

By Charis Hunt and Latrisha Jackson, From *Soul Source* (July 2004)

Transformed from reporting the news to preaching the Good News, Angelo Henderson, a 20-year veteran journalist, is following in Paul's footsteps in a ministry of spreading God's message. His appearance was that of a corporate go-getter: Tailored shirt, mahogany desk, clean-cut, an air of expectancy and energy. Yet with hands lifted high and eyes closed, his spirit and love of the Lord is evident in his worship.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." — Luke 4:18-19 NKJV.

Transformed from reporting the news to preaching the Good News, Angelo Henderson, a 20-year veteran journalist, is following in Paul's footsteps in a ministry of spreading God's message.

His appearance was that of a corporate go-getter: Tailored shirt, mahogany desk, clean-cut, an air of expectancy and energy. Yet with hands lifted high and eyes closed, his spirit and love of the Lord is evident in his worship.

"Just meditate on His holiness ...Think about how holy he is," said Henderson. "He loves it when you talk to Him. Worship just changes the whole atmosphere."

Born in Louisville, Ky., Henderson has evolved from a striving young journalist into a renowned Pulitzer Prize winner and, most recently, the Rev. Angelo Henderson. Known widely as one of the voices of "Inside Detroit" with Mildred Gaddis on WCHB AM 1200, he has used his diverse gifts as a motivational speaker, radio host, entrepreneur and now an associate pastor under the Rev. Dr. Carlyle Fielding Stewart, III at Hope United Methodist Church (HUMC) in Southfield.

Overcoming years of self-doubt, criticism and racism, Henderson is no stranger to trusting God to sustain and order his steps even when they defy natural understanding. Editors told him to pursue another career; he persevered. The most mundane and undesirable assignments were given to him — in St. Petersburg, Fla., and in Louisville, Henderson gave voice to the ignored or untold stories that were usually never heard. When naysayers charged that he his bylines only appeared on the front page — whether at the Detroit News or at the Wall Street Journal —because he was African American, he won the Pulitzer Prize for his work on urban culture and race relations. Each step of his career, he saw God’s promises manifested in his life; what had been intended for his detriment had been to his benefit.

“It was heavy. It made me move from the driver’s seat all the way to the back seat. Through prayer and communication with the Lord – I gained strength,” said Henderson.

But it was when he hit what should have been the pinnacle of his career, winning the Pulitzer, that Henderson began to sense that God was, as the gospel song goes, “trying to tell him something.”

“The Lord began radically changing my passions,” he recalled. Once ignited by crafting news stories, Henderson was increasingly drawn away from the news desk to fulfill speaking engagements. Confused and dismayed, he admitted, “I found it harder and harder to write.” At the same time, more and more of his speeches were, one by one, transitioning from journalistic education to spiritual exhortation.

Henderson heard God calling him to a different level of service.

He enrolled in, and in 2002, earned a diploma in Urban Ministry from the Ecumenical Theological Seminary of Detroit. He started working in the Worship Department at Hartford Memorial Baptist Church, and later served as a teacher and worship leader under his spiritual father, the Rev. Dr. Charles Adams. The same day he was told of the Pulitzer, he was ordained a deacon at Hartford. In December 2003, Dr. Adams would ordain Henderson as an elder, and the full-time ministry of the Rev. Henderson began.

“Behold I have refined thee ... I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.” —Isaiah 48:10

And again, when God's path defied logic, Henderson was clear in his steps. Although he had returned to the Detroit News as a special projects reporter, that was not what God had in mind. "Today," said Henderson, "it's about Jesus and journalism."

"I'm not confused about this thing," he continued. "Every speaking engagement I have ... every opportunity I have has nothing to do with me. I know what I'm not. But I'm humbled because God can trust me and He knows I'm crazy enough to do exactly what He asks of me."

Henderson noted, "The Pulitzer Prize just gave me an audience and credibility to talk about the Lord. Today I'm working harder than I did when I was a novice journalist. God doesn't bless what I think, He blesses what I do. So I must be about the doing of my father's business by putting Him first."

Remaining faithful to his career and uncompromising to his call is the challenge now. Though the media is often branded as liberal and having an aversion for the word of God (or the name of Jesus), Henderson has a zeal for sharing his revelation and personal relationship with the Lord, whether it is in corporate climates or church congregations.

"My mission is simply to give hope to the hopeless, specifically in the corporate arena. There is hope in the Lord — a blessed hope," said Henderson. "With a heart to motivate, educate, inspire, having suffered the loss of hope through many of life's disappointments, despair and dreams deferred, I learned that my goal should never have been to want things — but to want Him more."

His contributions have been invaluable as a part of the city often politically incorrect watchdog (the media). Said "Inside Detroit" co-host Mildred Gaddis, "Angelo is one of the most brilliant men I know. He knows Detroit and he knows politics." Facing issues that can divide a nation, she appreciates Henderson's grace and his sense of humor. "He doesn't tread where others go. He's not to be boxed in by anyone's boundaries."

Henderson feels that through the bold commentary of "Inside Detroit," he can speak the truth and expound freedom. "The Bible says the truth shall make you free. We're blessed to be free

in Detroit on WCHB. I believe we're like Esther, we're in this city for such a time as this — and it's a time of correction."

In addition, Henderson has launched Angelo Ink!, a media consulting firm that specializes in motivational speaking, media services, training for journalists (www.angeloink.com), is an associate editor of RealTimes Newspapers, the nation's largest African American-owned newspaper conglomerate including over five newspapers, and is responsible for worship, vision and emerging ministries at HUMC, cited as one of the largest and fastest-growing African American congregations in that denomination. Henderson is kept grounded and supported by his family, wife Felicia, an editor at the Detroit News, and son, Angelo Grant.

"Seven months ago, I never would have thought this was on my agenda," he mused. "Sometimes it's still difficult for me to believe that this is what I'm doing. 'To whom much is given much is required.' 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me' and 'eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things which the Lord has prepared for them who love Him.' Those three truths — that's how I live my life."

His all-consuming drive is to fulfill God's purpose for his life. Henderson believes that his increasing opportunities are only the result of obedience. "Only when you complete God's small assignments, can He give you bigger and bigger ones.

"This is all a faith walk — and I'm keeping my eyes on Jesus."

Charis Hunt is a freelance writer in metro Detroit. She can be reached at charishunt@yahoo.com.

Latrisha Jackson is a freelance writer/editor in Detroit. She can be reached at Ms_jackson212@yahoo.com

From *Soul Source* (July 2004)
www.ministrymarketingsolutions.com for more info on Soul Source