inscribed their names in Negro history in the past.

Today "that old-time religion" is not enough to face the myriad race problems that confront colored Americans in every phase of life.

Today the Southern Negro will not accept advice such as "one preacher gave his congregation who asked whether they should register to vote: "All we preachers are supposed to do is to preach the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and Him Crucified, and that's all."

CHALLENGE OF THE TIMES

The Baptists meeting in Kansas City this month will have an opportunity to face staunchly the challenge of modern times. In their ranks are many outstanding clergymen who have made their own churches leading community institutions. They have recognized their function as more than just immersion of converts at baptisms and preaching a sermon every Sunday. They have been able to make their places of worship genuine community centers to which people of all denominations can look for guidance.

Unhappily as yet these clergymen are still a minority, a faint voice in the wilderness of too many jack-leg preachers who insist on "performing" and making the Negro church a freak-show for white visitors.

If the church is to take its rightful place in the community, the reins of leadership in the ranks of the big Negro denominations must be handed over to the well-educated youthful ministers who have demonstrated in their own pulpits their ability to bring new blood and new life into the church.



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