

BEAUTIFUL



Gardner C. Taylor



Henry H. Mitchell Ella P. Mitchell



Wyatt Tee Walker

ARE THEIR FEET...

ROMANS 10:15 KJV

CELEBRATING MINISTRIES AND GIFTS

The Baobab Tree — "The Tree of Life"

Beautiful Are Their Feet

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

*How then shall they call 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

Beautiful Are Their Feet

There is a Ghanaian proverb, which suggests that you should never place the elders who nursed you outside the village. Regrettably, the wisdom of this saying is often unheeded and those who have fed us are physically and/or psychically placed outside. This volume and the celebration lifting the legacy of Samuel DeWitt Proctor that inspires it, honor the wisdom of the proverb and place four elders who have nourished us at the center of the gathered village.

This commemorative collection of testimonies and expressions of appreciation, recognition, and congratulations offered to our honorees, bears the banner "Beautiful Are Their Feet". Rarely do we look at the feet to discover beauty, but, as suggested by the text of reference, the beauty of the feet has to do with much more than the appearance of anatomical extremities formed for pedi-motion. The feet speak to the very essence and existence of a person and the character of his or her journey or walk in life. When speaking of those we honor, we can say wonderful is their presence and beautiful are their lives. They have given incarnate expression to authentic existence and exemplified fidelity, integrity, commitment, productivity, sensitivity, creativity, and depth of person and spirit born of intimacy with the eternal.

Their feet are beautiful because they have preached and practiced the gospel of genuine peace. Peace that does not solicit passive quiescence but rather demands prophetic words and deeds that unmask and challenge the principles, powers, and practices that violate true peace.

Their feet are beautiful because they have published tidings of joyous and profitable substance. While confronting and entering fractured reality they have never allowed brokenness and negativity to rob them of their energy, joy, or hope. They have maintained a voice that speaks of promise and keeps before us a vision of a new day dawning. They have kindled our hopes and given substance to the things hoped for.

Our honorees, in person, pronouncement, and production, have helped us rediscover the majesty and sanctity of the sable soul and reclaim the beauty and promise of life on this garden called earth. While critically pointing out broken places they have been agents of healing and restoration calling us to authentic celebration.

They have been the poets of our aspirations and the guides to our attainments. With selfless service, productive pen, powerful preaching, keen intellect, caring instruction, deep spirit, and unwavering faith, they have lifted the veils that darken the horizons and given us a glimpse of an eternal order and a foretaste of the not yet.

How beautiful are the feet of Ella Mitchell, Henry Mitchell, Gardner Taylor, and Wyatt Walker that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. We have been touched, nourished, and inspired.

With gratitude, we praise the Lord, and honor these elders.

Dr. John W. Kinney
Dean, Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology of
Virginia Union University

AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE



Drs. Mitchell

Honoring Henry H. Mitchell and Ella P. Mitchell

When Henry H. Mitchell began educating students in the 1940's, Black Preaching had already sustained Blacks for 300 years, keeping us sane, and providing us the stamina to live and to fight another day. However, no one had yet in a methodological or theological way written about this gift (Black Preaching) to America. After the upheaval of the 1960's, Henry H. Mitchell put pen to paper and indelibly stamped in academic literature the virtues, power and sterling worth of Black preaching. Before Henry H. Mitchell, while the Black Church knew the power of its preaching, others did not. Since Henry H. Mitchell, no one has denied it in writing and many have attempted to replicate it in non-Black pulpits.

Although later to the national stage than her husband, Ella P. Mitchell was a pioneer in introducing great Black Preaching to pulpits that had never heard it from women. Just as we marveled at the scholarship of Henry Mitchell, we stood on our feet for the proclamation of the Word by Ella P. Mitchell. Even the sounds of the enemies of pulpiteering by women were hushed in her presence.

Over the past 30 years, they have come to be known around the country, by too many denominations and faiths to name, as the ultimate clergy couple. Their inseparability has made flesh the phrase, "two became one." More than any clergy couple of the 20th and now the 21st century, they have modeled discipleship, scholarship, love of Black culture and covenanted marriage. Never has our culture produced a couple whose commitment to the Black Church has influenced so many generations of preachers. To these parents of our pulpit, we honor your inestimable labor and love of God.

Reverend Martha Simmons, Esq.
President, Publisher, The African American Pulpit Journal,
A Ministry of Hope for Life, Inc.

ELLA PEARSON MITCHELL

Whom God Chooses, God Uses

Looking back over time, from the vantage points of her youth, early adulthood and middle age years, and seeming to observe someone other than herself, Ella Mitchell shares her remembrance of how God called her to preach. Editor of *Women: To Preach Or Not To Preach*, a compendium of memoirs by twenty-one Black preachers, she writes: *"What committee would have selected a chubby girl converted in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1925 to be a kind of entering wedge for the breaking of the barrier against women?"* In high school, God called her attention, but she had heard from reliable sources like her own mother that women were not supposed to preach. Strangely enough, her preacher-father never said a discouraging word. In college she halfheartedly changed her major to religion in her senior year. Later when she served as a missionary in rural South Carolina, she would still not admit to preaching.

The woman of God continued to resist a call to preach even after seminary preparation, teaching in seminaries, and through the years delivering the Word. Then one Sunday morning, fifty years after her first word from the Lord, the Holy Ghost just snatched her out of the pew. She went running down the aisle to tearfully confess her 'call to preach.' God insisted and the Holy Spirit moved to the ordination. God be praised! God had chosen her, and God does move in mysterious yet powerful ways.

To the unfamiliar, Ella Mitchell's advocacy of woman-as-preacher may seem a feminist polemic. But her stance in that regard is not to be viewed solely in the context of gender politics or as any other kind of isolate position; rather, it must be interpreted in the context of her overarching unifying vision and her courage to preach the simple and enlightening truths. Thus, she exemplifies a faith-journey, a ministry, characterized by the willingness to see what is, as it is, as a prerequisite for change that will yield a renewed church.

Rev. Mitchell revisits Scripture to reference numerous examples of the most unlikely people who were chosen to do God's will. Though she focuses on Scriptural stories of both men and women who were chosen, her effortless scholarship asserts that *"God is not about to waste half of God's gifts and talents because they are not used in the male-dominated tradition"* - with the "half" in that sentence referring to women.

As one of the Black church's most acclaimed preachers, Rev. Mitchell is to be praised for her courageous call for renewal. She tells us,

"...there is abroad in the land an awareness that the African American preaching tradition may very well be God's provision for the renewal of the church. The Black church itself needs renewal...the truth is that most of that church is loafing along in anything from mediocrity on down the scale. We are often using a powerful tradition just to keep the doors open and to achieve some selfish ends. I am certain that the African American church must itself be renewed from its own bottom, from its own supposedly less wise, from its own weakest sources, from those on whom it has too long looked down. For that which is most likely to renew a church or a civilization is most likely to come from the bottom."

Ella Mitchell and her husband, Rev. Henry Mitchell, evoke especially warm sentiments because of the so called "Love Sermons" they preach together. Characterized by some as that "cute couple," the Mitchells recount how they met on an elevator and kissed, fell in love and have been joyfully married for nearly sixty years, still kissing on elevators. Preached in a conversational style, and embellished with personal anecdotes and natural bits of levity, their sermons are liturgical masterpieces. Two lifetimes of faith commitment and depth scholarship attend those sermons (and everything else the Mitchells do).

We celebrate the role of Rev. Ella P. Mitchell as the Deputy Director of the Martin Luther King Doctoral Fellows program at Rochester Theological Center. And ultimately, whether Ella Pearson Mitchell is preaching with her husband or on her own, and whatever the theme or occasion, she confides this about her intention, her purpose:

"My text says to all those who are outside the circles of power, whatever group or whatever culture, whatever social status-- -the least, the underdog, the persons of low estate, the ones at the bottom of earth's junk pile, the unsophisticated, the powerless-- -whom God chooses, God uses."

Born in Charleston, South Carolina, 1917

Daughter of a Presbyterian minister

1939 graduate of Talledega College

1943 graduate of Union Theological Seminary

Professor, Interdenominational Theological Center and Berkeley Baptist Divinity School

Dean of Sisters Chapel at Spelman College

1997 Ebony top fifteen Black Women Preachers

"Dean" of Black Women Preachers

BOOKS INCLUDE: *Women: To Preach or Not to Preach?*

Those Preaching Women (4 Volumes)

Together for Good and Fire in the Well (both with Henry H. Mitchell)

THE FORERUNNER

Ella Pearson Mitchell has been the forerunner for today's African American female preacher. Blessed by the continuous support of her husband, Henry H. Mitchell, she has broken barriers and dared to answer the call of God to preach the Gospel at a time when women clergy were not well received in our Black churches.

Dr. Ella is not only a trailblazer, but also truly a mentor who exudes the Spirit of the living God. Her edited books, *Those Preaching Women*, Volumes 1, 2 and 3, can be found in the bookstores of seminaries around the country while Volume 4 is scheduled to be published by Judson Press in the spring of 2004.

John the Baptist, was the forerunner to Jesus declaring, "Prepare the way." Likewise, Ella Pearson Mitchell has prepared the way for women in this new millennium to continue to answer their respective calls to enter ministry. For that, Dr. Ella, the people of God thank you immensely and are eternally grateful to you.

Your daughter in service,
Minister Jacqueline Glass

The Mitchells through the years



and their growing family.

HENRY MITCHELL

Abound, Do A Lot Of This Work

In 1971, when Dr. Henry Mitchell was on the faculty at Rochester Theological Seminary, he recognized the need to convene a group of Black theological scholars who, in addition to earning their doctorates, would provide curriculum materials for seminaries across the United States and abroad. To launch this inspired and unique undertaking, Dr. Mitchell sought the assistance of James Joseph, then President of the Irwin Sweeney Miller Foundation that ultimately funded the proposal. Thus, the Martin Luther King Doctoral Fellows initiative, commonly known as the MLK Fellows program, was founded.

As the Martin Luther King Professor of Black Studies at Rochester Seminary at the time, Dr. Mitchell was noted for placing rigorous demands on students. And this aspect of his pedagogy was, of course, infused into the new doctoral program, which emphasized high standards of research and scholarship. More specifically, Dr. Mitchell decided the program would recruit cross-denominational candidates who held the Master of Divinity degree and who were also master preachers. They had to have outstanding records of pastoral ministry and active participation in the social transformation of the communities they served.

Given the daunting qualifications specified by Dr. Mitchell, the Foundation officials expressed concern that only a few scholars would be recruited and able to successfully complete the program. But Dr. Mitchell's vision was larger than the Foundation's appraisal. So he took on the role of Director of the program, working long and hard with the undaunted aid of his wife, Ella Pearson Mitchell, who served as his Deputy Director. To the surprise of Foundation officials and others, he recruited twenty uniquely qualified candidates into the program. And three years later, when the MLK Fellows program ended, nineteen of those African American pastors graduated with earned doctoral degrees. Considering the thousands of people who can be positively reached and affected in the career span of just one well-prepared pastor, the achievement of having prepared nineteen such pastors promised an exponential yield of staggering proportions.

The MLK Fellows program is but one seed of the ministry of Dr. Henry H. Mitchell. His lifetime of good works also include his service as Dean of Virginia Union University School of Theology, Professor at Interdenominational Theological Center, ministry in various parts of Africa, and member of the Board of the African American Pulpit.

It is fitting to view Dr. Mitchell as a distinguished scholar and homilectician, but essential to see him as a man of faith with whom we can all identify. Indeed, we would do well to imbibe and practice his commitment to God-numbered days, as he puts it: *"...rejoicing in the days numbered or allotted to the purposes of God is still a reality. I have found this joy over and over in my own time. I can't recall any unspeakable joy that didn't begin in one of those God-guided, God-numbered days."*

He is a model of servant leadership with the commitment and dedication required of those who would do God's work: *"It takes somebody who is steadfast, unmovable, to abound in this kind of work. If you're scared they'll know it in a minute and they'll move in on you right then. We are free from fear, free to do labor, to take risky projects, to work where the kingdom needs to be helped, because in this day and age the biggest challenges we have require courage like we never had it before."*

"Abound," he tells us, *"do a lot of this work."*

Born in Columbus, Ohio, 1919

1941, B.A., University of Pennsylvania

1944, B. Div. Union Theological Seminary, New York

1973, Doctorate of Theology, Claremont School of Theology

Executive, American Baptist Churches

Dean, Virginia Union University School of Theology

Professor, Interdenominational Theological Center, Fuller Theological Seminary and

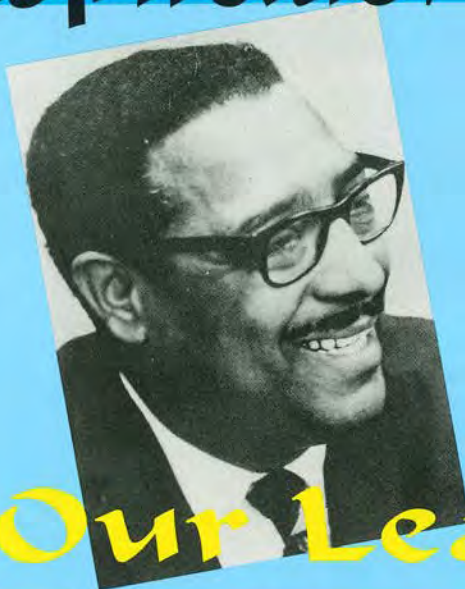
American Baptist Seminary of the West

Books Include: *Black Preaching*
 The Recovery of Preaching
 Soul Theology
 Celebration and Experience in Preaching
 Preaching for Black Self-Esteem

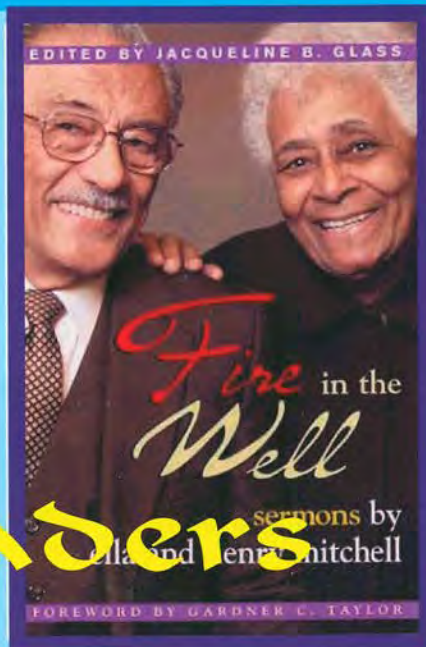
and with Ella P. Mitchell

Together for Good and Fire in the Well

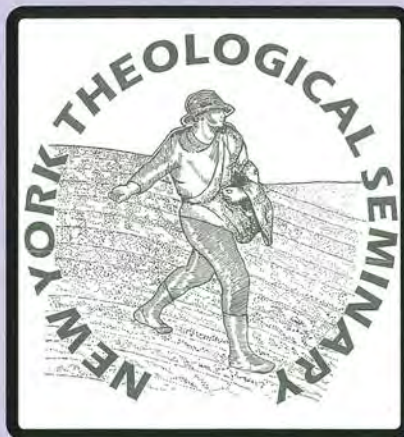
Inspiration



Our Leaders



**Drs.: Proctor,
Mitchell ,
Walker and Taylor**



New York Theological Seminary celebrates the outstanding and life-transforming contributions of Henry H. Mitchell, Ella P. Mitchell, Gardner C. Taylor, and Wyatt Tee Walker.

We all walk in the light of inspiration and encouragement that has shown forth through their stellar ministries.

May God continue to bless them as they continue to seek the Shalom of the City.

NEW YORK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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**DR. GARDNER C. TAYLOR, DR. WYATT TEE WALKER,
DR. HENRY MITCHELL, DR. ELLA P. MITCHELL**

My Dearly Beloved in the Lord:

There are no words that can adequately describe just how much of an awesome impact you have made on the life of Christianity in the North American context within your life times and mine. When the story of the Black Church in North America is written, your names will loom large across every page as four of the "trailblazers" who have set the standard high in terms of integrity and faithfulness.

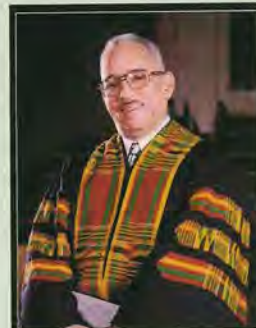
Dr. Taylor, you have touched my life in ways that you will never imagine. From the time that I was a little boy and you were friends with my father, Rev. Jeremiah A. Wright, Sr., your ministry and your spirit have touched my spirit and touched my life. On this occasion of your being honored, I write you to say, "Thank you."

Wyatt, you have been a presence in my life ever since the 1950's when Samuel DeWitt Proctor went to Virginia Union as President. Your ministry, your scholarship in music, your pastoral record and your friendship have meant the world to me. Thank you for being who you are and for being the man of God that you have been in my life.

To the Drs. Mitchell, there are no words that can convey just how full my heart is to see the two of you honored at this Conference. Your ministry, your preaching, your writings, your intellect and your character have placed a stamp on the African American Church that will be there long after all of us are sleeping in our graves!

Each of you were close friends and colleagues of Dr. Samuel DeWitt Proctor. Each of you carries a piece of him in your souls and in your hearts. Each of you has had him stamp your ministry and each of you has honored your friendship with him by taking the best that God has given you and using it to bless the lives of millions of people.

I thank God for your ministry and I thank God that we have this opportunity to say "Thank you" to you publicly while we have the chance. May God continue to bless you, keep you and strengthen you.



**Pastor Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr.
and the Congregation of
Trinity United Church of Christ
Chicago, Illinois**

*There are spirits that dwell in
deep woods!
There is a fire in the well!
Somebody's calling your name!*

*Ella Pearson Mitchell
Henry H. Mitchell
Gardner C. Taylor
Wyatt Tee Walker*

*I've got this church and
you were born to preach!*

*The world has truly been blessed
and I praise God for your life, your ministry
and the moments shared.*

*Rev. Dr. George E. McRae
President
Florida National Baptist
Convention*

CONGRATULATIONS AND
BEST WISHES TO

ELLA P. MITCHELL
HENRY H. MITCHELL
GARDNER C. TAYLOR
WYATT TEE WALKER



*From Reverend Dr. Leslie
David Braxton, Sheila
Braxton and the Mount Zion
Baptist Church Family*

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1634 19th Ave, Seattle, WA 98122
206.322.6500

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Senior Pastor**

**Reverend Dr. Cheryl Price Clemetson,
Assistant to the Pastor / Minister of Christian Education**

**Reverend Dr. Samuel Berry McKinney,
Pastor Emeritus**

“Deepening Our Roots, Extending Our Reach”

Greater Christ

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Reverend James C. Perkins
D.Min., Pastor



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November 25, 2003

Congratulations are in order to the co-conveners of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Pastors Conference for not only sponsoring a great progressive conference on ministry, but for also having the foresight to honor four people who embody Black Christian aristocracy.

Dr. Henry and Ella Mitchell are "Father and Mother" to at least four generations of preachers. No matter our denominational affiliation, they have in some way parented all of us. As a clergy couple, they were pioneers working side by side to teach and train us, as much by their powerful example of spousal love and mutual support, as by the books they authored to serve as our textbooks on the art and craft of black preaching.

Prophet-Preacher, Social Activist, Dr. Wyatt T. Walker embodies all of the best of the black preacher. I got a chance to meet him at close range when I joined him on one of his many tours to the Holy Land. That experience left a profound impact on me. His sermons, lectures, books and courageous social activism have blessed all our lives.

Dr. Gardner C. Taylor is, of course, a legend in our times. He sets the standard of excellence in preaching! To mention his name is to summons from our souls a desire to hear a Word from the Lord. He has been Father and mentor to us all.

I thank all of them for the life they have lived to make life for the rest of us a better experience; for the high standard they set of excellence in ministry, and for allowing me the privilege to know them up close and personal.

God be praised for all of you. May He continue to bless and prosper your life and labor.

In Christ,

James C. Perkins

JCP/kds



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Dennis W. Wiley, Ph.D., Pastor

*Christine Y. Wiley, D.Min.
Assistant Pastor*

*W. Wesley Wiley, B.Th.
Pastor Emeritus*

A TRIBUTE TO FOUR GIANTS OF WHOLISTIC LOVE

*"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind,
and with all your strength." (Mark 12:30)*

When I think of the four of you—Drs. Mitchell and Mitchell, Taylor, and Walker—I think of you as four giants of the Black Church whose lifetime ministries have consistently exemplified the wholistic love of God that Jesus identified as the greatest commandment of all. Your diverse contributions in the academic, pastoral, and prophetic arenas distinguish you as unusually gifted exemplars of authentic Christian love.

Each of you embodies the full complement of components that Jesus pinpoints to signify this wholistic love of God. However, if I were compelled to match each of you with one particular feature, I might respond that you, *Rev. Dr. Ella P. Mitchell*, represent the *heart*. Your warmth, your love, your sensitivity, your humility, and your tenderness as a human being are overwhelming. It is a blessing just to be in your presence. At the same time, your quiet dignity and confidence as a strong woman of God communicate your refusal to be marginalized or discriminated against on the basis of race, class, or gender. Truly, you have been a model of excellence for all of us, but I have particularly noticed how you have not only been a role model, but also a mentor for women—especially *Those Preaching Women*—in the Black Church and the seminary.

Thank you for your kind, gracious, and loving heart.

Rev. Dr. Henry H. Mitchell, if your wife Ella is the heart, then you would have to be the *soul*, and I am so happy to know that the two of you are *Together for Good*. I could easily argue that you best represent the mind, particularly when one considers your intellectual brilliance, your astute scholarship, and your prolific writing. But what makes you so special, Brother Henry, is your ability to hobnob in the often-rarefied atmosphere of academia without losing your soul. In other words, you are the layperson's scholar, the preacher's teacher, the commoner's hero, and the hypocrite's conscience. You keep all of us honest. And you do so, not only by bridging the gap between the Black Church and the academy, but also by tenaciously holding onto and cherishing those unique values, styles, and nuances of culture and ethos that are the sole ("soul") possession of those of us who live and breathe the African American experience.

Covenant Baptist Church (continued)

Thank you for loving us with all your soul.

Rev. Dr. Gardner C. Taylor, I could say so much about your heart, your soul, and even your strength as a giant among proclaimers of the Gospel. But here I just want to thank God for your *mind*. It never ceases to amaze me how, even now, during the golden years of your life, you continue to display such a profound command of the English language and are still able to mount a pulpit, without notes, and mesmerize us with your divinely-inspired sermons. Not only are you a brilliant man, but you are also a humble man whose life has blessed me in ways that you would never imagine. I remember the memorable Sundays when I would attend Concord Baptist Church as a student at New York's Union Theological Seminary. I remember the joy of interviewing you in connection with my doctoral dissertation on Howard Thurman. And I remember how blessed and encouraged I was, as a young minister, to read your classic, *How Shall They Preach?* Thank you, Dr. Taylor, for affirming so convincingly that it is possible to save one's soul without losing one's mind.

Finally, *Rev. Dr. Wyatt Tee Walker*, I know that you have a heart for the people of Canaan Baptist Church of Christ in Harlem, I realize that the title of one of your numerous books is *The Soul of Black Worship*, and I am aware how skillfully you applied your mind in writing your groundbreaking text, *Somebody's Calling My Name: Black Sacred Music and Social Change*. From your days as one of Martin Luther King Jr.'s chief lieutenants in the struggle for Civil Rights to your current struggle for health and healing, I have always known you to be a man of incredible strength—physically, spiritually, and emotionally. I admired you long before I came to know you personally because I could see that not only are you a man of tremendous gifts, talents, and charisma, but you are also sincerely committed to the liberation of oppressed peoples throughout the world, and especially of our brothers and sisters of African descent in this nation. Your strength is seen not only in your ability to stand tall, even in the face of adversity, but also in your capacity to respond to the needs of others. Thank you, Wyatt, for you—like Martin Luther King Jr. and, more importantly, like the “King of Kings”—are a living example of *The Strength to Love*.

Again, I thank each of you for being “four giants of wholistic love.” May God forever bless you.

Dennis W. Wiley, Ph.D.



UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
& PRESBYTERIAN SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

3401 Brook Road
Richmond, VA 23227

A Tribute to Ella and Henry Mitchell, Gardner C. Taylor and Wyatt T. Walker.

An occasion for honoring Ella and Henry Mitchell, Gardner C. Taylor and Wyatt T. Walker at the same time and in the same venue is not only a happy occasion but also something of a historical singularity. How often is one called upon to recognize the peculiar genius of each one and also to recognize each one's personal gifts within the context of the others? And how often is one challenged to offer an assessment of each one's contributions within the context of the times in which they lived and flourished?

In each one's own way, the Mitchells, Gardner Taylor and Wyatt Walker carry on the rich tradition of the preacher who could show how timeless truths speak to present needs. Without Ella Mitchell, it is doubtful that a generation of women preachers could have found their voice. Without Henry Mitchell, it is doubtful that the craft of black preaching could have found a secure place in the academy as well as the pulpit. Without Gardner C. Taylor it is doubtful that a Progressive Baptist Convention could have been born, and without Wyatt T. Walker, it is doubtful that America's "Second Revolution," the Civil Rights movement, could have come to pass in the way it did. Each one, in each one's way, has been indispensable, and for that we are all the richer.

Samuel K. Roberts

Anne Borden and E. Hervey Evans Professor of Theology and Ethics
Union Theological Seminary-Presbyterian School of Christian Education

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LOVE, NURTURE, LEADERSHIP, MOTHER, FATHER, FRIEND, MENTORS, WISDOM,

PROPHETS, PREACHERS, ENCOURAGING, GRACEFUL, PATIENT, KIND, CALLED,

And we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28 NRSV

...called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God...

...called to belong to Jesus Christ...

Romans 1:1, 6

*Mom and Dad, Nana and Papou, Dr. Henry and Dr. Ella,
Uncle Henry and Auntie Ella, Ella P. and H.H.*

The Rev. Drs. Ella P. and Henry H. Mitchell

Grace to you and peace from God on this day of celebration and thanksgiving. We add our thanks for you and for all the ways you have nurtured us and so many throughout our lives. We are grateful especially for the gifts of the spirit offered so freely to strengthen us and to encourage us in faith, love, hope and service.

We know you as parents, grandparents, brother and sister, aunt and uncle, preacher and professor, servant and prophet, neighbor and friend.

May God be greatly praised as we pause to honor you who have labored so faithfully in the vineyards of the Lord.

Blessings on you, always.

Regards,

Family, Friends and Students

*Art & Elizabeth Clement
Arthur V & Mitchell Clement
Bob & Muriel Lawrence
Carla & Kenneth Mitchell & Family
Elbert & Dorothy Mitchell
Janice E Mitchell
Stephanie & Taj Wilson
Albert, Gwen & Adrian White
Ermine Pearson Washington
Wendell & Lurline Cotton
Tad & Stephanie Gulley
Sam & Linda Gulley
Benes & Andrea Lawrence
Frederick R. Brown
Pearson & Clara Cotton
Agnes L. Lawrence
Schery & Archie James & Family
Nanette & David Sorge & Family
Elaine & Lawrence Green & Family
Louis & Cynthia Mitchell & Family
Goro & Joyce Mitchell & Family
Jackie & Joseph Lawson & Family
Carol A Mitchell
Robert & Hap Washington & Families
Edgar & Ida Crook
Bill & Marva Brooks
Rev Fleeta Turrentine
Hazel Wickliff
Kathy & Gary Butler
Meredith, Gail & Marcus Sirman
Rev. Lady Savage
Rev Jacqueline Glass & Nichole
Cheryl W Appline
Carl & Brenda Gammage
Cyrille Rhymes
Willie Delaney*

UNDERSTANDING, LEADERSHIP, ACCEPTANCE, FORGIVENESS, GENTLENESS,

GIVING, FRIENDLY, COMPASSIONATE, VISIONARIES, EXCELLENCE, FAITHFULNESS

We Honor You Today & Forever!

On behalf of all the seminarians across this country that have benefited from sitting at your feet, drinking from your wells of wisdom, or studying your written words, we honor you today and forever!



You have been such a tremendous blessing in my life that words cannot begin to express the love I feel for you both. Everyday that I'm with you, my life is enriched and made the better. I only pray that I can be as much a blessing in your life as you have been in mine.

Your Goddaughter
Rev. Lisa M. Tait

Beautiful Are Their Feet

*Honoring
Our Life Long Family Friends*

**Rev. Dr. Ella P. &
Rev. Dr. Henry H. Mitchell**

*for Over 50 Years of
Ministry*



*Dr. John N. and Juanita T.
Doggett*

BEAUTIFUL ARE THEIR FEET!

How did Reverend Doctor Henry H. and Ella P. Mitchell become such inseparable friends of the writer of this tribute? The answer is found in Romans 10:15—“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.” (KJV) Henry and I became roommates at Lincoln University, Pennsylvania in 1939. Henry received an outstanding honors scholarship to Lincoln. He shared his insight with me six months later when my senatorial music scholarship was granted. We enjoyed traveling with Lincoln’s Glee Club and debating teams in colleges and churches. Off and on campus jobs provided extra college funds for some of us. Henry was a language and literary advisor. My job involved working with the instrumental music department. At the start of World War II, Henry had already been accepted at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. I was accepted at Union six months later. Henry and I were listed for 4H exemption as theological students. It so happened that the daughter of a Presbyterian minister was already studying at Union. Ella Pearson had all of the skills and graces of a Religious Education Specialist plus vocal and instrumental gifts. We became a Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist trio.

The circle was broken when Henry and Ella were married. Henry’s Baptist executive secretary position kept him on the road. He managed to get to be the best man at my wedding prior to my graduation and appointment at San Francisco dual assignment at Hunter’s Point Church and National Guards captaincy. Not too many years passed before the Mitchell and Doggett families spent happy times as our children played together in various parts of the country. Henry and Ella played critical roles in churches, schools, colleges and seminaries. The Mitchell duo flooded us with the printed and preached word, which made a dynamic impact in all of our lives.

May I include another one of your honorees, Reverend Doctor Wyatt Tee Walker in this paper for his guidance when I was a part of the Western Region of Southern Christian Leadership Conference in rallying church, college, corporate, and theatrical support for the late Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. who dared to have a dream. May God continue to bless you in your endeavors.

Dr. John N. Doggett

DR. ELLA PEARSON MITCHELL

A “Dually Aligned Woman of God” is usually relegated to persons who hold memberships within two distinct church bodies or denominations. The term is also applied to Christian congregations holding official/formal or unofficial affiliations with two respective church bodies or denominational judicatories. Such alignments accord persons and church organizations significant comprehensiveness, ecclesiastical credibility, denominational endorsement or recognition, connectional, communal validation, and preparatory or academic affirmation and acclaim.

Dr. Mitchell is indeed a contemporary paradigm of all the above alignments. It is quite apparent to me that she truly epitomizes all of what it means to be authentically aligned and affiliated. Her alignments espouse and encompass both the work and ministry of the academy and community of faith. For me, Mitchell is a servant-leader of both the academic and theological community of faith.

As a citizen of the kingdom of God, Dr. Mitchell is astute enough in her orientation to teach God’s people in both the academy and church. In fact, she has got an incontestable record in this regard. In other words, her dual alignments have not only contributed to the educational development of her students but to the spiritual formation and preparation of her graduate/post-graduate learners as well. There are countless individuals around this globe whose lives have been transformed through the profound wisdom and ministry of Dr. Ella P. Mitchell.

What then are we to make of this dually aligned woman of God who empowers persons and institutions? First, Dr. Mitchell values and loves learning. Secondly, her commitment stems from a heart of love for both the academy and the believing community. Thirdly, she believes in the transformational power of learning. Fourthly, this committed pioneer woman of God exudes the belief that the Christian church receives credibility in this global marketplace when it is seriously yoked up with or allied with the academic community.

Thank you Dr. Mitchell for allowing God to use you and your gifts in both the church and the learning community.

Rev. Brenda J. Little, M. Div., D. Min. (candidate)

*Whom God Chooses, God Uses...
Abound, Do A Lot Of This Work*





Drs. Ella P. and Henry H. Mitchell

In a spirit of humility, I relish the opportunity to offer a few words toward this collection of commemorative comments regarding the ministry of Drs. Ella P. and Henry H. Mitchell. Together, they have helped multitudes grapple with the ultimate call of God, the task of putting into words what cannot adequately be conveyed by words alone.

The Mitchells placed on the world stage that which, at one time, had been deemed emotional noise making and the target of ridicule. The traditions of the Black Church could have remained obscure, but the Mitchells have taken what was unacknowledged and set it before the world as an art form. They have set forth the styles and content of preaching that has kept the Black Church alive and a dynamic force in the midst of hardship and handicap. Dr. Ella gave voice and presence to the best-kept secret of our tradition, Black Preaching Women. In the Mitchells' wake, I find myself rejoicing in what I had not been affirmed with, that the Black Church in America has something to offer the world.

Thank you Reverend Doctors Ella and Henry. Your light has chased shadows away and roses have bloomed in dry places, enriching the world. An untold number of preachers have been empowered by you, and I, for one, will be eternally grateful just for knowing you.

Congratulations and may God continue to bless you,

Rev. C Danny Johnson, Senior Pastor

Thankful Baptist Church, Johnson City, TN

The lives of Rev. Dr. Henry and Ella Mitchell are truly superb reflections of God's call to his ministers to "set captives free." In their breathtakingly full lives, they have devoted their energies to preaching, teaching, and living the Gospel.

Almost two decades ago, the Mitchells entered the stage of life (70+) usually referred to as "retirement." Typically, society views this life stage as a time to fish, hunt, or otherwise "tend one's garden." The Mitchells, on the other hand, have brought a new definition to this stage of life, and have done so with abundant grace and dignity.

After the age of 70, they completed their outstanding autobiography, *Together for Good*, and were featured in Jet Magazine. Rather than winding down, their lives gathered renewed momentum. This is consistent with the words of Henry Van Dyke who said: "I shall grow old, but never lose life's zest, because the road's last turn will be the best." In the lives of the Mitchells, this statement is dramatically demonstrated.

I, William Ingram first met the Mitchells on June 6, 1961, which is the day I graduated from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. Dr. Henry Mitchell was present on graduation day to celebrate his own 20th class reunion at Lincoln. Our friendship grew as they were flourishing professionally as pastors in California. During this period (1960's - 1990's), they pastored two churches, served as deans at several colleges, wrote numerous books, trained hundreds of ministers, and preached thousands of sermons at churches and lecture halls around the world.

Their lives give testimony to the fact that grace, will, and determination can help human beings transcend illnesses, heal from serious surgeries, and survive family crises to do God's work.

The Mitchells have raised three fine children, one of whom has also devoted her life to the ministry. They have survived great tragedy, including the early death of their oldest son.

There can be no greater example of lives devoted to the commitment to "set captives free" than the wondrous, corporate journey of Henry and Ella Mitchell. They have chosen to be channels to communicate God's love to the benefit of others.

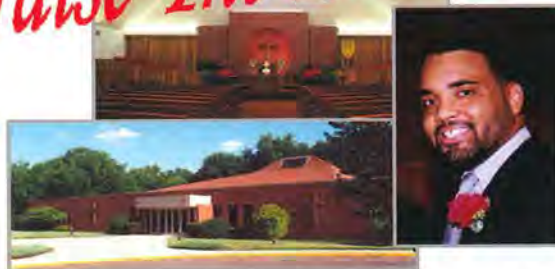
As a tribute to their steadfastness over many decades, ministering to the needs of family, friends, colleagues, and multiple communities and individuals around the globe, my wife and I enthusiastically participate in this celebration of their accomplishments.

Rochelle and William Ingram

Magnificent Mt. Zion Baptist Church
"Moving From Membership To Ministry"
under the dynamic leadership of
Reverend DeQuincy M. Hentz, Pastor

*Shouts of joy and victory resound in the
tents of the righteous: "The Lord's right hand
has done mighty things!" Psalms 118:15 NIV*

Praise The Lord!



***Praise God for the Life, Ministry and Legacy
of Rev. Dr. Samuel D. Proctor!***

***The Mt. Zion Baptist Church
joins you in honoring Christian giants:***

***Rev. Dr. Gardner C. Taylor
Rev. Drs. Henry and Ella Mitchell
Rev. Dr. Wyatt Tee Walker***

***and the memory of:
Rev. Dr. Miles Jerome Jones
Rev. Dr. Prathia Hall Wynn***

***Mt. Zion Baptist Church
10180 Woodlawn Boulevard, Cincinnati, Ohio 45215
Reverend DeQuincy M. Hentz, Pastor
(513) 772-6230 www.mtzionwoodlawn.com***

**MY STATEMENT OF WITNESS HONORING
HENRY MITCHELL, ELLA PEARSON MITCHELL, GARDNER TAYLOR & WYATT TEE WALKER**

The Black Church experience is a part of God's awesome testimony in creation. When we consider the great leaders God has fashioned out of the Black experience we see God's creativity and majesty in human forms. Psalm 8:3-5 tell us: *When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established: What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor."*

We can see God's care for all of us in the glory and honor placed on our leaders.

I am deeply grateful that my ministry has been touched so personally by these four wonderful Black Church leaders. I first met Wyatt Tee Walker during the Civil Rights Movement when, at the beginning of SCLC, he replaced Ella Baker as a staff member to Martin Luther King Jr. While I was very close to Ella, I also learned a lot from Wyatt. Through the years his leadership and his books have continued to inspire, nurture and challenge me. Rev. Dr. Gardner Taylor taught the one and only preaching class I had at Harvard Divinity School. On Dr. Gardner's weekly commutes to Cambridge, I had the privilege of driving him from the train station to the school. I relished those ten or fifteen minute drives. I can still feel the vibrancy of our conversations and the honor of being in his presence.

After being called to the Presbyterian Church, I met Henry and Ella Mitchell who were then in ministry with the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta. At the time, Gayraud Wilmore, another great Black Church leader, had written a book, titled *Black and Presbyterian: The Heritage and The Hope*, which helped to shape my ministry because it discussed the alienation of many Black Presbyterian congregations from the Black community and the Black Church experience. Since Ella and Henry Mitchell were sensitive to this issue and had extensive experience with Black Presbyterian schools and leaders, they generously helped me create videos, of Henry lecturing on the Black Church experience, that I could share with Presbyterian congregations. Those video proved to be very useful resources in my ministry.

I am not only very grateful for the ways these four leaders have touched me personally, but also for their contributions to Christianity worldwide. Because of them we know that the Black Church Witness has had an impact on the world. We are thankful that, through the ministry of these giants, we can see some of God's glory and majesty.

Rev. Dr. L. Rita Dixon
Associate for Black Congregational Enhancement
Racial Ethnic Ministries, Division of National Ministries
Presbyterian Church (USA)

**GARDNER C. TAYLOR, HENRY & ELLA MITCHELL AND WYATT TEE WALKER:
GIVING WITNESS TO THEIR IMPACT ON MY LIFE**

Four of the most influential people in my life are Dr. Gardner C. Taylor, Dr. Henry Mitchell, Dr. Ella Pearson Mitchell, and Dr. Wyatt Tee Walker. The four of them have guided, and continue to guide, my life work and ministry. It would take several books to fully explain their profound and enduring impact on me; but I am accorded limited space here, so know that my witness to their goodness could be far more extensive.

To begin with, know that it was Dr. Henry Mitchell who encouraged me to attend Colgate-Rochester Theological School, where I was granted a full scholarship. And during my matriculation, Dr. Mitchell and his wife, Dr. Ella Mitchell, took me in as one of their children. Thus, as my mentors, they changed my worldview of ministry and inspired me to rediscover my African identity and claim my heritage as an African American Christian. They also transformed my understanding of God in the general sense and God as the liberator of the poor and oppressed.

Dr. Gardner Calvin Taylor deeply impacted my life as a seminary student. He reaffirmed my call to ministry and completely transformed me by sharing the depth and breadth of his understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and by modeling the importance of articulating the meaning and significance of the Preached Word. Dr. Gardner helped me to see and understand that the ability to peel away levels of discourse moves one—and one's congregation—to fully experience the true meaning of the Gospel. Clearly, his is a major influence on my life work.

Dr. Wyatt Tee Walker one of the most influential of Baptist ministers, helped to shape my understanding of ecumenical witness. His ability to articulate preaching as theology and praxis from a global perspective not only intrigued me but also became the building block that guided my exploration of the ecumenical movement. As pastor of Canaan Baptist Church in New York City, he awed me with the expanse of his work. As pastor he played a major role in the civil rights movement, taught musicology, engaged in business ventures, wrote profusely on any and all subjects, engaged in the ecumenical movement and even found time to sail a yacht. Truly, his model of ministry is worthy of emulation.

Daily, as I contemplate all the ways these four Black Church leaders enriched and shaped my life, and the lives of uncounted others, and recalling their works far beyond the brief testimony above, what emerges is the example they set before us. Simply put, in their loving practice of the Gospel of Jesus Christ we see—truly see—how Christians love one another.

**Rev. Dr. Tyrone Pitts, General Secretary
National Progressive Baptist Convention, Inc.**

TRIBUTE TO REV. DR. ELLA P. MITCHELL AND REV. DR. HENRY H. MITCHELL

It is no wonder that these two have soared to such heights! Having met over 60 years ago in an elevator at Union Theological Center in New York City, clearly, they have created an art form of going up and down together and landing safely on solid ground. Recently, it was on solid ground that the three of us stood at the 2003 Hampton University Ministers' Conference, in Hampton, Virginia, where we team-taught the first ever degree-related course on Homiletics in conjunction with the Hampton University Ministers' Conference. Religious Studies students of Hampton University, who attended the Hampton University Ministers' Conference, had the opportunity to be both a conference participant and student of Homiletics. The ground beneath the students became more solid as they honed their preaching skills in the presence of Drs. Ella and Henry Mitchell.

The desire to teach with Ella and Henry developed when I served as Executive Vice President and Academic Dean of the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) in Atlanta, Georgia. ITC was honored to have Ella and Henry team-teach Homiletics as visiting professors. Occasionally, they would drop by my office to sit and talk with me. Each time they would say, "We pray for you every day." How could it be, I thought, given their sizable family and thousands of persons they know and care about and who care about them. How do they manage to get to my name on their daily prayer list? Those moments ministered to me in ways that only the Holy Spirit could interpret. I was the Academic Dean and they were my faculty; but in those moments, they were the deans and I was a child in need of prayer.

'Somebody prayed for me' is what we as African Americans sing and pray about weekly. Yet, all of us may not have had the personal experience of having somebody pray for us EVERYDAY, not because we are worthy, but because God has placed us in their care. Shepherds of their "flock," those to whom they minister, teach and for whom they pray, Ella and Henry quietly and humbly model for us that the gift of caring, is the quintessential requirement for *servanthood*.

As a servant leader for theological education, I pray that the prayers and ministry of Ella and Henry Mitchell will always encourage me to be servant first and leader second, and that those entrusted to my stewardship and care will themselves become more faithful servants. Hopefully, given Ella and Henry's thesis that the best way to motivate people to do the will of God is through celebration, we will have something to shout about.

Ella and Henry, thank you so very much for your love, care, wisdom and payers.

Leah Gaskin Fitchue, Ed. D.

President, Payne Theological Seminary, Wilberforce, Ohio

Pond Street Baptist Church, Dr. Samuel DeWitt Proctor's first Church, is delighted to join in tribute to the four stalwart Giants of the Gospel, being honored by their many colleagues, students, friends, and co-laborers. All of us are blessed by their presence.

Dr. Henry Mitchell is widely known and honored in lifting up the sacred heritage of the African American Pulpit as a prolific author, esteemed teacher, and model pulpiter. My association with Drs. Henry and Ella Mitchell goes back to 1968. **Dr. Ella Mitchell**, a pioneering pulpiter and teacher of preachers, has blazed a major trail among "Those Preaching Women." The Church is more healthy and empowered because of her. **Dr. Gardner Taylor** is everybody's Hero and Model as Pastor and Preacher. Because of him, every preacher is inspired to love the calling more deeply, to aspire to its call of excellence, and to lean on God, through the Holy Spirit, to carry it out more faithfully. **Dr. Wyatt T. Walker**, my personal mentor and friend for exactly 56 years, whose place in the annals of history is indelibly marked by his pioneering leadership with Martin Luther King, Jr., as the co-founder of the modern day civil rights movement. This widely recognized fact stands equal to his monumental achievements as Pastor, Preacher, Business Developer and Leader.

Pond Street Baptist Church is honored to offer these words of tribute, along with its proud pastor, and wife, Mrs. Lillian Wood, both of whom were students of Dr. Proctor in his initial years at Virginia Union University. Not only did Mrs. Wood grow up on the same street as Dr. Proctor in Norfolk, but our family was further blessed by the uniting of our son and his wife in holy matrimony by Dr. Proctor. They were then members of Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem.

And now, the one unfinished dream of Dr. Proctor which was to transform obsolete military camps into learning centers for inner city youth, yet awaits our hearts and hands, in some updated form and continuing urgency. Join those of us at work on this unfinished task of reversing the jail trail, and jump starting local economies. The challenge is ours - - "a charge to keep we have."

Our prayers are for all the continuing blessings of God upon our four honorees.

In the name of Him who loves us all,

REV. DR. VIRGIL A. WOOD, PASTOR
BOND STREET BAPTIST CHURCH, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

*Dr.'s Henry and Ella Mitchell have been an inspiration to me for many years.
Dr. Henry Mitchell has been a Master Teacher and a respected resource of
Biblical Knowledge.*

*Dr. Ella Mitchell has been a Trail Blazer to Women in Ministry.
She was the first woman to be ordained at
Allen Temple Baptist Church - my church of ordination in Oakland, California.
Dr. J. Alfred Smith Sr., Pastor*

*Because of her encouragement as a Sister on the Journey and Role Model,
I acknowledge with appreciation.*



*From
Dr. Regina C. Anderson, D.Min - Christian Education, UTS
A Henry Mitchell Fellow*

*Administrator - Green Pastures Christian Academy
Decatur, Georgia*

*Founder of Sisters on the Journey, Inc.
Atlanta, Georgia*

*A Ministry of
Empowering,
Caring,
and Sharing
(404) 344-3419*

In Loving Tribute To
The Rev. Dr. Ella Pearson Mitchell
&
The Rev. Dr. Henry H. Mitchell
~ “Ways . . .” ~

In Adoring Ways I honor you for the ways you've given yourselves to the Lord!

In Honorable Ways I commend you for the ways you've served the needs of the world!

In Commendable Ways I cherish you for the ways you've loved me and such different people as you've traveled around the world!

In Loving Ways I adore you for the ways in which your lives proclaim your love for our Lord!

In Reverent Ways I laud you for the ways in which you have taught the World to Preach the Word!

In Treasured Ways I bless you for the ways you have prayed the strengths of so many of us in God's service!

In Humble Ways I thank you for the ways you have made so many of us “your own!”

In Selfish Ways I claim you for the many ways you have endeared yourselves to me.

In Quiet Ways I applaud you for the gentle ways you have taught me to serve!

In August of 1983, Dr. Henry & Dr. Ella, while serving the School of Theology at Virginia Union, graciously invited me into their home to talk about my future in ministry. Seeking more than employment as a recent seminary graduate, it was imperative that I talk with some leading ministers about ministry. However, what I thought was going to be their reason for changing that appointment became a catalyst towards greater ministry. She was sick with a very bad cold – flat of her back in bed with covers pulled around her neck. They invited me into their bedroom, pulled up one chair to the side of the bed for Dr. Henry and placed one at the foot of the bed for me. **There** we talked about my life. Twenty years of caring about me and my ministry have endeared them to me in no small way. From the wisdom of Solomon to the love of Jesus Christ, they have reasoned with me, renewed me, resourced me, rejoiced with me, and often revived my love for ministry. So it's easy to salute them as my MENTORS because they have clearly demonstrated over these years that the greatest way to live life is to **pour** it into the lives of others! **‘How do I love thee?’** I cannot count the ways!

The Reverend Dr. Paige Lanier Chargois
Pastor, First Baptist Church
Franklin, Virginia

BEAUTIFUL ARE THEIR FEET

Rev. Ella P. and Rev. Henry Mitchell

God has made many beautiful and magnificent creations on earth, but none were as fearfully and wonderfully made as mankind. There are two wonderful creations by God that surpass the beauty of many other human beings because of what they have done to serve mankind in the physical and spiritual realm — they are Rev. Ella P. and Rev. Henry Mitchell. These are the two most loving, caring, and giving people that I have ever met. To me they exemplify the character of Jesus Christ and show forth the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. I first met Dr. Ella and Dr. Henry Mitchell in their home around the dinner table. Every time I have been in their presence, they have fed my hunger for knowledge and quenched my thirst for wisdom and understanding from their spiritual dinner table. When I read their written books, it's like exploring a new world and finding gold biblical nuggets and pearls of wisdom to live by in my daily walk with Jesus Christ. Because of the Mitchells, I will always have a hunger and thirst for the spiritual food they have served to so many of God's people, and my life will never be the same. Congratulations on receiving such a great honor. You are truly two of God's most beautiful creations!

Dr. Mary V. Smiley

Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA

**IN CELEBRATION OF THE SHARED LIFE AND MINISTRY OF
REV. DR. HENRY H. MITCHELL AND REV. DR. ELLA P. MITCHELL**

It is a joy and privilege for us to share in paying tribute to two spiritual giants in the epic saga of African-American Christians in the United States, as slaves, free persons, preachers, teachers, churches in the cities and the hinterland, and warriors in the struggle to be free, live with honor, and die with dignity. No two persons stand taller nor shine more brightly than The Rev. Dr. Henry Mitchell and The Rev. Dr. Ella P. Mitchell. Their pioneering work and ministry in many areas are well known and appreciated. Their notable contributions to "Setting Captives Free and Equipping Pastors" is well chronicled through their numerous publications, lectures, seminary courses, sermons, and weekend conferences and seminars. They have increasing limitations, but no complaints fall from their lips. In 2004, they are still making their voices heard and leaving their imprints for others to follow.

Two personal reflections are especially meaningful for us, and also, we are sure, to the Mitchells. Eva recalls with joy and thankfulness, summers past when she and Ella would walk barefoot on the sands of the beach in Cape May, New Jersey. While walking, they talked and shared their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears and enduring love for God and the People of God. Authentic friendship was experienced, nurtured and shared. Van recalls the very stimulating dialogue with Henry as they journeyed in the market place of ideas concerning the meaning of life (theologically and philosophically), as well as the contemporary challenges facing the African-Americans Diaspora in Church and state. Through the years, we have moved in different directions and in different places. However, at the most meaningful times in our several life journeys, we have always found ourselves together again in love and shared celebration. The publication of "BEAUTIFUL ARE THEIR FEET," in which your shared life and ministry are commemorated is another such moment. Eva and I are privileged to be a part of it. Not only are Henry and Ella "Together For Good," Eva and I continue to share with you today and always.

PEACE! POWER! LOVE!

Rev. Dr. Van S. Bird and Ms. Eva R. Bird

MY BLESSING

In 1976, I was asked to preach my first sermon, and I was at a total loss. I went to the bookstore and found a book entitled *The Recovery of Preaching* by Henry H. Mitchell. That book immediately became a classic in my preaching life. In the short-term, the book helped my immediate preaching task, but more importantly it started a twenty-five year association with Henry H. Mitchell that has blessed my life. He has been my formal mentor for a Doctor of Ministry program at United Theological Seminary. At United, he was my thesis advisor and helped me to get my thesis published as my first book on preaching. He has encouraged me to teach and write on Black preaching. He helped me to become the co-executive editor of *The African American Pulpit*. He has recommended me to many far and wide across the country. He has written forewords and introductions for subsequent books. He has listened to me, encouraged me, critiqued my preaching, taught me about celebration, given late night pastoral advice, and modeled partnership in ministry with one's spouse. At the end of the day, these comments are about an inarticulate gratitude to a giant that took the time to consider a novice from the south side of Chicago.

With all my love and respect

Rev. Dr. Frank Thomas

Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church, Memphis, TN

The cause of Christ is richer because of the exemplary contribution of the persons we honor with this publication. Drs. Henry and Ella Mitchell have set a high standard not only as historians and homiletics but as persons committed to the oral and written proclamation of a responsible Gospel. They have, by their efforts, been responsible for a most significant body of written materials regarding the African American Church, which will increase in value with the years.

Wyatt Tee Walker, a Martin Luther King Fellow, has long served us as a role model for the blending of his voice soaring with the passion of social justice as well as for his charismatic and creative preaching. While there may be others who have gained the honors, those who are astute historians of the twentieth century know that in many ways the thought and the strategy for civil rights advances in America came from the mind of Wyatt Walker.

There is no way to express the profound impact that the life of Gardner C. Taylor has had on the church of Jesus Christ. For all the decades of his God-kissed life he has sounded a "certain trumpet;" his has been a clarion call to redemptive faith. He has been our tutor, our counselor, our advocate and our friend. His voice has carried with its tones the authentic African American expression of proclamation. His preaching of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ has Touched so many and encouraged us all.

So we come to this time of celebration and commemoration to honor four whose lives and contributions have enriched us all: Drs. Henry and Ella Mitchell, Dr. Wyatt Tee Walker and Dr. Gardner Calvin Taylor. May God bless them all.

THE MARTIN LUTHER KING FELLOWS, INC.
H. Beecher Hicks, Jr., President



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Samuel DeWitt Proctor
Pastors Conference
“God’s Call: Setting Captives Free”

RE: Dr’s Ella P. and Henry Mitchell

Even though I have only known Dr’s Ella P. and Henry Mitchell a short time they have impacted my life in a way that will last a lifetime. I first met them in the summer of 1997 as a guest of their niece at a family wedding. They opened their hearts and home to me as if I were family. The next month my mother passed on to glory. The kind loving words Dr Ella spoke to me gave a peace to my heart that no one else had been able to give. Because of the foundation they have in Christ I witnessed the joy a life in the Savoir could bring. I was raised in a Baptist church but had drifted away thru the years. Yearning for the peace I saw in their lives I recommitted my life to God on January 1st, 2000. Since then my husband and children have also made that commitment. We are new creatures in Christ with old things passed away. I congratulate them both on doing just as the Lord commanded, they have been faithful and have borne much fruit on their vine. Their example of walking the path of steadfast Christians encourage many to come asking “What must I do to be saved?”. I have no doubt that when they meet the Savior he will exclaim well done, good and faithful servants. I wish them much love, joy, and continued happiness in the days ahead. Dr’s Ella P. and Henry Mitchell, may God bless you and keep you always with His grace and mercy.

Love and Gratitude,

Rosemary Donaldson-Ford, M.D.

JUAN A. VÁZQUEZ, PRESIDENT

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A TRIBUTE TO DR. HENRY MITCHELL

Years ago, Carlyse Marney told me, "No man ever amounts to much until he learns to bless his own origins. Henry Mitchell has enabled thousands of Black ministers to come to a new appreciation of the remarkable power and influence of the Black pulpit. At a time when there was a strong push for cultural diversity, Henry Mitchell made a brilliant case for the genius and the vibrant possibilities in the Black preaching style and substance.

Dr. Mitchell insured respect and visibility for Black preachers by gathering some of the pre-eminent and most prominent among them to research the roots of African-American religion and to challenge and inspire each other in the prophetic and artistic aspects of Black preaching. Through his influence, there was established the Martin Luther King Black Church Studies Program, leading to a Doctorate of Ministry degree at Colgate-Rochester-Crozier-Bexley-Hall. This became a model picked up by other seminaries for enabling Black preachers to refine their art and deepen their passion for homiletic practice which inspires, encourages, and also liberates.

Dr. Henry Mitchell has carried out his groundbreaking leadership in partnership with Dr. Ella Mitchell, thereby demonstrating a wonderful model for shared ministry. Like mother and father of the homiletic guild, they continue to travel across the country and around the world, challenging not only Black preachers but all preachers to make full proof of their ministry.

Henry Mitchell should be honored for his effectiveness in revitalizing that ministry which has most significantly empowered our community.

Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes, Jr., Senior Pastor
The Riverside Church, New York, NY

I am delighted to join the company of those who seize this opportunity to express our thanks and tribute to these fine people, all of whom I call friend, on the occasion of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Pastors Conference. I deeply treasure the friendship of more than sixty years of Henry and Ella Mitchell, and still enjoy telling the world that they spent their first night of marriage, August 12, 1944, in the residence of Eugenie and I, in Brooklyn.

Their friendship has meant more than I can say. It was a joy to see them at Shaw University where the chapel was dedicated in my honor and at the recent celebration of my 42nd Anniversary as pastor of Salem Missionary Baptist Church, Inc. Ella was one of only four participants at the memorial service for Eugenie.

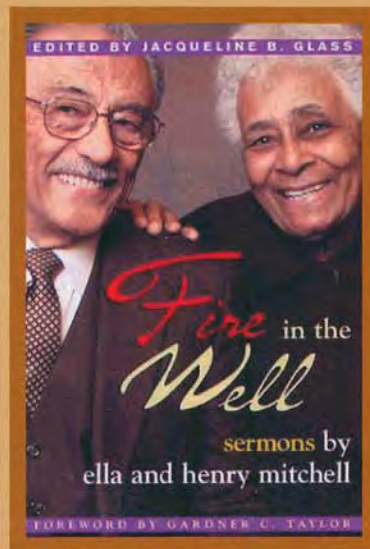
What does one say about Gardner Taylor? – Preacher par excellence, builder, world traveler, teacher, counselor, neighbor. He was the pastor of my beloved mother and the eulogist at her funeral. I am privileged to know him in each of these categories and consider him a national treasure.

It has been my privilege to know, for many years, Wyatt Tee Walker, who is unique unto himself - Preacher, historian of Black music, civil rights leader, pastor, builder, author, of many provocative and informative books, a brother beloved.

As the ranks of our contemporaries dwindle down even more, I cherish the ties of friendship increasingly, and inwardly rejoice in all honors so deservedly bestowed on them on this and other auspicious occasions.

Dr. Thomas J. Boyd, Pastor
Salem Missionary Baptist Church, Inc., Brooklyn, NY

Walker and Taylor



The Mitchells

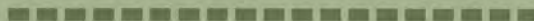
Proctor

ELLA P. MITCHELL AND HENRY H. MITCHELL,
GARDNER C. TAYLOR AND WYATT TEE WALKER

GOD'S LIGHT UPON YOUR FOOTPRINTS
WILL FOREVER GUIDE OUR PATH.

PRAISE GOD!

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But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

Matthew 23:11 (KJV)

ELLA P. AND HENRY H. MITCHELL

GARDNER C. TAYLOR

WYATT T. WALKER

Thank you for your servant leadership!

The Lord has done great things for us; whereof we are glad.

Psalms 126:3 (KJV)

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Printed in Canada