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THE STORY OF THE EMERGING VISIBILITY OF THE
COMMUNITY OF BLACK PEOPLE, NORTH PRESTON,
NOVA SCOTIA

by

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Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty in partial
fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In even a depressed community, a small percentage of people, according to some standard of judgments, has somehow risen a trifle above the norm of its environment.

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INTRODUCTION

Fifteen thousand black people, constituting over one-third of Canada's black population, more Canadian than most Canadians, live in Nova Scotia.¹ And over 10 per cent of Nova Scotia's black population exists in North Preston, a square area of land, four miles on each side, situated at a dead-end road, seven miles from the City of Dartmouth. Dwellings are located in the centre of this rocky terrain in the shape of an equilateral triangle, each side being one mile in length.

The Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, at the corner of Portland and Hawthorne Streets, Dartmouth, is located seven miles from North Preston. This church was organized in 1951. Its organization was sponsored by the Nova Scotia Synod.² It was the first new mission in the Atlantic Provinces in nearly half a century. The congregation dedicated its present building in 1954. Presentations and programs are non-directive. They are orientated towards understanding, interpretation and animation. The congregation is very mobile, vibrant and viable.

¹Marjorie Whitlock, They Endured, Pt. 1, A History prepared by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (Halifax, 1968).

²This synod is now the Atlantic District of the Eastern Canada Synod, Lutheran Church in America.

Three pastors have served Our Saviour during its twenty-year history. However, there have been four pastorates. The writer has been the congregation's leader twice. Between my first and second pastorates at Our Saviour I served four years as a military chaplain with the regular forces of the Royal Canadian Navy. The current pastorate is in its seventh year.

The Senior Choir and Lutheran Church Women of Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Dartmouth, were the concerned members of the body who paved a path to an understanding and interpretative relationship with North Preston for other members of the body. Initial contact with any organized group of black people in the area was requested by the Senior Choir. They discovered the people of Victoria Road Baptist Church to be extremely friendly, dedicated Christians. This discovery was made through a mutual participation in a city-wide choir organized for an ecumenical worship service. Nine months later, a joint worship-fellowship night was held by the two congregations at the Lutheran church. The motivating force was strictly a desire for Christian fellowship. Details of this and continued friendship gatherings will be presented in Part II of this thesis--"Emerging Visibility." But a degree of understanding and interpretation of black people was gained from this experience. Also, this fellowship became the motivating force for initial contact with North Preston.

The invisibility of North Preston, in the fall of 1968, was being featured by the news media as a comparison with and contrast to Halifax's Africville which was forced to disintegrate and relocate. The Lutheran Church Women, motivated by a desire for understanding and interpretation of North Preston, requested the president of the Nova Scotia League for the Advancement of Coloured People to address their members. Because of commitments, a substitute speaker, Mr. Calvin Ruck, a recently-appointed North Preston Social Development Officer, was assigned that night. A blessing had come to Our Saviour, for a genuine desire for greater understanding and interpretation--and even participation--was kindled by Mr. Ruck's presentation. Part II on "Emerging Visibility" will present some of the resultant experiences.

Until early 1969 the congregation was in advance of the pastor in understanding and interpretation of North Preston. The gap was not obvious. This group functions as a body. A gap or distance between pastor and people is not obvious where the priesthood of all believers is not only preached but practised. Thus two members of the body motivated this Lutheran congregation, who subsequently motivated their pastor to a deeper understanding and interpretation of North Preston.

Books and articles, included in the bibliography, about the general black American scene were pursued by the

writer. Basic philosophies of Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph Abernathy and Whitney Young, as well as Stokeley Carmichael, Rap Brown and Eldridge Cleaver were pondered. An attempt was then made to ascertain, through attendance and observation, whether these philosophies related as a foundation philosophy for any of the local organizations--The Nova Scotia League for the Advancement of Coloured People, The Neo-African Liberation Movement, and The Black United Front. These area groups are affiliated with the national organizations. Through discussion with development officers and Preston residents, inquiries were made to ascertain the relationship of North Preston with the area groups. From historical documents the early facts of the community were gleaned. Documentary tapes furnished human interest history and testimony. To aid my understanding and interpretation of North Preston, I called upon the Social Ministry Board of the Lutheran Church in America, the Canada-Section--Lutheran Church in America, and also the Eastern Canada Synod of the Lutheran Church in America; my experience with these bodies, described elsewhere, was largely negative.

Emerging visibility will be defined in this introduction when Part II of the thesis is outlined. With that exception, the terms of reference for the thesis title follow.

This thesis is designated as The Story to indicate it is simply an account of experiences and source materials.

Also, the designation, The Story, permitted the writer to be more himself and to tell how understanding and interpretation was achieved. On the other hand, experience gained as a part of the action is different than Matti Terho's stance and cannot be documented.¹ Therefore "the story," indicating material presented through a factual tale. Furthermore, there is no attempt for the thesis to be a sociological study of North Preston; a study in Canadian race relations; a study of the church's role in establishing and maintaining community; a program for congregational action; a study from the ecological stance to ascertain whether emerging visibility may produce undesirable consequences; nor to present hard-fact considerations in any specialized study. Since this thesis as the story is an account of experiences which lead people to understand and interpret people, the story is an extremely appropriate term even in a theological colloquy.

Community is described as people bound together in a well-ordered fashion, part of a small community, which in turn is part of the expanding community, woven together with the golden threads of industry, trade, transportation, com-

¹Matti Terho, "Responsibility and Freedom in the Challenge of Black Power to North American Protestant Theology" (unpublished B.D. thesis, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, 1969). On p. 36 of his thesis Terho refers to his "only ghetto experience as described on pp. 21-23." The picture given there is heavily documented, based upon an excellent bibliography indicating experience from written words, but he was not personally present on the scene. His experience was a personal extension of the written word.

munication, education, recreation, government, religion and arts.¹ Community is also depicted as people gathered together upon the basis of commonality.² On the basis of the former definition community has not existed at North Preston. On the basis of commonality community has grown to full stature. *For then not only the positive force of the church, but also the negative and unenviable existence of isolation, prejudice and discrimination, lack of education and training, inadequate housing, lack of employment and poverty must be recognized as the threads which wove community.* Community in this thesis is defined simply as people grown together on the basis of commonality.

Black people is the term of reference in this thesis although most in North Preston prefer to be called Negroes or coloured people. However, since the 1968 Human Rights Conference of Nova Scotia, black is the term desired by the educated blacks in all areas. Black gives identity and dissociates from nightmare experiences in the Southern United States at buses, water fountains, washrooms, stores and the like, where people were designated as white people or branded as niggers or coloured.

¹"Community," World Book Encyclopaedia (Chicago: Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, 1969), IV, 728-31.

²"American Missions," Minister's Information Service, Lutheran Church in America (March, 1970), p. AM-7.

The sequence of study and experience has prompted Part I of this thesis--Invisibility. Chapter I of this division will present curtains of history which have kept the community invisible. Chapters II and III will show how other curtains--the people themselves; the Lutheran Church of Our Saviour; federal, provincial and municipal governments; the Social Ministry Department of the Lutheran Church in America, the Canada Section--Lutheran Church in America and the Eastern Canada Synod of the Lutheran Church in America--have all been involved in keeping North Preston invisible.

Emerging visibility expressed as the approach of this thesis is the theme of Part II. In Chapter IV I show that on the basis of testimonies, published projections and personal observations some double exposures are suggested or attempted at North Preston. All appear to be re-creative. The glimmer of a new day is apparent and with it--emerging visibility. Federal, provincial and municipal governments are now informed and concerned. The problems of isolation, prejudice-discrimination, education, adult training, housing, self-development, poverty, and the local church are being understood and interpreted. Re-creation has started. In Chapter V I give testimony to the exposure of the body known as Our Saviour Lutheran Church. References to the Senior Choir and the Lutheran Church Women in the first sentence of this introduction are elaborated. In addition to expanding understanding and interpretation, I shall show how this has

resulted in the body's participation in a clothing depot; encouragement of a hand-knitted mitten project in which all Lutheran Church Women groups in the Atlantic District of the Eastern Canada Synod, Lutheran Church in America participated; the sponsoring of a crayon and colouring book project for pre-schoolers; provision of money through the Sunday School for bookshelves at the Social Development Centre; provision of Christmas dinners for families not included in "organized charity" by an appointed deadline; the relaying of information to restrain "do-gooders" who would hinder self-determination and dignity. Comments will be given about the body's participation through understanding and interpretation. I shall show this to be empathy and the service of a Christian.

The conclusion will present the body's idealism and a suggested projection of the next steps. It may be well for the group to consider a short- and long-range relationship with "The Story of the Emerging Visibility of the Community of Black People, North Preston, Nova Scotia."

PART I

INVISIBILITY

CHAPTER I

THE CURTAIN OF HISTORY

* A census of 1686 shows a black man in Nova Scotia with the French settlers. Newspapers, from 1750 to 1760, record descriptions of slaves offered at public auctions. Preston Township was laid out in 1784; shortly after the township was created some free Negroes emigrated to Nova Scotia at the close of the American Revolutionary War.→

(1) The Black Loyalists

The British offered any slave deserting his American rebel master guaranteed freedom by joining the British Army. Three thousand of the ten thousand who chose these British Army lines as a road to freedom came to Nova Scotia. They were called Black United Empire Loyalists or Black Pioneers, and made up 10 per cent of the United Empire Loyalist population.

Mary Lawson describes the arrival of the Black Loyalists, coming to Nova Scotia with hope, in these words:

On April 9, 1785, one hundred and ninety-four free negroes arrived in Halifax from St. Augustine. They were almost naked and destitute of every necessary of life. The governor had to ask for rations, clothing and blankets from the military stores for their relief. They soon became dissatisfied with the discomforts and poverty of their new life. Unaccustomed to make

provisions for themselves, they were unable to supply their own wants and proved a most unsatisfactory class of emigrants.¹

The arrival of these men of hope, believing Nova Scotia to be their salvation, furnished the stage for the tragic drama of prejudice and discrimination. White Loyalists received meat, fish, molasses and meal. Black Loyalists received molasses and meal. Loyalists were promised one hundred acres of land plus additional acreage for wife and children. Some whites received up to one thousand acres, while blacks received ten acres, and only in isolated instances up to fifty acres. Where a black Loyalist did receive land in accord with the agreement, it was without access road and as much as fifty miles from any settlement. In many cases, lots in settlements were assigned but later the blacks were to learn their location had been assigned to whites earlier. So Black Pioneers ended up without property. At this time Preston area was entered by black people who were assigned ten acres of land.

So these men of hope, already victims of prejudice and discrimination, met their next satanic attack, the climate. Having migrated from West Africa to the Southern United States, they were totally unaccustomed to the climate, and survival against the elements was part of their war which also included lack of knowledge in cultivation and

¹Mary Lawson, History of Dartmouth, Preston, Lawrencetown (Halifax: Morton Co., 1893), p. 156.

harvest techniques. To aid them in their survival, relief centres were set up in Dartmouth. Already in this eighteenth century black people were regarded as a liability, thus setting a permanent stage of prejudice for future settlers.

While subtle prejudice existed here, open discrimination and persecution did not exist as in the Shelburne area.¹ Yet it was that same persecution that called forth North Preston's first indigent leadership.

David George was a slave in Virginia who escaped twice from his severe master. In his second attempt he was aided and concealed by a tribe of Natchez Indians. Here a missionary led him to know Christ. With the assistance of a group of white children he learned to read and with them started to study the Bible. Upon his arrival in Halifax there was no way open to preach to his own people. In 1782 he went to Shelburne where there were not even any houses built.

David George entered the woods and started clearing a place for a camp. As he worked he sang "soul-stirring spirituals" of his people. Through the grapevine "the sound" was made known and black people from isolated locations came to meet and hear him. For the first "sabbath meeting" both white and black people came in large numbers

¹Shelburne is one hundred and fifty miles south of North Preston.

to hear him. Some of his principal members were white. A meeting house was erected.

Prejudice, discrimination and persecution soon came from two sources. Slavery was a very live issue. Large numbers of whites having fellowship in George's church was disquieting to the white settlement. His fundamental beliefs were contrary to the orthodox doctrines practised in Nova Scotia. Houses in George's settlement were destroyed. The angry mob also seized the meeting house and converted it into a tavern. David George fled to a swamp and emerged across the river from Shelburne at Birchville. After three months of preaching from house to house amongst blacks only, open persecution arose again.

George returned to Shelburne and repossessed his former meeting house which became his church and home. By this time his fame as a preacher spread. Calls came requesting him to visit many points. It was through one of these requests that David George visited Preston--preached, baptized five, administered the Lord's Supper and left Brother Hector Peters in charge.¹

This leadership of the church, perhaps more properly defined as David George's dynamic influence, gave the community of North Preston direction and decision. Promises of land had not been fulfilled by 1787. The future held no ray

¹Pearleen Oliver, A Brief History of the Coloured Baptists of Nova Scotia (Halifax, 1953), p. 21.

of hope for the black Loyalists. Under the leadership of the church the Preston area, in 1792, ~~was~~ as an entire community was depopulated. The black Loyalists moved to establish Sierra Leone and the Baptist Church.

"To-day amongst the aristocrats and esteemed in Sierra Leone, Nova Scotia is a term frequently used. To establish a link with ancestry of Nova Scotia, places one in the category of a Lodge or Cabot in Massachusetts."¹

(2) The Maroons

Meanwhile, an enterprising group of black people known as Maroons² lived in the Jamaican hills. They were a community of 1,500 African slaves whose Spaniard masters had surrendered to the British. The Maroons lived in the hills, and lived well, by plundering British plantations in the valleys. Jamaican military forces attempted to capture them. Their knowledge of the hills and ability to hide in caves enabled them to become invisible. The military forces released fierce dogs to exterminate the Maroons. Fear of being torn to pieces by the dogs forced their surrender.

¹George Shepherdson, They Endured, Pt. 1, A History prepared by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (Halifax, 1968).

²In The Documentary Study of the Establishment of the Negroes in Nova Scotia by C. B. Ferguson, Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Publication No. 8 (Halifax, 1948), p. 4, footnote 15 states, "Maroon is said to be a corruption of the Spanish Cimarron, meaning wild or untamed."

To rid Jamaica of these marauders the colony paid twenty-five thousand pounds to settle them in Nova Scotia. In June, 1796, the Duke of Kent, Commander in Chief at Halifax, met the ship carrying these bandits. He was met by a clean, neat regiment who recognized him as royalty and provided a guard of honour and martial music. The Duke branded them as a finer class than ordinary Negroes. He admired their evidence of great strength. He offered them work on the fortification of Halifax. The Maroons offered to work without pay. The King insisted upon payment of nine pence a day plus provisions, lodging and clothing. Temporary accommodation was provided in Halifax. The construction of the fort progressed rapidly. By the fall of 1796, the invincible Maroons were settled in huts and small houses on excellent land in the Preston area.

It had been the intention not to settle the Maroons as a group. They were so peaceable, orderly, inoffensive, however, and delighted with the country that plans to separate them were discarded. With Jamaican funds their two superintendents purchased five thousand acres of land. A twenty-room superintendent's residence known as Maroon Hall was built. The dwelling was also used as a school, church and entertainment centre. The Anglican Church, already giving ministrations to the area, included the Maroons. The rector was appointed their chaplain and teacher. He thought highly of the Maroons and proclaimed that they carried no malice or

revenge in their sentiments toward Jamaica. Because they had a long list of wants an appeal to fulfill their desires was made to the King. The appeal was based on the feeling that "Granting their supplies will reclaim them to the Church of England and disseminate Christian piety, morality and loyalty among them."¹

A very severe first winter and cold spring brought discontent. They requested to go to the Cape of Good Hope or India to fight. Permission was given for them to be enrolled in the Halifax militia. Many of them advanced rapidly and became officers. Before the close of 1797, the Royal Nova Scotia Regiment was sent to settle the signs of a Maroon mutiny.

By 1799, these Preston settlers had lapsed into absolute restlessness, idleness and discontent. They refused to work and were labelled "the insubordinate Maroons." The chaplain-schoolmaster complained,

My duties are neither easy or successful. They are ignorant of the language and neither understand or listen to my sermons. In spite of all the Christian instruction they have refused to abandon polygamy.²

¹Lawson, loc. cit., p. 164.

²John Patrick Martin, The Story of Dartmouth (Dartmouth, 1957), p. 138. (Polygamy practise is mentioned in detail by Lawson. In one portion she reports three of a Maroon officer's four wives gave birth to children on the same day. He and his fourth wife, the favourite and most beautiful, during that same time were the centre of attraction at a party in Maroon Hall.)

This Preston crowd was discontented, troublesome and anything but industrious. The expense of their maintenance was a drain on the provincial resources.* In 1800 the Maroons were sent to Africa where they created Freetown under climatic conditions more to their liking. So the community of North Preston was depopulated a second time.*

(3) The Third Settlement

After the 1812-14 war and following years the third community of black migrants came to Nova Scotia. This migration included the ancestors of the present-day community of North Preston. They were former slaves from the Southern United States. There were three ways by which they came to Nova Scotia. Some deserted to serve with the British forces and were guaranteed refuge and freedom at the end of the war. Others were promised refuge and freedom simply for deserting. The remainder worked out their own escape route and entered Canada by way of the underground railroad between Detroit and Windsor.

Most of the better Maroon lands were sold at public auction. Acreage not sold after a year was reclaimed by the Governor. The better reclaimed land was granted to white colonists who had applied for additional acreage. But land was available at North Preston.

"Preston was therefore selected again, as a home for another dusty colony and this it remains until the present

day."¹ Freedom made them idle and miserable. The government provided rations in the winter. "Experienced wretchedness, incidental to idleness and improvidence, were a constant drain upon the benevolence of the white neighbour."²

✕After the Maroon departure the better land was sold, reclaimed and reallocated. Therefore the land assigned to the ancestors of the present-day community of North Preston was the worst. In isolation, they lived close together on rocky, barren ten-acre lots, holding the land by "tickets of location" and "licenses of occupation."³ After three years' proof of industry, the grants were to be confirmed. It must be acknowledged that white colonists relinquished a portion of their land holdings to increase North Preston to its present acreage. While it appeared a genuine act of benevolence, their benevolence probably increased and intensified segregation and isolation.

By February 23, 1841, grants had not been confirmed according to a petition of the residents of this community. In describing the land, their proclamation voiced that "few white men could make a living on ten acres." They also requested that lands, still held by "tickets of location" and

¹Lawson, loc. cit., p. 185.

²Ibid., p. 188.

³C. B. Ferguson, Documentary Study of the Establishment of Negroes in Nova Scotia (Halifax, 1948).

"licenses of occupation," be granted. Larger grants were also requested.¹

The reply of John Spry Morris, Commissioner of Crown Lands, acknowledged one hundred acres would be needed. He criticized the more enterprising blacks for burning wood to charcoal to sell in Halifax. A council on May 11, 1841 asked for an investigation.

* Meanwhile, the traumatic experience of migration to a new, strange land, cold climate and inadequate acreage, the sudden emancipation without the benefits of scientific training, the plague of the combined ravages of crop failure, poverty, starvation, ignorance and white prejudice continued.*

With the Abolition of Slavery Act, 1833, true attitudes of the whites came to the foreground. Steps were taken to prevent more blacks coming to Nova Scotia. Already in 1827 governors decided land was to be sold, not granted. Attempts were made in 1836 to have the blacks migrate, because they were miserably poor and were a people requiring relief.

White memorialists, in 1838, had noted that "generally whites are preferred to blacks who do not have equal chance of obtaining their share of little labour."² Only

¹Ibid., p. 115.

²Ibid., p. 110.

from May to October did blacks even obtain labourer's jobs. Because of this prejudice and discrimination the blacks could not maintain their families and needed other dependence to prevent starvation. But, "memorialists can't find anything about these people, by which it would appear, that they were incapable of arising to a comfortable independence, if they had a fair opportunity of doing so."¹

Rawlyck, in a general comparison of the plight of the Guysborough² Negro, describes their predicament as horrible, but writes, "In many parts of the country, both east and westward, detached families of negroes are to be found, whose conditions, though still miserable poor, is far better off than their brethren near Halifax."³

Their equality in wretchedness was magnified by an epidemic of smallpox. Later a fever plague struck the community. Spiritual songs and prayer sustained them during the epidemics. They had little besides their freedom and their God.

(4) The Church in North Preston

Was the Southern Baptist-influenced Church interested in the souls of the black people on an emotional

¹Ibid.

²G. A. Rawlyck, "Guysborough Negroes," Dalhousie Review, XLVIII (Spring, 1968), 31.

³Guysborough is one hundred and twenty-five miles north of North Preston.

Church of 1812
basis, to provide an escape mechanism from their own inabilities and the harsh realities of life? Was the church in North Preston a curtain enabling the community to forget prejudice, hunger, cold, inadequate dwellings, a bleak future? Was it a social activity without application to life? Was it true that, "though far from being a moral people, yet they are most religious, and delight in gathering for worship and preaching"?¹

David George (see p. 12), a dynamic preacher, had visited Preston to preach, baptize and administer the Lord's Supper to the Loyalist blacks. His influence led the community on January 15, 1792, when it was depopulated. Probably the most concrete role of the Maroon-era church was to bury the dead in an integrated cemetery. They apparently did not influence African Baptist history. Oliver devotes only two lines to the Maroons--to mention their departure.²

A major or perhaps dominating role was played by the church after 1812. It always worked to enrich the lives of these people who were isolated geographically and socially.

Father Burton, who embraced Baptist principles, worked with the 1812-15 refugees throughout the province. The Anglican faith had attempted various ministrations and met with limited success. They willingly withdrew when Baptist-influenced leadership appeared on the scene.

¹Lawson, loc. cit., p. 190.

²Oliver, op. cit., p. 21.

Richard Preston was one of these leaders. In 1815 a young man came to find his mother. He had heard in Virginia that she had been taken to Canada which he did not realize was very large. After his escape he made his way to Halifax. There he was told of a large settlement at Preston. Since his name was Richard Preston he decided to start there. Coloured Baptist history refers to this experience and the following events at Preston as "The Miracle."

On the long, lonely walk to Preston he prayed that God would prepare a place for him to stay that night. Soon darkness fell and the young lad stopped before a small dwelling. He knocked. A woman slowly opened the door. The young man asked for a night's lodging. The woman being alone and fearing to take a stranger in urged him to try further on in the settlement. He turned away making visible to her a peculiar marking on his face.

"Wait," she called, "what is your name?"

"Richard Preston, ma'am, just landed to-day from Virginia."

There was a cry and a sorrowing mother fell to her knees. The first door he had tried in Canada had given him his mother. Wonderful are Thy ways, O Lord.¹

Richard Preston was a baptized believer. He had a strong conviction, a great gift of oratory and a dynamic personality. Father Burton rallied Halifax Baptists to send Preston to England for training and ordination. He became the first pastor of the newly-organized African Baptist Church in 1832. This church was located in Halifax. It was to become the mother church of all black congregations. The first branch was opened the same year in Preston by Richard Preston.

¹Ibid., p. 22.

The community was strong through much participation in worship. Mary Lawson reports, "At the present time they have no lack of native ministry. Like St. Paul, through the week, 'they labour with their own hands', and on Sundays, in black garments and white ties, preside over the 'meetin'."¹

The community was undergirded at the time of baptism. According to the fervour of religious revival, five to fifty candidates for baptism, dressed in white, were "plunged into the water."² In preparation for the ceremony, the female community made shopping trips, which they could not afford, to Dartmouth and Halifax to purchase brilliant-coloured parasols and hoop skirts. On this day of general rejoicing and festivity, all were gaily dressed and participated in talks, prayers and feasting. They called the event "The Dipping."³

The community was heightened by church policy at the time of death. When a member died, the neighbourhood followed the dead from his home to the churchyard, chanting funeral hymns as all marched slowly behind the departed. This scene was described as "tender and touching."⁴ However, the funeral sermon and exercises were postponed to a

¹Ibid., p. 191.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

more convenient season. This postponement was generally until summer when times were better and mourners were more prepared to entertain friends. The funeral service lasted all day, with only a brief intermission for dinner. Many sermons, talks and presentations of the day were described as follows:

The ludicrous prevails largely over the pathetic. Tropes and figures relating to time and eternity, to archangels and the departed brother, are mixed up with a freedom, most startling to those unaccustomed to such eloquence.¹

During most of the first half of the nineteenth century, formal organization of a congregation did not exist. Because of isolation, the community was "unable to have holy communion and other sacred rites performed regularly, and a hardness to the things of God set in."² In 1842, First Preston Church was organized for the area. In 1854, the African Baptist Association was organized to band together the Baptist churches whose members were black. Perhaps isolation caused an area strife which was based on envy and jealousy. The Second Preston or South Church was formed in North Preston in 1856. This first formal North Preston congregation erected a new building in 1879. It was renamed "St. Thomas Church." John R. Thomas was a white pastor who married a black lady from Preston. He resigned as pastor

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 35.

when the 1856 strife arose. Also he had served as moderator for the African Baptist Association. Pastor Thomas laid the cornerstone at Second Preston two weeks before his death. Out of love and respect for him the church was renamed. This same building and organization continues to serve in North Preston today.

The church became truly a spiritual home and a medium of self-expression. Having so little, they lean all the more upon God; this is shown still today by testimonies at Human Rights Conferences. Baptismal services continue as community highlights. ★The church is still the best medium to communicate community announcements★

Evangelical Christianity at North Preston has been attacked for providing some, or perhaps most, with an escape from the harsh realities of life. Their church has been accused of keeping the people, twenty years too long, in a dehumanized state through a fundamental message. It would appear that to a high degree this criticism is invalid. The positive note of social reform and action was visible in the activity of the Education Committee of the African Baptist Association. They creatively worked to encourage education.

(5) Summary

In the survey of North Preston's history, curtains of prejudice, discrimination and religion (in part) have kept North Preston invisible. Prejudice was subtle. Black

people were avoided and silently branded as undesirable colonists. Discrimination came in the form of supplies and land which were only a percentage of the amounts given to white Loyalists. The church gave them a medium of self-expression. The church also gave them a closed community unrelated to the outside world and helped to keep North Preston invisible. †

CHAPTER II

THE CURTAINS OF ILLITERACY AND POVERTY

(1) The Lack of Education

The attitude towards education of black people as well as opinions about the black man's lack of mental ability has resulted in the lack of education. This in turn has resulted in a curtain of illiteracy at North Preston. It has served to keep the community invisible.

North Preston's education problem was included in the general black education dilemma of the province. From 1879 to 1904, the white philosophy still prevailed that "if you educate a Negro, you unfit him for a slave."¹ The Baptist Association attempted to raise the standards of their clergy. They were the best educated in the communities and assumed the lead to educate. The Association struck at communities about the lack of education and schools. The black population was too small to become a self-supporting economic unit to maintain schools. The people were encouraged to take greater advantage of available forms of education and training.

Prior to the emergence of the African Baptist

¹Oliver, loc. cit., p. 34.

Association, Rector Willis, St. Paul's Anglican Church, Halifax, in 1840, established an African School. This was done against the public opinion of whites who believed blacks did not have the mental ability to learn. The African School was operated with tuition plus grants. After a degree of success in Halifax, where "people had learned to read and enjoy scriptures," an African School was established in Preston, but it did not have success in that "desolate place with great destitution."¹

Only in 1905 was a school established in North Preston to overcome almost one hundred years of illiterate parents raising illiterate children.²

Although the school was established, and the African Baptist Association encouraged and held up educated images and idols, this stimulus did not appear to motivate North Preston. It may be that little stimulation could be seen in the struggle of educated black people in the province. They were forced to work twice as hard and be twice as good as whites to receive equal status.³ Seeing this struggle, and

¹Ferguson, loc. cit., p. 113.

²Marjorie Whitlock, Maritime Magazine, A Documentary and Testimonial prepared by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (Halifax, 1968).

³Oliver's opinion to which he gives testimony based upon his personal experience as a labourer, student and educated black man. The thought was expressed at St. Francis Xavier University, January, 1969. This fact is recorded in that Teach-in-Report (p. 4) entitled "The Black Man in Nova Scotia."

comparing it to North Preston isolation, it may well be that lack of motivation for education may have been prompted by the attitude, "Why improve myself--improve myself for what?" Perhaps an isolated school forced to use many inferior teachers--the lack of advice, guidance, and encouragement to supplement the educational voice of the church--may be factors which during this century have also kept the community invisible.

North Preston does still not consider education a key to advancement. There are five hundred children in elementary school and about one hundred and twenty-five at high school. Several girls have completed grade eleven. One boy has completed grade eleven and is attending university. The end of education presses upon the child the day he begins school. Parents do not enforce or encourage study nor stress the necessity of education.¹

(2) The Lack of Employment Opportunity

But closely related to this passive attitude to education may be the past lack of opportunity for employment. Some early settlers were energetic enough to manufacture charcoal from their ten-acre lots. They were reprimanded for this initiative when they requested additional land grants. North Preston settlers with sufficient initiative

¹Statistics from Calvin Ruck, North Preston Social Development Officer.

to go to the Halifax market to sell wild fruits, wild flowers, brooms, baskets, bean poles, and the like were regarded by the white population as "a novelty as they squatted in the market, talking with one another, offering their wares for sale." For seasonal employment, without reservation, whites were preferred to blacks. Thus the general employment anticipation was, "perhaps summer employment," but definitely winter relief lines, year after year.

Because of the lack of employment well-meaning white people at Dartmouth invited North Preston residents to "clean out" their basements in exchange for the discarded contents; to "take away old lumber" to improve and expand their shelters; to call for "discarded" clothing which was out of style or from the previous season.

Lack of employment forced a stereotyped public image and style. North Preston's settlers were recognized on Dartmouth streets by the "rags they wore." Until recent times they were easily distinguished by their second-hand, often unseasonal, multi- and unco-ordinated-coloured dress.

Lack of employment forced another public image and style which made North Preston residents "stand-outs," "things," or "novelties" on the streets. Isolation demanded mobility. As recently as twenty years ago, an ox was the method of travel. Half-ton trucks, always overcrowded, replaced the oxen. The popularity of trucks gave way to low-priced, dilapidated cars.

Lack of opportunity for self-determination forced by unemployment in turn forced a dehumanized public style and image. Black people adopted as their ideal, their hero, the man with grade six or seven education who had "made it"; who reaped the fruits of year-round employment; who purchased his own clothing; who drove a "good" car. Therefore, simple, steady employment, not education, became an absolute ideal and goal to achieve.

(3) The Lack of Adequate Housing

Lack of employment has co-existed with inadequate housing. Descendants of the present North Preston residents upon arrival moved into the abandoned log huts "chinked" with moss vacated by the black Loyalists and Maroons. However, the better lands and dwellings had been sold and only the most undesirable remained.

In more than a century housing improved little. Some of the original log huts were covered with discarded metal signs, scrap lumber and varieties of shingles.

Where "new" dwellings were erected, lack of construction knowledge, lack of carpentry skill, lack of money and lack of sized and calculated materials resulted in "houses" that were little more than shelters from the weather; unsightly, susceptible to fire and hazardous to health, they were not conducive to pride nor an incentive for family advancement. Houses were merely a place to exist, not live.

Housing in North Preston was described by Nova Scotia Welfare Minister Gaum in March, 1969 as follows:

There were nine children and two adults squeezed into a two-room paper shack. There was no table; just a chair and old stove.

A hot rusted smoke exhaust pipe led to the roof through a cardboard ceiling.

Sanitary facilities were non existent¹

The County Welfare Committee on a visit to North Preston in March, 1969 described one phase of their visit in this way:

Twenty children were squeezed into a two-room shack and were huddled around only a stove for warmth. Wind blew through one-inch cracks. There was no electricity, or running water or even an outside privy. The firetrap had one door and paper-thin stovepipes run through cardboard walls.²

Inadequate housing is difficult to define. What is adequate for one person may be inadequate for another. A rude shelter, mortgage free on the dweller's personal property, may be quite adequate. This ownership aspect characterizes the housing of North Preston. Also the air is relatively pollution free. The houses set on a hill do overlook natural forests and lakes as well as one another's ungraded yards and dwellings. These enviable virtues do not eliminate the fact that most dwellings are inadequate and constitute inadequate housing.

The definitions of "Livable Housing . . . and Surroundings" also brand North Preston houses as inadequate.

¹Halifax Mail Star, March 11, 1969, p. 1.

²Ibid., March 3, 1969, p. 1.

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including . . . housing.

A home is more than shelter and space.¹

North Preston's amateur-built houses are erected as single-family dwelling units. Most are one storey. Some have a low second storey. Most would not exceed five hundred square feet. Occupancy may be by several generations. No private homework facility exists in most. Families are dependent on wells and outside toilets. No concrete statistics exist but it is estimated over one-half the residents do not have a private well nor an outside toilet. Sewage disposal does not exist in any organized form. Looking only at the surface the health, well-being and space aspect of North Preston housing brands it as inadequate.

Reference has been made to the present North Preston residents moving into huts vacated by the Maroons. These were the worst and had deteriorated. For contrast to ascertain further the ridiculousness of today's housing, it is well to see the top standard provided with funds from the Jamaican Colony and the King. Martin throughout The Story of Dartmouth tells that Maroon properties for fifty years were owned and occupied by prominent, wealthy and history-making families. Maroon Hall and its fantastic number of outbuildings plus one thousand acres was the commodious

¹Priorities (Toronto, 1969), pp. 71-73, part of the report of the Montreal Conference on "Christian Conscience and Poverty."

setting of the area for nearly half a century.¹ North Preston dwellings today, contrasted to even the outbuildings occupied by the Maroons, must be condemned as inadequate housing.

(4) The Lack of Income

National low-income medians exist. The Dominion Bureau of Statistics identifies low income as less than \$1,500 for one; \$2,500 for two; \$3,000 for three; \$3,500 for four; and \$4,000 for five or more in 1961 dollars. These amounts are based on the criterion that any individual is in the low-income group if he has to spend 70 per cent or more of his income on the necessities of life.²

Statistics have not been gathered at North Preston to ascertain percentages which fall into these low-income categories. It can be assumed that a portion of the community would fall into each category. However, on the basis of discussion it is questionable whether the poverty median is a measure for North Preston to ascertain poverty. This

¹Martin, in Story of Dartmouth (Dartmouth, 1957), relates how this Maroon estate was originally purchased by a wealthy Halifax Jew. Following the loss of much of his fortune he went insane. He lived out his life chained in a building of the estate and was very well cared for by his wife and staff. A prominent German was also an owner at a later date. He made a scientific discovery here. His finding was published by a German university. It is of human interest that these fine accommodations were the scenes for murders, weddings, balls, political caucuses, etc.--all amongst the leaders and wealthy for half a century.

²Ibid., p. 7 (footnote 4).

judgment is based upon the fact that most families have eight to twelve members.

The framework of the Canada Assistance Plan would appear to be a better gauge of North Preston poverty.

"Under the Plan, assistance is to be determined by an assessment of a person's requirements."¹

By the national median most North Preston families may not be in a poverty or low-income bracket. The combined income of husband and wife or other wage-earning combinations within the families probably exceed \$4,000 annually. But families are large. Isolation demands transportation. To create a good public image for "straight" society clothing demands are high. Families are also entitled to have the "poor man's psychiatrist"--television, a case of beer, an occasional pint of whiskey and three dollars for the youth of the family to have a weekend social life. Furniture, appliances, electricity, fuel, taxes and other basics should be included. On the basis of the "assessment of a person's requirements," economic poverty would appear to exist in North Preston.

The visits of the provincial and county welfare representatives, which gave a press release about two of the homes visited (see p. 32), also offered comment about the

¹Lutheran Church in America--Canada Section, Social Statements, II, 10 ("Summary of the Canada Assistance Plan").

food cupboards. These visitors indicated that there was a very limited food supply. But malnutrition did not appear to exist. The medical officer has stated diets are heavy in carbohydrates. Whether this is the result of poverty or lack of dietary knowledge has not been established.

An apparent economic deficiency may be a problem of financial mismanagement. Again this is merely assumption. Regardless of the basis of judgment to define and establish poverty, families are experiencing a financial deficiency. Most family financial resources are inadequate to meet their needs. And this is economic poverty. While poverty is apparent it is not statistically proven.

(5) Summary

Curtains of illiteracy and poverty have helped to keep North Preston invisible. There was the lack of education; the lack of employment opportunity; the lack of adequate housing; the lack of income. These interrelated curtains of life led to dehumanization. Opportunity for self-determination did not exist. North Preston was an invisible community.

CHAPTER III

OTHER CURTAINS

(1) Fear from Without

Other curtains besides history, illiteracy and poverty kept the community of North Preston invisible. A sense of worth was probably not recognized by the people themselves nor given by the outsider. Therefore, forces from without and from within kept the community invisible.

Fear kept the outsider at a distance from North Preston. The writer was introduced to North Preston in 1958 by one of his parishioners:

. . . and then you must also see North Preston. I'll bet you've never seen anything like it--the houses! Don't get out of your car or the hub-caps will be stolen--or even wheels by the time you return. Never go on a Friday night--that's the night they drink large amounts of homebrew. There's always fights and even knifings. They drive like crazy too--there's always 'blood on the road' on weekends. It's a real jungle. You must see it.

With fear, the pastor and his family went to see North Preston several times--never stopping--unconsciously happy to be out of that community. In the spring of 1959, I was introduced to the chain of lakes in the area beyond North Preston. My parishioner's trucks were known in the community. However, the day we passed through for our fishing trip, before daybreak, my friend was using a vehicle

unknown to North Preston. Returning from the woods after dark that night, the truck was pelted with huge rocks. By driving fast we did not experience broken glass--only dents on the truck. I concluded then that fear kept the outsider out and probably public opinion was correct.

In recent years I shared this experience with a black leader whom I respect very highly. In the 1960's he was given a dry cleaning driver-salesman job which covered North Preston. He relates several calls which filled him with fear. The ultimate in fear arrived when his truck broke down. He too had heard about receptions for the outsider. As he waited for a tow-truck, minutes seemed like hours. Darkness came and he felt panic within. He wished he and the truck, for which he had responsibility, could be lifted out of North Preston. Fear kept him from ever returning again to the community as a driver-salesman.

(2) Fear from Within

The public's fear kept the outsider out. Fear from within also kept North Preston from associating with the outside. Various area black organizations have as their goal emerging visibility of black people through various means. North Preston did not associate with any of the groups. Fear made them a community unto themselves and kept them invisible.

There was the outside group known as the Nova Scotia Society for the Advancement of Coloured People. It has a four-fold purpose to advance--in education; in employment; in housing; in human relations. The group has been moderate, but in recent times has indicated a degree of pressure upon society. The pinnacle of change in the Society's policy may have been reached in "Halifax's Oldland Case."¹ Gus Wedderburn, a Halifax school principal and president of the Society, told a meeting of disheartened blacks,

I am a man of peace and I have always said that if laws are wrong, change them. But this runs alien to all I believe and have stood for. I cannot say to you burn this city down--but I don't know what else to tell you.²

One year ago three houses burned at North Preston. That day the Neo-African Liberation Movement met to give public testimony of their interest in North Preston welfare. This meeting may also have been motivated by the group's desire to encourage North Preston to overcome its fear and come forward and identify. The meeting was also used as an opportunity for a press release to make its objectives known.³ In summary, the movement appears to advocate any means to bring about liberation of any type. The white oppressor will determine the means.

¹Blacks and labour opposed city council's decision to hire Robert Oldland of Oklahoma City as Halifax's city manager. Oldland was reported to be white racist and anti-labour.

²Time, April 6, 1970, p. 10.

³This was the writer's first knowledge of the group.

Last year the Black United Front (BUF) was organized. It was to be a broad coalition of black groups throughout the province. So far the group lacks an executive director and field workers. This group introduced Federal Health and Welfare Minister Munroe to North Preston (see p. 44). It was BUF which, following that visit, was granted \$500,000 over a five-year period by the Federal Government. One-half of the \$100,000 for 1969 was to be used for housing in North Preston. So far the money has not been received by North Preston.

National Black Coalition was formed to organize a black Canadian community. Twenty-seven organizations have responded. This area has not responded. Doctor Howard McCurdy presented National Black Coalition at the 1969 Nova Scotia Human Rights Conference.¹

(3) Church Blindness

Local churches, other than Victoria Road Baptist, did not relate to North Preston until the past two years.² The Lutheran Church of Our Saviour will serve as my example. This body is based upon faith in Jesus Christ. The pro-

¹Doctor McCurdy was also keynote speaker at the 1968 Conference. He is a vibrant personality and one of the most eloquent orators I have ever experienced.

²This opinion is based upon Dartmouth Ministerial Discussion, prior to and following a 1969 presentation by Mr. Ruck, North Preston Social Development Officer. As secretary and knowing Ruck, the writer made the arrangements.

claimed faith must be shared, for it is no good alone. Concern and service to the rejects of society occupied much of Our Saviour's ministry--good news to the poor, release to the captives, sight to the blind, physical healing and liberty to the oppressed. Yet as Christians, possessors of a shared mutual faith, the body was uneducated and unconcerned about North Preston.

Pastoral fear was not an excuse. By the 1960's, pastor and family patronized the North Preston store. He found the people extremely human, congenial and excellent discussants on the subject of fishing. They shared mutual favourite fishing spots on East Lake. The writer periodically entered the community alone. He left his car and keys with various families while he entered the woods. Nothing was ever touched. He concluded they were very human.

Perhaps an age void of ecumenism may have led more to lack of concern than any other aspect. Until recent years churches were more concerned about selling the commodity than giving service. While the latter has always been our policy certain boundaries could not be passed. Otherwise, the motive was misinterpreted. In retrospect, this, more than any single factor, made the body guilty of aiding to keep North Preston invisible.

It can be concluded that the Eastern Canada Synod of the Lutheran Church in America has little understanding and interpretation of black people. A request had been submitted

by the executive committee of the Synod to the parent body. They desired Act Funds to send two underprivileged black or Indian children to each of our camps. Extreme concern and disagreement was voiced when rejection of the request was announced. This illustrates the prevailing attitude to be still one of "do-gooder" only.¹

In April, 1969, I was advised by my consultant, Doctor Arne Siirala, that the Board of Social Ministry had added a black pastor to its staff. He suggested my congregation invite this man to our area.

Immediately a request to have the pastor visit our area was made. A suggested time was October or November of 1969. They were informed of our friendship relationship with the congregation referred to in the Introduction. They were informed we are located in an area which has the highest Canadian concentration of black people. They were informed the suggestion was made by my consultant for a proposed thesis. It was suggested that knowledge of this area of the Canadian scene may be beneficial to the whole. A proposed program was suggested: worship-fellowship with Victoria Road Baptist Church; visitation to black communities; observation at any black organization meetings which may have coincided with the visit; anything the pastor would

¹Witnessed at the 1969 meeting of the Eastern Canada Synod. It is recorded by Mrs. C. Shortt, delegate, in her written report (p. 4) for Our Saviour Church, September 23, 1969.

judge to be helpful to the whole. A packet on "Race Relations" was also requested.

Seven months later, October, 1969, the letter was acknowledged. Regrets regarding inability to come were expressed. It was hoped that in some future year we could be included on an itinerary. For information on "Race Relations" referral was made to the current "Stewardship Packet."¹

In February, 1970, "Race Relations" information was requested from the Canada Section--Lutheran Church in America, 211-228 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg 12, Manitoba. The request was forwarded from there to the secretary of the division at Kitchener, Ontario. He advised a "Social Statement" has not been issued by the Canada Section. Any other current Lutheran Church materials which may relate to the subject were also requested. Direction was given to forward about two dollars to the Board of Social Ministry--Lutheran Church in America for a packet. The correspondent believed that my deduction was probably correct, namely, that the 1964 materials in my file appeared to be the most recent. A two-dollar money order in United States funds was submitted

¹This experience was the opposite of The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Dartmouth. Their congregation is about the same size as Our Saviour. Doctor Emmett Dickson, a black pastor in charge of all their black congregations and relations in North America came to the white Dartmouth congregation for a week. He visited the black communities throughout the area. He spoke publicly of likeness and contrast between our black communities and those in the Southern United States.

on February 26, 1970.¹ The packet entitled "Human Relations" arrived on April 9 coinciding with this writing. These materials will not be used to supplement the bibliography; they will be listed in the appendix.

(4) Government Blindness

Governments and their divisions had also kept the community of North Preston invisible.

Federal Health Minister John Munroe was introduced to North Preston, June 6, 1969. He was the first Federal Government representative to visit the community. He described conditions as the worst in Canada. He categorized the situation with two Indian communities in the Western Provinces.

The Minister continued:

Most Canadians conceive the problems of the Black man as being products of our smug conviction that we have not been guilty of the sins of condescension, and sometimes outright discrimination like our American neighbours. But the truth is we often have been. It isn't that we have wished such conditions to occur. It is merely that we have permitted and sanctioned the environment that practically dictated the existence of such communities. We have piously pointed to the absence of the segregationist law in comparison to the Southern United States. In practise, prejudice has more than a small hold on our housing situation and on our job market. In other words, we have fulfilled the letter of our law, but we have not brought justice to its spirit.²

¹From correspondence on file at Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Dartmouth.

²Ibid., June 7, 1969, p. 1.

County Unsightly Premises Inspector, Mr. Orin West, had "never seen the place."¹

Chief Building Inspector, Mr. Donald Vincent, had "never made a tour."²

County Planning Director, Mr. Bob Gough, offered no comment other than, "It's a welfare department problem."³

County Welfare Committee made its first trip in nine years on Saturday, March 1, 1969.⁴

County Health Inspection Supervisor, Mr. George Lahey, on March 3, 1969 claimed he was aware of the Preston situation.

A forgotten area, yet it isn't. We have a public health nurse there regularly and we go there occasionally. It is difficult to enforce regulations--'you know what could happen'. Many of the community's 100 odd homes don't even have a privy. We could enforce, but we have been easy due to lack of money. An outside privy would cost \$100. to \$150.⁵

And so the community of North Preston, out of sight, was out of mind.

(5) Summary

Other curtains which kept North Preston invisible were fear from without; fear from within; church blindness;

¹Ibid., March 4, 1969, p. 1.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

and government blindness. Fear from without kept those with resources at a distance. Fear from within kept the community from aligning with agencies which could have helped them. Church blindness was in the form of passiveness. Government blindness was characterized by lack of concern. All kept North Preston invisible.

PART II

EMERGING VISIBILITY

CHAPTER IV

SOME DOUBLE EXPOSURES

(1) A Linkage with the World

Isolation automatically segregates people. They do not have the opportunity for an easy exchange of ideas, business opportunities or contact with people. Palestinian history indicates a city assumed a "new face" if it were located on a trade route. Automatically, new progressive attitudes, new opportunities, new faces and wealth came to an area which was not isolated. Isolation limits, affects physical opportunities and creates set mental attitudes as well.

While North Preston is situated geographically on a dead-end road, eight miles to the north "runs" the Trans-Canada Highway connecting Vancouver and Halifax. The area between North Preston and the Trans-Canada Highway contains chains and chains of beautiful small lakes, teeming with trout, a tourist paradise and an extreme attraction for residents of Halifax and Dartmouth. Located at the ten-mile mark north of North Preston is the Kelly Lake International Airport, on the Trans-Canada Highway.

The road into North Preston was paved in 1969. A projected road connecting the Trans-Canada Highway would

channel all Trans-Canada traffic travelling to Dartmouth through North Preston. This would encourage North Preston residents to seek employment at the International Airport. They would have to drive only eight miles instead of the existing twenty-five. All Dartmouth residents going to the International Airport could pass through North Preston on a shorter, more accessible highway. Tourists would be attracted to the community to enjoy the natural beauty as well as fish at the doorstep of North Preston.

Fifty years ago, a suggested answer to overcome isolation may have been relocation of the community. That idea would no longer be valid. Today the City of Dartmouth is "going out" to North Preston.

Illiterate attitudes, fears and unfounded concerns, by outsiders and residents alike, would be overcome more fully through the elimination of isolation. Free and natural communication with the transient world would exist. Outsiders, through direct contact, would learn to appreciate the community as humans.

Much has been done by the people themselves to overcome a past style and image which led to prejudice and frequently to discrimination. In recent times, although they still cannot afford it, residents of North Preston are recognizable on city streets by their excellent grooming, current styles and co-ordinated colour schemes. Closely associated with this style is a high average standard of motor

vehicle. In 1966 provincial legislation demanded motor vehicle safety checks. This forced most of their dilapidated vehicles from the roads. Out of growing exposure to the wider world has come a new image and a new style.

And thus a degree of humanization, which overcame a degree of prejudice, also arrived. Despite needs of housing, food or other aid, according to Social Development Officers, residents do not expect any aid to maintain these new phases of life, self-determination in clothing and automobiles. Families will attempt to do anything to maintain clothing and cars of a high standard.

(2) Education

* Education may be amongst the keys to free North Preston. However, for education to become an incentive and goal, a change in attitudes and idols will be required. Increased encouragement will have to be given to the youth to remain at the schools.*

Rather than increased or renewed physical facilities, North Preston requires the highest calibre staff available. In 1956, when the responsibility for education was taken off the shoulders of the individual school section and placed in the arms of the municipality, a partial "education-solution" came to North Preston: physical facilities were improved. But the community has continued to receive many poorer-calibre licensed teachers. While it must be acknowledged

that a licensed teacher may be an excellent teacher, such has not been the case in this community. Generally, white teachers have preferred not to teach in North Preston. As a result, the staff includes new immigrants from India, learning the English language, licensed to teach black pupils in black schools at North Preston.

These children require the best qualified and most competent teachers. It requires excellent ability and communication to create educational images as a key to social and economic development. If the municipal salaries are inadequate to hire the best teachers available, perhaps the churches could play a role to raise the standards of education and guidance. On the world scene, teachers are sent to various countries, subsidized by their church. Churches could encourage, recruit and subsidize high-calibre specialists to teach in North Preston.

In recent years a school bus has taken North Preston children, now down to grade seven, away from their isolationism. They are taught at integrated district schools. While this may appear ideal, the policy still does not afford the black child equal opportunity for advancement with the white child. While not substantiated, it is expressed verbally that in the integrated schools many teachers call the whites by name; blacks are designated as, "you, over there, in the third seat." Hopefully, church-assigned teachers could aid a higher degree of personalization. The

white child has a homework facility, perhaps a private room. The black child is returned from school to a crowded shack without homework facility.

It is anticipated that by 1970-71, students from North Preston down to grade five will be taken from isolation to integrated schools.¹ It is expected that eventually all grades down to kindergarten will be transported to integrated schools. Mr. Skeier believes, "It's a matter of having to re-educate a whole new generation. There is great need for a sense of pride and dignity among the people. They must be re-educated who they are and what they are."²

Consideration should perhaps be given to The Kibbutz, Israel's experiment in collective living and child rearing, as a possible solution to the problems of education in North Preston. The Kibbutz was created in the early 1900's to help residents of Jewish ghettos contend with sadly substandard and unsanitary housing conditions, inadequate diet, a low level of self-confidence and a minority environment. It was an attempt to raise and educate children to a new level in one generation, in a setting where the school is the community and the community is the school.

¹Halifax Mail Star, April 19, 1969, p. 36.

²Ibid.

(3) Employment

Training and up-grading of school dropouts and adults may also be a North Preston key to economic and social progress. It may be an aid to overcome the stagnancy of human development.

Although employment opportunities are available, 95 per cent of the black applicants are rejected. They cannot meet the requirements to join the labour force. Long-term benefits of adult vocational training are not grasped or cannot be realized because of economic pressure. While forty people from North Preston are enrolled for training most of the time, there is a 30 to 40 per cent turnover. During a time of unemployment men attend vocational training to get sixty-four dollars a week. Most trainees have families of six to eight or more members. If seasonal construction work which will give one hundred dollars weekly becomes available, they leave the adult training.

A person cannot qualify for vocational training until he has been out of school for three years. As a result, the school dropout becomes another problem. He has no alternative but to work as a seasonal labourer. Legislation closing the three-year gap between school dropout and eligibility for vocational training would benefit the community.

A third category of person just simply does not have the basic ability to be up-graded to qualify for vocational

training. Seasonal unskilled labourer jobs, winter relief and assistance would appear to be his inevitable destiny.

For some time a reversion to an apprentice system, if wage subsidies were available, appeared to be a possible incentive for people to learn and develop a skill. In January, 1970, Halifax County, through the Welfare Committee, outlined a "North Preston Work Training Program." The program would be non-academic, teach work habits, self-discipline and be closely assimilated to a normal job situation. The work activity project would tie in with construction of houses for widows, deserted mothers, unmarried mothers and the disabled with children.

Thirty participants, who would receive basic instruction in the proper use of tools and house construction, would be chosen for the project based on the following criteria:

1. A participant must have no serious physical or mental health problem or debility which would prevent him from employment on the regular work market.
2. The participant must be unskilled and be unable to participate in up-grading or training without prior counselling or training.
3. The participant would have a poor work history, such as being unable to acquire employment or retain employment for a reasonable length of time.
4. The participant must be eligible for assistance under the Canada Assistance Act.

Participants with three or more dependents will receive sixty-nine dollars a week. While there are regular evaluations of all phases of the participant's activity, it is anticipated that after a six-month period or sooner

participants may have acquired sufficient work discipline to enable them to obtain employment on the open market. Depending on the individual's circumstances, a three-month extension could be granted. An individual can be released at any time if it is felt he is deriving no benefit or if he is disrupting the project. The project will run twenty-four months at a cost of forty thousand dollars.

(4) Housing

Twelve hundred people, one hundred and eighty families, live in one hundred and fifty dwellings at North Preston.

A major problem in accord with the early history of North Preston was the lack of grant confirmation. Where grants were confirmed generation after generation, parcels of land were passed down without any concern for deeds or titles. As a result, a Dartmouth law firm has an articling graduate working full-time on establishing title and ownership for those desiring to erect a new house under a government scheme.

As indicated in the preceding paragraph, concrete steps have been taken to provide housing for widows, deserted mothers, unmarried mothers and the disabled with children. Mortgages will run over years, monthly payments being in line with mortgagors' income.

The Provincial Government has made available ninety thousand dollars and the United Church of Canada forty-five

thousand dollars as a loan fund for housing developments and improvements. To qualify for a loan, the need must exceed five hundred dollars.¹

In North Preston, five members have received land clearance and desire co-operative housing. However, Central Mortgage and Housing no longer sanctions septic tanks and wells and demands sewage disposal plants and a main water supply. Until the financial responsibility for a sewage disposal plant and water supply are worked out, the project remains dormant.²

In North Preston, twenty-three families "doctored up their homes for the 1969 winter."

To bring housing to minimum standards and fulfill needs, the community will also require public housing.

It would appear that churches could aid North Preston most by making available financial resources, as did the United Church of Canada, which is willing to make grants in lieu of loans if the committee, composed of government,

¹Halifax Mail Star, December 12, 1969, p. 1.

²Unofficially the Nova Scotia Government has made available funds for the construction of the sewage disposal plant. Construction has started. Official press releases were expected this first week in April. Construction of ten houses has started.

Many in North Preston do not have outside toilets. There was no house construction when septic tanks were legal for county community housing projects. The contrast was from no toilet or an outside toilet to the sewage disposal plant. This accounts for the repeated phrase related to housing development--"The septic tank age passed us by."

county, church and community representatives recommends it.

(5) Self-Determination

Self-determination is the maximum participation of the individual in the decisions that affect him.¹ Through projects such as working together on houses, skills are developed and the more capable are given experience in book-keeping, purchasing, company management and business procedures. This involvement will hopefully develop confidence, character, self-reliance and the ability to lead. Community organizations are also emphasizing self-determination.

Adults of the community are organized as the North Preston Development Recreation Association. This group aims for social improvement through various forms of adult recreation. Community auxiliaries, ratepayers association, an education committee and various adult interest groups also function. They too emphasize self-expression for the community.

Youth of the community are organized as the North Preston Youth Improvement Association. This two-year-old organization is among the most fertile forces. Projects begun within the community now relate to the outside. Recently their hockey team took the championship in an inter-black

¹Volunteer Action for Social Change, Handbook of Student Overseas Service, p. 1.

community league. Next season they anticipate expanding to the outside Eastern Shore League. They organize community leagues related to most sports. Drama, discussion, choral groups and the like are organized as part of their far-reaching influence. They select a Youth Queen at the community's winter carnival which is now two years old. This youth segment still strives to encourage the untrained youth in particular. It has proven to be saturated with unlimited, latent, undeveloped talent and the desire to learn to help themselves.

The church still plays a dominant role in the life of the community. It gives opportunity for self-determination. Each Sunday two worship services are held. One service is conducted by the pastor, Reverend Skeier. He is also a North Preston school teacher. The other worship service is led by a committee or organization of the church or community.¹

Through testimonies, it appears that the power of the gospel of faith, love and hope has touched human relationships of the community. For this hope, based on faith in Jesus Christ, is a dominant note of lives with character and purpose set on a better tomorrow.

¹The schedule of worship leaders, posted in the church narthex, includes not only the customary Deacons, Women's Missionary Society and the like, but also the Community Organization Committee and the most fascinating of all, the Cemetery Committee.

In Canada's centennial year the church sponsored a Centennial Choir. This group was among the first forces to aid in establishing North Preston as a positive community in the minds of outsiders.

The church annually goes into the area as leaders and participants in memorial services for Doctor Martin Luther King, Junior. They remember and make him known as a leader, "Brief in years--Endless in influence."¹

North Preston church will be involved in this summer's conference dealing with Black Community Social Problems. This conference of the African Baptist Association will be held in their neighbouring community of East Preston.

The Canada Section--Lutheran Church in America has issued statements related to housing,² health³ and poverty.⁴ This gives direction for understanding and interpretation for this phase of North Preston. All stress the rights, dignity and self-determination of people. The whole community, including the church, is urged to "an informed concern" and the directive to "join in the action" to overcome these social problems.

¹The theme of their church narthex poster promulgating the April 4, 1970 memorial service.

²Canada Section--Lutheran Church in America, Social Statements, III, 13-14.

³Ibid., pp. 5-9.

⁴Ibid., II, 5-9.

(6) Summary

A linkage with the world will improve communication with the outside. Education will give knowledge and credentials to enter the regular labour force. Employment will increase human dignity. Improved housing conditions will give the people their social right. Self-determination will develop latent talent. Together they will continue to develop emerging visibility.

CHAPTER V

OUR SAVIOUR'S EXPOSURE

Further experience and involvement could not be written if the writer or his people followed the hierarchy of the Lutheran Church to the letter. Good resource materials or persons are accepted as a guide. However, the church promulgates a doctrinal power structure. It has a set posture for its congregations in relation to other denominations. Pulpit fellowship has been only partially realized amongst Lutherans. No directive has been given for Lutheran-Baptist pulpit fellowship. If existing church guidelines were followed pulpit and social fellowship could not have been realized with the people of Victoria Road Baptist Church--who were created by God as black people.

(1) Worship and Fellowship

The Senior Choir of Our Saviour and the Choir of Victoria Road were participants in Dartmouth's first city-wide Roman Catholic-Protestant ecumenical service. These two groups found each other such "friendly people." The Lutheran Choir suggested their pastor invite the Baptists for an evening fellowship. The request was taken to the February, 1968 church council meeting. Council unanimously

approved the suggestion. One councilman summarized the feeling of the group by saying, "The choir should be congratulated. We have many fine suggestions. But I think this is the best one ever."

During the next seven months the pastors negotiated. An early November date was selected. The Lutherans as hosts had the responsibility for the evening. To appreciate how the Lutherans were tempted not to be themselves, their worship calendar must be illustrated.

The Lutheran Church has weekly Sunday evening worship. Four years ago Folk Mass Services were featured. Although well done, they did not have long-term value to youth or adult. Therefore, by 1968 evening worship was usually Vespers with vestments, but with occasional informal services. For the latter the pastor wears clerical street garb and the choir their street dress. The late morning service format is consistent: The Service--choir in robes--pastor with cassock, surplice, stole, pectoral cross--Holy Communion with The Service the first Sunday of each month and on festivals. On the remaining Sundays Holy Communion is celebrated five minutes after the Service. On festivals and summer months, formal Sunday School sessions yield to a "Casual Dress Family Service." This worship order is Morning Suffrages with a brief children's story-type sermon. Pastor and choir wear regular street clothing.

Against this varied, meaningful worship calendar, what format of worship should the choir select? Naturally they selected an informal service because they were hosting Baptists. Upon second thought, they concluded that they really were not being themselves. Vespers was part of our life; is well sung; is meaningful. So Vespers was selected as the order of worship. Pastor Fairfax of Victoria Road consented to preach. Pastor Rock was selected as liturgist. The choirs decided to get together a week in advance to rehearse Vespers, hymns and special music. The Lutheran Church Women assumed the responsibility for the social fellowship. And so, motivated mutually by a desire for friendship, a Baptist and Lutheran congregation entered into each other's lives--and later it was realized that one was black people and one was white people.

These mutually-cherished friendships have resulted in three more experiences. At the most recent fellowship in Victoria Road Baptist Church, their pastor and deacons incorporated new ideas. The worship outline was Baptist. Choirs were combined. Pastor Rock was the preacher; Pastor Fairfax was the liturgist. The vice-president of Our Saviour read the scriptures. The head deacon of Victoria Road offered prayer. Two members of each group served as ushers. Elders and deacons from African Baptist Association churches at Halifax, Loon Lake, Cherryfield and Lucasville

were present. Their ladies assumed responsibility for the social fellowship.

Had it not been for these experiences I would not have black people as valued friends and acquaintances. I know that their pastor's fears, sorrows, joys and concerns for his people are not unlike mine, although his road is more difficult than mine: his congregation cannot financially support him, and so he works full-time as Postmaster at the Nova Scotia Mental Hospital Branch. Nor would the people of Our Saviour have black people as friends and acquaintances. The Lutheran Church Women sell Victoria Road's tickets and support their functions. Choir music is exchanged by the churches. As individuals there is a degree of visiting in homes. That Victoria Road ladies are fantastic cooks and excellent home-makers was a lesson learned. Amongst my most meaningful current invitations is an invitation from an elder to come for worship at Lucasville.

Unknowingly Our Saviour had entered into the history of North Preston. Richard Preston (see p. 22) also organized Lake Road Baptist Church, Dartmouth. In 1905 when this church relocated from Crichton Avenue to Victoria Road it was renamed Victoria Road Baptist Church.

(2) Community Involvement

Late in 1968 the Lutheran Church Women at Our Saviour invited Mr. Wedderburn, president of the Nova Scotia Society

for the Advancement of Coloured People, as guest speaker. His commitments did not permit him to come. Mr. Ruck, a member of the Society, was sent as a substitute. He was the newly-appointed Social Development Officer for North Preston. In that way we were introduced to the facts of life in North Preston. The presentation was based upon the potential of North Preston. Caution to work only through existing agencies of the community was underscored. A need of good mittens for many children was presented.

The Lutheran Church Women adopted as an initial involvement "Mittens for North Preston." Information about North Preston and the project was relayed to all Atlantic District Lutheran Church Women. All concerned were invited to participate. The co-ordinating group delivered three hundred and forty pairs of hand-knitted children's mittens to North Preston. These were distributed on the basis of need through the public health nurse and the school.

At Easter, 1969 a need of crayons and colouring books for pre-schoolers at North Preston was made known. The information was relayed to the entire body. Boxes were placed in the church narthex for the collection of these items. The number received was high. The project relayed understanding of the pre-schoolers' inability to adjust to school at the normal age. Through training in colouring a step towards school adjustment was anticipated.

The Social Development Centre as an early program towards self-determination and dignity established a clothing depot. To eliminate dehumanization a small price was affixed to each article. Only excellent used clothing was accepted. During this operation Our Saviour learned through participation the meaning of dignity. It was believed rubber boots and overalls could be worn with dignity. Boots and overalls can be dignified; if you also have the choice of shoes and trousers. The Centre operated on this principle. Only new, current style, co-ordinated clothing could create incentive. When the thrift shop was discontinued, the balance of clothing at Our Saviour was channelled to Canadian Lutheran World Relief.

The 1969 pre-Christmas fight at the Social Development Centre was against illiteracy. Many books had been donated by St. Mary's University. They were to be used as relaxation-time reading. The youth were being taught that people read for relaxation and self-improvement. However, the books were stored in closets and boxes. Public funds were not available for bookshelves. Shelves would enable teaching book arrangement. Books well displayed and treated respectfully were hoped to be stimuli even to touch, handle and scan, if not to read. Understanding of this reading program and its hopes were made known at Our Saviour through the Sunday Church School in the Christmas season. A "White Envelope Offering for North Preston Bookshelves" was

received. The amount exceeded the one hundred dollar goal. Men offered to erect or assist to build the shelves. However, the youth of the community wished to "do-it-themselves."

Area charitable organizations who provide Christmas dinners formulate lists of prospective recipients early in December. Consequently, names not included by the deadline are omitted. Two weeks before Christmas the North Preston Development Officer advised of genuine need of four Christmas dinners as well as shoes for a family of eight who were recently "burned out." The dinner need was made known and met by combinations of the concerned within the congregation. Coinciding with the information of the dinner need, the writer was selected by a squadron of Canadian Navy ships¹ as the Protestant clergyman of Dartmouth to recommend a family in need to be the recipients of a Christmas basket. A North Preston family was designated after consultation with the Social Development Officer. The Officers' Wives Club of Canadian Forces Base Halifax offered to meet the need of shoes.²

¹This was a squadron of Navy ships without a chaplain. Usually each squadron has an appointed chaplain. Where such an appointment does not exist, they are designated as "ships without a chaplain."

²The meaningfulness of mobility to meet needs rapidly was learned by the body at Christmas, 1966. A black family of eighteen members at East Preston lost all their possessions through fire two days before Christmas. Between the early and late worship services the writer delivered

(3) Moving Beyond "Do-Goodism"

All these efforts of community involvement may easily be categorized as "do-good" efforts. This is undoubtedly true. The congregation has responded to flagrant needs. In large measure this is due not only to humanitarian impulses but also to the emphasis of the larger church. Church hierarchy advocates a "do-good" philosophy. People must be out "where the action is." A church may already be involved in their community. If so, the challenge is given to use more resources--and resources may already be over-taxed. Such directives given at random lack depth of understanding where the people stand. A guilt complex is given. The people feel this can be appeased only by becoming a "do-gooder."

However, in light of the fact that North Preston's chief goal is self-development the "do-good" philosophy must be examined and restrained. At Our Saviour there is a pastoral emphasis teaching the necessity of accepting a discrepancy between the larger church directives and the local program. The alcoholic's prayer is applied to many phases

thirty-eight children's gifts to this family. Gifts were delivered to their temporary cramped shack-type accommodation. Nine black faces were gathered around a three-by-four-foot table where the mother was working. She was scraping small pieces of meat from beef bones for a Christmas Day stew. These were received by a nineteen-year-old son at a chain store on Christmas Eve. This experience was featured in the midnight Christmas Eve sermon at Our Saviour and was emotionally received as a challenge of life.

of our life: "Lord, give me the strength to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference." It cannot be judged at this time whether the message has the congregation asking deeper questions about North Preston. The answer will come if there is a predicted 1970 racist back-lash.

(4) Summary

Our Saviour Church has worship-fellowship experience with Victoria Road Church. Through Mr. Ruck understanding and interpretation of North Preston has started and grown. Involvement has taken place through available opportunities. Whether or not we are really involved can be challenged. Cleaver said that if you are not doing something about the problem, you are part of the problem. We believe a start towards continued understanding and interpretation is doing something. I disagree with that fellow Lutheran pastor who claims a congregation only enters into the black community when you have at least one black person on your church membership rolls.

CONCLUSION

In North Preston half the houses have "little buildings" behind them. There's a little path going down to it. A story is told in North Preston about one of these little buildings which got overturned. The father called his son. "Son, are you responsible for this?" "No, father." "Now remember, I want you to tell the truth. You know, George Washington told the truth and you know what happened." "Yes father." "Now, I'm going to give you another chance. Did you overturn that building?" "Yes, father, I cannot tell a lie. I did it." And what a whaling he got! Then he looked up to his father and he said, "You know, father, George Washington chopped down the cherry tree, and he admitted it but his father didn't whip him." "All right son, but George Washington's father wasn't sitting in the cherry tree!"

We are all sitting in North Preston. North Preston does not belong to the inhabitants of that community alone. It is part of all the life of all men. An "overturning" there is also an overturning for us. Not only does it demand understanding and interpretation by Our Saviour but also by Synod and the Lutheran Church in America. Not only does it demand understanding and interpretation by Our Saviour but also by those with whom they live their lives.

To accomplish this, understanding and interpretation must be shared to make known where we sit. Baldwin would urge us to be like lovers who would insist on or create the consciousness of others.

I conclude that communication with North Preston must be shared. White people who have tried to understand the black community must communicate to white people. Attitudes must be transformed. Genuine inroads must be paved. These must lead to realize, "I am not my brother's keeper but my brother's brother." These must lead to realize Christ's directive, "Love one another as I have loved you."

Baldwin suggests that to change a situation, you must see it for what it is. Therefore, knowledge of the local scene must be communicated as a specific. Where education is based upon facts, I conclude there is a greater possibility for commitment, concern and action.

Partnership of churches is a current concept.¹ It may result in mutual understanding and interpretation. It may result in giving money without expecting a return. Partnerships affecting social change mean sacrifice.

"Lobbying . . . a rough and tumble process" is suggested to the churches as a method to exert strategic

¹The writer in 1968 served as secretary-treasurer and Monsigneur Murphy as chairman to lead all churches in surveying two-thirds of the geographical area of our city. On a set Sunday several hundred ecumenical teams made door-to-door contact. The news media endorsed this and gave great support. It is this concept of local partnership referred to in the text.

influence at centres of power in society.¹ Understanding must lead to a willingness to exert pressure upon governments. Demands beyond the available government resources may have to be made to meet unfilled needs. Education will be required to mobilize and activate rapidly. Doctor Martin Luther King Junior is idolized in North Preston. Therefore, white people should acquaint themselves with his basic four progressive steps--collection of facts; negotiation; self-purification; and direct action.

Education must eliminate the "White Moderate" who is more devoted to order than justice.² Gradualism is his virtue. It has taken Christianity nearly two thousand years to progress to the achievements of today. Is there time to wait for social reform? Should extremists such as Martin Luther or Jesus Christ be encouraged?

Goals of self-determination, self-improvement, self-help are idolized in North Preston. The "outsider," the "do-gooder" should relate only when his activity does not blur or destroy the objective. To draw nearer the idealism organization is required. Where a community of black men get together the action should not be viewed without skepticism. As a member of the black community, Doctor Howard

¹Walter F. McLean, Pussy Cat Puurrrr or Tiger Roar (Hamilton, 1969), p. 38.

²Martin Luther King, Why We Can't Wait (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 87.

McCurdy notes that

There seems to be a great deal of concern in the white community about black people trying to get together. They are the first to accuse black people of racism. All the black man is doing is what every group has had to do--meet together--and at the same time not be racist.¹

Education to North Preston goals must be shared to eliminate skepticism, fear and uncharitable construction. For the Lutheran Church of Our Saviour and all who share their understanding and interpretation it would appear they relate through an educated attitude; a converted mind, a sharp conscience; as a committed partner; as a trained activist; as an available resource.

There does not appear to be a magician's formula for North Preston. But there is a continued challenge to bring to fruition the optimistic lines of a runaway slave in the 1850's.

Far better to breathe Canadian air
Where all are free and well
Than live in slavery's atmosphere
And wear the chains of hell.

¹Halifax Mail Star, December 8, 1969, p. 1.

APPENDIX

Major Agencies at Work in North Preston, March, 1970

- (1) Provincial Department of Public Welfare
 - (a) Child Welfare
 - (b) Social Assistance
 - (c) Child Protection and Probation
 - (d) Division of Social Development and Rehabilitation
- (2) Atlantic Health Unit
- (3) Municipal Welfare Department
- (4) Adult Education
- (5) Federal Manpower
- (6) Children's Hospital
- (7) Nova Scotia Housing Commission
- (8) Community Planning

This is a list of material received from the
Board of Social Missions--Lutheran Church
in America in the packet entitled
Human Relations
(see reference, p. 43)

Mimeographed Sheets

- "Black Power, Black Youth, The City's Rebellion Implications
for Youth Ministry," by Cameron Wells Byrd.
- "Reflections on the Biblical Meaning of Power."
- "Social Injustice Often Makes Personal Goodness Irrelevant,"
by Richard G. Watts.

Pamphlets and Brochures

"How Do You Score?"

"Race Relations," Social Statement, 1964.

"Report on Civil Disorders."

"Soul Quiz on Famous Black Americans."

"Unwise and Untimely."

Magazines and Booklets

"Fair Play in Housing," by Algernon D. Black.

"Institutional Racism in American Society: A Primer."

Newsweek, November 20, 1967.

"Racism in America," by Joseph H. Douglass.

"Racism, Power and Authority," Operation Speak Up.

"Study Document on Christian Action in Racial and Ethnic Relations: Its Biblical and Theological Basis."

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