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Chapel Transcript: February 22, 1974 - "Blackness and Christianity" Bishop G.O. Patterson

Holy Spirit Research Center, Oral Roberts University

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Bob Stamps

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CHAPEL -- 2-22-74
BISHOP PATTERSON
CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST

AA 1.C 1974 2/22 TR A
Blackness and Christianity
Chapel 2/22/74 Bishop Patterson

VOICE:Scripture reading by Brother _____. God bless you.

VOICE: Would you turn with me please to the 4th chapter of II Corinthians and would you read along with me silently while I read aloud. "Therefore seeing we have this ministry as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."

CARLTON PEARSON: May the Lord add a blessing to the reading of His Word. The Souls Afire are coming at this time. We're going to sing a song that was again written and words and lyrics by our brother Rayfield Green, who's at the piano. It's called, "We are the Father's children." Again Miss Mary Archer, our assistant director, is going to conduct this morning.

VOICE: Thank you ever so much and welcome to today's chapel. How many of

you are part of the Father's children? Amen. First before I say anything I want to thank Sister Ross, she sits at the piano, uh, the organ. She's the lady who makes that organ speak to us. We thank her so much for coming. Thank you, Sister Ross. We want you to feel relaxed. If the Spirit leads you to say amen, say amen, say Hallelujah, hallelujah, praise the Lord. Do as the Spirit leads. President Roberts will come now and introduce today's chapel speaker.

ORAL ROBERTS: Good morning. The largest Pentecostal denomination in the world, either black or white, is the Church of God in Christ. All my life I have had some contact with this movement. It has the largest annual convocation of any religious movement in the entire nation. This convocation is in the city of Memphis. So far there's never been any building there large enough to accommodate it. While my father was alive, he was very fond of this way the Spirit was moving in this tremendous movement. I never knew that I'd have this opportunity this morning. But I assure you it is an honor and a privilege of mine to present our speaker. First I want to present Bishop Blake, who is the presiding Bishop of the state of California for the Church of God in Christ. Who is the pastor of Carlton Pearson. Right on! Bishop Blake, will you stand? Thank you. Bishop Patterson was first elected as a Bishop in the early 50's. But he became the presiding Bishop of the entire movement in 1968. He is the supreme head from an earthly point of view unto God of the Church of God in Christ. And he is our invited speaker today. And I present him to you with a great deal of warmth of heart, a deepness of appreciation and a real fellowship in Jesus Christ. Bishop Patterson.

BISHOP PATTERSON: Speaking of the convocation of the Church of God in Christ, I'm going to ask you to join me in prayer that God would bless our forthcoming international convocation to be held in Memphis, Tennessee in November of this

year with the presence of your illustrious President, Reverend Mr. Oral Roberts. Young people, you are truly blessed of God. And you should bless the day President Oral Roberts was born. For it is he who has given you the opportunity to get your learning and at the same time keep your burning. Now when I was invited here, Carlton is guilty of this too, he told me that this would be somewhat of a late observance of Negro History week. There would be some emphasis on uh, black emphasis. I also later learned that there are some connections with uh, Christianity for the uh, week. Now though I would just like to say a few words to you with reference to uh, both blackness and Christianity. I am going to be very, very brief if at all possible. If not, the President certainly has the same privilege he had with Carlton, pull me down. Now though the subject of blackness could be dealt with from many different ways and from different perspectives, I am prompted to because of Christ's centered interest, which has always been characterized, which has always characterized ORU, and because of my calling of a gospel minister to convey some of the thoughts on the subject of blackness and Christianity. It has been said that by certain black people who sought to rationalize their failure to comply with the valid demands of the gospel, that Christianity is a white man's religion. That it was given to the black people during the days of slavery as a means of assuring the slave masters that they would be non-violent, obedient and pleased to abide in their slavery. Now unfortunately in certain instances this could have been true. However, I also want to assert that long before those in the Mediterranean had even suspected that this land of ours existed. Black people and the continent of Africa had become in interaction with Christ and His church. When because of their concern for the life of the babe, Christ, Mary and Joseph had defined a place of refuge. It was in Egypt, into North Africa that they sought safety. During the dark day of His crucifixion when the Jews of Asia were condemning Him and crying out for His death, when Europe, represented by the Roman Centurion, drove nails into His hands and feet, and brutally pierced Jesus

in His side, Africa, being represented by Simon of Cyrene from Northwestern Africa, stepped forward when everyone else stepped back. And shared the history of Christ's most significant moments with Christ. One would think that the privilege given to Simon of Cyrene would have been reserved for Simon Peter or John or some of the other apostles. But God, in His own wise providence, chose black hands and woolly hair to perform an act and render a service that all of the truly wise and truly great men of the ages would have been supremely honored to share and to perform. Were it possible for Simon of Cyrene to testify here in this auditorium today, he would be very, very resentful of the assertion that Christianity was a white man's religion. The Ethiopian Eunuch would resent it also. For after the gospel was first preached to the Jews and then to the Samaritans who were of mixed Jewish stock, Phillip was divinely summoned to a desert place where the Ethiopian Secretary of Treasury soon passed in his chariot. Before Peter was sent to the Italians in Caesarea, before Paul began his diligent missionary effort in Eastern and Mid-Western Europe, this Ethiopian nobleman heard and delivered the gospel after being baptized went on to Ethiopia to form there the Abercedian Church which exists until this day. Dean Millman has said that it was Africa, not Rome, which gave birth to Latin-Christianity. For Africa gave them three among the greatest leaders and scholars of the church, Augustine, Tutolan and Cyprone were all born in northwestern Africa in the city of Carthage where _____ blood co-mingled and produced one of the ancient world's most powerful and advanced civilization. The African Tutolan made Latin Christianity ethical, justice and practical. The African Cyprone with the church's authority in all matters of ecclesiastical law. Probably the greatest contribution to western theology other than the Bible was made by the African Augustine. And any person who would reject Christianity because

he felt that it was a white man's religion is both mistaken and unaware. Black man has the privilege of being among the first leaders and participants in the pentecostal or charismatic revival which started in the early 1900's. And now sweeps our country and the world. Vincent Simon says Charles F. Parham, a white man, and William J. Seymour, a black man, share roughly equally positions as the founders of modern pentecostalism. Parham first emphasized pentecostal doctrine in Baxter Springs, Kansas, and Seymour was the outstanding personality in bringing about the great and crucial pentecostal revival called the Azusa revival that took place in, uh, on Azusa street in Los Angeles, California. And from that revival Pentecostalism spread across the nation and the world. One key-man in that contagious spread was Charles Harrison Mason, a black man, the father and founder of the Church of God in Christ. Church of God in Christ was founded and incorporated as a holiness body back in the early 1900's, 1907 I believe it was, yes 1907. Elder Mason traveled to Seymour's revival and received there the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Other members of the denomination also sought to receive the experience. And the Church of God in Christ became the first legally incorporated pentecostal body in the United States. Seymour also points out that most of the white Pentecostal churches between 1907 and 1914 had no recognized ecclesiastical body to represent them or to ordain ministers. And therefore they were not authorized to perform marriage and certain other ministerial duties. They were unable to obtain reduced clergy rates on the railroads, and scores of white ministers obtained ministerial credentials from Elder Mason and the Church of God in Christ. One group in Alabama and Texas received permission from Elder Mason to use the name of the church in 1912. This arrangement continued until 1914 when they organized and called their predominantly white organization the Assemblies of God. When Bishop Mason passed in 1961 he left behind him one of the largest Pentecostal bodies in the world. No, Christianity is not a white man's religion. It's not solely a black man's religion. It is simply man's religion. It is the

the only hope of man's sanity and salvation in the world. Would anyone dare deny that our world is in trouble. Would anyone dare deny that we are precariously perched on the very brink of a national and an international oblivion. Crime is not only in the streets where ignorance and poverty flourish. It is also in the suites of our government and finance because of the Watergate, the breakin to the office of Ellsberg, the psychiatrist, the Hearst Kidnapping. We are awakening to our nation's potentials for degradation. Can anyone deny that Isaiah was right in his description of human society when he said that the whole head is sick and the whole heart's faint. From the soul to the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it. But wounds and bruises and putrifying sores that have not been closed, neither bound up, neither nullified with ointment. The time has come and long since passed for the concept of color to be lost in the consciousness of the living Christ. The time has come and long since passed for those who name the name of Christ to renounce their prejudices and separation and their snobbish superiority. The time has come for those who wade in the shallow ponds of racism to plunge into the deep oceans of God's love and His plan of redemption. Yes, it's late, but it's not too late to proclaim that Jesus is the Son of God. It's not too late to say that the sins and the failures of the world were placed on His shoulders and He received our punishment for us. It is not too late to tell men that forgiveness, liberation and power are available only through Christ Jesus, who said I am the way, the truth and the life. It is late, but not too late for us to join with John Oxman in saying in Christ there is no East nor West. In Him no South, no North. But one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide world. In Him shall true hearts everywhere their high communion find. His service and the golden cord close, blinding all mankind. Join hands then brothers of faith, whatever your race may be. Who serve my Father as His Son is surely kin to me. In Christ now meet both East and West, in

Him meet South and North. All Christianity, all Christless souls are one in Him throughout the whole wide earth. I was riding, and I'm closing, in a taxi in Chicago some time ago. And as I passed an intersection, I stopped, the taxi stopped at the intersection, I saw several black fellows standing on the corner. And they all gave me the black power salute. The taxi pulled off. I could hardly restrain the tears from my eyes. For I was thoroughly convinced by those young men's attire that they didn't know what power meant. Power means more than black African gods, African hairstyles, unshaved and unbathed. I went on to Kansas City and when I boarded the plane in Kansas City, walked by the cockpit and saw a neatly dressed black man sitting at the controls of that big jet. I took my hat off and said this is black power. And now a final word about Christianity. And again I'm going to say to you that you should bless the day President Oral Roberts was born. Someone said to me, Brother Preacher you're from the old school. What you're representing, Christianity is on its way out. It will soon meet its, listen to this, Watergate. The common expression is soon meet your Waterloo. But it will soon meet its Watergate. I called up Heaven. Because I always feel if you want information, get it from the right source. And I made a long distance call to Heaven. And uh, I made it person to person. When they connected me around the Throne, I let it be known that I wanted to talk to Jesus. And when they got Him on the phone, the Holy Ghost said Jesus is on the main line, tell Him what you want. And I asked Him if the church would soon meet its Watergate. He said to me, I told you before I left that upon this rock I'll build my church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And said, if Hell's gate can't bother it, don't worry about Watergate. Christianity, young people, get your learning, get your learning. This has been a great experience for me. Just meeting your President, he's a great man. But you can understand why he's great. He's so humble and so kind, so down-to-earth. Get your learning, but for God's sake,

don't lose your burning. Because Christianity is the only anchor that will stand the stress and strain of life. I know it's a long black night. I'm not like they say, the ostrich putting my head in the sand and saying it's not true. It's a long black night when crime, rape, murder, dope, robberies, skyjacking and hijacking are running rampant down our streets like water down a rain vent's gutter. It's a long black night. It's a long black night when high government officials are substituting plumber's tools for burglar's tools. It's a long black night. It's a long black night when one would be kidnapped for a ransom for food for the poor. And if I was poor, with no clothes on my body and no shoes on my feet, I'd have the integrity that David had when they offered him water from the well that he wished so much to drink from, and realized that blood had been shed to get that water. He poured it out on the ground. I could never eat anybody's food given to me, purchased with the blood of another individual. It's a long, long, long black night when cannibalism is practiced in the civilized United States. When a man is apprehended with human fingers in his car and admits that I've eaten the heart. It's a long black night. It's a dark night, a black night when a supreme court served an eviction notice for God to vacate the premises of the public schools. And my heart was broken when I saw Jesus pick up His Bible and His hymnbook and walk out of the public school and look back with tears in His eyes and said, birds have nests, foxes have holes, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head. It's a long black night when young people are experimenting with love, shacking together. Too cheap to get married. It's a long black night. I was a long black night with Apostle Paul. But he proved that Christianity is the anchor that will hold under all circumstances, when he set sail from _____ to fair haven. And when after 14 days there was no sun up in the sky, blackness everywhere, when the waters were perturbing the boat and it looked like every minute she'd go down to a watery grave, when the captain of the ship didn't know what to do, when the captain of the army's heart failed him and when the sailors

were ready to get in the lifeboats and forsake the ship, a little preaching man, just a little preaching man stepped out on the deck of the ship. Look like I can see his little cape now sailing in the wind. Who is he? He knows nothing about navigation. He knows nothing about sailing a ship. He's just a preaching little man. But I hear him stealing, stilling the audience saying to those on board, be of good cheer. And then comes the questions of the critics and the smart folks and the knowalls, where do you get your information from? Who are you? What do you know about what's happening? Are you basing your argument on something that's tangible, something knowledgeable? He has to admit, no, I'm not. But I tell you what, last night, last night when the storm was raging, last night when there was no sun up in the sky, last night when it would seem that all hope was gone, last night when every minute it looked like we were going down to a watery grave, last night when I could have so easily despaired and flung myself out of life's back door, last night an angel stood by me and said be of good cheer. It's a dark, stormy night. But Master the tempest is raging, the billows are tossing high, the sky is overshadowed with darkness, no shelter, no hope is nigh. Carest thou not that we perish? Oh, how canst Thou lie asleep when it seems that each moment is threatening a grave in the angry deep. Wake up Jesus. The winds and the waves shall obey thy will, peace be still. Whether the wrath of a storm tossed sea or demons of Hell or whatever may be, they all shall sweetly obey Thy Will, peace be still.

ORAL ROBERTS: Right on! If you cut my suspenders, I'd go straight up. Glory! Whew! Man, I'm tempted to preach. Man, if you can't preach after that, you got no preach in you, did you know that? Bishop I don't know where you been hanging out so long. Why you haven't been by here before. Thank God. Thank God for you young people that arranged this. Thank God for Jesus. Thank God the days of shacking up are over. Thank God. Thank God we wiped the slate clean and we start over and we're not going to be cheap any more. We're going to pay the price when it comes time. We're going to get married. We're going to

pay the price. And now when we have children, they will not be illegitimate. There'll not be abortions cut out of girls' bodies. There'll not be any young man around here impregnating a girl with an unwanted baby. And no girl will allow it done to start with. He talked about last night. I'm talking about this morning. This morning Jesus of Nazareth is standing up in that storm tossed boat. And He's looking at the howling winds of lust, of passion that tear us apart. And that tell us we have no security. That's we so insecure that we got to grab at every little thing. I grab a piece of sex here, I'll grab a little dope here, I'll tell a lie here. I'll cheat here, I'm so insecure I'm going to grabbing. Jesus is standing there in the midst of that howling gale with His clothes being swept about Him and He's holding out His hands, the hand that scooped out the bed for the ocean, that flung the stars from its fingertips, that sculptured the mountains. Jesus is standing there and He's saying to that storm, you lie down and behave. Peace be still. (OR speaking in tongues) Jesus is standing up in your boat this morning. And my boat this morning. And He's saying to that wild animal nature lie down. You don't belong in charge. And He's saying to that spiritual side, with which He made us, you rise up. You, the inner man, you stand up on the inside and you look the devil in the eye. And you say devil take your hands off God's property. I don't belong to you devil. I belong to God. And when I touch a girl or I touch a boy, it'll be a caress that'll uplift and that'll encourage and that'll inspire to be clean and upright. When I touch a girl or a boy it'll not be to pull down to a low level. But I'll dignify my fellow human being. And I'll dignify myself. And I'll stand up. And when the Supreme Court ordered God out of the schools, the Holy Ghost swept Him in on the campus of Oral Roberts University. And we're going to say, welcome Jesus, aren't we? Let's say it. Welcome Jesus. My body is yours, Jesus. Say it. Say it like you mean it. My mind is yours, Jesus. I'll study to show myself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. My soul is Gods. My whole man

is Gods. And I'm going to walk in the Spirit all my life. I'm not just going to be a bricklayer that is out laying brick. I'm going to build a wall, and I'm going to build a cathedral. (Audience repeats each phrase). Amen. Amen. Amen, Amen. It's a new day. It's a new day for us. For in olden times men of God came by and they gave the message of the Lord and the people listened. It's a new day. It's a new day. And you've helped us bring in the new day. Samson, whose eyes were gouged out and was put in prison because he backslid, his hair is growing again. And he's rising up. And his enemies have him in the temple and they're going to kill him. And he says to the little boy, lead me to the two pillars that support this building. And son, you get out of my way, I'm going to pull it down. And Samson standing up there, shook the pillars, and some 3,000 enemies of the Lord shook and trembled and said, 'get out of here, get out of here quick. But they couldn't move. And his hands on those pillars pulled them down like they were match stems. And the building came tumbling down upon the enemies and upon Samson, too. But before he died, he looked up and he said, for mine eyes have seen the glory of the Lord. And in his death he slew more of the enemy than he had in his life. Samson is rising again . I see this morning in the Holy Spirit, a faculty member, a staff member, a student with his head up, and his shoulder back standing straight. Not speaking with a forked tongue, but a clean tongue. Eliminating all bad language. I see us standing up studying, looking at our books with a new respect. I'll get my lesson. Nobody will have to get it for me. I'll get it. I'll stand on my own two feet. I see us not ashamed to kneel before God. Get down on our knees while the world laughs at people that pray. We'll pray and shake the world. And I see us balancing ourselves spiritual, physical, mental. I see us becoming whole men and not ashamed of it. What do you see this morning? I see the coming of the Lord. Amen. I'm going to ask one of the World Action Singers to close us with prayer. Debbie? Have you ever prayed before our group like this?

DEBBIE: No, I haven't.

ORAL ROBERTS: This is the first time?

DEBBIE: Yes.

ORAL ROBERTS: You've sung on the national television program many times, haven't you?

DEBBIE: Yes.

ORAL ROBERTS: But those were words that other people had written. And you sing the songs with the World Action Singers. We're going to turn you loose to pray. If you pray one word or a thousand words, we're not worried about the number of words. Nobody's written the words for you. I don't even know your religious background, I just know you love Jesus. And just pray.

DEBBIE: I will. Let's bow our heads. Dear Heavenly Father. Father God, thank you for assembling us together today. Thank You for the things that You've opened all our eyes to this morning Heavenly Father. Help us to be newer people and better people, Your children, dear Heavenly Father. Proud of who we are and living as you'd have us to live. Give us the strength to be. Give us the desire to ask You for the strength when we feel weak. And just help us to depend on you when we can't depend on our own strength, dear Jesus. Thank you dear Lord that You saved my soul. And that you will save all of our souls, dear Heavenly Father. And I ask these things in Christ's name, Amen.

ORAL ROBERTS: You might want to come and meet the Bishop. You're dismissed from assembly. Go with God and the Holy Spirit.