African-American Women Lead the Way as Missionaries in Africa

Answering the call to mission in Africa issued by Bishop William Taylor, three African-American women, beginning in 1887, were among those whose faith and tenacity ensured the growth and success of new missions begun by Taylor in Angola, Congo and Liberia.

**Susan Angeline Collins** was born in North Carolina and attended Upper Iowa University for Normal Training. She was the university’s first African-America student. In 1875, while working as a laundress in the Dakota Territory, she noticed among clothes wrapped in newspapers an ad for mission training in Chicago. In 1887, responding to Bishop Taylor’s call, she went as a missionary first to the Congo and later Angola where, in Quéssua, she established a school for girls. Altogether she served more than 30 years.

**Martha Drummer** was born in Georgia. Her pastor recognized her abilities as a youth and encouraged her to attend Clark College in Atlanta (now Clark Atlanta University), followed by the Methodist Women’s Training School for Deaconesses in Boston. In 1906, Drummer went as a nurse deaconess to the Quéssua Mission in Angola. Her nursing skills soon became well known. When she arrived, she discovered 38 children with dangerous fevers. Drummer lost only one child. Drummer worked at Quéssua for 20 years.

**Anna E. Hall**, also born in Georgia, similarly attended Clark College where she first expressed the desire to serve as a missionary. In 1906, soon after training at the New England Deaconess Training School in Boston as its first African-American student, she left to serve as a missionary in Monrovia, Liberia, teaching the Kru people. She later worked at the Garraway Mission directing the Julia A. Stewart Memorial Girls Home and School. For her contributions, the Republic of Liberia knighted her in 1956.