

*Oh, I know the Lord, I know the Lord,
I know the Lord has laid his hands on me.
Oh, I know the Lord, I know the Lord,
I know the Lord has laid his hands on me.*

The NATIONAL TUBERCULOSIS ASSOCIATION
cooperating with Tuskegee Institute
National Urban League
Works Progress Administration,
U.S. Veterans Administration
presents

LET MY PEOPLE LIVE

*

(...)

I know the Lord has laid his hands on me.

(...)

I know the Lord has laid his hands on me.

*Oh, I know the Lord, I know the Lord,
I know the Lord has laid his hands on me.*

Cast
Rex Ingram
Peggy Howard
Merrit Smith
Erosthine Coles
Robert Anderson
Christine Johnson
Jackson Burnside
Choir – William L. Dawson

Did ever you see the like before?
I know the Lord has laid his hands on me.
King Jesus preaching to the poor.
I know the Lord has laid his hands on me.

Directed by
EDGAR ULMER
Dramatic Assistants: S.E. Walker, Edward Lawson
Camera: William Miller
Sound: Nelson Minnerly

Produced by
MOTION PICTURE SERVICE CORPORATION

Oh, I know the Lord, I know the Lord,

*I know the Lord has laid his hands on me.
Oh, I know the Lord, I know the Lord,
I know the Lord has laid his hands on me.*

“Before we go to our classes, I want to say, as your student medical advisor, one final word about tuberculosis. We, as Negroes, seem to be particularly susceptible to this disease. The reason is: the great majority of our homes are poor, and our work hard, and we don’t have money to get treated when we should. Now if you have any of the symptoms of tuberculosis such as coughing, unusual fatigue, a loss of weight, go at once to a physician for an examination. Tuberculosis can be cured, but only if treatment is started soon enough.

- Thank you, Dr Gordon. Thus we close our Negro health week service.”

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*Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt’s land,
Tell old Pharaoh: Let my people go.
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt’s land,
Tell old Pharaoh: Let my people go.*

“Hello?

- Hello, George? This is Mary. Yes, your sister. George, mom is very sick. The doctor says you’d better come right home.

- What’s the matter?

- My mother is very sick. She has tuberculosis. She’s had it for years, but she’s never seen a doctor. I have to go home.

- [May this help you.]

- Thanks. I won’t forget this.”

*

*Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry home.*

I looked over Jordan and what did I see?

Coming for to carry home.

A band of angels coming after me,

Coming for to carry home.

“George! George!

- Mary!

*

*Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee!
E’en though it be a cross that raiseth me,
Still all my song shall be
Nearer...*

“The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.”

*

“The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.” But oh Lord, let my people live. Come in, sister.

- It’s about Mama, reverend Jackson.

- She was a good woman, Miss Baxter.

- She had tuberculosis. *Consumption*, she called it. I’m scared, reverend Jackson. They say it runs in the family. If Mama had it, then I have it too.

- No. I don’t know that it means that at all. Some people think that tuberculosis can be passed down from mother to child. That’s not true. I’m not a doctor, but I’ve read a lot about tuberculosis. It comes from a germ that’s passed along by contact of one person with another.

- But I have the same symptoms mama had. I have a cough, I feel tired like she did all the time and... I can’t eat.

- That’s not so good.

- But what can I do?

- You be smart. You go see a doctor. If you can’t afford that, go to a clinic. The doctor will test you and tell you whether or not you have tuberculosis. If he says no, that’s fine. If he says yes, do exactly what he tells you. But don’t let anyone tell you that tuberculosis can’t be cured.

- Alright. I’ll go to see Dr Gordon tomorrow. Good evening, Reverend [Jake]. Thank you.”

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“Hello, Mary. Where are you going?

- To Dr Gordon’s.

- I noticed. You got the same thing your mother had, ain’t you?

- I’m not sure, Minnie. I’ve got to find out.

- Listen, honey. Ain’t no use you fooling yourself. You know you got it.

- Well, I have to get treated.

- You going in there? Girl, ain’t no doctor in the world can cure you no tuberculosis.

- Well, who can?

- My grandma can. You see, she makes this special kind of a tea adding herbs and roots and stuff, and before you know it, your consumption’s gone. She don’t charge half as much as this doctor does neither.

- My mother believed in that. Roots, herbs and teas. I’ve got to see Dr Gordon.

- Oh, come one, girl!”

*

“I’m getting better, George. Dr Gordon said I was so sensible to come to see him so early. George, how about you? Of course, you weren’t with mama as much as I was, but you might have caught it too.

- Well, I’m alright.

- You may feel alright. George, why don’t you run over and let Dr Gordon look you over? He’s a real doctor. Promise me you will.

- Well, maybe I will.”

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“Well, I don’t hear anything. But we’re not through yet. Sit down, young man.

- What’s that for, doctor?

- I’m gonna put a drop of this solution into your arm. It’s called “tuberculine”. Now, in two days, if this part where I made the injection is raised and reddened, it means that at one time in your life, tuberculosis germs got into your body.

- It didn’t hurt a bit, doc.”

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“How does it look, doctor?”

- Positive.

- Does that mean I have tuberculosis?

- No, but I’m going to send you to a hospital to have an X-ray made.”

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“Here’s a picture of your chest. And that spot there is what we call a primary tubercle. It means that the germs got into your lungs at one time. Maybe long ago. But you were healthy and your body took care of it.

- Jee, I’m glad to hear that.

- What you’ve got to do though is to keep your good health. Don’t use up too much of your energy, either in work or play, or staying out late at night. Eat well-balanced meals and get plenty of fresh air. If the danger sign of fatigue, coughing, loss of weight or pain in the chest appear, don’t fail to come in and see me.

- Thanks, doctor. I’m certainly glad to know I haven’t got it. Oh, how is Mary getting along?

- Well, she’s getting the very best of care in the sanatorium and she’ll be well pretty soon now.

- Jee, that’s swell.

- Now you see why it’s so important that tuberculosis be discovered early. Every young person from 15 to 25 should have a tuberculin test and an X-ray. You see, they may find, as you did, that they need only rest and care, or they may find that their lungs like your sister’s need treatment right away. The quicker they know and the sooner they get treated, the better their chances are to get well. This is especially true of our race. Many of us wait too long before starting treatment. We must teach our people that tuberculosis is curable, and we must show them that every person with tuberculosis is a menace to his family if his case isn’t put under a doctor at once.

- Thank you, doctor. You made me see things in a different light.”

*

¹(...) *kings*

For ever and ever

Hallelujah, hallelujah

And Lord of lords

For ever and ever

Hallelujah, hallelujah

King of kings

For ever and ever

Hallelujah, hallelujah

And Lord of lords

For ever and ever

Hallelujah, hallelujah

King of kings

For ever and ever

Hallelujah, hallelujah

And Lord of lords

King of kings

And Lord of lords

And he shall reign, and he shall reign, and he shall reign

And he shall reign for ever and ever

¹ Chœur de l’Alleluia du Messie de Georg Friedrich Haendel (1741)

*King of kings
For ever and ever
And Lord of lords
Hallelujah, hallelujah
And he shall reign for ever
For ever and ever
King of kings
And Lord of lords
King of kings
And Lord of lords
And he shall reign for ever and ever
King of kings
And Lord of lords
Hallelujah, hallelujah
Hallelujah, hallelujah
Hallelujah!*

“I feel as though I were right there.

- It's too bad, Mary, you couldn't go down to see George graduate. But just think how lucky you are.
You are well and have a good job.

- Yes. I wish Mama were here. I almost think I hear George's voice.”

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THE END

Transcription : Chloé BOURGOGNE