

Instrument of God's Perfection

Julia A.J. Foote was the fourth child born to devout Christian parents in Schenectady, New York, in 1823. When she was 10, her parents, who were former slaves, sent her to live with and work for a wealthy white couple.

This couple acted as Julia's patrons and enrolled her in an integrated country school, where she received a basic education. In 1836 she rejoined her family.

At age 15, Julia accepted Jesus as her Savior and joined an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church. Although she was filled with the joy that accompanied her conversion, Julia felt defeated in her Christian life.

She saved enough money to attend a Christian school for African-American children. But for unknown reasons, the school closed after three weeks. Devastated, Julia thought she would never find the answers she sought.

Soon God sent an elderly couple from her church to teach Julia about the "second blessing" (baptism in the Holy Spirit). Through prayer and her study of God's Word, Julia's hunger was finally assuaged.

In her late teens, Julia married George Foote and moved to Boston. Early on, she spoke out against women preachers.

Julia had received two visions concerning her calling, but she ignored God's bidding because she feared the rejection of men. But after prayerful communion with the Lord, she was led to obey His calling on her life.

Julia's public preaching stirred controversy within her

community. Both her parents and her husband opposed her newly chosen path.

When her ministering led to excommunication from her church, Julia found strength in Christ and continued preaching the doctrine of holiness through sanctification. She stood in the face of rejection and ridicule and held fast to her teachings on liberation from sin and total identification with the Lord.

Julia never thought of herself as a social reformer. However, her zeal to preach the sufficiency of the blood of Jesus led her to speak against both racism and religious sexism.

As a Methodist holiness preacher and evangelist, she traveled a total of more than 50 years, speaking at churches, revivals and camp meetings throughout the United States and Canada.

Julia Foote preached wherever a door was opened—to whites, blacks, men and women, in churches, meeting halls and in homes. At 71, she became the first ordained female deacon in the AME Zion Church. Five years later, the denomination ordained her as their second female elder, and she continued in ministry until her death on November 22, 1900. *

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