“We Are Marching to Zion”:
Zion Church and the Distinctive Work of Presbyterian Slave Missionaries in Charleston, South Carolina, 1849–1874.
Otis Westbrook Pickett

Integration in South Carolina occurred sporadically at best prior to the twentieth century. For instance, from 1849 to 1874 a unique interracial interchange took place within a Presbyterian Church in the low country of South Carolina that sheds light upon nineteenth-century “interracialisim” in the South and carries implications for contemporary notions of racial interchange. In what historians have referred to as “slave missions,” an ante-bellum church in Charleston called Zion Presbyterian contained a blend of white leadership, in the form of pastors and ruling elders, and a mostly enslaved African American audience and membership. The interracial aspect of this particular slave mission church produced a distinctive yet measured racial progressivism expressing itself in terms of expanded freedoms within the ante-bellum church structure and through an unusual ecclesiastical equality during Reconstruction.

The slave missionaries at Zion Presbyterian provided, in a multitude of ways, a counterexample to the prevailing cultural expectations of race, the institution of slavery, and race relations during the mid-nineteenth century and through Reconstruction. The culmination of this interracial exchange occurred in 1869, when seven African American freedmen from Zion became the first individuals of African descent to be ordained as elders in the southern branch of the Presbyterian Church of the United States. Undoubtedly, their experiences in the ante-bellum church structure at Zion prepared them for important ecclesiastical leadership roles during Reconstruction and beyond. After the Civil War, while whites and African Americans were separating along racial lines politically, culturally, and ecclesiastically, the history of Zion Church provides an intriguing study in late-nineteenth century interracialisim and the measured egalitarian structure of Presbyterian Church leadership and polity.

Known by the African American community in Charleston simply as “Big Zion,” Zion Presbyterian Church had, in the mid 1850s, one of the largest congregations of enslaved Africans in the entire South. The old Zion building, on Calhoun Street near Meeting Street, was also one of the largest church structures in the state of South Carolina, seating upwards of three thousand individuals on a given Sunday. The structure, however, was not the most impressive aspect of Zion. Indeed, there had seldom been a space provided by whites in Charleston that afforded ecclesiastical equality,
and thus hope, to the enslaved African American population as at Zion. Historian John Boles has mentioned that some biracial churches "offered a spark of joy in the midst of pain, a promise of life-affirming forgiveness to soften the hopelessness of unremitting bondage, an ultimate reward in heaven for unrewarded service in this world." More than that, Zion offered a practical and useful ecclesiastical structure for enslaved African Americans hoping to display their spiritual leadership abilities and thus, eventual ecclesiastical equality.

The missionaries at Zion, John B. Adger and John L. Girardeau, seemed to possess what can only be described as a moderately reformed racial perspective toward Africans compared with the prevalent societal notions of race in the mid-nineteenth century South. Containing something distinct even from Boles' notion of a "limited emancipationist impulse" among various slave missionaries, the Presbyterian missionaries in Charleston introduced measured reform within the institution of slavery through expanded freedoms within the church structure, culminating in ecclesiastical equality during Reconstruction. While these slave missionaries were undoubtedly operating within a paternalistic framework, they offer a unique portrayal of individuals whose varying ideologies of race, policies of ecclesiastical equality, and educational goals placed them in a different category of nineteenth-century racial moderates.8

In 1846, the Second Presbyterian Church commissioned John B. Adger to oversee the work of caring for the spiritual needs of the enslaved Africans of the congregation.9 Despite some early support, however, many members of the Charleston community rejected domestic mission work with enslaved Africans. One notable complaint against Zion occurred in a letter to the editor of the Charleston Mercury under the pseudonym "Many Citizens." He wrote, "The blacks would be joined together in an organized society with the right to consult and deliberate and be heard in matters of church government." He went on to say that "they would develop a spiritual allegiance to the church" and that "they would learn that what they suffer for the church will be a proud distinction," and "to minds thus matured, what will be the language of the master or the owner." However, in spite of community uncertainties, Adger and the leaders of Second Presbyterian were able to convince the Charleston public, in a public response to "Many Citizens" and others, that the mission would not become a breeding ground for insurrection.10

In the summer of 1847, the slave mission began in the basement of a building on Society Street known as the Presbyterian Lecture Hall. In 1850 it moved to an old Catholic Church on the corner of Anson Street, just south of Calhoun Street. In 1852 Adger's health began to fail due to debilitating eye problems, and in December

---

The Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association 2010
of 1853, at the age of twenty-nine, John Lafayette Girardeau filled the pulpit at the Anson Street Mission Church. Born in 1825 on James Island, John Lafayette Girardeau was the first College of Charleston honors graduate and a relative of Charles Colcock Jones, the famous slave missionary from Liberty County, Georgia. Under Girardeau’s guidance, Anson Church experienced “steady growth” and was “divided into classes.” His ministry and preaching attracted large numbers of enslaved African Americans, and the congregation soon outgrew the building on Anson Street as it “quickly became the most prominent gathering place for the African American community of the city.” Girardeau remembered the building at Anson “became too strait for them, the fences around it being occupied by those who could not get in, and sometimes even the trees in the rear” were filled. The young preacher’s fame as an orator captured national repute, but his desire to work explicitly with the African American population of Charleston kept him near the place of his birth.

According to Girardeau’s original biography, his work at the Anson mission during weekly instruction “led the leading negroes of other churches to admit that the Anson Street work was ‘of the Lord’.” The mission began with thirty-six members in 1854, and by 1857, there were over six hundred enrolled members, with an attendance of over fifteen hundred in a regular Sunday worship service. Eventually, the six hundred-seat Anson Street building was simply not large enough to accommodate the individuals attending, and the session decided that the church needed a new meeting place. Robert Adger, an elder at Second Presbyterian and a wealthy real estate investor, located a “prime piece of property near the corner of Meeting Street and Calhoun Street — barely a block from Second Presbyterian Church — and bought it for $7,220.”

Displaying the complexity of Presbyterian slave missions and the distinct nature of Zion, the church became a stand-alone congregation with its own session (which comprised all white members from Second Presbyterian), mission plan, vision, and atmosphere. Indeed, according to John Adger, it was the enslaved membership that “named it Zion.” Enslaved members chose the name Zion to signify it as a “dwelling place” that God had set apart for his chosen people. Other Presbyterian churches with enslaved converts, according to historians Randall Balmer and John Fitzner, “were not permitted to form independent congregations. Instead, they attended white Presbyterian Churches but were generally barred from office-holding and were seated in separated areas of the sanctuary.” Almost the exact opposite occurred with the formation of Zion.

Zion was an independent congregation. Its members were allowed to hold leadership positions, and while the seating was separated along racial lines, the African
American congregants occupied the best seats or "the places of honor" in the pews directly in front of the pulpit. Further, many slaves flocked to Girardeau's church because he acknowledged the distinct needs of the enslaved African American community, and Zion possessed an identity independent from the white congregations in Charleston. Erskine Clarke described Girardeau's Zion as "their [African Americans] church, as no other church in Charleston had been theirs since Morris Brown and the African Methodist Church." To slaves, it "was a building, a place that had been built for them. Here they could gather, could claim a community and thus humanity in the very midst of an alienating and dehumanizing bondage." Girardeau acknowledged that enslaved African Americans needed spiritual encouragement, education in the theology of the church, and equal treatment as human beings. Therefore, pastor and congregant endeavored together to form a distinctive missions style. There was no doubt that Girardeau defended the racial order inherent within the institution of slavery. Something in his approach to interracialism within the context of slave missions, however, separated him from the predominant categories among many white theologians and churchmen in the nineteenth century.

At Zion, Girardeau divided the church into "classes." The "leaders" of each class took up collections from their members for the sick or infirm. It was also the leaders' duty to visit the members of their class and report on any sickness or discipline matters to the session. Through these leadership positions, enslaved Africans discovered a unique sphere to "nurture (and be recognized by whites to have) moral responsibility and what historians have called 'moral earnestness.'" The pastor, session, and congregation gave serious consideration to these positions, and the leaders undoubtedly saw themselves as possessing a measure of spiritual authority over their fellow congregants. To be sure, in "a society that offered few opportunities for slaves to practice organizational and leadership skills or hear themselves addressed and see themselves evaluated morally on equal basis with whites, small matters could have large meanings."

The class leaders also appeared at session meetings and at church discipline cases where elders considered their testimony valuable. It was significant that Girardeau and the session allowed enslaved Africans to give testimony in the church courts. This occurred in a society that did not allow enslaved Africans to testify in civil courts. At Zion, however, enslaved Africans appeared as witnesses and gave testimony either for or against their fellow African American members. Church discipline cases included punishments for a variety of behaviors including drunkenness, lying, and adultery. Referring to this interracial ecclesiastical court structure, Boles mentioned that, "nowhere else in southern society were slaves and whites brought together in an arena where both were held responsible to a code of behavior sanctioned by a source.
outside the society—the Bible. Zion not only held whites and African Americans to the same “code of behavior—the Bible,” but the church courts allowed slaves to give statements and testify to one another’s guilt or innocence. This treatment might have given enslaved leaders of Zion the slightest sense of equality, if not a glimpse toward a hoped-for equal civic status in the future.

There were also “exhorters” among the enslaved African leaders. Exhorters could conduct funeral services and were able to teach and preach to other members of the church. Some of these exhorters could read, and while they could not, legally, teach others to read, they could read from the Bible at certain classes and prayer meetings. Allowing enslaved Africans to read to one another sent a clear message to participants in the classes. John Boles, noting the importance of enslaved leaders in a congregation, said, “Slaves apparently had their image of being creatures of God strengthened by the sermons” and their “evident pleasure in occasionally hearing the black preachers speak to biracial congregations no doubt augmented their sense of racial pride.” Indeed, enslaved Africans did not rely on white-operated institutions to encourage their sense of self-respect and identity, but neither were they adverse to grasping opportunities wherever they found them and using them suitably to meet their own needs as well as the requirements of the congregation. Girardeau’s insistence on having enslaved class leaders, exhorters, and readers rejected many notions that African Americans were incapable of reading and interpreting theology, deep spiritual understanding, and leadership. In Girardeau’s Zion, expanded freedoms through the development of spiritual leadership afforded enslaved Africans the opportunity to seize positions of honor in an otherwise degrading society.

Girardeau also conducted wedding ceremonies and funerals, a feature not unusual for slave mission churches. Girardeau, however, performed these ceremonies with large numbers in attendance and in the very center of the social district of the city of Charleston. Slave weddings were usually performed for small parties on plantations outside the public eye. As a Presbyterian of the reformed tradition, Girardeau believed in the importance of the institution of marriage, and therefore he celebrated it publicly. Further, Girardeau, like Charles C. Jones, tried to preserve families in his congregation and disagreed with separation of the nuclear family. It is possible that Girardeau used large wedding displays to show slaveholders, and the broader Charleston community, that he did not support the separation of families to make profits in slave trading. In addition, one can also only imagine the reaction of white onlookers as hundreds of slaves gathered to celebrate a wedding in the very center of the Charleston peninsula.

Girardeau’s regard for his flock as human beings is particularly apparent in the church roll books of Zion. Girardeau meticulously recorded the names of individuals he
baptized and married. Contrary to many church record books of this era, Girardeau recorded the first and the surnames of each slave in the roll books. In antebellum society, slaves did not receive surnames as this suggested their status as a human being with a lineage rather than as chattel property. One historian, noting the importance of such a demarcation said, “This equality in terms of address may seem insignificant today, but in an age when whites were accorded the titles of Mr. and Mrs., and it was taboo for a white to so address a black, any form of address that smacked of equality was notable.” Girardeau was acknowledging a slave as a human being with a soul, a family, and a spiritual and physical heritage.

This unique attribute has distinguished Zion Church from other denominations in that the “typical Baptist or Methodist churches included black members, who often signed (or put an “X”).” Usually, missionaries listed enslaved Africans in church roll books as, for example “Sam, servant of John Dawson.” For decades, slave owners throughout the South had denied their slaves surnames in order to display that slaves had no genealogical connections because of their status as property. Members of Zion who claimed surnames did so bravely, displaying individuality, humanity and self-determination. By encouraging this, Girardeau made Zion Presbyterian Church a place where slaves could declare a genealogy, a family history, and thus that they possessed an allegiance to someone other than their owners. Further, slaves did not just pick the names of their owners but “by the late 1850’s, more than 92 percent of the slaves who joined Zion gave as their own surnames names that were different from those of their owners.” Slaves were declaring not only a family history, but one that was separate from their owners. Further, “in addition to claiming the name of their families of origin, wives gave the surnames of their husbands, affirming their slave marriages.”

These aspects of Zion were indicative of the larger philosophy behind Girardeau’s experimental work. Indeed, small matters could have large meanings.

Augmenting this philosophy of humanity at Zion was the seating of enslaved African Americans. While many churches throughout Charleston relegated enslaved African Americans to the stifling hot galleries, at Anson Street, and later at Zion, enslaved congregants occupied the pews directly in front of the pulpit. Lois Simms, the first historian of Zion Presbyterian Church, has called this seating “the place of honor.” African Americans at Girardeau’s Zion occupied the pews while white session members and visitors sat in the galleries. Regarding this unusual phenomenon, John Grimball, after visiting Zion, wrote home to his family on 27 November 1859, “I waited until after J.L. Girardeau had performed the service for the Negroes. There were there unusually large numbers and occupied all of the pews of the church.” Grimball showed frustration that his presence was not given preference over enslaved attendees.
This was yet another display of Girardeau's belief in the humanity and ecclesiastical equality of his congregants. The seating arrangement told white visitors and participants that they were of secondary importance in Zion's mission. There were certainly few spaces in the mid-nineteenth-century South that white men and women were ever considered secondary to African Americans. Zion was one of those spaces. Enslaved Africans did not discover a civic equality at Zion, but they encountered spaces where Girardeau provided a resemblance of equality and some appearance of common humanity. Far from insignificant to the lives of enslaved Africans, the acknowledgment of a common humanity and ecclesiastical equality in biracial churches was one of the ways enslaved Africans conjured the will to survive an inhuman bondage.36

Throughout the Civil War, Girardeau served as Chaplain of the 23rd South Carolina Volunteers. During Reconstruction, Girardeau's work with the African American community in Charleston, now freedmen, continued. While many of Girardeau's contemporary southerners fought against integration, against African American leadership, and against the rights of freedmen after the Civil War, Girardeau was working for progressive ecclesiastical reform. Further, many African American congregants left their old antebellum churches, but Zion continued to experience growth. African Americans "in significant numbers—eventually all of them—began to move out of the biracial churches and join a variety of independent black denominations." Likewise, many white churchmen of biracial antebellum churches applauded "the new segregated patterns of worship" during Reconstruction.37 Several African American members of the antebellum Zion church, however, retained their membership. Indeed, newly freed members of the old antebellum Zion formally requested that Girardeau return and serve as their pastor throughout the period of Reconstruction.

In a letter dated 27 July 1865, Paul Trescot, one of the African American class leaders and exhorters from the antebellum Zion church, wrote to Girardeau expressing the church's interest in Girardeau's return to Zion: "The past relations we have engaged together for many years as pastor and people are still in its bud in our every heart. Therefore we would welcome you still as our pastor." Trescot also informed Girardeau that "our past congregation will be the same in future and till death, provide past relations with you are and considered the same."38 These individuals could have offered a call of ministry to an African American Presbyterian minister from the North, or they could have simply joined other African American churches in Charleston, but they decided to invite Girardeau, once again, to serve as their pastor.

Despite the Second Presbyterian offering the more prominent pulpit to Girardeau in 1865, he agreed to the request of the freedmen. He went on to become
one of the leading advocates for integrated worship and improved ecclesiastical status of African Americans, and he became the first white southern Presbyterian to ordain African American elders in the southern branch of the Presbyterian Church. These somewhat abnormal postbellum racial notions were rooted in both the expanded freedoms and progressive nature of Girardeau's antebellum experiences. His work towards integrated worship was an indicator of his moderate views towards race in an environment that was growing increasingly hostile towards African Americans' new civic freedoms.

In 1873, following the Civil War, factions within the Presbyterian Church of the United States (PCUS) began to debate the new ecclesiastical status of freed African Americans. In 1874 Girardeau was the lone member of the PCUS to vote against the formation of a separate black denomination. It was his conviction that African Americans and whites should worship together. He desired to see both whites and African American members "continue in their spiritual relations as an integrated body." To resolve this matter, the general assembly of the PCUS called Girardeau to serve as chair on a committee in order "to consider the relations of the church to the freedmen and report on the whole subject." He drafted a report to the Assembly in 1866. Many of those at the assembly commended the report, and "the assembly adopted the committee's resolution and ordered that Girardeau's paper be published in the Southern Presbyterian Review."!

In the report, Girardeau explained his fundamental beliefs on the equality of the freedmen in the church, and he cited several biblical texts supporting these views, including Galatians 3:28. In further support of his position, Girardeau suggested that the new civil climate of Reconstruction demanded a renewed consideration of African Americans' status in the church. In accordance with the emancipation of the slaves, Christians were now under civil obligation to grant full ecclesiastical equality to former enslaved Africans. Girardeau wrote, "The ecclesiastical disabilities which attached to them, growing out of the state of slavery, are no longer in existence. It must be admitted that, technically speaking, their minority in the church must be removed." He believed that southern Presbyterians could no longer use the "slave argument" to keep freedmen from serving as equals in the church. For Girardeau, it was time for ecclesiastical freedom, which meant granting greater privileges and equality to African Americans in the context of the church.

It is noteworthy that while many southerners were fighting for strict segregation of every single institution during Reconstruction, from government positions to public facilities, Girardeau was advancing integration in one of the last places that southern whites still maintained a measure of control: the church. The church was one of the last strongholds for southern whites to maintain racially stratified
antebellum roles and one of the few places where federal law could not intervene to force ecclesiastical equality. Conversely, Girardeau was advocating integration of freedmen into the church power structure, education with a gradual move towards pastoral leadership, and equality in ecclesiastical leadership (i.e. the possibility of having African American deacons and elders).

Zion experienced membership expansion after the war, and the annual reports display growth. In 1867 a meeting of African American members at Zion determined how many individuals would remain. At that meeting, 187 indicated that they continued to want to be a part of Zion with Girardeau as their pastor. One witness remembered that many “were ready to come back to their old church and remained loyal to their former faithful and devoted pastor, and sometimes large congregations attended the services.” On 25 March 1867, the (white) session of the church nominated seven (African American) individuals to be superintendents over the new congregation. Many of these men were the same class leaders, exhorters, and readers who served in the antebellum Zion. In 1869, Girardeau’s work towards ecclesiastical equality of the newly freedmen came to fruition, “upon recommendation of the Session, the following African-American men were nominated to serve in the office of Ruling Elder—Paul Trescot, William Price, Jacky Morrison, Samuel Robinson, William Spencer, and John Warren.” As a result, Girardeau became the first white member of the Southern Presbyterian Church to ordain African Americans to the position of elder, which is the highest position of authority in the Presbyterian Church. This success, however, was short lived.

In 1874 Benjamin M. Palmer, among other southern Presbyterian leaders at the Columbus, Missouri, General Assembly, called for the organic separation of African Americans from white Presbyterian churches. Girardeau became the only member of the national Presbyterian General Assembly to vote for integration. As the solitary voice, Girardeau’s effort to retain a racially incorporated church ultimately failed and “with the establishment of the African Presbyterian Church, Girardeau’s cause for an integrated church was lost.”

In 1874 the last of Girardeau’s African American members left Zion. Many joined other local African American churches or remained to form what later became Zion-Olivet Presbyterian Church. Girardeau later remarked, “it was in past days, my privilege to enjoy with those courteous and noble gentlemen. They were my warm friends, and I hope, through grace, to meet them when not long hence it shall be my turn to go.” As fighting for the ecclesiastical equality of African Americans, however, was not the only legacy of Girardeau’s postbellum work. His work towards education and ecclesiastical integration lasted well into the twenty-first century.
The heritage of Girardeau’s missionary work left an indelible imprint on the history of African Americans in the low country of South Carolina. During Reconstruction, the Zion Church housed one of the first schools for African Americans in Charleston. Zion Church was also an initial place for the establishment of a political leadership for African Americans in South Carolina during Reconstruction. As Thomas Holt recounted, “meeting at Zion Church in Charleston during the late fall of 1865 was by all accounts unprecedented.” Experiencing the freedom of political expression for the first time, many “black Charlestonians crowded into the Church’s galleries to hear the daily debates and to applaud speeches of their newly emergent, largely indigenous leadership at nightly mass meetings.” It was in Zion that African American “men—mostly freeborn and relatively affluent—met to demand new liberties and to fashion their first major political manifesto.” Indeed, it was not strange or unnatural for freedmen to consider and remember Zion as a place of equality and spiritual liberty for the African American community. For some, Zion was one of the only spaces in antebellum Charleston where enslaved Africans experienced any semblance of equality.

Thus, Zion became one of the first spaces where freed African Americans of Charleston established political leadership and were formally educated. This was in part due to the work of the Adger family and Girardeau, whose efforts led to the building of this facility, whose work led to the education of many enslaved Africans, and whose ideology of expanded freedoms created ecclesiastical equality as well as development of an indigenous leadership base within the enslaved African community of Charleston. After the Civil War, the fact that the newly freed African American community was continuing all three of these principles in the space at Zion Church was not a coincidence.

Finally, the work of the old Presbyterian slave missionaries had a lasting impact into the twentieth century. In 1948 the ninetieth anniversary celebration of the African American Zion-Olive congregation remembered the work of Girardeau and Adger. Reverend Sandy David Thom produced a booklet and noted in the foreword that “We now come to this ninetieth anniversary with grateful hearts and souls overflowing with thanksgiving. This booklet is dedicated to the Honorable Past, the Prosperous Present and the Promising future.” He went on to remark, “Here we view the road long and dismal; the white friends that shepherded the slaves in the Second Presbyterian Church and later organized them into a separate Church.” Indeed, Thom recognized that out of this slave mission church, an autonomous African American congregation developed with an indigenous African American leadership. He thus remarked, “We can never know the great multitudes of lives that have been awakened . . . and must
never forget or be ashamed to 'Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged'.” Throughout the booklet, produced by a congregation of African Americans in the very midst of a segregated Jim Crow South, there was certainly a sense of thanksgiving and remembrance for the Christian Interracialism that occurred through “white friends” who ministered and worshipped alongside a large portion of the enslaved African community of Charleston.51

NOTES

Dr. W. Scott Poole provided constructive criticisms as well as insightful comments in the drafting of this paper for conference presentation. His careful guidance as a mentor and thesis director made this work a possibility. I would also like to thank Drs. Charles Reagan Wilson and Ted Ownby for their suggestions and continued support of my research. Drs. Sean Lucas and C.N. Willborn have been a bountiful source of knowledge on the topic. I also would like to thank everyone at the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture, particularly Geor gente Mayo, and Drs. W. Marvin Dulaney and Bernard Powers. I would especially like to thank Lois Simms, whose knowledge and insight on the topic was a source of inspiration.

1. Paul Harvey, Freedom's Coming: Religious Cultures and the Shaping of the South from the Civil War through the Civil Rights Era (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2005). The old hymn “We are Marching to Zion” is a song of hope, and it describes Zion as a place of beauty, of freedom and of rest. Part of the title of this article came from the old hymn, which was sung by the remnant of the Zion congregation at the merger of Zion and Olivet Presbyterian churches on 16 August 1969, according to the worship pamphlet in Lois Sims, A History of Zion, Olivet, and Zion-Olivet Churches 1850–1985 Charleston, South Carolina (Mercury MicroComputer Products: Library of Congress, 1987), 40.

2. There is a tremendous amount of literature on religion in the South and slave religion, but for works directly dealing with slave missionaries see John Boles, Masters and Slaves in the House of the Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740–1870 (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1988); Anne C. Loveland, Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order, 1800–1860 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980); and Janet Duitsman Cornelius, Slave Missions and the Black Church in the Antebellum South (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1999).

3. It should be noted here that while upwards of three thousand individuals would attend Zion’s services weekly, the actual membership (or individuals that made an official commitment to the church usually in the form of a ceremony) never reached these numbers. According to church roll books and minutes of session the membership was usually around five hundred to six hundred individuals. The author is also currently unaware of any connection that Zion Church had with the African American Freed People of Color community of Charleston prior to the Civil War. After the war, Zion was a gathering place for politicians, teachers and race leaders within the African American community, but prior to the war, Zion’s membership was mostly enslaved African Americans.

5. H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image But... Racism in Southern Religion, 1780–1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1972). Smith’s examination of southern theologians, pastors and missionaries throughout the nineteenth century provided an interesting comparative framework in which to place individuals like John L. Girardeau and John B. Adger. These individuals provided a stark contrast to Smith’s southern racists such as Theodore Weld, John Fletcher, Robert L. Dabney, and Thornton W. Stringfellow, who did not see a common humanity or future ecclesiastical equality with African Americans (or conceived of Africans as somehow degenerate).


7. Erskine Clarke mentioned that the author of “Many Citizens” was A.G. Magrath who became “judge of the United States District Court and would serve as governor of South Carolina during the last days of the war. As a fire-eating judge, he would declare that the foreign slave trade was not piracy when the slave ship *Wanderer* was captured illegally selling African slaves in Georgia.”


10. John Adger and several members of the influential Second Presbyterian Church responded to editorials and letters to the editor in the *Charleston Mercury*. They assured the community that there would be white oversight and control, and that a white session member would always be present at meetings of enslaved members.


15. *Minutes of Session of Zion Presbyterian Church, 1858–1869*, South Caroliniana Library, 5 June 1858. A Holiday Inn is now located where the old Zion Church was located on Calhoun Street in downtown Charleston. There is a small plaque in front of the hotel commemorating Zion Presbyterian Church.


17. Throughout the Old and New Testament, Zion was the residing place of God’s chosen people. Called the city of David in 2 Samuel 5:6–9, 2 Chronicles 5:2 and it was a figurative representation of God’s kingdom in Psalms 122:1, Hebrews 12:22 and Revelation 14:1. Enslaved Africans who named the church were undoubtedly influenced by these passages linking a physical “dwelling place” with God’s chosen people. John Boles also touched on this aspect.

The Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association 2010
in Masters and Slaves by referencing Katherine Dovak’s assertion that “for an enslaved people stolen from African homes and too often torn from ‘home’ slave communities by sale, home became an eschatological symbol celebrated in slave songs as a new Jerusalem, as Canaan’s shore, as promised land,” 174.

21. Ibid., 152.
24. Ibid., 14.
25. Ibid., 15.
27. Boles, Masters and Slaves, 14.
28. Zion-Olivet Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, Avery Research Center For African American History and Culture.
29. Boles, Masters and Slaves, 12.
30. Ibid., 9.
31. Clarke, Our Southern Zion, 158.
32. Ibid., 197.
34. John Berkley Grimball Collection, letter dated 27 November 1859. South Caroliniana Library.
35. Boles, Masters and Slaves, 14.
36. Ibid., 5, 17.
37. Blackburn Family Papers, letter from Paul Trescot to John Girardeau dated 27 July 1866, Microfilm Roll #166, South Caroliniana Library.
38. Clarke, Wastin’ Jacob, 178.
40. Ibid., 192.
41. Ibid., 193.

42. This section deals specifically with Paul teaching the Church in Galatia that there are no racial differences between Jew or Greek that can separate them from Christ and the promise of salvation. Girardeau applied the same logic arguing that African Americans and whites

The Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association 2010
now have the same civic status and therefore they should have the same ecclesiastical status. Girardeau argued that they should be able to join the ranks of the Presbyterian Church as members in equal standing.


44. Willborn, "Girardeau," 203.

45. Thomas Smyth Papers, Prefatory Notes, Second Presbyterian Church Papers: Records of Anson Street and Zion Church kept by Dr. Girardeau, Collection 24, box 5, folder 6, South Carolina Historical Society. The seven individuals include Paul Trescot, John B. Mitchell, Sam Robinson, John Warren, Jacky Morrison, William Price and William Spencer.

46. Willborn, "Girardeau," 203. W.F. Robertson also recorded "Charleston, July 6, 1869—At a meeting of the colored congregation of Zion Church, Charleston S.C., held this night and called for the purpose of considering the propriety of organizing them according to the plan recommended by the last General Assembly, the following resolution was adopted—Resolved—That this congregation accepts the plan of the Assembly and desires to be organized accordingly thereto."

47. Willborn, "Girardeau," 205.

48. Tennent Family Papers, letter from John L. Girardeau to Dr. Charles Tennent dated 6 June 1879, South Caroliniana Library.

49. Robertson, W.F., *Dr. Girardeau Devoted to Negro Work*, in *History of Zion Presbyterian Church*, Vertical File, Churches-Presbyterian-Zion-Olivet, Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture. Part of the legacy of Girardeau was that in April of 1878 the Records of the Charleston Presbytery show that "the Zion colored church, Calhoun Street, Charleston, S.C., is still open and religious services are conducted twice every Sabbath by a Presbyterian minister, a minister, however, who is not in connection with our Presbytery."


The Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association 2010