

BEAUTIFUL ARE THEIR FEET...

20
YEARS
ANNIVERSARY

Romans 10:15 KJV

AMBASSADOR
SUZAN JOHNSON COOK



REV. DR. JOHN MENDEZ



REV. DR. DAVID
D. DANIELS III

THE VERY REV.
SANDYE A. WILSON



REV. DR. MELINDA
CONTRERAS-BYRD



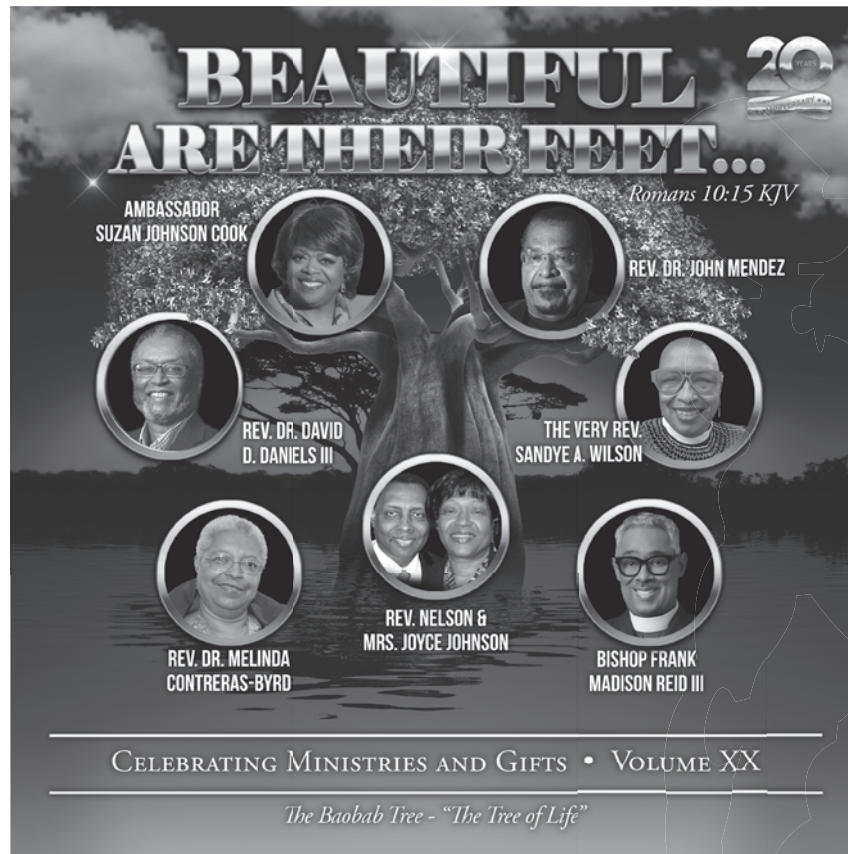
REV. NELSON &
MRS. JOYCE JOHNSON



BISHOP FRANK
MADISON REID III

CELEBRATING MINISTRIES AND GIFTS • VOLUME XX

The Baobab Tree - "The Tree of Life"



BEAUTIFUL ARE THEIR FEET

CELEBRATING MINISTRIES AND GIFTS

20th Anniversary Edition XX



BEAUTIFUL ARE THEIR FEET

*For whosoever shall call upon the
name of the Lord shall be saved.*

*How then shall they call on him in
whom they have not believed?
and how shall they believe in him of
whom they have not heard?
and how shall they hear
without a preacher?*

*And how shall they preach, except they be sent?
as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of
them that preach the gospel of peace, and
bring glad tidings of good things!*

Romans 10: 13-15 (KJV)

Stony the Road We've Trod

Twenty years ago, the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Inc. (SDPC), held its first annual gathering – right here in Atlanta. There was an air of excitement and anticipation. What would this organization be? What would it stand for? What legacy would it leave? Who would it impact?

It was the vision of the Rev. Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright Jr, Rev. Dr. Iva Carruthers, and the Rev. Dr. Frederick D. Haynes III. They were looking for an organization that would honor those who had worked for social justice for “the least of these” and feature preachers from around the world who understood the need for those who called themselves Christian, to spread the Good News under the umbrella of the Great Commandment. They also wanted an organization that would be a bridge between the church and the academy, drawing scholars from all disciplines to fill the plates of those who needed scholarship to inform and enhance their preached messages.

When Dr. Wright and Dr. Haynes presented the idea to Dr. Carruthers, who they wanted to head up this new organization, she listened intently and then asked where were women who could also help shape the vision? When they told her there were none, she said to them that she would consider heading it once they got women involved.

They did just that and named Dr. Carruthers the General Secretary.

From the beginning, the SDPC annual conference has bestowed its “Beautiful Are Their Feet” (BATF) and its Ella Jo Baker Human Rights awards to those who have surely broken the hard and rocky ground of injustice. Through their preaching, their teaching, their community activism, and their scholarship, they have been lights in the darkness. From Rev. Dr. Gardner C. Taylor to Ruby Sales and C.T. Vivian, they have lit the way. From Addie Wyatt to Renita Weems and Teresa Fry Brown, they have lit the way. From Bishop Yvette Flunder to Bishop Anne Byfield to Revs. Dennis and Christine Wiley, they have lit the way. From Katie Cannon to Johnetta Cole, they have lit the way.

Some of the honorees have transitioned and sit with the great cloud of witnesses, but others are still here and are still on the battlefields of advocacy and education. They still lift their voices and still work and pray with their feet. The present-day obstacles – though not new – are challenging. We see gains made over the past 50 years – for women, for African Americans, for members of the LGBTQIA community, and for non-white, non-Christian persons – being eroded. White Christian Nationalism has dug its fangs into the soul of this country, and for some, the rocky road seems untenable.

Despite the toxicity of these times, there are those who refuse to give in or give up, and it is those whom we honor this year. For the “Beautiful Are Their Feet” award, we are honored to recognize **BISHOP FRANK MADISON REID, THE VERY REVEREND SANDYE WILSON, REV. DR. MELINDA CONTRERAS-BYRD, DR. DAVID DANIELS, JOYCE AND NELSON JOHNSON, AMBASSADOR SUZAN JOHNSON-COOK, AND REV. JOHN MENDEZ.** For the Ella Jo Baker Human Rights Award, we are privileged to recognize **ATTY. STACEY ABRAMS, THE HON. REV. DR. RAPHAEL WARNOCK, and the REV. DR. HEBER BROWN III.**

The road to justice, liberty, equity, and fairness for all is indeed stony, and unfortunately it is exceedingly long, with twists and turns, inclines and declines – and rocks, lots of them. From its inception, the founders of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference wanted the journeys of foot soldiers to be known so that everyone, especially the youngest among us, would know in real time who they were and what they were doing. The SDPC wanted the youngest among us to know that freedom is not free, and that there were people who had gone before them, many of whom were still alive, and had forged a path for them. Without their work, their pushing against doors that had been slammed shut for oppressed people, our lives would be far different. As Bryan Stevenson once said, “Slavery didn’t end; it just evolved.” The same can be said for the racist, sexist, xenophobic, homophobic and all the other prejudices which seem to guide far too many people.

We are proud to include this year’s honorees into the hall of honorees that SDPC decided to create twenty years ago.



A poet, author, ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, and a retired clinical psychologist with over 35 years’ experience in her field, **REV. DR. MELINDA CONTRERAS-BYRD** is a nationally and internationally known presence in the field of major depressive and anxiety disorders. In her work, she has developed a psycho-spiritual approach in the treatment of depression in Christian women. She has worked as a school psychologist in urban and suburban districts and as a clinical psychologist for juvenile offenders, homeless men, and adult substance abusers. For six years, she served as the Special Services Advisor to the Office of the Dean of Students at Princeton University and developed, implemented and supervised programming directed at meeting the social, cultural, academic and emotional needs of Asian, Black, Latinx and Native American undergraduate students. Presently serving as the Dean of the AME Ministerial Institute in the Dominican Republic, Dr. Contreras-Byrd has been a consistent presenter for the Transatlantic Roundtable on Religion and Race, and for the SDPC. A graduate of Rutgers University (NCAS), The Graduate School of Applied & Professional Psychology (Rutgers), and the Princeton Theological Seminary, she is the author of several books including *The Great Shift: Psycho-Spiritual Manual for Survival and Transformation in the Trump Era*, *Saving the Lives of Black and Latinx Pastors: A Self-*

Care Study. She is also the editor of *Black Women and Girls Matter: Voices of Resilience, Resistance and Resolve* and most recently, *Toward a Theology of Holy Black Rage*.

Beautiful are the feet of this woman of God anointed to do the work of spiritual and emotional healing of marginalized and oppressed people in this country and around the world.


THE HONORABLE **REV. DR. SUZAN JOHNSON COOK** (“Sujay” to those who know her) has been clearing the paths for women in ministry for her entire ministerial career – not just in the church world but in the world in general. She was the first woman in the 200-year history of the American Baptist Churches, USA, to be elected to a senior pastorate at Mariners Temple Baptist Church in New York, where she grew the congregation from fifteen to over one thousand. While there, she launched what she called the “Lunch Hour of Power” and “Wonderful Wednesdays,” where people could – and did – come to worship for an hour during their lunch hours. She was the first woman and African American to hold the position of United States Ambassador for International Religious Freedom. Nominated by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and appointed by President Barack Obama, she served as the principal advisor to both in her work for global religious freedom. In that position, she integrated religious freedom into foreign policy and national security and represented the United States in 28 countries. She served as an associate dean and faculty member at the Harvard Divinity School for three years. For 21 years, Ambassador Johnson Cook was the first female chaplain for the New York City Police Department. She was on the front line following 9/11 and helped build bridges between the NYPD and New York’s diverse communities. While in that capacity, she produced a short film, “A Different Way,” for which she won first prize in the Dare to Overcome short film competition in Tokyo, Japan. That film recently debuted in the Pavillion (sic) Afrique at the Cannes Film Festival. To commemorate the 20th anniversary of 9/11, she produced yet another film, “The Day Faith Took Center Stage,” which will be shown nationally and internationally. Ambassador Johnson Cook was the first female to be elected president of the Hampton Ministers Conference. She continues to blaze trails for women in general and African American women in particular; she has formed W.O.W. – Women on the Worldstage movement, work in which she encourages women to “not only lean in at the table but to get in and have a seat at the table.” Currently, with a \$1.5 million grant awarded to her by the Lilly Endowment, she leads 60 Black women ministers representing countries from all over the world. In December, she hosted the first gathering of these women at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. A member of Delta Sigma Theta, she was chosen to give one of the prayers for President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden at the National Cathedral on their first day in office. All her work has been about forging the paths for and encouraging the spirits of women in a world that has historically made the road for women far more difficult than for their male counterparts. Most recently, a Women in Ministry Center was established in her name at Virginia Union University, which will open in the spring of 2023. She never stops seeing, believing, hoping,

reaching, innovating, and has inspired literally thousands of women in their work. She works to “bring the world together through faith, business, the arts, and diplomacy.”

Beautiful are the feet of this woman of God who walks, lives, and creates in faith a way for women to press forward in ways they perhaps would not have without her influence.

From a very early age, **DR. DAVID D. DANIELS III**, *the Henry Winters Luce Professor of Christianity* at McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, IL, was committed to the cause of freedom and fairness for Black people. While in high school in the sixties, he marched with Black students and educators in Massachusetts, where he lived. In the 70s, he went to Washington, DC to march against apartheid and colonialism in South Africa. He was a member of the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), but because of his upbringing, he grew up believe that contrary to the way many people thought of people who belonged to COGIC, that Pentecostals could be activists and have Black consciousness and not be offensive to their God or their faith. As a college student and later as a professor, he was compelled to speak against injustice. He was never silent. He later connected with Rev. Herbert Daughtry, from whom he learned much about integrating Pentecostalism and social activism. He became interested in learning how to think theologically about oppression, and he also wanted to understand the African roots of Christianity. His hunger for engaging and melding the theological with the praxis of fighting for social justice has only grown. In addition to his position at McCormick Theological Seminary, he is also the Professor Extraordinarius, Institute for Gender Studies, University of South Africa. He earned his MDiv from Yale Divinity School and a PhD in Church History from Union Theological Seminary in New York. He has written literally hundreds of articles, including “*Black Europe, Christian Africa: Excavating the Origins of African American Christianity Prior of Modern Racism, 1500-1700*,” “*Violence of Discourse and Violence Against Women: Interrogating the Credibility Structures of Pentecostal Histories*,” and “*Prelude to a Post-Racist Future: African Christians in Europe and Africa before 1700*.” In addition, he has lectured all over the world, including “Christians of Color: Martin Luther and Ethiopian Christianity,” at St. Paul University in Limuru, Kenya in 2018 and “Martin Luther, Michael the Deacon, and Ethiopian Christianity” at Princeton University in 2017. He is a member of the American Academy of Religion, the President of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, a member of the Society for the Study of Black Religion and other organizations too numerous to mention. He is a member of several boards, including the Christian Century Foundation, the Global Impact Group, and the Louisville Institute. He is also an advisory board member of the Ogbu Kalu Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, Ambia State University, Nigeria. In 2006, he received, along with Dr. Cecil Robeck the Azusa Street Award and the Presiding Bishop’s Award given by the Church of God in Christ.

Beautiful are the feet of this son of God who has dedicated his life to melding the religious and theological with the academy, and to teaching the world of the African roots of Christianity.




JOYCE HOBSON JOHNSON and her husband, the REV. NELSON JOHNSON are co-executive directors of the Beloved Community Center in Greensboro, North Carolina, organized in 1991 to carry out the dream of the 20th century prophet, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Both activists began their work for justice early in their lives. Mrs. Johnson's work in community activism and leadership began as a high school student and NAACP youth member in Richmond, VA during the 1960s struggle for civil rights. She deepened her involvement at Duke University, where she was founding co-chair of the Duke Afro-American Society. A retired business professor and transportation research director at North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro for 27 years, Johnson was instrumental in the university's designation as a national transportation center of excellence in research and training with multiple year, multiple million-dollar funding from the US Department of Transportation. Johnson was recognized as an Outstanding University Researcher in the Transportation Research Board Review of the National Academy of Sciences. Her husband, Rev. Johnson, has been active in the movement for social and economic justice since high school in the late 1950's. He served as a local and national student leader in the 1960s and 1970s, including Vice President of the SGA at A&T State University and National Convener of the Student Organization for Black Unity (SOBU). While a student leader, he played the leading role in building the Greensboro Association of Poor People (GAPP), a groundbreaking local poor people's movement, and worked closely with the Greensboro NAACP, local clergy, and other groups on voter registration, redevelopment, housing, education, open public accommodations, worker justice campaigns, and African Liberation support initiatives. Both Rev and Mrs. Johnson are heavily involved in the Poor People's Campaign; Rev. Johnson serves on the N.C. Coordinating Committee and National Steering Committee of the Poor People's Campaign, co-chaired by Bishop William J. Barber, II and Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, and Mrs. Johnson is a state tri-chair and serves on the National Steering Committee as well. Rev. Johnson is the founding Pastor Emeritus of Faith Community Church in Greensboro, and Mrs. Johnson is a founding member of that church. As co-executive directors of the Beloved Community Center, both Rev. and Mrs. Johnson spend much of their time teaching and training students in community organizing and leadership development, research, and advocacy. The Johnsons have earned recognition and awards for their work, including the Ford Foundation's Leadership for a Changing World Award, the National Faith and Politics Institute's St. Joseph Day Award, the Encore Career's Purpose Prize Award, the North Carolina A&T State University's Human Rights Award, the Greensboro NAACP's Leadership Award, and the NC NAACP President's Award, bestowed by the Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II. The Johnsons have two adult daughters, Akua Johnson Matherson, a university administrator, and Ayo Samori Johnson, a nurse administrator, as well as two grandchildren, Alise Jamill Matherson and Nelson Josiah Johnson.

Beautiful are the feet of these co-workers for justice who have tirelessly stayed on the battlefields of injustice, encouraging those who may well have lost hope without their direction and presence.

REV. DR. JOHN MENDEZ has been on the battlefields of injustice throughout this country and around the world. The pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina for 36 years, Dr. Mendez has preached and taught in Nairobi, Kenya, in Madagascar, in London, England, Quito, Ecuador, and of course, throughout the continental United States. He participated in the investigation of the Puerto Rico Vegas Island Pollution crisis, and in the investigation of United States War crimes in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Angola. He served as a member of the Apache Stronghold to save sacred sites on Mount Graham and Oak Flats, and sacred sites in Hawaii. He was involved in the African American Church Leaders Environmental Racism/Injustice fact-finding commission in Louisiana and participated in a special diverse Peace Commission of religious leaders who went to Iraq to divert that war, and was a member of the Reframing the Dialogue on Racism (RDORTF), which was a response to the Burn Churches crisis where he and 42 other ministers met with President Clinton and then-Attorney General Janet Reno. He was a founding member and chairperson of Citizens United for Justice that successfully acquired a citizen/police review board in Winston-Salem and was a founding member of an organization that brought clergy, law enforcement, businesses and the community together to tackle the problem of teen gun violence in the city. He also chaired the Daryl Hunt Legal Defense Committee that worked to get Hunt released and exonerated after being incarcerated for 19 years for a crime he did not commit. He has spoken at universities and colleges across the country including Harvard, Bates College in Maine, the University of Alabama, Duke University, Appalachian State University, Winston-State University, Wake Forest University and many others. He was the keynote speaker at the Thomas Dorsey National Convention of Gospel Choirs in 1993, and in that year also preached at the Dr. Martin Luther King Freedom Nights of the Progressive National Baptist Convention. In 1986, he presented a paper at the second Martin Luther King Jr. Theological Conference in Matanzas, Cuba. Dr Mendez received his BA from Shaw University, a Master of Divinity from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, and his Doctor of Ministry from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. He is also a graduate of the Post Graduate Center of Mental Health in New York, where he studied pastoral counseling, and continued his education along that track at the Institute of Contemporary Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis at the Washington School of Psychiatry in Washington, D.C. He also organized the Howard Thurman Counseling Center and Listening Room at his church, Emmanuel Baptist. He has received countless awards including most recently the Lifetime Achievement Award from the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Dr. Mendez is married to the former Sarah Lee Howard and has two adult children, Sekou and Jamila, five grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.


Beautiful are the feet of this child of God who has prayed with his feet, taking the fight for justice throughout this country and the world!



BISHOP FRANK MADISON REID III, currently the Presiding Prelate of the 11th Episcopal District and Chair of Christian Education for the AME Church, made history in July 2016 when he was elected as the 138th Bishop of the AME Church, marking the first time in AME history that three generations from the same family were elevated to the Episcopacy; both his father and grandfather served in that capacity before him. Born in Chicago, Bishop Reid remembers being surrounded by books and raised to treasure educational excellence and achievement. The statement “readers become leaders” became a driving force in his life and work. After preaching his trial sermon in 1971, he dedicated his life and his ministry to serving God and God’s people. He attended public schools in St. Louis, Missouri, was a part of the Rockefeller Foundation’s Yale Transitional Year Program, and continued to Yale University, graduating in 1974 and then going on to Harvard Divinity School where he completed his Master of Divinity degree in 1978. In 1990 he earned his Doctor of Ministry degree at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, selected to serve as a fellow in the Samuel Dewitt Proctor Fellows program. In the mid -70s, he served as a missionary pastor in Monrovia, Liberia, West Africa, following which he accepted an appointment as pastor of Greater Bethel AME Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. During the ‘80s, he served as servant leader at Ward AME Church in Los Angeles. In 1988, the late Bishop H. Hartford Brookins appointed him to the history pulpit of Bethel AME Church in Baltimore, where he served as senior pastor until 2016. While at Bethel, he led the congregation to become one church in two locations and serve as a preeminent spiritual beacon to the nation. His television ministry, “*Outreach of Love*,” reached millions via the Black Entertainment Network (BET), Armed Services, and Word networks. In addition to having had a successful television ministry, Bishop Reid wrote two best-selling books, *The Nehemiah Plan* and *Restoring the House of God*. He also co-authored a book with the Rev. Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr, *When Black Men Stand Up for God: Reflections on the Million Man March*. During the ‘80s, he was a key advisor in the historic presidential campaign of the Rev. Jesse Jackson, served as a consultant for the hit comedy series, “*Amen!*” and served for two terms on the Board of Regents for the State of Maryland. Despite all his national and international work, he says his greatest legacy is his faith and family. He has been married to his wife, Marla Reid, since 1980, and they are the proud parents of three children, Shane, FranShon Barnes, and Faith, and the grandparents of Harleaux Barnes.

Beautiful are the feet of this anointed man of God who has served nationally and internationally to better the lives of God’s children through faith and education.

THE VERY REVEREND SANDYE A. WILSON, currently the interim dean at the Cathedral Church of All Saints (Episcopal/Anglican), St Thomas, US Virgin Island and Chaplain to at the school associated with that church, earned her M.Div. in psychiatry and religion at Union Theological Seminary in New York, her D. Min in pastoral care and counseling and her MBA at the Graduate Theological Foundation in South Bend, Indiana, and earned her



undergraduate degree in German, Economics and Ethics at Vassar College in 1975. In her own words, she describes herself as “a strong, innovative, entrepreneurial collaborative faith leader who enjoys leading a team in a creative university environment where excellence in education, research, community engagement and applied evidence-based solutions create a culture that provides students, faculty and staff with the tools needed to build a more just society.” At the Cathedral Church, she works with the Intentional Transition Ministry program, which includes leadership development, “Building on Heritage,” “Community Connections,” leadership, financial development, community development, conflict management and change management. She also runs a major feeding program for the unhoused. She also works in the Office of Black Studies for the Episcopal Church in New York, where she engages in curriculum design, training trainers, and a cohort of coaches. She leads workshops across the United States of America on *“Healing from Internalized Oppression,”* conflict management and resolution workshops, and also leads a coaching practice supported by the Office. She has served as the Chief Operating Officer at Saint Augustine University in Raleigh, North Carolina, and at St. Andrew and Holy Communion Episcopal Church in South Orange, NJ, where she served as Rector from 2004-2018, she led a multi-national congregation representing 15+ nations. While there, she developed a shared ministry with Protestant students at Seton Hall University and introduced stewardship as a constituent element of Congregational Vitality. She also developed a Community Social Work program. In addition to serving as rector in several churches, she served as an international corporate lending officer for Chase Manhattan Bank in New York, a Senior Pricing Analyst and Senior Marketing Specialist in Cargo Sales for Trans World Airlines, and as a reporter and researcher for Time Magazine in the economy, business, and energy department. She has served and continues to serve on many boards, including the Dubois Circle, Maryland’s oldest Black women’s intellectual group. She is the author of *Forty Years of Weekly Sermons*, contributed to *Speaking of Faith: Global Perspectives on Women, Religion and Social Change*, (edited by Diana Eck, Harvard University Press), She has published many articles, including “*Anglicans and Racism: “Toward a Theology of Black Liberation,”* (published by Church House, London, England).

The Very Reverend Sandye A. Wilson has used her skills as a business major and a woman of God to help those to whom she ministers to widen and deepen their spiritual leadership and economic lives beyond which they might have imagined possible.

Beautiful are the feet of this woman-child of God who has helped people develop the spiritual and temporal skills to navigate a world that has challenged their lives and sometimes, their beliefs.

Beautiful Are Their Feet

Rev. Dr. David D. Daniels III



*I grew up thinking people of African descent were major actors in history
– Dr. David D. Daniels III*


Dr. David Douglas Daniels III, the Henry Winters Luce Professor of World Christianity at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, publishes on the history of the Black Church, Global Pentecostalism, and African Christians in 16th century Europe. Early in his life, he wrestled with understanding the relationship between Christianity and the work of African Americans for racial justice in this country and countries in Africa.

Following the path of his maternal grandparents, he grew up in Holy Temple Church of God in Christ, a congregation founded in his grandfather's tailor shop in 1925 in Springfield, Massachusetts. David joined other members of the congregation in the fight for civil and human rights that was being waged by those engaged and involved in the Civil Rights movement during the late 1960s. Born in 1954, he participated as a junior high student in school boycotts and marches for more Black local public school teachers and better funded schools in Black neighborhoods.

In 1970, he traveled with a group of students to Washington, DC to march against apartheid in South Africa as well as against Portuguese colonialism in Africa. He took his first Black history course when he was in the 12th grade, reading, among other books, Alex Haley's *Autobiography of Malcolm X* and Lerone Bennett's *Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America*, a book that sparked his interest in African American and African history.

After high school, he entered Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, a college with a student body of 1100 people, including 100 African Americans, Afro-Caribbeans, and Africans. An economics and religion major, he took courses in Black Studies and read books by W. E. B. DuBois, Eileen Southern, and James Hal Cone. After graduating from Bowdoin, he went to seminary at Yale University Divinity School where he met his spouse, Delois. At Yale, he studied with Cornel West, Leon Watts, and David Allen. From 1979 to 1983, he taught in the Religion Department at Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire. He introduced the students to texts by Alice Walker, James Cone, Steve Biko, James Baldwin, and other people of African descent. Encouraged by James Melvin Washington to pursue a doctorate in Church history, David enrolled at Union Theological Seminary in New York, focusing on the history of Black Christianity throughout North and South America, and earning his degree with a dissertation on Charles P. Jones, Charles Harrison Mason, and the Black Holiness movement.

Appointed to the McCormick Theological Seminary faculty in 1987, David's classes explore how Christians of color from Africa, Asia, and the Americas have played key roles in shaping the history of Christianity. His participation in various research projects in the United States and Germany along with conferences in Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal has expanded his knowledge of Africans and other Christians of color in the development of Christianity. His teaching and research deeply inform what he publishes. His writings can be found in books edited by Cornel West, James Abbingtion, Estrela Alexander, Ogbu Kalu, and others; his writings are published in United States, Nigeria, Germany, and the Philippines.

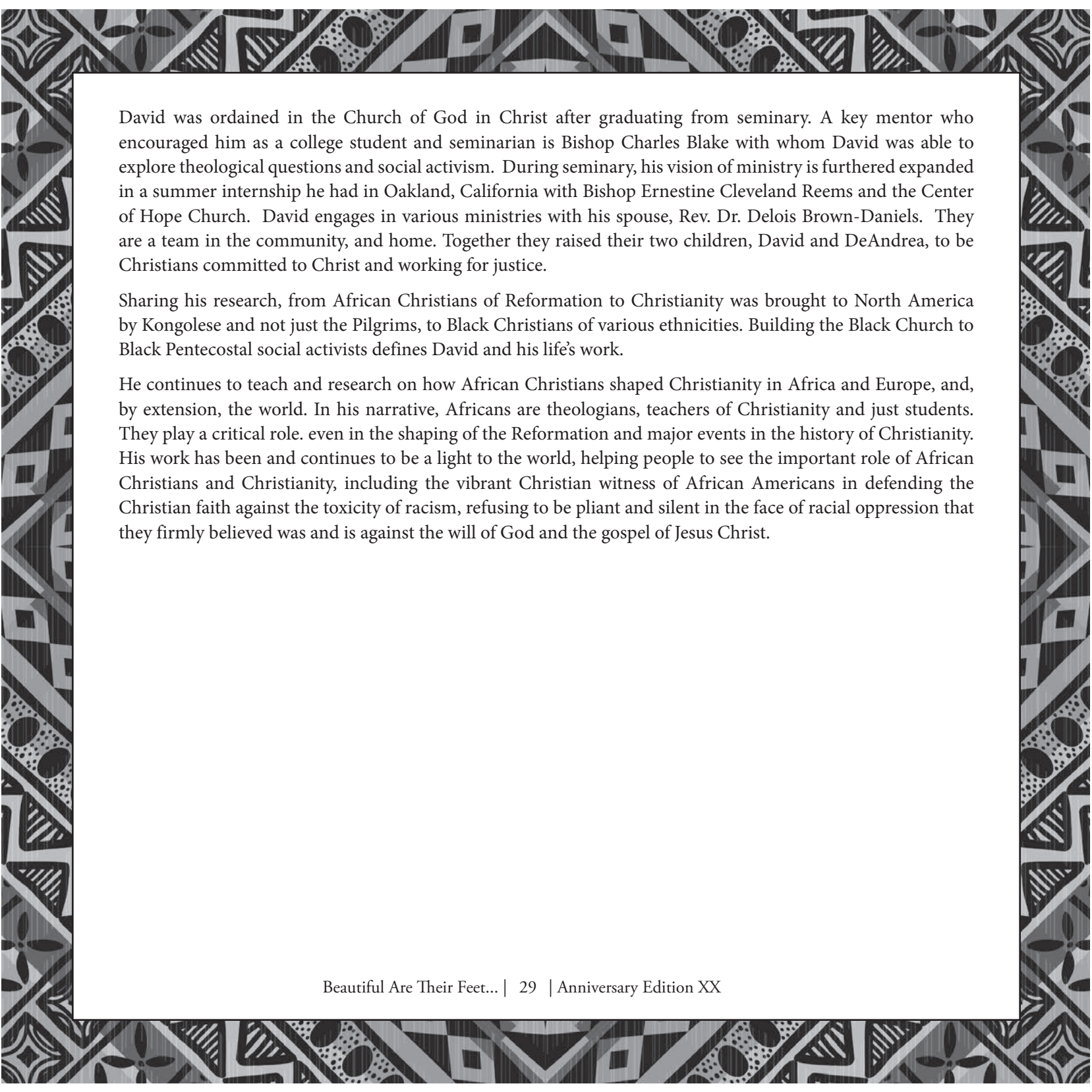


David is part of an international group of scholars who publish on African Christians during the Protestant and Catholic Reformations of the 16th century. He wrestles with and writes on how African Christians and Christianity influenced the Reformation. He uncovers leading African Christian scholars who taught Ethiopian Orthodox theology to reformers like Martin Luther, changing the narrative about the Reformation. He also lifts up that the first printed Bible not written in a European language was the Ethiopian Bible with Ge'ez as the language. He notes that African Christians, in addition, served on the Vatican staff during the famous Council of Trent and few others supplied scholarship to officials of the Council. He adds that, during the last phase of Trent, the second African was consecrated a bishop within the Roman Catholic Church of the sixteenth century.

How could African Christians play such significant roles during the Reformation of the 16th century when in the early republic of the United States in the nineteenth century people of African descent were legally excluded from most institutions of American society? David believes modern racism is the culprit. He agrees with the scholars who identify 1660 to 1720 as the period when modern racism is being erected. If this is true, African Christians in Europe during the Reformation had more opportunities, even though slavery existed. In his writings, David has published on the role of Kongolese Christians in the North Americas during the 1600s. He credits these Christians with introducing Christianity to African Americans in North America more than European missionaries or enslavers. He charts how early African American Christianity might have reflected key practices of Kongolese Christianity such as ring shouts and lay societies. To David, this is a story that needs to be told broadly and an analysis that should be pursued rigorously.

Growing out of his dissertation, David pursues new topics in Black Church history that range from the history of Black Pentecostal activists in Black nationalist, Pan-Africanist and Civil Rights movements to the role of African American Christians in the African anti-colonial struggle of the twentieth century. Regarding Black Pentecostal activism, he lectures on a fascinating moment in Black Pentecostal civil rights involvement when Bishop Charles Harrison Mason, first presiding bishop of the Church of God in Christ called for the interstate bus boycott in 1931, encouraging Black Pentecostals to ride trains, not buses, because trains hired Black people and buses didn't at that time. David seeks to understand Black Pentecostalism and African American Christianity beyond limited frameworks.

Even the Black Church as a concept comes under scrutiny by David. He publishes on the ethnic diversity within the Black Church. He writes about Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Canadian Christians who worked along side of African Americans in starting the Black Church. He researches the contributions of Cape Verdeans in advancing the Black Church. He publishes on how the Black Church is being shaped by African immigrant congregations led by Nigerians, Ghanaians, Kenyans, and other new Africans living in the United States. The Black Church possesses fresh sounds and looks with the addition of these new Black Christians. David experiments with how to teach and publish on this new reality of blackness.



David was ordained in the Church of God in Christ after graduating from seminary. A key mentor who encouraged him as a college student and seminarian is Bishop Charles Blake with whom David was able to explore theological questions and social activism. During seminary, his vision of ministry is furthered expanded in a summer internship he had in Oakland, California with Bishop Ernestine Cleveland Reems and the Center of Hope Church. David engages in various ministries with his spouse, Rev. Dr. Delois Brown-Daniels. They are a team in the community, and home. Together they raised their two children, David and DeAndrea, to be Christians committed to Christ and working for justice.

Sharing his research, from African Christians of Reformation to Christianity was brought to North America by Kongolese and not just the Pilgrims, to Black Christians of various ethnicities. Building the Black Church to Black Pentecostal social activists defines David and his life's work.

He continues to teach and research on how African Christians shaped Christianity in Africa and Europe, and, by extension, the world. In his narrative, Africans are theologians, teachers of Christianity and just students. They play a critical role. even in the shaping of the Reformation and major events in the history of Christianity. His work has been and continues to be a light to the world, helping people to see the important role of African Christians and Christianity, including the vibrant Christian witness of African Americans in defending the Christian faith against the toxicity of racism, refusing to be pliant and silent in the face of racial oppression that they firmly believed was and is against the will of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Dr. David D. Daniels III





Dr. David D. Daniels III

Anthea Butler

*Geraldine R. Segal Professor in American Social Thought
Department Chair*

Congratulations to the Rev. Dr. David Daniels for this important and well-deserved recognition from the Samuel De Witt Proctor Conference!

I can say without a doubt that Dr. Daniels is an exemplar in myriad ways- in his scholarship, mentorship, and his devotion to the church and to the history of Black people in Christianity. He is a devoted husband, father, scholar, and mentor, and I am blessed to have had him as a mentor and guide throughout my academic career.

I met Prof. Daniels first as a graduate student in 1994. I had heard about his wealth of historical knowledge, and the rumors were true! At that time, I wanted to know everything about the Church of God in Christ and Pentecostalism. What I did not realize that he was a real church historian, one who knew not only everything about the church, but especially about the Black Church tradition as well as Christian history. While I never had a class with him, every conversation we had was one in which I always learned some new piece of information. As a scholarly mentor, he was always very helpful and an invaluable research resources. Never selfish, Prof. Daniels has always been a generous and gracious scholar, eager to help.

Prof. Daniels scholarship and acumen is not only on display to students and colleagues, but around the world as well. He holds the Henry Winters Luce Professorship in World Christianity at McCormick Seminary, and with good reason. His research, scholarship, and care for the church has brought him to many countries around the world, including Ghana, South Africa, Brazil, South Korea, Kenya, Israel, Switzerland, Brazil, and many other environs. Dr. Daniels service to ecumenical dialogues cross denominationally is crucial work, unseen by those unfamiliar to several ecumenical dialogues. He has been a participant in several ecumenical dialogues with denominations including the World Council of Churches, and I have the privilege of serving alongside him. Watching him interact with others in these meetings, especially when conversations became difficult, has shown me the depth of his character, and patience.

Dr. Daniels is also the “invisible hand” in the academy and the church, advancing people and their work. He has spent many hours in service on committees, working with granting agencies, and making sure people have what they need in order to complete their work. He is always willing to make himself available to help, and that is a quality not many in the academy or the clergy are willing to do.

In my mind, David is an exceptional friend, scholar and mentor, who is always a man of integrity who loves God with all of his heart. I have yet in my 28 years of knowing him heard ANYONE say a bad word about him. All of this speaks to his excellence as a scholar, as a black man, and as a friend. Blessings to you, David. You richly deserve this honor!

Blessings,

Anthea Butler

Geraldine R. Segal Professor of American Social
Thought Chair, Religious Studies
University of Pennsylvania
antheab@sas.upenn.edu



Bishop J.W. Macklin
1st Assistant Presiding Bishop
Prelate - Nor Cal Metropolitan Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction
Founder/Senior Pastor - Glad Tidings International Church Of God In Christ

How Beautiful Are the Feet

Often we are blessed to read of men and women who impact the lives of disadvantaged, marginalized, and underserved people. These unsung heroes walk in humility with the calling of the Divine ringing and raging in their innermost being. A deep rippling sound disturbs their soul, shakes their spirit, and leads them into pathways others dare not traverse. It is not only that they have captured a vision; it is that a vision has captured them. It is as if they are held hostage until their hearts surrender a resolute "Yes" to God.

Day by day and year by year, God's call is forged in the heat of daily tribulation. Howard Thurman once noted, *"When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their flocks, the work of Christmas begins: to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner, to rebild the nations, to bring peace among the people, to make music in the heart."*

They ask, "How long, Lord before I see more clearly the assignments to which my hands are now attached?" In this statement, I can only wonder if there were nights the young professor, David Daniels, prayed, "More, my Lord. More of you and less of me." Eventually, David Daniels heard the call of God more clearly, and now those of us who have watched in amazement see God directing the steps and work of his willing servant.

Dr. David Daniels is a renowned scholar and seminary professor, for which there is no debate. His spiritual insight, intellect, and godly wisdom make him a giant in the Church and a treasure to the Kingdom. He is a theologian, mentor, and anointed to make the complex simple and God's Plan plain.

Bishop Daniels' calling was never ambivalent, as he was anxious to speak truth to power. As he proclaims the Gospel in the presence of kings and presidents, he connects with the heart of the humble. With a clarion voice, this dear servant lifts the cause for those for whom justice is seldom known.

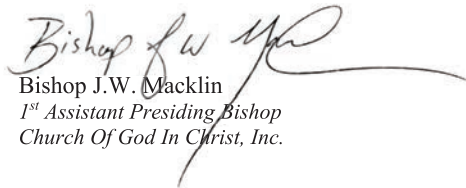
Bishop Daniels sensed the necessity not just to see the needs of others but to formulate concepts and ideas that have made an indelible impact on his community and the world. At the same time, many are called, yet few embrace and embody the spirit necessary to be transformative leaders in our society's life and culture. At the center of Bishop Daniel's ministry has always been his determination to bring us closer to the Beloved Community. And to accentuate the lives of marginalized people.



Bishop Daniels' genius has been to nurture and cherish his personal and intimate relationship with his Creator and to shape the incredible forward. Through his intense study of God's word and his commitment to biblical authority, his passion for the Gospel mission continues.

Bishop Daniels is known as a standard bearer in the Church of God in Christ, Inc. He is constantly called upon as a prolific writer to defend and advance the Church's mission and doctrine. His episcopal elevation is a credit to our denomination and a blessing to the ecumenical community.

It is an honor and privilege to live in a time where a man of Bishop Daniels' stature and acumen stands without intimidation for justice and right. Let it be forever noted that Bishop David Daniels is a point of light shining in the midst of a dark and unpredictable world. On this day, we join hearts with many others giving thanks to God for his life, service, and willingness to do the work of the Kingdom.


Bishop J.W. Macklin
*1st Assistant Presiding Bishop
Church Of God In Christ, Inc.*

Dr. David D. Daniels III - cont'd.



January 2, 2023

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as 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 KJV

Earlier this year, Dr. David D. Daniels III presented a lecture at King's College in New York entitled "Black Europe, Christian Africa: Excavating the Origins of African American Christianity Prior to the Rise of Modern Racism, 1500-1700." Dr. Daniels purposefully uses the archeological sense of the word "excavating" to help us to visualize the process of digging through layers of history and reminds us that the layers while often fragmentary can be thoughtfully reconstructed in ways that allow us to see history in new and powerful ways.

As we excavate through David's history and his impact upon us, here too we find many layers. His name alone, David D. Daniels III evokes history; a history that includes those who came before and bore his name. And, of course, there are more contemporary layers to David's history as husband, father, teacher, pastor, scholar, lecturer, colleague, friend. If we take a moment to reflect on just one of those layers—his role as scholar—we see them, one built upon the other, each giving form and focus to his work over more than thirty years. From the "Interracial Impulse of Pentecostalism" to a "Multi-cultural Approach to American Pentecostalism" to "Engaging Racial Equity: Toward a Pentecostal Political Theology of Race" to "Dialogue Between Black and Hispanic Pentecostal Scholars: A Report and Some Personal Reflections" to "A Pentecostal Engagement of the Economy from the Margins" to "Race: Reordering the World on the Principle of Grace" to his more recent work regarding African Christianity and its role in the Reformation David's research and writing has helped change the way we think about our world and our roles in it.

I have never taken a class from David yet he has been my teacher. I am not a member of his church yet I have felt his pastoral presence from my first days at McCormick. I have not lectured with him, co-authored articles or spoken on panels with him yet he has treated me always as a colleague. I, like so many of you, have been blessed to have David Daniels in my life. As we celebrate David's extraordinary contributions to theological education, the Church and its history, the Academy, the McCormick and Proctor communities, and the lives of all who have had the privilege of knowing him, let us thank God for his presence in our lives, for his family that sustains him and shares him with us, for his groundbreaking scholarship, and his tireless service to God's glory.

With deep appreciation and gratitude,



David H. Crawford
President
McCormick Theological Seminary

Dr. David D. Daniels III

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December 30, 2022

It is with an amazing sense of respect, honor, and gratitude that I am adding my voice to the legions of friends, colleagues, and benefactors of the humble brilliance of Dr. David Daniels professor of Theology.

I have known Dr. Daniels since I matriculated at the McCormick Theological Seminary as a graduate student in the nineties. I quickly recognized that Dr. Daniels was a valuable gem whose humility was set in the midst of the brilliance of a rare and powerful intellectual preeminence. I must have thought to myself, "this brother is bad dude."

Since my early encounters with Dr. Daniels, as his student, he has never, ever failed to inspire me with his intellect, intrigue me with his grasp of the enormous and monumental Black contributions to our Christian faith, traditions, and history, and graciously inform me of the meaning of the heart and meaning of a vibrant, powerful, penetrating and pivotal Pentecostalism.

Bishop Daniels has been a powerful beacon for my pastoral pursuits. He has counseled me in innumerable ways. He walked hand in hand with my church, the Beloved Community Church of God in Christ on our journey into fellowship with the Church of God in Christ. He even, praise to God, co-officiated (I needed two preachers) at my wedding to Lady Paulette.

So though it might seem strange to some, I am in awe of this man, " the little giant of Gospel genius," Bishop and Dr. David Daniels. I thank God for you!

Sincerely,

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

Dr. David D. Daniels III

Dr. David D. Daniels III



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National Museum of African American History and Culture
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Tribute to Bishop David Douglas Daniels, Ph.D.

Having published his first autobiography, *Born to Rebel* in 1971, it was the late Dr. Benjamin Elijah Mays, former President of Morehouse College, who in gratitude for what God had done for him through the people God had placed in his life, entitled his second autobiography, *Lord, the People Have Driven Me On*. Like Mays, I have been so fortunate for my life to have been touched, shaped, and influenced by a multitude of people and everything that I have accomplished has been because the people, by God's grace, have driven me on. One key individual that God has used to goad me, and so many others to good works, is the brilliant church historian and ecumenical teacher, Bishop David Douglas Daniels III. On this occasion of his reception of the Beautiful are the Feet Lifetime Achievement Award, we heartily congratulate him for his scholarly, and prophetic witness. We remain grateful for and fully acknowledge the light and wisdom he has brought to our lives.

It was during the junior year of my undergraduate experience, in the fall of 1996, that I would come under the influence of Professor Daniels' scholarship and ministry. Though I had heard him minister within the life of the congregation at Chicago's St. Luke COGIC, it was when he offered a course during the midweek Bible study on the history of the denomination, that I would witness the sheer brilliance and the spiritual depth of his protean theological imagination. In addition to his theological and historical insight, what impressed me most about his presence and message was the spirituality that informed and undergirded his scholarship. As a young twenty-something-year-old, reckoning with the awesome burden of the call to ministry, having embarked upon a journey of faith-seeking understanding, Daniel's ministry and guidance would come at a signal moment in my discernment process. Since that time until now, not only has his scholarship provided light along my academic and ministerial journey, but he has also taught me, through his example, to follow the light on my path.

When I think of the witness and worthiness of Daniels, I cannot help but think of his late mentor, Bishop Ithiel Conrad Clemmons. It was Clemmons, the former minister of the Historic First Church of God in Christ of Brooklyn, who once noted of his own scholarly and pastoral vocation, that he understood himself as one who sought, "to read the hidden but powerfully present footprints of God in the affairs of humankind and nations." An



Dr. David D. Daniels III - cont'd.

ecumenist, denominational executive, and an astute interpreter of his tradition's history and theology, Clemmons would be instrumental in inspiring generations of pastors and scholars from his tradition and beyond, to use their own social location as a starting point for engaging history theologically. Like his mentor and teacher before him, Daniels would continue this legacy and tradition. It is in Daniel's penchant to read history hierophantically, with great attention to the ways in which God is present in the world, that enables his scholarship to speak to the church with such power. It is precisely in this sense that Daniels' scholarship summons history to come alive. In Daniels' historical and theological vision, in the words of the Austrian composer Gustav Mahler, "Tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of fire." Daniels fans the flames of history to allow people to see themselves as part of a grander tradition and legacy.

What can one say about a man whose brilliance is only rivaled by his humility and informed by a deep-seated spirituality? Daniels speaks a common language with extraordinary compassion, creating space and allowing others to be named, to be seen, and to be heard. He extends himself sacrificially to ensure that the 'least of these' are affirmed and pushes us toward our greatness. He freely shares his knowledge with those who hunger for understanding. We congratulate our brother; we congratulate our teacher, and we congratulate our friend. May God continue to bless him prodigiously and grant unto him long life. We are blessed beyond measure by and through the witness of Bishop David Douglas Daniels, III.

With best wishes, I remain,

Eric L. Williams, Ph.D.

Curator of Religion

Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture

Dr. David D. Daniels III



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Dr. Robert Michael Franklin

President Emeritus

A Tribute to Dr. David Daniels:

As we honor Dr. David Daniels, we declare that history matters and brilliant historians have the capacity to change lives. Before he became one of the nation's most important religious scholars, he was an astute student and an anointed preacher. We became friends back when we studied at two of the leading university divinity schools. We kept each other encouraged amidst hard times and micro aggressions. Through prayer, fellowship and mind-expanding theological discussions we kept each other marching towards the finish line.

It has been inspiring and humbling to observe his evolution into an expert in World Christianity and a national treasure. Dr. Daniels was among the pioneering voices in the academy insisting that American religious history recalibrate to account for the African presence and profound impact on American religions. In addition, he urged us to revisit the spiritual, political and subversive dimensions of the Azusa Street revival. He invited us to appreciate how people of color and the global south figured into, and were often erased from, dominant narratives about the Protestant Reformation.

Today, I credit him with my interest in medieval and Renaissance history, because he reminds us that it's not all about Europe, but Africa and Asia are there, too. Moreover, in his prophetic voice, he reminds us of the tragic oppression and slaughter of Black people that unfolded while the great European and Anglo intellectuals wrote their books. Just when I was ready to sideline all theologians who ignored the Atlantic slave trade, I stumbled across an article by Dr. Daniels that contained this sentence: "Luther esteemed the Church of Ethiopia because he thought Ethiopia was the first nation in history to convert to Christianity." And, "As a forerunner of the Protestant Reformation, the Church of Ethiopia embodied the gospel message more robustly and faithfully." All this in an article titled, "Martin Luther's fascination with Ethiopian Christianity." How can you ignore that? That is the genius of a brilliant historian.

At a time when many black theologians were criticized for losing touch with actual Black churches, David unashamedly loved the church, even to the point of helping to lead the church. I marvel at the breadth of his interests and commitments. He is a scholar, a global ecumenist, a Bishop and an organic intellectual-in short, a spiritual Renaissance man.

The roster of extraordinary historians of the Black Church includes brilliant lights: E Franklin Fraser, W.E.B. Du Bois, Zora, Neale Hurston, Benjamin Mays, C. Eric Lincoln, Gayraud Wilmore, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, Albert Raboteau and others. Now, add to that list, Dr. David Daniels, our teacher, my brother, and God's anointed.

With respect,

Robert M. Franklin, PhD
President Emeritus, Morehouse College
James T. Laney Professor in Moral Leadership



Dr. David D. Daniels III

Dr. David D. Daniels, III is unique. Dr. David Daniels, III is the Henry Winters Luce professor of World Christianity at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois. Dr. David Daniels is unique.

Excelling in the fields of Church History, Religious History and Global Pentecostalism, Dr. David Daniels is a tenured professor at McCormick Theological Seminary. Dr. David Daniels is unique.

Dr. David Daniels received his Bachelor of Arts from Bowdoin College majoring in Religion and Economics! Dr. Daniels is unique.

Dr. Daniels received his Master of Divinity from Yale University being the recipient of the Benjamin E. Mays Fellowship from The Fund for Theological Education while maintaining an A average at Yale University! Dr. Daniels is unique.

Dr. Daniels has earned a Ph.D. in Church History from Union Theological Seminary. Dr. Daniels is unique.

Dr. Daniels has not only taught McCormick where he continues to turn out student after student with excellent grades and a phenomenal understanding of Global Pentecostalism. Dr. Daniels also was an instructor of Religion at the Phillips Exeter gathering for five years while earning his advanced degrees! Dr. Daniels is unique.

Dr. Daniels has been a member of the American Academy of Religion since 1989, the Society for the Study of Black Religion and the Society of Pentecostal Study. Dr. Daniels is unique.

Dr. Daniels is not only a loving husband, a proud father about to become a grandfather and a man of integrity and high moral character. Dr. Daniels has served as a commissioner for the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches USA and has participated on consultations sponsored by the National Council of Churches in the United States and the World Council of Churches in the United States and Costa Rica. Dr. Daniels is unique.

Known from Costa Rica to Cape Coast, Ghana, celebrated in Senegal and Switzerland, Dr. Daniels is not only an author. He is unique for other reasons.

Dr. Daniels has lectured at numerous colleges and seminaries in the United States, in Toronto, Canada, in Switzerland and at the Spiritan International School of Theology in Attakwu, Enugu, in Nigeria. Africans on the continent sing Dr. Daniels' praises because of his academic work and his incredible lectures at the Cheik Ante Diop University of Dakar, Senegal, all while being an ordained minister in the Church of God in Christ! Dr. Daniels is truly unique.

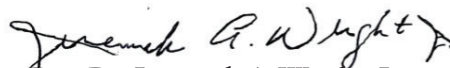


Dr. David D. Daniels III - cont'd.

The characteristics which make Dr. Daniels most unique in my opinion are two. First of all, Dr. David D. Daniels, III is the only Bishop in the history of the Church of God in Christ who was elevated to the Episcopacy while never having served as a pastor in the denomination. Bishop Charles Blake and the Council of Bishops elevated Dr. Daniels to the Episcopacy because of his brilliance, his work in the field of International Pentecostalism, his love for God, his love for the Church of God in Christ and his love for the people of God across denominational lines!

The second reason in my opinion that Dr. Daniels is unique is because he is a man who has married intellect with integrity, head and heart (To use the words of Howard Thurman), and scholarship in the academy with fellowship with Christ Jesus! He loves learning and he loves the Lord! He is truly unique.

The biblical prophet had to have had persons like David D. Daniels, III in mind when he says, “Beautiful are the feet” of those who bring good news, the good news of the gospel. The Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference is proud to honor Dr. Daniels for the Christian scholar that he is! David D. Daniels, III, Ph.D. and Bishop in the COGIC is extraordinarily unique!



Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr.

Rev. Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr.

Co-Founder, Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Inc.
Pastor Emeritus, Trinity United Church of Christ
Chicago, Illinois

“Wisdom is like a Baobab tree, no one person can embrace it.”



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God ordained thee prophets unto the nations...

Jeremiah 1:5 (KJV)

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The statue of the Haitian unnamed maroon memorializes the sacrifices, lives and faith of an African people, who in 1791, initiated a spiritual and military liberation struggle against the evils of the slave trade in Haiti and the Americas. Their victory, culminating in 1804, reverberated throughout the world. It is this symbol of faith and liberation that has been adopted as the logo of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference.

The symbol represents righteousness in the struggle for justice and liberation. In one hand the conch shell, like the ram's horn, was used by the maroon to call the assembly together and to signal approaching danger. In the other hand, the sword, like the word of God, was used to acclaim the righteousness of our struggle on which all our hope lies.

Relevant then and relevant now, the logo symbolizes the call to assembly from Joel 2, and the Spirit of our Living God (Isaiah 61 and Luke 4).

“Preach the Word: be prepared in season and out of season: correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.” - 2 Timothy 4:2 (NIV)

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