

'Co-signers' to meet July 2-4 in Phila.

From July 2 through July 4, a convention will be held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to co-sign the American Declaration of Independence in the city where it was first signed in 1776. The chairman of the steering committee for the initiative, Rev. James L. Bevel, defined the purpose as follows: "With the right of citizenship and the sovereignty of our nation being undermined from within and without, it is imperative that we as citizens purify ourselves and clarify our Declaration of Independence. The fundamental truth captured in the Declaration of Independence is universal.

"As the 1960s civil rights movement asserted these principles and broke down the walls of injustice, in the face of today's national and international chaos and crises, we must reassert those principles of the Declaration of Independence once again. The idea is to have thousands of people descend upon Philadelphia, for a mass co-signing of the Declaration of Independence on Sunday, July 4, 1993, at church services throughout the area."

The conference is sponsored by the Baptist Ministers Conference and the AME Preacher Meeting of Philadelphia, the International Civil Rights Movement, the Student Non-Violent Constitutional Committee, Students for Educational and Economic Development, and the Schiller Institute, among others.

Co-chairmen of the steering committee are the Rev. Marshall L. Shepard, attorney Almanina Barbour, and Amelia Platts Boynton Robinson. The executive director is Dennis Speed. It can be reached by telephone at (215) 386-5930.

Concert to honor Anderson

The weekend's events are slated to begin on Friday, July 2 with a concert honoring contralto Marian Anderson. A Philadelphia native and African-American, Anderson died on April 8, 1993 at the age of 96. Anderson's entire life was a witness to the basic philosophy of the Declaration of Independence, explained one of the organizers of the convention, for she overcame fierce racial discrimination to win recognition as one of the supreme artists of the century in performing European classical music.

On Saturday, July 3, seminars and workshops will be held on "the Foundation, Principle, Method, and Goal of the American Revolution." Later on the same day, a "Personal

Integrity National Sovereignty Awards Ceremony" will take place, at which men and women whose lives have reflected the principles of the Declaration of Independence will be honored.

Then, on Sunday, July 4, the co-signing of the Declaration of Independence will take place in all of the churches in the City of Philadelphia which are participating in the convention. All freedom-loving Americans are asked to co-sign the Declaration of Independence and thus to reaffirm the principle of "justice and freedom for all."

A convention rally will be held from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Drexel University's playing field, where signatures gathered on behalf of the principle of government of, for, and by the people will be presented. The steering committee will also attempt to obtain a meeting with President Clinton, Nelson Mandela, and President F.W. De Klerk of South Africa, who have been invited to Philadelphia on July 4 by the city.

Plans are also under way to have parallel events in other cities. Parallel Co-Signers' Conventions will take place in Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco on June 26, Seattle on June 29, in Houston on July 2, and in Richmond, Virginia on July 3 (featuring Nancy Spannaus, candidate for governor and Rev. Robert N. Jones, a prominent local leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference). Related activities are planned in Nashville, Birmingham, southeastern Oklahoma, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh.

'A more perfect union'

The organizers of the convention say they intend to make the Declaration of Independence a living document capable of laying the basis for making "a more perfect union," not only of the United States, but also of the international community of sovereign nation-states. They expect that one of the most important questions to be discussed in the seminars at the convention will be the notion of man as created in the living image of God and the notion of natural law which derives from it, both of which are expressed in the first four paragraphs of the Declaration.

If the Founding Fathers appealed to "Nature's God" to support their right to declare independence, why is that same God now being driven from our public institutions? ask the convention organizers. If our Founding Fathers appealed to the "Laws of Nature" to defend their right to create an independent sovereign nation with "separate and equal station" among the powers of the Earth, why is this principle not applicable today in respect to all nations? If the policies of such institutions as the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations have become destructive to the inalienable rights of man, why should these institutions not be abolished? If it is the right of a people to organize its powers in such a form "as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness," why should Third World nations be forced to submit to supranational dismantling of their economies?