

Shiloh Baptist Church History

An Historical Sketch of Shiloh Baptist Church

The Beginning

Shiloh Baptist Church, New Rochelle, New York, was organized on July 17, 1899, in the home of Brother and Sister Richard and Eliza Jones at 124 Winyah Avenue, New Rochelle, New York. Eliza and Richard Jones were former slaves who traveled by freight boat from North Carolina to New Rochelle after the Emancipation Proclamation. They settled in New Rochelle with their three young sons. In addition to the Joneses, the following people were present at the organizational meeting of the church: Rev. J. A. Sumler, Rev. Robert Burk and William A. Bagley, acting as clerk. Rev. J. A. Sumler became the first pastor and served for a short time. He was succeeded by Rev. Robert Burk, who pastored for a few months. Rev. J. A. Sumler was later recalled. During this time there were many souls converted and baptized. This was the beginning of the new church.

During the course of Shiloh's history, there have been several meeting places. The first meeting place was 13 Railroad Avenue; the second was 6 Union Avenue; the third was 3 Railroad Avenue; the fourth was 103 Winthrop Avenue, and the present location is 185 Lincoln Avenue.

Reverend Dr. William Henry Slater (1900 - 1945)

"They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever." Psalm 125:1

On July 12, 1900, Rev. Dr. William Henry Slater came to Shiloh's first meeting place at 13 Railroad Avenue. The Pastor, Rev. Sumler, was not present at the time. As the members were about to start the prayer service, Rev. Slater, sitting near the door arose and said; "I am a licensed preacher from the Shiloh Baptist Church in New York City, and if you are willing, I would be pleased to preach to you this morning." The church accepted his offer and he took as his text the 125th Psalm. His subject was "God as a Trust." After the morning service, Rev. Slater was asked to preach at the evening service. Rev. Slater would be officially called to serve as the pastor of Shiloh on November 3, 1900. He would be the pastor of the church for the next 45 years.

Rev. William Henry Slater was born on May 16, 1868 in Alexandria, Virginia. He was the son of Clora Ann and Burnet Slater. Rev. Slater attended Grammar School #83 and High School in New York City. In 1898 he completed his training to become a bricklayer at the New York Trade School. His religious studies were completed at

Amity Bible School in New York City and Virginia Theological Seminary and College in Lynchburg, Virginia, where he received his Honorary Degree of Doctor of Divinity in May 1911.

As the new pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church, Rev. Slater did three very important things: first, he held a revival service and 14 souls were saved for the Master's Kingdom; second, he held an Easter rally and the church was able to raise \$25.00; third, and very important, he brought the members in touch with the New York Clergymen. To do this, he advised the members to reorganize and get letters of separation from their former church, Bethesda Baptist Church.

In December, 1902 letters were received from Bethesda Baptist Church, New Rochelle, New York for Fred Motley, Nelson Powell, Richard Jones, James Noble, John Motley, Mary Groce, Lucy Mack, Maria Bagley, Ellen Powell, Eliza Jones, Kitty Motley, Marie Johnson, Lettie Noble, Martha Batts, and Mary Freeman.

On May 6, 1903 the members purchased a lot on Railroad Avenue for \$1,000. On June 16, 1903 a Recognition Council was called with 11 churches present. Committees on Records, Doctrine and Practice were appointed and confirmed. Their reports were unanimously adopted, and the Council unanimously declared Shiloh Baptist Church recognized and welcomed to the Sisterhood.

In December, 1905 Shiloh was incorporated. In 1906 the church exchanged the lot on Railroad Avenue for the one on Winthrop Avenue at a gain of \$500. In 1907 the New England Baptist Missionary Convention gave \$10.00 for the building fund. In June of 1908, there was a ground-breaking for the new church. On August 16, 1908, the Cornerstone was laid. A Dedicatory Service was held on December 13, 1908. By December 4, 1911, the mortgage was paid on the first unit. A building fund was started and would continue until August, 1920. At that time a contract was signed with builder George Watson to finish the church at a cost of \$25,000. On Easter Sunday, March 27, 1921, the members entered the main auditorium. In February, 1924, a Moller Pipe Organ was installed at a cost of \$5,000.

After an illustrious career and a long illness, Rev. Dr. William Henry Slater died on January 24, 1945. The church was without a pastor for one year. During this time, property was purchased, the membership grew and the church was built and paid for. Shiloh was among the front-line Churches of the denomination. Rev. Slater served as pastor for 45 years and his legacy speaks for itself. He laid the groundwork for our next pastor.

History - pt 2

Reverend Dr. Huston Crutchfield, Sr. (1946 - 1971)

*"And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh..." I Samuel 3:21
"And there ran a man...and came to Shiloh..." I Samuel 4:12*

The membership of Shiloh in 1945 was approximately 500 and it held a respectable amount of cash assets. Rev. Grant Powell and Deacon Philip Bolden, the pulpit committee, supplied the church with a steady flow of ministers from which to choose the next pastor. It was some eight months after the death of Rev. Slater that it was decided that Rev. Dr. Huston Crutchfield, Sr. would be the next pastor. Rev. Crutchfield took charge of Shiloh Baptist Church in January, 1946, and was formally installed as the pastor on Sunday, April 7, 1946.

Rev. Dr. Huston Crutchfield, Sr. was born on August 26, 1900 in Washington, D.C. to Carmelia Robinson and Lucius Crutchfield. He was educated in the elementary schools of Washington, D.C., Syracuse, New York and Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania. He attended McKeahey and Dunbar High Schools in Washington D.C. He studied theology at Hartford Seminary, Hartford, Connecticut, Baptist Educational Center, New York, New York, and Virginia Theological Seminary and College where he received his Doctor of Divinity Degree on May 27, 1961.

Rev. Crutchfield was a visionary, who had a shepherd's heart. His concern was for his flock to work together for the good of Shiloh Baptist Church and always give God the credit for all of their accomplishments. He was known as a kind and generous man with a humble spirit. He was well received and well regarded by his congregation. He was esteemed among his peers and throughout the community. He was an effective leader and was blessed with people who were willing to follow his wise leadership and share in a common dream to build.

When Rev. Crutchfield assumed the leadership of Shiloh, there were approximately 500 members and the church was located at 103 Winthrop Avenue. On August 7, 1946, a committee was formed to purchase the present site at 185 Lincoln Avenue. The committee consisted of Charles Shelton, David Hayes, John Tate and Norman Ogburn, who met with Paul Shelton, owner of the property at 185 Lincoln Avenue. An agreement was reached and Mr. & Mrs. David Hayes lent a binder of \$500 to the church. The purchase price was \$8,500 and the agreement stated that \$5,000 would be paid at the closing and Paul Shelton would hold the mortgage of \$3,000 with a 5% interest for 18 months. The deal was finalized on April 17, 1947, eight months after the expansion committee commenced.

In 1949, during the 50th Anniversary celebration, a fund-raiser was launched stating the intention to build a new church. Shiloh stepped out on faith and began their fund

raising. The members showed strong financial support and with the help and cooperation of the community and other churches, over 500 people attended the anniversary celebration. Pledges were stepped up from nickel and dime contributions to \$25 and \$100 dollars. Mr. David Green, a trustee, drew a sketch of the type of structure the church members had in mind. Contractors and architects worked to design the church until the people of Shiloh were satisfied. By September, 1948, plans for the church were formally announced and the Standard Star published a news article in its September 15, 1948 edition about this grand adventure. The firm L. M. Neckerman & Sons of New York City was chosen as the builders at an estimated cost of \$325,000. The new structure would have the usual accessory rooms and would seat 875 with 240 in the balcony and 75 in the choir loft.

The next project was to move the present structure from 103 Winthrop Avenue to 185 Lincoln Avenue. This edifice would be renovated and dedicated to the memory of the late Dr. William H. Slater. An agreement was secured with the Nicholas Brothers, Inc., Yonkers, New York. The estimated cost to move the church and lay the foundation was approximately \$28,000. Because the church was too wide for Winthrop Avenue, the move took two days. The church had to be twisted sidewise and squeezed by two homes on either side of the street. It was moved on rollers about four blocks from 103 Winthrop Avenue to 185 Lincoln Avenue.

In 1953 the work began and in 1956 the cornerstone was laid. Although it took ten years to complete Shiloh Baptist Church, the members marched with pride into the new sanctuary on June 5, 1960.

After toiling in the vineyard for many years, Rev. Crutchfield summed up how far he and the church had come and his hope for where they could go in his letter of resignation:

"Dragging my feet, missing much that should be done, and forgetting much that should be remembered for the well being of the church, I arrive at this decision. For I am old and tired. A hardheaded Baptist in this day and age of the church. Thankful for the Great Head of the church has brought us a long way together, taken us many places and blessed us beyond measure. For this I bow to my Heavenly Father and will always thank him for his blessings. Souls have been saved, lives made Christlike and the services spirit-filled. Also full cooperation with the officers of the church. For this I thank God. May the Great Head of the church continue to bless us and use us to build the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men."

Upon his resignation, Rev. Crutchfield was given the honorary title of Pastor Emeritus and the library was named in his honor. Approximately one year later, Rev. Dr. Huston Crutchfield, Sr. died at Grasslands Hospital (now Westchester Medical Center) Valhalla, New York. His funeral services were held at Shiloh on February 5, 1972. The eulogy was given by Rev. Dr. Leonard E. Terrell of Union Baptist Church of New York City.

History - pt 3

Rev. Dr. Calvin G. Sampson, Sr. (1972 - 1989)

"The Black church has been, and is, a valuable institution and presence in our community and has energized and strengthened us when others collapsed and failed."

Rev. C. G. Sampson

Having accepted the resignation of Reverend Dr. Huston Crutchfield, Sr. in March of 1971, the church once again commenced the search for a new pastor. The pulpit committee, consisting of Deacons Joseph P. Bryant, Jr., Richard Shuler, Nathaniel Clark, David Spivey, James Cox, Trustee Ellsworth Stewart, William Fisher and Sisters Burdelle Griffin, Clora Brown, Maggie Hayes and Katherine Oliver, worked diligently to ensure that each Sunday morning a different preacher was heard by the congregation. As the Pulpit committee narrowed down the pool of applicants to the most promising few, those ministers were invited for a return visit and interview. Rev. Dr. Calvin G. Sampson was among them. This young man of 29 years had impressed the members with his enthusiasm for the Lord, his knowledge of the Bible, and his ability to interpret and impart the word of God. The call was made officially on February 3, 1972 and fortunately Rev. Sampson accepted the call as God inspired and directed him. He saw Shiloh as a church of great potential and possibilities, where his talents and those of its members could be further developed and tested in the service of the Lord.

Rev. Dr. Calvin G. Sampson assumed his pastoral duties on June 4, 1972, and was duly installed on September 24 of that year. He would remain the pastor until 1989. And so, the third great era of Shiloh Baptist Church began.

Rev. Sampson was born on September 25, 1942, in the Bronx, New York to Ethel Taylor and Artwell Sampson. He graduated from Dwight Morrow High School in Englewood, New Jersey and attended New York University and Lynchburg College in Lynchburg, Virginia. He received a BA Degree in Sociology. He continued his education at Drew University and received a Bachelors Degree of Divinity and a Master of Divinity Degree in Pastoral Counseling from New York Theological Seminary in New York City. He did graduate studies at Rutgers University School of Social Work, Newark, New Jersey. From Lynchburg College in Lynchburg, Virginia, he received the LLD (Doctor of Laws for pastoral work in the ministry).

Recognizing that the primary responsibility of the church is to win souls for Christ, Pastor Sampson embarked upon a campaign for increased religious education and participation of the Shiloh Church community. His efforts can be seen in the numerous accomplishments he achieved during his tenure as pastor. Wednesday prayer meeting became Christian Education night. Rev. Sampson provided three hours of religious instruction, beyond the fundamentals offered in Sunday School. In

addition, other classes were offered to those desiring extra help in understanding the Bible for application in the church school. A Junior Church program was conceived as a method of increasing the religious education and participation of the youth of Shiloh.

Mindful of the need of the sick, shut-in, and the "unchurched" to hear the word of God, Pastor Sampson negotiated with Bill O'Shaunessy, President of WVOX/WRTN radio stations, and within a short period of time, Shiloh was given Sunday morning time to air its "Message of Deliverance." A church newspaper (booklet), Shiloh Speaks, was organized. It provided a variety of articles on outstanding members, consumer news, educational tips, poetry, news for the senior citizens, biblical information and book reviews.

Among other programs initiated and organized by Rev. Sampson were the Senior Citizens Group, the youth basketball teams, the Angelic Ensemble, Board of Christian Education, the Helping Hands Committee, the Women's Choir, the Nurses Unit, the Scholarship Committee, and an after school tutorial program.

Rev. Sampson's vision of Shiloh as a progressive church, challenged the congregation to grow in community awareness and participation as a united people. His efforts to keep Shiloh and Westchester informed of relevant issues facing Black Americans, resulted in his becoming the host of the "Westchester Church News" radio broadcast on WVOX. He also became the president of the Westchester County chapter of Operation Push and chairman of the Westchester Church Community Campaign of the United Negro College Fund. Involvement in these various organizations resulted in fund raisers that afforded the community the opportunity to meet prominent Black community leaders such as Rev. Jesse Jackson, Dick Gregory, former Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, Ossie Davis, and a host of others.

The members of Shiloh benefited greatly from the efforts of Rev. Dr. Calvin G. Sampson, Sr. He wanted to keep all of Shiloh "committed to the cause, dedicated to the duty, and pledged to the progress of the church."

Rev. Samson was once asked what makes a great church. This was his response:

"What Makes A Great Church?"

*Not benches and subdued lights, but strong and courageous followers of Christ;
not the sweet tones of the organ but sweet personalities that somehow reflect Christ;
not tall towers having chimes and bells, but a lofty vision of its people;
not big budgets but big hearts;
not the amount of finance received, but the amount of Service rendered;
not gossip, but the Gospel makes a church great;
not a large membership but a large spirit, mind and soul;
not grumbling and complaining, but helping and learning;
not what people you know have done in the past, but what they are doing now and can
do in the future."*

