

MINUTES
OF
BERMUDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION
African Methodist Episcopal Church

Richard Allen A. M. E. Church
St. Georges, Bermuda
REV. C. A. STEWART, PASTOR
Thursday, August 16th, 1928

RT. REV. JOSHUA H. JONES, D.D., LL.D.
PRESIDING BISHOP

REV. CHAS. H. BELL, B.A., D.D.
PRESIDING ELDER

REV. R. J. STOVEL, Secretary,

REV. C. A. STEWART, Statistical Secretary.

a noble effort by a talented young man. The Chairman, at this juncture, turned over the gavel to the Bishop to close this memorable meeting in his own way.

The Bishop took the opportunity of impressing upon his congregation the responsibility that parents owe to their children. The Bishop declared he believed in the culture of the black boy and what he could accomplish through its aid.

After a most interesting closing address, the Bishop announced the Women's Mite Missionary Conference for the following day. An Executive Session of the Conference was also announced for the following day. The singing of the Doxology, and the pronouncement of the Benediction by Rev. C. A. Stewart, brought a thoroughly enjoyable meeting to a close.

FRIDAY, AUG. 17th.

SECOND DAY

Executive Session

The Presiding Bishop called the Conference to order about 11 a.m. in Executive Session to discuss matters of special importance relative to our Church work in the Island, and about which some definite information was necessary.

The Presiding Elder was asked to supply information with regard to the sale of Church Property, St. Philip's, at Tucker's Town, as no report had been officially submitted. The P.E. stated that a portion of the money (twenty-three hundred pounds) accruing from the sale of Church Property, as above, was expended for the erection of a new Church, St. Philip's, at Harris Bay; the remainder, about nine hundred and twenty-seven pounds, was loaned to the Annual Conference, but no legal agreement had been made between the latter and the Trustees of St. Philip's with respect to the loan.

This loan, however, has been exhausted.

He further informed the Conference that the interest paid the Trustees of St. Philip's in 1927 was appropriated from money raised by the Conference. The Bishop expressed as his opinion that under the law the money accruing from the sale in question should be dealt with as Bermuda Church Extension Money. The P.E. stated that a Committee had been appointed by Bishop Vernon, consisting of the latter, as chairman, Rev. Austin Richardson, since deceased, and himself. The Bishop ruled that if this transaction had been completed during the administration of his predecessor, Bishop Vernon, he would have had no jurisdiction in the matter, but since no report whatever had been submitted to the Conference, it was still a matter of unfinished business, and he felt justified in making an investigation, with the view of giving satisfaction to all concerned. To this there was general assent. A discussion followed which was prolonged at great length, with the result that the Bishop directed the Presiding Elder, Rev. Chas. H. Bell, prepare a full itemized report dealing with the expenditure of the loan in question, have it signed

by Bishop Vernon, and present the same at the next Annual Conference (1929). Rev. C. A. Stewart brought to the notice of the Bishop and Conference an agreement alleged to have been made between him and the Tucker's Town Development Company. The Bishop ruled that this transaction had no legal standing. He also declared that the Conference had no legal status, not having been incorporated, and therefore was not legally in a position to borrow money. Not having any corporate standing it therefore has no corporate power.

The Conference, however, will go on record as admitting they borrowed nine hundred and twenty-seven pounds from the Trustees of St. Philip's Church, Tucker's Town, to be used for Church Extension work on the Island and did promise to pay three per cent interest upon the loan, or any portion of it, until the whole was paid.

The Presiding Elder brought to the notice of the Bishop the trouble that exists at Bethel, Shelly Bay, on account of a school being held in the Basement of said church.

The Bishop related the substance of an interview he had held with a deputation of Bethel people with regard to the trouble accruing from the school being held in the basement of the Church.

The deputation claimed that the school and its accompaniments had become a nuisance, whereby the Church Property was being deteriorated.

They further held that the Church and its precincts should be held sacred, and that the dispute would continue until the school was separated from the Church.

The Bishop advised that the Trustees and Officers of Bethel Church to publicly state that they disfavoured the continuance of the School in the Basement of their church, and were regretfully forced to take steps to compel the school to quit the Church premises. Rev. H. L. Gault, pastor of Bethel, told of the unpleasant experiences he had endured during his pastorate of this charge, and was strongly of the opinion that the school should be compelled to quit forthwith. The Bishop said he was somewhat of the same opinion, but he would further consider the matter and submit his conclusions later.

The case of the re-enrollment of Bro. Ainsworth Darrell was next considered. The Bishop after defining the official standing of Bro. Darrell in the Conference —admitted on trial—stated he was not against his admission and that the Conference might use its judgment as to the condition of his re-enrollment. It was hardly necessary to re-examine him as the time of his suspension had only been one year.

A question was asked by Rev. C. E. Stewart relative to admitting Miss Gwendoline Bascome, a student of Wilberforce, as a member of the Conference. After due deliberation it was thought best to advise her to accept the status of Conference Evangelist. The Bishop thought she could be used as a supply whenever her services were needed.

The P.E. informed the Conference that the General Conference Delegates had jointly borrowed the sum of £45 to help defray their expenses to the Gen-

eral Conference. The Bishop observed it was a delicate matter. He advised that in the case before them, the Conference pay as much as they can on the bill and have it renewed. The Bishop then expressed his regret at the decrease in finance, as per reports of pastors, as compared with the previous year. Explanations were given which the Bishop declared as being satisfactory to him.

The Bishop asked a few questions relative to the expenditure of a certain sum of money which the Mite Missionary Society had voted in behalf of the Church building programme in Bermuda, and which had been entrusted to Bishop Vernon to forward. The Bishop replied that the matter had been reported and dealt with at the General Conference.

The point next dealt with was the unwillingness manifested in certain quarters to accept local pastors.

Whole-time men, and in some cases, lack of proper training, it is suggested, are the factors contributing to this, and not weakness of moral character, by any means.

It was remarked that the meagre salary paid at nearly all the charges were prohibitory to the securing of trained men from abroad as pastors.

A question arose as to the advisability of dividing the work in Bermuda in two districts.

It was argued that it was not advisable under the peculiar conditions that existed, and in the light of past experiences to take this step. The Bishop then spoke with reference to the defamation of Mrs. Dennis' character, and emphasized that it was necessary for Rev. Bell to take the step he did on the Conference floor, and that he would take the responsibility of Rev. Bell's act because he believed it was a step that would relieve the situation and help all concerned. He believed in being candid and sincere with all the brethren.

The Session was then closed.

THIRD DAY

MORNING SESSION

Saturday

Session opened with devotionals led by Rev. J. S. Johnson.

Scripture Lesson I Corinth. XIII, read by Sister Evangeline Bascome.

Rev. Jost of the Ebenezer Methodist Church, St. George's, brought greetings to the Conference from his church and from the various churches of his denomination in the Island. He gave a very interesting speech, wherein he submitted briefly, an account of the organization of the United Church of Canada, and the benefits already accruing therefrom.