

Article

New Light on a Lost Cause: Atticus G. Haygood’s Universalizing Spirituality

Susan Kwilecki

Department of Philosophy & Religious Studies, Radford University, Radford, VA 24141, USA;
E-Mail: skwileck@radford.edu; Tel.: +1-540-831-5000

Received: 12 March 2012; in revised form: 1 April 2012 / Accepted: 13 April 2012 /

Published: 26 April 2012

Abstract: The American tragedy of slavery and the Civil War provides the backdrop for the exemplary spirituality of Atticus Haygood (1839–1896). The son of a Georgia slaveholder, Haygood served as a chaplain in the Confederate army. At the War’s end, he returned to Atlanta to suffer poverty and humiliation under the martial law of conquerors. His spirituality developed as a positive response to the chaos of Reconstruction. Following a mid-life transformation, he earned a national reputation as a progressive Southerner and crusader for the rights and education of former slaves. As a Southern Methodist clergyman, Haygood blended the ideals of evangelism and the social gospel, envisioning an America in which Northerners and Southerners, blacks and whites joined together to build the Kingdom of God. His spirituality evolved to the “universalizing” pinnacle of James Fowler’s stages of faith, a perspective from which all persons—regardless of race, status, and place of birth—participate as equals in fellowship with a just and loving deity.

Keywords: American Civil War; evangelical; reconstruction; social gospel; Southern Methodist

1. Introduction

Atticus Greene Haygood (1839–1896) of Georgia lacks the popular renown of other spiritual exemplars in this volume. However, after the Civil War, he achieved national prominence as an educator, spokesman for the New South, crusader on behalf of the former slaves, and Southern Methodist clergyman. An historian of American race relations describes him as “one of the first and probably the greatest of the Southern churchmen to revolt against the abandonment of black

Christians” ([1], p. 73). Similarly, an historian of Methodism notes that Haygood, in his day, was “the recognized leader in the South of the movement for the elevation of the Negro” ([2], p. 193). A study of the social gospel portrays him as part of “a vocal minority [in the South] committed to the cause of racial reform,” for whom “ostracism was their reward” ([3], p. 45–46). A biographer depicts him as representing “the most progressive and humanitarian qualities of a Southern man” ([4], p. vii).

Haygood’s case enriches this collection as a Southern counterpart to Lincoln (with whom some compared him); an example, along with Mother Teresa, of Christ-centered faith; a visionary, like the Shakers, of the Kingdom of God; and as a reminder that exemplary spirituality may grow in seemingly unlikely places—in this instance, the soil of Southern evangelism. A brief biographical sketch is followed by a delineation of his mature faith.¹

2. Biography

In 1839, Haygood was born in the hamlet of Watsinsville, Georgia. His father was a successful lawyer; his mother, a school teacher. The family owned two slaves, Aunt Esther, whom Haygood remembered singing hymns while working in the kitchen, and Uncle Jim, who taught him, as a boy, to fish and hunt ([4], p. 6; [5], p. 429–430). In 1881, even as he renounced his wartime defense of slavery², Haygood ([6], p. 21) nevertheless maintained, “I saw its best aspects in my father’s house. His slaves loved me, and I loved them; and we love each other to-day.”

In 1852, the family moved to Atlanta. Haygood attended Emory College, where he met and married a Southern Methodist preacher’s daughter and prepared for the ministry. In 1859, he began circuit preaching. In the decades ahead, he would serve the Southern Methodist Church in a number of capacities: preacher, pastor, elder, bishop, college president, Sunday School Secretary, church publications editor, and fraternal delegate to a Northern Methodist conference.

Haygood was in many respects a product of his religious environment. Methodists, and after 1844 Southern Methodists, were ante-bellum leaders in evangelizing the slaves; and, after the Civil War, in providing for freedmen education. Further, Methodists, like evangelical Protestants in general, were dedicated to American and overseas missions. Haygood was schooled in revivalism; his own writings and those of contemporaries depict him preaching at camp-meetings, calling penitents to the mourners’ bench, and recording the names of converts ([5], pp. 102, 130, 230). Just as Catholic monasticism would provide the vehicle of Mother Teresa’s spirituality, so Haygood’s universalizing faith would emerge within 19th century Southern Methodist agendas, especially the conversion of the world to Christianity.

In hindsight, Haygood would see the South’s secession from the Union as a mistake ([5], p. 123). However, during the Civil War, he was a patriotic Southerner, indeed a Confederate chaplain. In 1861, in a communication published in an Atlanta newspaper, the twenty-two year old described the Northern army as “invaders of our soil and our rights;” Washington City as “that Babylon of political iniquity;” and Lincoln (whom he later came to admire) as “that Belshazzar in the White House.”

¹ This treatment of Haygood departs from my earlier use of his life to consider theoretical issues in the study of religious development (Kwilecki 1991).

² One of Haygood’s virtues was his willingness to repudiate earlier public pronouncements after moral reconsideration of the matter in “new light,” as he put it (Haygood 1880: 13).

Still, after glimpsing some Yankee prisoners, he declared war “tragedy—bloody and terrible” ([5], pp. 93, 95, 98). Another sympathetic image of Haygood’s service during the War survives from the pen of a Confederate hero whose leg was blown off in the bloody battle at Chickamagua, Georgia (1863). Lying on the battlefield, the barely conscious man was approached by two civilians carrying pillows and baskets of food. One was Atticus Haygood, pastor of Atlanta’s Trinity Church; the other, Father O’Neal, priest of Atlanta’s Catholic congregation. “There they were—Methodist minister and Catholic priest,” wrote the soldier, “joining their forces on an errand of love and mercy, roaming around through the dead, dying, and wounded” (pp. 78–80).

As Trinity Church’s pastor, Haygood witnessed the siege of Atlanta (1864) firsthand. When Sherman’s army began to arrive, he evacuated with his family to Watkinsville. Years later, he recalled, “The night Atlanta fell and lurid fires lit the very sky . . . I walked through the town . . . but I did not believe we would fail.” He shared the confidence of countless Southerners, he reminisced, in the righteousness of their cause ([5], p. 125).

Returning to Atlanta several months later, Haygood found destroyed crops, mangled railroad tracks, burned homes and churches, and the cemetery where his parents were buried vandalized by Union soldiers ([4], p. 48–49). Many who went off to war never returned; “those who got back found desolation,” he would later recall. “Horses and mules were scarce . . . Cows were as scarce as horses and of hogs there were very few. . . . The scarcity of money can hardly be exaggerated” ([4], p. 62). Adding to the chaos, millions of slaves, ill-prepared for self-sufficiency and citizenship, had been liberated and enfranchised.³

To make matters worse, in 1863, without Lincoln’s knowledge, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton issued orders that Southern churches in areas occupied by the army would be confiscated and given to the corresponding Northern denominations ([7], p. 244). Haygood recalled the presence of well-paid and confident Northern Methodist missionaries “going to and fro prophesying the ‘disintegration and absorption’ of the rebel Church,” and inciting fear and hatred in uninformed freedmen by saying that Southern Methodists wished to re-enslave them ([4], pp. 62, 117).

“Almost every reason for tears, uncertainty, and hopelessness,” according to Ahlstrom ([8], p.715), existed in the post-war South, “death, hunger, social dislocation, political disorder, racial fear, violence,” and so on. As Southerners were left to fathom why God failed to support their cause, Northerners read victory as divine endorsement of theirs. “No matter how desperately some Southerners would cling to the past, it was irretrievably gone,” writes Ezell ([9], p. 40). “Hope, and with it, revival, had to lie in the future, whose chief architect would be the North.”

The faith that qualifies Haygood as a spiritual exemplar was a constructive response to this mayhem. He presented detailed proposals in “The New South: Gratitude, Amendment, Hope,” a sermon he preached on Thanksgiving Day in 1880; and in *Our Brother in Black: His Freedom and His Future*, a treatment of race relations published in 1881 (reprinted in 2009).

However, he divulged his strategy beforehand, in the summer of 1880, in an address to the Northern Methodist general conference in Cincinnati. As Southern Methodist fraternal delegate, he called

³ In 1860, slaves constituted about a third of the Southern population, according to the 1880 census, comprised almost half the population of Georgia.

colleagues in both regions to “the blessings of a broad, generous, and true fraternity.” By the end of the speech, he was wishing for intermarriages across the Mason-Dixon ([5], p. 181).

The following November, Haygood preached the “New South” sermon at a Thanksgiving worship service in Oxford, Georgia. He echoed Henry Grady, editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, and other Southern progressives who urged Southerners to leave behind the Lost Cause with its agrarian, slave-supported economy, and assimilate into the industrialized North. He asked worshippers to thank God for the end of slavery, readmission to the Union, and a higher standard of living than in 1860. They were to acknowledge and amend their faults, e.g., an “intense provincialism” without which there would have been no Civil War. While some listeners were offended, the congregation voted to have the sermon printed.

In *Our Brother in Black*, Haygood urged whites to assist in the education and social elevation of ex-slaves; he called for donations to black churches and schools, and support for Negro land ownership. Without this help, he insisted, blacks could not judiciously exercise the rights granted them in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. He anticipated that whites would hesitate, fearing that blacks would attain a higher status than theirs. That was impossible, Haygood argued, unless whites descended, through their own mistakes, to a lower position. “A man rises,” he observed, “not by the color of his skin, but by intelligence, industry, and integrity” ([6], p. 60).

It was a progressive agenda with a spiritual foundation. The “race problem” had been “given us to work out” by Providence, Haygood claimed. “There is no more sacred right than a man’s right to be all that God gives him ability to be in all good things.” He had reached the conclusion that “this educational work among the negroes of the South; *it is God’s work*” ([6], p. 80).

Both the “New South” sermon and *Our Brother in Black* earned praise in the North. In a letter published in the *New York Observer*, a Yankee judge paid tribute to *Our Brother in Black*: “I have read nothing since the war so well calculated to instruct good men, north and south, as to their duty and responsibility to the millions so recently made citizens” ([5], p. 228).

However, at home, Haygood was reviled as “Nigger Bishop” (he was elected Southern Methodist bishop in 1882) and “Nigger College President” (he was president of Emory College). Once a popular, sought-after preacher, Haygood was not invited to fill a Southern pulpit for several months after the publication of *Our Brother in Black* ([5], p. 150). Indeed, in 1883, the editor of a newspaper in Covington, Georgia implied in print that Haygood had fathered a set of twins with a black woman ([4], p. 194–195). Further, as Haygood achieved national recognition through lecture tours in the North, Southerners charged him with misrepresenting the South in order to win donations to Emory from Yankee philanthropists.⁴ During 1883, he was accused in print of “‘toadeyism,’ ‘flunkeyism,’ shameless hypocrisy, and selfish ambition.” In an Athens, Georgia newspaper, a critic wrote of Haygood, “He is doing the South and his people more harm than even Sherman and his torch” ([10], p. ix).

Backed by the conservative Bishop George Pierce, during the 1870s, Haygood had quickly ascended the ranks of his church, having been appointed Sunday School Secretary (1870), President of Emory College (1875), and editor of the *Wesleyan Christian Advocate* (1878). Despite his divisive

⁴ While it seems unlikely that this was Haygood’s motivation, the New South sermon did inspire Northern banker George I. Seney to give \$10,000 to Emory College, of which Haygood was then president, as well as donations to two Georgia women’s colleges.

writings, he was elected bishop in 1882 (but declined the office). He could have strengthened his position in the established order by espousing conventional animosities—hatred of Lincoln, the North, and the freedmen.

While Haygood never burned his bridges to the Southern Methodist Church, in correspondence with sympathetic churchmen after the “New South” sermon, he laid claim to a divine mission outside the episcopacy. For example, in 1881, Haygood wrote Bishop E. R. Hendrix that while Northerners had praised him for the sermon, he had received “not a line from any so-called *leaders* in the church . . . *not one* [letter of approval from] the *older ones*.” “It breaks my heart,” he continued, “to see men so blind and deaf. . . . In God’s name—I cut loose from deaf & blind & dead men & move out to sea—maybe God will help us” ([5], p. 330).

A few months later, he wrote Hendrix, “I have had many bitter things said of me this past year—but none of these things move me . . . To me this year 1881 has been the happiest and best of my life. I have been on the breezy heights—often walking alone—no—Christ has been with me” ([5], pp. 333–334). In the same mood of spiritual independence, in 1887, Haygood wrote Rev. George G. Smith, “I do not profess religion—I never sought a *reputation* for being good—But I know *Him*” (p. 323).

As a result of his out-spoken commitment to the New South and Negro education, in 1882, Haygood was appointed agent of the John F. Slater fund, a Northern endowment for Negro education in the South. He was responsible for the distribution of some \$20,000 to \$40,000 annually to deserving industrial and academic institutions, e.g., Booker T. Washington’s Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. In 1887, Haygood wrote ex-President Rutherford B. Hayes (Slater Board Trustee), “I believe with all my soul that God’s hand is on me for these poor people. It is to me a sacred work” ([5], p. 338).

What led Haygood, in 1880, to take up social reform? There is no clear answer. Biographer Harold Mann ([4], pp. 50, 67–71, 109–111) credits an (implicitly Jungian) maturation of his personality wherein inner contradictions were resolved at mid-life. As a Southern Methodist clergy, Mann argues, Haygood had repressed secular values and ambitions, in particular, a desire to be a literary hero (p. 69). Indeed, early in his ministry, Haygood rebelled against conventional preacherly affectations, such as emotional displays in the pulpit and using “Hallelujah!” as a greeting. Acquaintances recalled that he dressed the part of a businessman, not a preacher ([5], pp.100–103, xii–xiv, 274).

Further, the loss of the Civil War, Mann ([4], pp. 198–200) suggests, contributed to Haygood’s redirection. He had trusted the Providence of popular sentiment to vindicate the South; after his expectations were unfulfilled, he opened himself to a more mysterious force of destiny to which he could only submit, not fathom or control.

Unfortunately, Haygood did not leave an account of his conversion to social activism. However, family and friends credited him with two stories of inner transformation that, if authentic, shed light on the mystery. According to one, Haygood, then President of Emory College, had been paying bills and had run out of funds when a Negro carpenter, Lander Thompson, came to ask for his wages. Haygood responded irritably that he would pay him later, and Thompson left. Soon the college president felt guilty, borrowed money from a student, and walked in the dark to the carpenter’s cabin. There he found the family eating a humble supper of corn bread. Haygood apologized for his abruptness and gave Thompson his wages. Later, according to the story, he told a close friend, “That dark night, as I went back home from Lander Thompson’s cabin, I caught a new glimpse of heaven” ([5], pp.153–154).

A slightly different version of the story comes from a former Emory student who claimed to be the one who loaned Haygood the money. As Haygood walked home from the carpenter's cabin, "God revealed to him the great foundation principles of *Our Brother in Black*," according to the erstwhile pupil. Haygood, the admirer noted, was "the kind of man to whom God reveals his great truths" ([5], p. 191).

According to the second story, supposedly told by Haygood to a friend, Haygood struggled with the devil as he worked in his study on the "New South" sermon and *Our Brother in Black*. "[W]hen my very bones cracked under this conviction, I, on my knees, seemed to see the devil himself across my desk," the preacher reportedly said. Satan then warned him that if he pursued his controversial ideas, Emory would come to ruin and he would be ostracized, whereupon, Haygood struck at the demon and told him to go back to hell, declaring, "I will do it, God helping me" ([5], p.152).

Whatever the origin of his midlife convictions, after 1880, Haygood dedicated himself unsparingly to the perfection of post-war Southern society, not only as the advocate of Negro education, but of prohibition, prison reform, and other progressive causes. As Slater Fund agent and moral crusader, he constantly traveled North and South, speaking to black and white audiences. He worked long hours; his pen never stopped. By late 1887, according to Mann ([4], pp. 201–202), Haygood had entered a period of declining enthusiasm, health, and finances that would continue until his death at the age of 56.

Worn down from conflict with the Slater Board of Trustees, in 1890, Haygood resigned as agent and accepted election to the Southern Methodist episcopacy. As overseer of the Church's California and Mexican missionary conferences, he moved his family to Los Angeles. On a visit to Mexico City, he contracted dengue, a tropical fever from which he never recovered. In 1893, the Haygoods returned to Georgia. In the meantime, his lifelong financial imprudence (e.g., the habit of paying the bills of Emory College and its students with his own money) culminated in an embarrassing personal indebtedness. Further, using alcohol to relieve the pain of his disease, the temperance advocate became addicted and was seen staggering in the streets of Oxford, Georgia. ([4], pp. 201–211).

In a piece published in a Methodist journal in 1895, several months before he died, Haygood realistically assessed the progress of reforms he had urged years earlier in *Our Brother in Black* ([5], pp. 656–673). With respect to the sectional hostility he had hoped would resolve, he noted the Northern "fixed incapacity to be just when writing, speaking or thinking of Southern white people" (p. 658). A case in point was the reference to him, in a letter published by a Yankee tourist of Dixie, as having organized Ku Klux Klans. As for his efforts on behalf of the freedmen, Haygood had found the problem of race more complex than he had estimated. "I do not understand this Negro question," he wrote. Perhaps he discerned the new phase of violent Southern race relations, dawning, according to historians, in the late 1890s ([1], pp. 117–151). However, still certain of his providential interpretation of the Civil War, with resigned fortitude, Haygood recommended trust in an unhurried God. "Great movements," he wrote, "must have time" ([5], p. 665). "The humblest and feeblest worker for God and man . . . will not, cannot, fail of doing good" (p. 673).

On January 5, 1896, Haygood preached from the same pulpit in which he had delivered the "New South" sermon. Paralyzed on one side and leaning on his cane, he spoke of death, telling the congregation, "Bodies are put in boxes . . . [but] the real man, the invisible man, the indestructible man . . . the ever-living man . . . will take his place at once beyond this existence in God's purpose" ([5], p. 67). Two weeks later, he was dead.

Mrs. Haygood received a letter of condolence from “the colored citizens of the town of Oxford,” who conveyed their “profound regret and sympathy . . . in common with all classes of our community, in the loss we have sustained in the death of your illustrious husband” ([5], p. 442–443). At the funeral, a bishop of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church delivered a eulogy, and Negro mourners sang a song around the open grave. Haygood’s grave, according to an acquaintance, was located happily “on the very spot where [years before] stood the little church, erected by the ante-bellum Methodists for their slaves” (pp. 156–157).

3. Haygood as Spiritual Exemplar

Haygood exhibited many of the qualities Scarlett [11] attributes to the spiritual exemplar. He was the advocate of a “noble purpose,” and “deeply connected to life’s problems and tragedies” but not consumed by them. He lived in the wreckage of the post-war South, in the path of Sherman’s march to the sea, and under the martial law of conquerors. While he occasionally vented anger at arrogant and foolish Yankees, his response to Southern devastation was constructive. He sought to heal sectional wounds and elevate the former slaves.

According to Scarlett [11], spiritual exemplars “show a balance between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ virtues,” exemplified, in Haygood’s case, by, respectively, courage, on the one hand, and compassion, on the other. After 1880, he boldly stepped outside the conventions of Southern society. He beseeched idolaters of the Lost Cause to reorient themselves towards a future of fraternity with Yankees and equality with ex-slaves. Although he paid the price in scathing criticisms, he never turned back. Regardless of its origins, the story of Haygood battling Satan in his study captures his courage.

However, in Dempsey’s (1940) collection of remembrances of Haygood by those who knew him, compassion figures more often than valor. For example, former Emory student Rev. C. M. Ledbetter recalled how, in his presence, President Haygood was approached by another student who had come to say that he would be leaving Emory because he no longer had the money for living expenses. Despite his meager salary, Haygood took a twenty dollar gold piece from his pocket and gave it to the boy, telling him to put the money towards his room and board and to come back when it had run out. “He was the most sympathetic man with those who needed I ever knew,” Ledbetter summarized ([5], pp. 255–256). According to another former Emory student, Rev. Luke Johnson, “He carried scores [of students] through on his own pocket” (p. xvi).

“Black and white came to him for help and counsel, and they were never turned away”, recalled Haygood’s sister-in-law ([5], p. 43). An acquaintance observed, “his heart was big enough to take in all whom Christ did” (p. 117).

In Scarlett’s model outlined in the first paper of this special edition, a spiritual exemplar succeeds in the pursuit of a noble purpose. Only with the 20th century Civil Rights movement did African American salaries, education, and professional opportunities begin to approach those of white Americans. The long period of Jim Crow laws, lynching, and black disenfranchisement separating Haygood from Martin Luther King, Jr. makes it difficult to determine the 19th century reformer’s contribution to present day racial equality.

Perhaps Haygood’s success is best gauged in terms of the black educational institutions he fostered, some which exist today, and their graduates. Mann ([4], pp. 196–197) provides a list of late 19th

century beneficiaries of Haygood's efforts to provide higher education for blacks, e.g., Dr. W. F. Penn, a graduate of Yale's medical school; Allen Griggs, who became president of the National Baptist Convention; W. S. Scarborough, classics professor at Wilberforce University; and John Wesley Gilbert, Greek scholar at the American School in Athens (Greece).

Certainly Haygood possessed Scarlett's fifth characteristic of the spiritual exemplar, personal faith. Haygood was a practical man, not a theologian. Haygood Hall on the Emory campus enshrines his aphorism: "Nothing praises or pleases God like service" ([5], p. 134). Still, his actions on behalf of various social causes derived from a clear, pervasive sense of identity, motivation, values, and orientation to life—a faith as Scarlett [11] defines it.

Haygood extensively articulated this perspective in *Our Brother in Black*, where he brings to bear on the post-bellum problems of the South, the spiritual mandate of universal love represented in the figure of Christ. Like Lincoln and countless other Americans, Haygood sought to fathom the role of God in the Civil War. *Our Brother in Black* presents the national tragedy as an opportunity for moral and spiritual perfection on the part of the American churches, regions, and races. He set the stage with observations of factionalism and deprivation in Reconstruction Atlanta.

One story after another illustrates the virulence of post-war sectional hatred as Northerners assumed the role of conquerors, and Southerners were cast as the conquered. "Mutual suspicion, pride, and folly kept those apart who should have worked together," Haygood ([6], pp. 52–53) observes. Northerners arrived in the South with "exaggerated ideas of their own personal excellence" and of "the depravity of Southern whites." Southerners, in turn, rejected Northerners with benevolent intentions as "mean Yankee[s]" and "detestable carpetbagger[s]." "If angels ever weep and devils ever laugh," Haygood ([6], p. 53) comments, "these mistaken and suspicious men furnished rich and rare occasion." All the while, uneducated former slaves—confused and frightened pawns of sectional politics—were caught up in "a sharp struggle for existence" (pp. 1–6).

Haygood read these circumstances in the light of the biblical saga of the ancient Israelites, particularly their enslavement and exodus from Egypt, which led ultimately to the founding of the Hebrew nation from which Jesus descended. God, he emphasized, certainly did not sanction the slave trade—"one of the darkest crimes recorded on the page of history." ([6], pp. 12–13). However, there is no clearer truth taught in scripture, he insisted, than that God turns human folly to his own purposes.

What exactly was God's purpose in the Civil War? The catastrophe, according to Haygood [6], was preliminary to the conversion of Africa. Slavery, for all its evils, had resulted in the Christianization of hundreds of thousands of African Americans who, as educated freedmen, could take the gospel to their kindred in Africa.

Haygood [6] detected the hand of God in critical details of the sectional conflict, e.g., the fact that slavery was profitable in the South, but not in the North. With its Protestant religious homogeneity, the South provided the better environment for the religious instruction of the slaves (pp. 15–16), just as the industrialized North was equipped to liberate the bondsmen for the next stage in their divine calling. "God's hand is upon this people," Haygood (p. 110) insisted of the Negroes, much as it was upon the Israelite slaves, also enlisted in the salvation of the world. Having fought the war that liberated American bondsmen, Northern and Southern whites were next called to unite in preparing them for mission work.

Our Brother in Black closes with a vision of racial, sectional, denominational, and international unity in building the Kingdom of God: “Millions of Christianized negroes in America sending and carrying the Gospel, that alone brings life and immortality . . . to uncounted millions in their native Africa, while millions of Christians of the white race join hands and hearts in helping on the glorious work” ([6], p. 110).

For Haygood, conversion to Christianity, for Africans or anyone else, meant coming into fellowship with the deity embodied in Jesus Christ, a figure he portrayed, across his writings, but most thoroughly in *The Man of Galilee*, as “a universal character . . . brother to every human being,” who “loves one as well as another.” Haygood’s Christ transcended the distinctions that woefully divide humans, and was “incapable of prejudice . . . free from all intolerance, from all caste feeling and race prejudice” ([12], p. 40).

Captured in the parable of the Prodigal Son, the God Christ revealed was not one before whom we should “tremble and cower.” Jesus’ teachings contradicted the “horribly heathen conception of God [as] an infinite terror, seated on the throne of the universe, to be afraid of, fled from, and hated forever” ([12], p. 73) Rather, it was precisely Jesus’ universal love that attested His divinity (pp. 140–141).

Like countless evangelicals, Haygood believed that moral capacity was at stake in the conversion of the world to Christianity. Christ alone could correct the misguided human will whence came evils such as the slave trade. Jesus, he thought, “always stressed character and nothing else. Character, in the teachings of Jesus, is all . . . the measure of what a man is.” “Goodness,” according to Haygood ([12], p. 91), was “another name for Christ-likeness.” The Savior, Haygood argued in *Go or Send: A Plea for Missions*, “proposes nothing less than the moral recreation of the whole world . . . the restoration of the entire race to the unity of an all-embracing spiritual Kingdom” ([13], p. 13).

According to Scarlett [11] spiritual exemplars display different patterns of faith, configurations that reflect cultural setting, theistic orientation, and other factors. Haygood’s configuration consists of a spiritual posture and agenda that may be described as, respectively, unified and unifying, integrated and integrating. A consideration of his spirituality within the history of American religion illuminates this pattern of wholeness.

Haygood aspired to build the Kingdom of God in America—an agenda that places him in the company of Puritans, revivalists, sectarians, Transcendentalists, and social gospellers. Across these settings, according to Niebuhr ([14], p. 88), the quest for the Kingdom entailed three elements: faith in the absolute and immanent sovereignty of God; certainty that Christ revealed and initiated the Kingdom; and the mandate to organize life towards the actualization of the Kingdom. Much as the Puritans endeavored to build the Kingdom of God in 17th century Massachusetts, Haygood, some 200 years later, called Americans to redeem slavery and the Civil War by establishing of God’s reign in Africa.

Even today, Christians seek to remodel America according to divine standards. However, an all-consuming culture war between conservatives and liberals has resulted in mutually exclusive, fractional methods—evangelism, on the one hand, and political activism, on the other. Haygood represents a bygone Christian unity in the task of building God’s kingdom on earth.

The revivalism of the Second Great Awakening focused on the salvation of individuals, but also issued in voluntary societies through which early 19th century Americans pursued humanitarian causes, such as abolitionism, public education, and temperance ([8], pp. 387, 637–647). Efforts to save

individuals and to better society moved in tandem, just as Haygood sought to aid ex-slaves in order to alleviate their misery *and* to evangelize Africa. Standing at the fork in the road where evangelical and social Christians parted ways, Haygood sustained a unified approach after it had become nationally outdated.

At the same time, within the nascent social gospel movement, Haygood, with his two-pronged approach to the Kingdom, stands with the progressives of his day. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, social gospellers sought to ameliorate the ills of Northern industrialism and Southern racial inequality. As an “enlightened conservative,” Haygood belongs to the group of churchmen who helped launch the movement from an orthodox but progressive Christian perspective. They preached, according to Hopkins ([15], pp. 18–19), “an emasculated Calvinism” focused on a loving God and a humanitarian—but nevertheless divine—Jesus. Socially aware evangelicals viewed the Kingdom of God, in the words of one representative, as “a Christian organization of society, in all nations and in all parts, effected, sustained, and animated by God, acting on regenerated men” ([15], p. 20). This is the larger vision of the Kingdom, in which personal and social redemption are sides of the same coin, that characterizes Haygood’s spirituality.

Scarlett [11] identifies two dilemmas spiritual exemplars must manage—the conflict between reason and faith, and the problem of maintaining strong personal faith in a religiously pluralistic environment. These quandaries did not trouble Haygood, who lived in cultural isolation from the Northern intellectualism and immigration that produced them. However, coming into manhood in the Reconstruction South, he faced the predicament of political, socio-economic, and racial divisions deep enough to have caused a war, beside which contemporary American dissension seems trivial.

Early in his struggle against factional prejudices, to an audience in Monteagle Tennessee (1883), he spoke a creed of wholeness: “I believe in the essential unity of the [human] race, and I believe in the brotherhood of the race.” It translated into egalitarian commitments: “I believe, therefore, in all brotherly help and service wherever and however I find any human being. For the very same reasons that I believe in sending the gospel [overseas], I believe in giving Christian education to the Negroes in America,” and, he noted, to whites as well. All “are alike human beings, and by natural, God-given right should have the best opportunity God’s providence allows them for becoming all that they are capable of becoming. So long as I believe in Jesus Christ and his gospel I cannot stand on a lower platform than this” ([16], pp. 7–8).

4. Concluding Remarks: Haygood’s Universalizing Faith

Thus Haygood’s faith may be characterized as “universalizing,” the highest level of spiritual development in James Fowler’s [17] six stages of faith. The Stage 6 exemplar sacrifices ordinary satisfactions, and, in some instances, life itself, in the service of an ultimate reality that is “inclusive of all being.” Persons at Stage 6 defy conventional distinctions with a spiritual perspective that brings to light “the partialness of our tribes and pseudo-species” ([17], p. 200). According to Fowler ([17], pp. 204–211), Stage 6 derives from the tradition of radical monotheism, which is “oriented toward the coming Kingdom of God,” an eschatological reality defined by “the divine intention to redeem, restore, and fulfill all being” ([17], pp. 209–210). Haygood’s agenda to assist the downtrodden and

reconcile dissidents in post-war America, summarized especially the Monteagle speech, directly corresponds to Fowler's Stage 6 criteria.

In sum, Haygood's spiritual evolution was as American as Lincoln's, only with different stops. It traversed the United States through Georgia brush arbors, the Confederate and vanquished South, the board rooms of philanthropic Northern industrialists, and a Methodist see in California—returning finally to the common national platform of the “sacred right” of every person “to be all that God gives him ability to be” ([6], p. 60).

References

1. Williamson, J. *A Rage for Order: Black-White Relationships in the South since Emancipation*; Oxford University Press: New York, NY, USA, 1986.
2. Farish, H.D. *The Circuit Rider Dismounts: A Social History of Southern Methodism, 1865–1900*; The Dietz Press: Richmond, VA, USA, 1938.
3. White, R.C. *Liberty and Justice for All: Racial Reform and the Social Gospel (1877–1925)*; Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, KY, USA, 1990.
4. Mann, H.W. *Atticus Greene Haygood: Methodist Bishop, Editor, and Educator*; University of Georgia Press: Athens, GA, 2010; originally published in 1965.
5. Dempsey, E.F. *Atticus Green Haygood: He took the Kingdom by Violence, Matthew 11:12.*; Parthenon Press Methodist Publishing House: Nashville, TN, USA, 1940.
6. Haygood, A.G. *Our Brother in Black; His Freedom and his Future*; General Books: Nashville, TN, USA, 2009
7. Norwood, F.A. *The Story of American Methodism: A History of the United Methodists and their Relations*; Abingdon Press: Nashville, TN, USA, 1974.
8. Ahlstrom, S.E. *A Religious History of the American People*; Yale University Press: New Haven, CT, USA, 1972.
9. Ezell, J.S. *The South since 1865*, 2nd ed.; University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, OK, USA, 1977.
10. Ward, J.C. Emory University Publications: Sources and Reprints. Series VI. Higgins-McArthur Co.: Atlanta, GA, USA, 1950.
11. Scarlett, W.G. Spiritual Exemplars: An Introduction. *Religions* **2012**, *3*, 183–190.
12. Haygood, A.G. *The Man of Galilee*; Publishing House of the M.E. Church, South: Nashville, TN, USA, 1889
13. Haygood, A.G. *Go or Send: A Plea for Missions*; Publishing House of the M.E. Church South: Nashville, TN, USA, 1874.
14. Niebuhr, H.R. *The Kingdom of God in America*; Harper & Row: New York, NY, USA, 1959; originally published in 1937.
15. Hopkins, C.H. *The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865–1915*; Yale University Press: New Haven, CT, USA, 1940.
16. Haygood, A.G. *Pleas for Progress*; Phillips & Hunt: New York, NY, USA, 1889; reprinted by Book Renaissance, n. d.

17. Fowler, J.W. *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*; Harper & Row: San Francisco, CA, USA, 1981.

© 2012 by the author; licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>).