



ROSA LEE CLARK

Christianity
with its sleeves
rolled up

IT is my good fortune to serve as a nurse in one of the American Church Institute for Negroes schools, St. Paul's Polytechnic Institute, Lawrenceville, Va. The motivating force in my selecting nursing as a church career was the opportunity to serve mankind.

I was born in the deep South, where the economic conditions of the Negro and white races were at their lowest ebb. It was there I saw my people suffer from the lack of proper medical care and attention. I recall the plight of an old lady who had taken a fall and had a possible fracture of the right arm. She was in intense pain for several hours because there was no one who could give her first aid until the doctor arrived. I began to ask God to direct me in a way that I might become an instrument in His hands, that I might alleviate the suffering of my people.

The fact that my parents were poor delayed my entering high school. I was able, however, to attend Fort Valley Normal and Industrial School (now Fort Valley State College) in Fort Valley, Ga., and Voorhees School and Junior College, Denmark, S. C. Through the kindness and interest of close friends, who were impressed with my sincere desire to serve humanity through nursing, provisions were made for me to enter St. Agnes' Training School for Nurses in Raleigh, N. C.

Though my training was not spent without some moments of discouragement, I can now look back over my three years at St. Agnes' as a marvelous experience which prepared me to meet the many emergencies which arise in nursing.

About three days before the end of my training, I began to wonder when and where I might be placed. Then, one bright, sunny October morning, I was called to the superintendent of nurses' office. I naturally became very nervous and excited, because I didn't know what she wanted. She said, "They are looking for a school nurse at St. Paul's School. Would you like to go and have an interview with the president?" Of course, I was very happy. I got dressed as quickly as possible and motored to Lawrenceville with one of the interns at St. Agnes'.

I was taken to the president's office for an interview. When he told me, "We are happy to employ you," I saw my dream come true. I was to be a nurse to serve others.

Before leaving the campus, I was shown the Loulie Taylor Memorial Hospital, which has a bed capacity of seventeen. I was deeply impressed with its unusual setup.

Upon my return to St. Agnes' I told my friends I had been employed and would be leaving immediately. As soon as Sister Anna

Mary, the matron of nurses, heard of my good fortune, she was overjoyed and expressed her deep satisfaction in knowing that I had found the opportunity to serve for which I had yearned.

When I began at St. Paul's, I found that the 1935 school term had been in session for several weeks without a nurse. This, of course, had added extra duties to the dean of women's program. As soon as the students learned of my presence, all types of aches and pains began to develop.

Here at St. Paul's Polytechnic Institute, I found that opportunity I had been seeking. The locality not only offers a challenge to serve as a college nurse, but it also offers a challenge and an opportunity to serve among the people in the community and in the rural district.

My work at St. Paul's includes physical examinations of our college and elementary students, Wassermann tests, chest X-ray clinics, and daily treatments. I find great happiness in my work administering medications and treatments and constantly observing and caring for hospitalized patients. When I see the joy and radiance of one who is convalescing with a healthy outlook on life, it makes me feel very happy.

In addition to my routine service, I assist

with monthly health programs for our entire student body. I give talks on health from time to time at churches, schools, clubs, and various organizations in the rural district. I also teach a class in home nursing and serve as co-chairman during the tuberculosis Christmas seal and cancer campaigns.

In case of medical emergency, Dr. Clifton F. Nelson, our college physician, and I are always ready and willing to render help to the needy and suffering. Our service would be impossible without God's help. We are especially blessed here at St. Paul's with a deeply religious atmosphere which has been nurtured since the days of our founder, the Ven. James Solomon Russell.

Quite often, I am called out during the late hours of the night. One wintry night around twelve-thirty, for example, one of our male students came to the hospital bleeding profusely with a scalp wound. He had struck his head on the end of a broken mirror which hung over his bed. Before I could admit him, which only took a minute, the upper portion of his body was saturated with blood. I applied pressure to the injured part until Dr. Nelson, who had been out in the country seeing another seriously ill patient, arrived. Every effort was exerted to keep up the student's morale. We were able to control the

hemorrhage by means of several sutures and after a few days he was able to resume his studies. Can there be any greater joy than that which comes from serving others? We have saved many lives in the community and rural district when the people could not receive medical attention elsewhere.

Any person going into nursing or any other vocation, should do so only if she is willing to give untiringly of the very best of herself. This means willingness to serve beyond the call of duty. She should be a Christian and have faith in God; she should like people; she should have patience; she should be optimistic; and she should always keep service in mind.

Every individual must have a philosophy of life. This philosophy must be well defined in the heart of the individual. There are many interpretations of nursing, but I have chosen as my philosophy, Christianity with its sleeves rolled up.

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