

# REFLECTIONS

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Every morning was a Happy Birthday, another day of thanks for waking up. Every day was another day of gaining on it, a day closer to gaining his crown. Every sermon was begun with Psalms 121:1-2 "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord".

On October 4, 1917 in Caseyville, Mississippi a baby boy was born to the union of Beulah Dora and Willie Phillip Cooke, Sr. This little boy was named Willie Phillip Cooke after his father. He was one of seven siblings, all of whom preceded him to glory.

He accepted Christ at the tender age of five and united with the St. Paul Baptist Church in Union Church, Mississippi. He was baptized by his father, the late Reverend Willie P. Cooke, Sr. A special anointing was upon him even at the age of five. He later joined the St. James Missionary Baptist Church under the pastorate of the late Reverend P.T. Thaddison in Brookhaven, Mississippi. Early in life it was evident that he was endowed with a humble, caring and loving nature that would set him apart as a servant of Christ. His genuine faith to which he committed himself as a young child remained throughout his life.

Reverend Cooke received his elementary education in the rural area of Union Church, Mississippi under the instruction of his mother who was a school teacher. He received his high school education from Alexander High School in Brookhaven, Mississippi. He studied electrical engineering from the American School of Electricity of Chicago, Illinois and worked as an electrician at the Cannon Electric Company in Brookhaven before moving to the state of Oregon.

Upon leaving the South he remembered waving and saying "goodbye" to cotton and hoped he would never see any again. However, to his surprise and disappointment there was so much cotton in the fields of Bakersfield, California that there were even cotton gins in the fields. He was ever so delighted to be heading to Oregon.

After moving to Oregon, he was employed as the first African American licensed electrical contractor in the state of Oregon. He later established his own Auto Body and Fender business under the name of The Cooke Car Clinic in Pendleton, Oregon. After moving to Sacramento he was employed as an electrical motor winder with the Wismer & Becker Electrical Co. Prior to his calling to the pastorate of Shiloh Baptist Church, he attended the Conroe Normal Industrial College of Texas obtaining a Bachelor of Theology. He also attended the Andrew Baptist College & Seminary of Sacramento, CA. where an honorary Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him. The many awards and honors bestowed upon him over the years are too numerous to mention.

After relocating to Sacramento he united with the Shiloh Baptist Church in 1952. The late Reverend Joseph Williams was pastor. As a new member he soon exercised his gift

as a diligent and ardent Bible teacher. He was licensed December 16, 1953 and ordained November 11, 1956 in Shiloh Baptist Church. February 2, 1957 he was called to shepherd the flock at Shiloh as pastor. His leadership of the people whom God entrusted to him was one of love, compassion, humility and tender caring. He preached, taught and build for much of the church was built by his own hands. Under his leadership ground was broken April 13, 1958 and construction on the present building begun in June of 1958. The new edifice was completed and dedicated October 13, 1963 with the mortgage paid off. After twenty six continuous years of faithful and devoted service he retired in 1983 and was conferred Pastor Emeritus. After retirement he served as Interim Pastor for a number of churches in California including three additional years in his home church, Shiloh Baptist.

Reverend Cooke married the late Mary Alice Bryant in 1940. To this union two sons were adopted, Willie and David. Mary Alice and Willie preceded him in transition. In 1969 he married Alveda Davis May. The completion of this union was the adoption of each others' minor sons. Alveda adopted David and he adopted Amos and Kenneth. He was a dedicated and loving husband, father and grandfather, with a quick wit and humor.

Many loving memories are left to be cherished by his loving and devoted wife of 43 years, Alveda; their three sons, Amos Cooke, Kenneth Cooke and David Cooke; three grandchildren, Myshawn Cooke, Aletta Cooke and Sean Cooke; one great grand child, Virgil McClendon; many loving nieces and nephews and other precious family members and dear friends; his sons in the ministry and their families; and his entire loving and caring Shiloh family.

### TO KNOW HIM WAS TO LOVE HIM!

