

Calvin B. Rock

Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*
May 6, 2018



Calvin Bovell Rock's life has been one of dedicated and varied leadership service to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A third-generation Adventist and native of New York, New York, Rock's consistent focus on the righteousness of Christ and his belief in the efficacy of the Word of God have been reflected in his sermons and actions. Through his service as a pastor, religious educator, evangelist, church administrator, author and ethicist, Rock has demonstrated exemplary leadership, interpersonal and outreach skills.

After receiving his BA in religion from Oakwood College, Rock obtained an MA in sociology from the University of Detroit and a DMin and PhD from Vanderbilt University, both in religious ethics. In his 63 years of active ministry, Rock has pastored in Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, Michigan and New York. He has also lectured extensively about the topics of diversity, leadership and pastoral ethics. Rock conducted major evangelistic campaigns in Romania, Russia, Zimbabwe, Ghana, England and Kenya. His church-related travels carried him to a total of 73 countries.

In 1971, Rock became the eighth president of Oakwood College, now Oakwood University. During his 14 years of service, he helped to facilitate increases in enrollment from 572, the year prior to his inauguration, to 1,440; additions in faculty doctorates, majors and graduates; expansion of foreign student enrollment; construction and renovation of facilities; and establishment of "Town and Gown" relationships.

Following his time at Oakwood, Rock was elected as a general vice president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. His services there were marked by his chairing a number of the church's most difficult issues. His worldwide assignments during his tenure from 1985–2002, included chairing the boards of Loma Linda University and Hospital and Oakwood College. He was a member of the Andrews University board for 12 years. After retiring in 2002, Rock pastored for 11 years in the Las Vegas and Phoenix areas.

Recognized for decades as a spokesman for social justice, Rock has chaired the board of Operation ReachBack, Inc: The Association of Black Seventh-day Adventist Professionals since 1994. This group, which he helped found, has provided needed social services to numerous communities in the U.S. and served 13 African countries with provisions such as medical assistance, evangelistic meetings, water wells and support for a number of orphanages and educational institutions.

A prolific writer, Rock's ninth book, "Protest and Progress: Black Seventh-day Adventist Leadership and the Push for Parity," a landmark historical/philosophical work on race relations within the North American Division, was released this month by Andrews University Press. He has also written numerous studies in the areas of moral philosophy as well as social views of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. From 1988 to 2001, he contributed monthly to the column "Faith Alive" in the Adventist Review and has had articles published in other magazines including Spectrum, Ministry, The Adventist Laymen, and Message. Rock is especially grateful to God for his single parent mother, the late Eva Bradford-Rock, whose sacrifices and encouragement assured for him a Christian education through college and whose examples of courage and servanthood instilled an ethic that has lasted a lifetime. He currently lives in Las Vegas, Nevada, with Clara, his wife of 65 years. They are blessed to have three daughters, four grandsons, one granddaughter and four great-grandchildren, one boy and three girls.

For his lifelong commitment to exemplary leadership and ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and his example of service to communities in need, Andrews University takes great pleasure in honoring Calvin Bovell Rock with the degree, Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*.