

C. M. KINNEY'S STATEMENT ON THE CONCEPT OF REGIONAL CONFERENCES
October 2, 1889 SDA Campground Nashville, TN,

Elder R. M. Kilgore: Now, Bro. Kinney, we are ready for your statement.

Elder C. M. Kinney: It is probable that my ideas may be a little different from what has been expressed by some. But they are mere suggestions, and I would be extremely glad if there were no necessity to carry them out.

In the first place, a separation of the colored people from the white people is a great sacrifice upon our part; we lose the blessing of learning the truth--I have reference especially to general meetings. The colored people as a class are in need--

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Elder R. M. Kilgore: What kind of separation do you refer to?

Elder C. M. Kinney: I refer to the separation in the general meeting; that is, for them to have a different campmeeting. It would be a great sacrifice upon the part of my people to miss the information that these general meetings would give them; and another thing, it seems to me that a separation in the general meetings would have a tendency to destroy the unity of the Third Angel's message. Now, then, this question to me is one of great embarrassment and humiliation, and not only to me, but to my people also.

There are four thoughts that suggest themselves to mind that should be considered in the solution of this question: the *first* is that the course that shall be taken shall be pleasing to God; *second*, that a position will be taken that will not compromise the denomination; *third*, that the position that is to be taken will be to the best interest of the cause; *fourth*, that a position will be taken that will commend itself to the good judgment of the colored people, that they may not be driven from the truth by our position on this question. Now, these are questions that seem to me should be considered in the solution of this matter, I am glad to state first that the Third Angel's message has the power in it to eliminate or remove this race prejudice upon the part of those who get hold of the truth.

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Elder R. M. Kilgore: That is clearly demonstrated, at least to a great extent, as I learned on the camp-ground here.

Elder C. M. Kinney: Second, that the Third Angel's message is to go to all nations of people; that it cannot take hold of them if there is some obstacle in the way, and that the truth of the Third Angel's message will enable us to remove that obstacle. The colored-line question is an obstacle; in other words, the very presence of the colored people in church relations and in our general meetings is an obstacle, is a barrier that hinders the progress of the Third Angel's message from reaching many of the white people.

Now, I wish to present twelve propositions, which, to my mind, would be a complete or perfect solution to the difficulty:

- (1) A frank understanding between the two races on all questions affecting each. This would avoid much trouble that would otherwise occur.
- (2) That colored laborers shall have no special desire to labor among white people, except an occasional invitation where to accept would cause no trouble.

- (3) That the colored brethren do not interfere with the outside interest among the white people; the minister in charge of such work to be judge of such interference.
- (4) Where the two races cannot meet together without limitation in the church, it is better to separate.
- (5) That missions be established among them, thus raising up separate churches. White laborers giving their time exclusively to this work.

I realize the difficulty of white laborers attempting to labor for both classes in the South, for if they labor for the colored people they will lose their influence among the white people, but in laboring among the colored people exclusively that difficulty is obviated.

- (6) That in view of the outside feeling on the race question, and the hindrance it makes in accomplishing the work desired among the whites, the attendance of the colored brethren at the general meetings should not be encouraged, yet not positively forbidden. If they do attend let there be a private, mutual understanding as to the position they should assume on every phase of the meeting.

I would say in this connection that in my judgment a separate meeting for the colored people to be held in connection with the general meetings, or a clear-cut distinction, by having them occupy the back seats, etc., would not meet with as much favor from my people as a total separation. I am willing, however, to abide by whatever the General Conference may recommend in the matter, and advise my people to do the same.

- (7) In those churches where there are two or more let them remain until an effort can be made to raise up a church among them; then have them to unite with it.
- (8) Until there is enough to form a conference of colored people, let the colored churches, companies or individuals pay their tithes and other contributions to the regular state officers, and be considered a part of the state conference.
- (9) That the General Conference do what it can in educating worthy colored laborers to engage in various branches of the work among them, when such can be found.
- (10) That Christian feeling between the two races be zealously *inculcated everywhere*, so that the cause of separation may not be because of the existence of prejudice within, but because of those on the outside whom you hope to reach.
- (11) That when colored conferences are formed they bear the same relation to the General Conference that white conferences do.
- (12) That these principles be applied only where this prejudice exists to the injury of the cause.

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