



ADVOCATE



COGIC Scholars Fellowship

**Volume 10, Issue 4
November/December
2012**

Dates to Remember:

Founder's Day
C.H. Mason Seminary
Atlanta, GA
Feb.25-28

Society for Pentecostal
Studies Meeting
Seattle, Washington
March 21-23
sps-usa.org

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COORDINATOR SPEAKS

As the year 2012 winds down to a close, I want to take this time to express my gratitude to all who have supported us through the year. It seems that it was only yesterday when, on the heels of an intellectually stimulating Society for Pentecostal Studies conference that Linda Neely invited me to work with her on what has now become the COGIC Scholars Fellowship. Since that time, there have been many changes. However, we have made some very important strides since our inception. There have been many significant people placed along our path who believed in what we were doing and gave us their blessing. With their assistance we have made significant contributions to scholarship within our denomination and the broader academy. With the current leadership team of Eric Williams, Glenda Goodson, Oscar Owens, Charles Hill and Eric Greaux we can truly say, "We've come this far by faith leaning on the Lord." And we can't turn around now for there are oncoming scholars within our denomination depending on us. From this vantage point in our history, the future looks brighter. Grace and peace.

***Dr. Raynard Smith

DR. BEBE PATTEN: A CIVIL RIGHTS PIONEER

In fulfillment of our commitment to the larger Pentecostal body, I have invited Dr. Abraham Ruelas, to submit the lead article for this issue of the Advocate. Dr. Ruelas is the Professor of Communication and Behavior Psychology currently serving as Dean at the Patten University in Oakland, California and recent author of the biography on Dr. Bebe Patten, entitled, No Room for Doubt: The Life and Ministry of Bebe Patten published by Seymour Press.

Having graduated from L.I.F.E. Bible College in 1933 at the age of 19, Bebe Patten, nee Willa Bebe Harrison, was assigned as the Foursquare State Evangelist to Tennessee. Using the moniker of "girl evangelist" for promotion, she became a successful tent evangelist, and because she was ministering in the South, her tent revivals were segregated events – attended by Whites, with African American listening in from the outside.

Little is known of her racial attitudes during this time, but the marriage to her second husband Carl Patten, a Tennessean, had an important influence on her. Because Carl's duties during the tent services included making sure the tent pegs remained in place, he had plenty of opportunity to witness African Americans, eager to hear the Gospel but restricted to experiencing the manifestations of God's Spirit by listening from outside the tent fabric. This caused Carl to confront his own Southern-bred racism and change his views. While Bebe's focus had been the gender battle – ministering in a male

dominated profession that denied the validity of women ministers – Carl help Bebe expand the vista of her battle to include the fight for racial equality. However, it would not be until Bebe’s ministry led her to the West Coast, that she would find a venue where she could fully exercise her views of racial egalitarianism.

A 19-week revival in 1944 in the city of Oakland, California, led to the birth of Oakland Bible Institute (OBI). From the beginning, the attendees at her revival and the students who enrolled in OBI were from various races. Bebe soon organized the Flying Choir Girls (FCG), a group of over 40 young women who sang at her evangelistic services in Oakland, in cities on the West Coast and in Canada. From the beginning the FCG was integrated as Jean Chapman and her sister Myra Williams, both African Americans, were part of that choir.

As many of the students who enrolled at OBI were World War II veterans who put high school graduation on hold to fight in the war, there was a need to help them finish their high school education. Thus, the Academy of Christian Education was also founded and its student body was integrated as well. When the campus community formalized Christian Temple, the campus church, in 1950, its services were also multi-racial. By the late 1950’s, Rev. Wortham Fears, an African American and a graduate of the school Bebe founded, was appointed an assistant minister. Fears was a member of the Montfort Point Marines, the first group of African Americans to serve in the Marines. He was presented a Congressional Gold Medal by House Speaker John Boehner and Senate Majority Leader

Harry Reid in Washington DC on July 27, 2012 along with other surviving members of the Montfort Point Marines.

As a Pentecostal, Bebe’s focus in ministry remained evangelism and the manifestation of God’s power, both in church services and in the lives of Christians called to reach the world for the Gospel. Within the institutions she founded, personal piety and ability to carry out one’s responsibilities were what mattered, and not the color of one’s skin. With the changing demographics of Oakland, so changed the demographics of the Academy of Christian Education (now which included middle school), and the school’s population became increasingly African American. The school’s principal became alarmed at this shift and expressed his views to Bebe who promptly fired him.

A front-page article in *The Trumpet Call* was headlined, “The Blood of All People is Red.”¹ Using Revelation 5:9-10, Bebe emphasized that Christ’s blood redeemed “every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation,” and that medically, the color of everyone’s blood is red. Why then should there be discrimination? Although she did not agree with all the tactics being used by civil rights activists during the 1960s, she wrote, “but I wonder, if I were numbered with this group, after all these centuries of being pushed down, disregarded, cast aside – I wonder if I had not joined that number in an explosive manifestation of my

feelings and emotions.”²

Dr. Martin Luther King was in the midst of the planning for the Poor People’s Campaign when he was struck down by an assassin’s bullet in April of 1968. Bebe, her daughters Priscilla and Rebecca, and her son Tom along with members of the Patten community family traveled to Atlanta to attend the funeral. Following the funeral Bebe had the opportunity to personally offer her condolences to Coretta King in person at King’s home.

The 1968 May-June issue of *The Trumpet Call* a sermon preached in Christian Cathedral entitled, “Let Freedom Ring.” In it she paid tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr. for his non-violence activism against racial inequality. Bebe also made her own appeal for equality – “The color of our skin has nothing to do with the way our heart beats. It has nothing to do with our minds and our souls. No! All people are free. If not, they should be. And here in America, many have fought for this freedom.”³

Ralph Abernathy and other Civil Rights leaders proceeded with the plans to take the Poor People’s Campaign (PPC) to Washington, D.C. In the Bay Area, Ralph Abernathy joined with Al Alyn of the American Friend’s Service Committee, Jesse Jackson of Operation Breadbasket, Bobby Seale of the Black Panthers, Reyes Tijerina of the Alianza Federal de Mercedes, in organizing a rally in the Oakland Auditorium on May 15 to drum up support for the Poor People’s Campaign. Bebe not

² Bebe Patten, “The Blood of All People Is Red!” *The Trumpet Call*, January 1968, Volume XVII. Number 1, 1.

¹ Bebe Patten, “The Blood of All People Is Red!” *The Trumpet Call*, January 1968, Volume XVII. Number 1, 1.

³ Bebe Patten, “Let Freedom Ring,” *The Trumpet Call*, May-June 1968, Volume XVII. Number 5-6, 5.

only attended the meeting to lend her support but was also on the dais with the organizers of the campaign. She was one of the few White people in attendance at the event.

Bebe Patten's activism in the Civil Rights movement consisted mainly of leading the institutions she had founded – Oakland Bible Institute (now Patten University), Academy of Christian Education (now Patten Academy of Christian Education), Christian Temple (now Christian Cathedral, and the Christian Evangelical Churches of America, Inc. – in

a manner consistent with Martin Luther King's dream – the "content of one's character" was the litmus test and not the color of one's skin. In sermons she would at times tell the congregation that if they had problems with people of another race or color, they should remember that the Christian Cathedral sanctuary in which they sat was the result of the efforts of a Jew and an African American. When Bebe was looking for a way to finance the building of the church building that would become Christian Cathedral,

she came across an ad in the paper that asked, "Are you looking for money?" Bebe called the contact phone number; she was connected with a Jewish money broker who brought in a local African American businessman who made the loan to Bebe's church so that the sanctuary could be built. The schools and church Bebe founded were examples of racial diversity before that goal became a reality in other segments of society.

~2013 HOLY CONVOCATION CALL FOR PAPERS~

The AIM Convention 2013 will convene in Baltimore, Maryland, July 1st through 5th. The COGIC Scholars Academic Forum will be in session Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday (July 2, 3, & 4). An invitation has been extended to us by COGIC sisters Drs. Willie and Cynthia Bragg to have one session on the campus of Morgan State University. Proposals are requested for papers. Papers/Presentations may be interdisciplinary, must be religious/theological in nature, and should seek to stimulate critical reflection among COGIC members and to connect COGIC members with the on-going scholarship of the academy and the wider Pentecostal movement in particular.

Proposals should be no more than 250 words and should include a working title, the statement of the problem, the scope & outline of the paper, the methodology and a tentative conclusion. Confirm that your name, title and institution are as they should appear on the program.

Proposals are due to the committee no later than February 25, 2013. Send to Dr. Raynard Smith rdsmith20@earthlink.net and Elder Eric Williams ewilli7@yahoo.com. Each proposal will be acknowledged by e-mail within two weeks of submission.

COGIC Authors

During the most recent Holy Convocation, the following books were brought to my attention:

Michael Corcoran, *He Is My Story: The Sanctified Soul of Arizona Dranes* (San Francisco, CA: Tompkins Square, 2012), pp. 44 (hbk), \$24.98.

Marva Cromartie Nyema, *Against the Odds* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2012), pp. 99 (pbk), \$20.00.

Brandon B. Porter, *Filling God's House: Practical Church Growth Principles for the 21st Century Church* (Memphis, TN, Greater Community Temple/ Brandonbporter.org, 2012) pp. 47 (pbk), \$12.95.

Brandon B. Porter, *A Reason to Keep Going: When Fulfilling Purpose Gets Difficult* (Memphis, TN: Greater Community Temple/ www.gctministries.org, 2011) pp. 106 (pbk), \$14.95.

Rita V. Womack, *Kingdom Consciousness: A Journey of Discovery and Purpose* (Los Angeles, CA: www.ritawomackministries.com, 2012) pp. 73 (pbk), \$20.00.

Austin Moore, *Bishop C. H. Mason Singing, Preaching, and Praying in the Spirit* vol.1 CD (Altmo productions@gmail.com: Altmo Productions, PO Box 1171, LaVergne, TN 37006, 2012), \$15.00.

C.M. Cole, *Revival in a Graveyard* (Abbotsford, WI: LIFE SENTENCE Publishing, LLC, 2011), pp. 140 (pbk), \$14.95.



HOLINESS

2013

42nd Annual Meeting of the
Society for Pentecostal Studies,
meeting jointly with the
Wesleyan Theological Society

Featuring



Bruce
Marshall



Walter
Brueggemann

21-23 March 2013
Seattle Pacific University



HOLINESS AND ECONOMICS
will be the subject of a joint
session that includes papers by
Daniela Augustine, Assistant
Professor of Theological
Ethics (Lee University) and
Thomas Dozeman, Professor
of Hebrew Bible (United
Theological Seminary).



Lee Roy Martin, Program Chair/President Elect
Guidelines for submitting proposals may be found
online at <http://www.sps-usa.org/> and
<http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyan-theological-society/>

**THE FUTURE OF HOLINESS
IN PENTECOSTALISM**
will be explored by a panel that consists
of a biblical scholar (Scott Ellington),
a systemic theologian (Daniel Castelo),
and a practical theologian (Marcia Clarke).



BOOK REVIEW

Barbara A. Holmes, *Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003) pp.186 (pbk), \$24.00.

In Barbara Holmes' book, *Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church*, she offers a new interpretation of the history and future of black religion and explains why Christian beliefs and dogma are giving way to new grassroots movements rooted in social justice and spiritual experience. But separate from the activism and radicalism which defined the last fifty years of the Civil Rights movements, this book is a transitional departure from her previous work where she seems to have evolved from a personal self-discovery in her first book on Barbara Jordan to positioning her self politically and theologically in her books on cosmology and racism.

In this book on the contemplative practices of the black church, she seems to come full circle and to a place of complete understanding as to the history of the odyssey of Africans living in America. She postulates rather effectively that it is the rediscovery of the spirituality that Africans knew on the continent which will allow for any kind of survival against the harshness of continued social injustice perpetrated against Africans living in America. She writes, "I am suggesting that inculturation is not enough; rather, experiential returns must be included in the process. Contemplative practices provide the linkages.....they provide concrete and identifiable links to African spiritual traditions."

While it is true that in this book she seems to finally see the flaws of carte blanche accommodation, she also finally recognizes the importance of the principles which forms the core of liberation and theologies of revolution. She writes in the preface of the book that this work became a major change in the focus of her work. It is as if she completes a journey. She focuses primarily here on the social aspects of the gospel. She attacks the historical economic, social and political instability of American culture. It was something she failed to do in her preceding work to any real degree. It was as though she was detached from blackness. But here she seems to speak out of divine revelation and spiritual discernment about the timelessness at the center of black church practices that exceed its history and deserves exploration.

She talks about a shared religious imagination that manifests itself as the communal intent designed to sustain a diasporan people living in brutal exile as they move toward an unspeakable joy, despite a long history of socially oppressive conditions. It is as if she speaks about a modern day Old Testament Egyptian enslavement experience for Africans living in America.

While her first book dealt with being able to identify the issues in the speeches of Barbara Jordan as she spoke in the most pragmatically of ways, "truth to power," this book speaks to the sufferer and the victims, elucidating for them how to discursively hew hope out of the conditions of oppression. Holmes raises the issue that through the arts of spiritual contemplation and the legacies of practiced religious experience the that black community can find the potential to ease post modernity's striving. She says so matter-of-factly, "Perhaps through this retrieval of the contemplative practices of the black church, the trans-racial and diversity based- community-called-beloved will come into view." She continues as she did in her books on liberation and the cosmos, to call for a commonality of experience, involvement and engagement. It is this communal camaraderie alone that will reinvigorate community life, causing transcendence and transformation.

What I find extremely fascinating about this book is her complete understanding of the nature, history, character and sensibility of the black church. For Dr. Holmes the black church inhabits the imagination of black people in ways which are incomprehensible to the dominant Christian church. It embodies a unique spiritual idea that is grounded not only in history but also in the narratives and myths of an oppressed people. She writes, "In fact, for people of color the black church was one of the few safe spaces in an unsafe world." She expresses the same sentiments that are expressed by this author writing for the Family Psychology and Counseling Series in, *Counseling African American Families* that the black church has sustained, nurtured, helped, and hurt its people. However, given all of its failures the black church has always been central to the life of the black community.

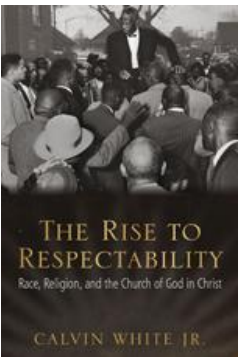
Dr. Holmes gives us insight into her personal life here, starting with her strong religious Gullah background, fraught with its cultural pragmatism that was steeped in its more mystical understanding of scripture, to her contemplative inclinations expressed through her Pentecostal faith. Along the way she is influenced by Barbara Jordan's pragmatism; Martin Luther King, Jr.'s and Howard Thurman's "love ethic" and even the more radical theologies of James Cone, William Jones and the like, but ends up pondering the importance of spirituality and contemplative life. It is for her the new paradigm of the 21st century. She calls for a new connection for blacks to their African spiritual roots to deal and cope with the American dilemma of slavery and racism. It is her response to liberation theology and all other attempts blacks have used through their sojourn in this country as coping mechanisms.

Holmes opens up a world of understanding as to what it means to be an African American, as well as what is the meaning and purpose of African centered Pentecostal worship. For me she defines, identifies, affirms and validates clearly the purpose and power of communal worship. She connects the history of the Pentecostal worship experience to African spiritual practices. She explains it with such precision and enthusiasm that one can't help but feel the Spirit through her words as she explains the ecstasy of the dance, drumming and song. The only element that she does not go into detail about is the tongues which might lead one to question the depth of her connection to the Apostolic Pentecostal Church, given the fact that tongue speaking is so central to the doctrine of Apostolicity. However, it is my understanding that she was indeed an intricate part of an independent Apostolic Pentecostal Church for a number of years.

Dr. Holmes tells this story of the discovery of the spiritual life and the liberating power of contemplative practices unlike any that I have heard before. It's clear, concise and with so much emotion and so much holy ghost fire, as it were, that I feel that not only do I know who I am, I also know why I have survived. It's truly joy unspeakable!

***Dr. Rufus Sanders, Suffragan Bishop, Pentecostal Assemblies of the World

BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT



The Rise to Respectability: Race, Religion, and the Church of God in Christ
Calvin White Jr. 239 pages, \$39.95 (hbk) 978-1-55728-977-3

Comprehensive history of the Church of God in Christ

"In his prudently revisionist account of the early career of Charles H. Mason and the origins of the Church of God in Christ, Calvin White Jr. shows that the church has on several key occasions tentatively engaged worldly concerns, including opposition to World War I, social-uplift missionary efforts in Africa, and cautious cooperation with Dr. King in the Memphis garbage workers strike of 1968. A valuable addition to the historiography of COGIC."

—John B. Boles, Rice University

"A timely and valuable contribution to the fields of African American history, religious studies, and southern history. White's work sheds light on the dynamic interplay between religion, class dynamics, race, culture, and evolving notions of uplift and conformity. Will be enjoyed by readers of all levels and interests."

—Charles W. McKinney Jr., author of *Greater Freedom: The Evolution of the Civil Rights Struggle in Wilson, North Carolina*

"A complex, important, and amazing story of religion, race, class, civil rights, and history. Required reading for all serious students of the black church."

—Reg Hildebrand, author of *The Times Were Strange and Stirring: Methodist Preachers and the Crisis of Emancipation*

"Uncovers a great deal of valuable historical data and provides one of the very few full-length examinations of the most important group in black Pentecostalism."

—Paul Harvey, author of *Through the Storm, Through the Night: A History of African American Christianity*

The Rise to Respectability documents the history of the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) and examines its cultural and religious impact on African Americans and on the history of the South. It explores the ways in which Charles Harrison Mason, the son of slaves and founder of COGIC, embraced a Pentecostal faith that celebrated charismatic forms of religious expression that many blacks had come to view as outdated, unsophisticated, and embarrassing.

While examining the intersection of race, religion, and class, *The Rise to Respectability* details how the denomination dealt with the stringent standard of bourgeois behavior imposed on churchgoers as they moved from southern rural areas into the urban centers in both the South and North.

Rooted in the hardships of slavery and coming of age during Jim Crow, COGIC's story is more than a religious debate. Rather, this book sees the history of the church as interwoven with the Great Migration, the struggle for modernity, class tension, and racial animosity—all representative parts of the African American experience.

Calvin White Jr. is assistant professor of history and director of the African and African American Studies Program at the University of Arkansas. He teaches African American and southern history.

WHAT ARE COGIC SCHOLARS DOING

Dr. Andrew Hopewell Willis (Philadelphia, PA) pastor of First Redemption Evangelical COGIC and co-founder of the Urban Theological Initiative at Lutheran Theological Seminary Philadelphia was consecrated as an Auxiliary Bishop by Presiding Bishop Charles Edward Blake, Sr., Chief Apostle of the Church of God in Christ, during the 105th Holy Convocation in St. Louis, Missouri. The church family within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Jurisdiction along with the COGIC Scholars Fellowship celebrates this recognition of a loyal servant with a commitment to academia and ministerial preparation in the Church of God in Christ.

Dr. Fred Ware (Washington D.C.) writes, “During the spring 2013 semester, I will be teaching a course on black theology. I received a publishing contract from Westminster John Knox Press for a comprehensive textbook on black theology tentatively entitled *African American Theology: An Introduction*. The book should be available in 2014.

Sister Cleorah Scruggs DeBose (Flint, MI) was featured in an article about for her work in founding the National Multicultural Day for the National Education Association in *This Active Life* September 2012 issue.

Elder George Akins (Montclair, NJ) was featured in an article on hospital chaplaincy at Einstein Medical Center in the Philadelphia Tribune. The article can be accessed at

[http://www.phillytrib.com/newsarticles/itemlist/tag/Einstein Healthcare Network.html](http://www.phillytrib.com/newsarticles/itemlist/tag/Einstein+Healthcare+Network.html).

Elder Scotty Ward (Waldorf, MD) announces the current listing of the Spring 2013 online courses for the C.H. Mason Jurisdictional Institutes. He invites people to “publish as broadly as possible to your local churches and - perhaps most importantly - to other jurisdictions who may not be aware that CHMJI is teaching online courses.” For the course listings contact Elder Ward at wards@newcommunity-cogic.org

Brother Jeff Gos (Memphis, TN) writes, “I am in the midst of writing a chapter for a book *Plural Spiritualities and Four Catholic Disjunctions*. The title of the chapter will be “Challenges of Pentecostal Spiritualities in a Post-Modern, Post-Eurocentric World.” While most of my stories are Latin American narratives, if anyone has suggestions, particularly of narratives connecting Catholics and Pentecostals, let me know.”

Dr. Quintin Robertson (Philadelphia, PA) will be conducting two seminars with the pastors and wives of the Commonwealth of PA Jurisdiction Winter Retreat. Dr. Robertson is also working with Dr. David Daniels and others on a project entitled “Pilgrimage to Pentecost” - a daily devotional and sermon outline for the 50 days between Easter and Pentecost.

Dr. Ida Jones (Washington D.C.) writes of good news: “I received a contract with The History Press to write about Mary McLeod Bethune's residential life in the former headquarters of the National Council of Negro Women building at 1318 Vermont Avenue, NW. The Bethune Council House is a National Park Service site and home to the National Black Women's Archives which is open to researchers. Many know that Bethune was an epic personality during her life and the legacy of the NCNW remains a viable part of her legacy and leadership. The book will examine Bethune's life in Washington DC from 1943-1949 when she utilized the property as her Washington residence. The tentative title is *Mary McLeod Bethune in Logan Circle, Washington, DC*.

Sister De Borah Donald (Detroit, MI) has been re-certified as a professional mediator by the National Association of Certified Mediators.

Dr. David Daniels (Chicago, IL) and **Dr. Elijah Hankerson** (St. Louis, MO) have been commissioned by Presiding Bishop Charles E. Blake Sr. to compile a devotional resource guide “Pilgrimage to Pentecost” for the COGIC that leads from Easter to Pentecost. Several COGIC Scholars members along with others have been asked to contribute to the project. The devotional material will be accessible to all COGIC members on the COGIC website.

Dr. Keri Day (Fort Worth, Texas) Assistant Professor of Theological and Social Ethics and the director of Black Church Studies at Brite Divinity School will be lecturing on her newly published book, *Unfinished Business: Black Women, the Black Church, and the Struggle to Thrive in America* at the C.H. Mason Founder's Day events on Monday, February 25, 2013.

From the Library of the
LATE BISHOP A.T. MOORE

Bishop C.H. Mason

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New Members: Welcome to all who have joined the Fellowship since our last newsletter.

Darrell Bowman (York, PA) is the pastor of Unity COGIC. He has a Ph.D. in Christian Counseling. His academic interests are Engineering and Theology.

Robbie Lueneal Weathington (Chicago Heights, IL) is a member of Abounding Life COGIC. She has worked for the past 35 years as an educator/teacher and literacy coach mentoring 1st and 2nd year teachers. She has an MA degree in Computer Education from Governor State University.

Timothy Brown (Vine Grove, KY) has a BA in Middle Eastern Studies. He is currently a MDiv. student in seminary.

COGIC SCHOLARS FELLOWSHIP REMINDER:

If you have not renewed your COGIC Scholars membership now is a good time to renew. Make your check to COGIC Scholars and send your \$20 membership renewal fee to 36 Dorothy Ave., Edison, NJ 08837. Renewing will keep you connected with the network of COGIC Scholars benefits:

- COGIC Scholars newsletter "The Advocate"
- Access to paper presentations (upon author's release)
- Information about COGIC Scholars Academic Forums

[Connect With COGIC SCHOLARS FELLOWSHIP VIA FACEBOOK](#)



OR <http://www.cogic.org/cogicscholars/>

If you have an interest in academics and scholarship and are looking for a group of Pentecostals with whom you can share your passion, consider joining the COGIC Scholars Fellowship. We are a supportive network of scholars within COGIC pursuing academic excellence, recognizing that life in the Spirit and intellectual acumen need not be antithetical.

For more information, visit our website on www.cogic.org/cogicscholars/, or contact Dr. Raynard Smith, coordinator, at rdsmith20@earthlink.net, or write to COGIC Scholars Fellowship, 36 Dorothy Ave., Edison, NJ 08837, or call (732) 767-1430.

*** formatted by Evangelist Mary Lewis Freeman
***edited by the Rev. Dr. Joanne Noel