

THE STAR OF ZION

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Already I am readjusting my spending habits and taking action on self care mentally, physically, and spiritually. I am opening up and communicating with the understanding there are others who have been through on going the same or similar experiences.”



“It exceeded my expectations. I have so much information to work with I am so grateful for this program. From self care to spiritual care is exactly what I received.”



“In an abbreviated time we gained so much valuable knowledge and real life applications to secure a future for ourselves and our families.”




Learning “How to manage my personal funds to support ministry without stressing myself out.”

PASTORS, WE CARE.


Submitted by Rev. Julius Walls, Jr. COO

The A.M.E. Zion Church has launched a new initiative to C.A.R.E. for our pastors. C.A.R.E. stands Concern, Action, Resources, and Education. This program, which is guided by our Board of Bishops and operated by our General Officers Team, provides not just concern but action in the way of resources and education. Because we C.A.R.E., we are giving away over \$700,000 in grants to pastors serving in the United States and provide education and mentoring to pastors serving across the United States. Eventually we hope to provide context-sensitive instruction to our sisters and brothers pastoring overseas.

The program began on January 31, 2023 with a 2-day in-person conference at the Hampton Inn in Charlotte, NC. Travel, hotel, and meals were provided at no cost to the pastors who attended. The pastors are receiving instruction in 20 modules/classes in personal finance, including budgeting, taxes, and wills, health insurance, church finance, and the theology surrounding finance amongst other personal development courses. The General Officers, who are subject experts in their area of service, provide instruction during the courses in this program and also provide mentorship to the participants. Supplementing the General Officers and providing additional expertise are an outside financial services company and a certified public accountant.



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The Star of Zion is an award-winning newspaper and journalistic media organization, published by The A.M.E. Zion Church as its official organ since 1876.

Being guided by the core values of truth, faith, and love, the Star seeks to raise the consciousness of readers with news that is current, relevant, and dependable.


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★ The Star of Zion ★

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Article/Ad Submission Deadline Dates

April 2023 Issue.....	March 15, 2023
May 2023 Issue.....	April 15, 2023
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August 2023 Issue.....	July 15, 2023

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To get into the program pastors had to apply. Their applications were evaluated without any identifying information provided to the evaluators. The pastors had to commit to attending the in-person conference and all 20 modules, meet with an outside certified financial counselor (all conversations are confidential), meet with a mentor on a weekly basis, and have their congregation participate in the program. Each pastor that successfully completes the program, in addition to leaving the program with an enhanced financial skillset, will receive a grant for \$8,000-\$10,000.

The genesis of the C.A.R.E. for the Pastor program began in the Fall of 2021 when the Board of Bishops and the General Officers Team had a conversation concerning the plight of many of our pastors who are struggling with their personal finances. The Board of Bishops and General Officers both acknowledged that many of the pastors were in this condition in large part because of the social economic conditions of their context. We also acknowledged that many pastors had not been sufficiently prepared to manage their churches finances and their personal finances. The Board of Bishops and the General Officers, through this C.A.R.E. for Pastor program are taking steps to shift this dynamic.

We applied for and received a \$1 million grant from the Lilly endowment under their initiative for Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders. Guided by the Board of Bishops, who are providing oversight for this initiative, the General Officers began an outreach to pastors hosting town halls via zoom and online surveys via SurveyMonkey. The information was used to develop the curriculum of the 20 modules that are now being offered to the 1st cohort of 25 pastors. It is our plan to work intensely with up to a total of 100 pastors, cull our learnings from their feedback and then offer these teachings to the whole denomination. We may not be able to offer financial grants to everyone, however we can begin to shift the dynamic of our economically challenged pastors, better preparing them for their future as leaders in their home and the church.

Stay tuned for more C.A.R.E. initiatives. We are currently working on 4 new initiatives: Nurturing Children through Worship and Prayer, Christian Parenting, Thriving Congregations, and Compelling Preaching. Within the next couple of weeks we will also have an exciting announcement regarding FREE financial counseling for all A.M.E. Zion ordained ministers and their families.

CORRECTION NOTICE

The February 2023 issue of the Star of Zion reported that Coach Jerret Fite was the Clinton College Esports coach. As of February 1, 2023 he has resigned from this position and Mrs. Kendra Smith has been hired as the new Esports Head Coach for Clinton. Additionally, we neglected to publish that this article was submitted by Mr. Zion Shoulders, Sports Editor, The Star of Zion.

MUSINGS FROM AN A.M.E. ZION WIDOW'S WINDOW – J. FAIRBANKS LEACH, “SERVING UNTIL EMANCIPATED”

Submitted by Debra Chappelle-Polk
Zion Spotlight Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: Zionspotlight@starofzion.org

New York, NY

February 2023 - It is often stated that the African American story should not be whittled down to 28 days in February, the designated Black History Month. The same is true (perhaps even more so) of Women's History Month. Women should be celebrated, honored, exalted 365 days of the year 24/7. From Eve to Mary to Sojourner to Harriet, women have played an integral part in virtually every aspect of society. The role of women in the church, particularly the Black Church has been impactful. It can be said without exaggeration that the Black Church owes its survival to the enormous contributions and sacrifices of women. J. Fairbanks Leach is one such woman who has been serving God and the Church for over 82 years.

In January 2023, Mrs. Leach contacted the Star of Zion requesting coverage of the commemorative service The International Ministers' Spouses and Widow(ers) Fellowship, (IMSWF) was hosting celebrating the life of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As Spotlight Editor, I was assigned the event. I contacted Mrs. Leach who provided me with information about the IMSWF and the MLK Commemorative Service. I was impressed with her manner of speaking, her thoroughness and her delightful sense of humor.



As if God directed, our conversations took on a more personal tone. J. Fairbanks Leach, as she likes to be addressed, shared tidbits of her life as a lifelong Zionite. Again, I was impressed and asked if I could tell her story as part of the Spotlight feature for Women's Month. I provided her with a list of topics, i.e., the role of Black Church in today's society, role of women in the Church, etc. She agreed and chose to write about "her parsonage experiences." She candidly stated, "Admittedly, I am very opinionated and could wax eloquently on all of the other topics but was not led to do so. I am ultra-verbose, and I thank God for this here ma-chine keeping count for me. As long as I've been around it is very difficult to be concise about my activities and really difficult to be prim and proper in talking about myself." She shared with me an amusing story about her father and another preacher: "Daddy asked him on-the-spot to preach one Sunday night. Upon his arrival, an 'academician' in the choir poked my daddy on the shoulder and said, 'Reverend, don't ask him to preach, his language is atrocious.' Daddy didn't cotton to women poking him in the shoulder and telling him what to do. So, he asked the little preacher to preach. He replied, 'Rebben, Ah's do the bes' ah kin'. Well, Sistah Girl got so happy during the sermon, she tossed her hymnbook and it went to the front row somewhere."

J. Fairbanks Leach is 94 years young and is "the artifact of the Rev. E. Johnson and Mattie Pearl McKay, born in the Fair Promise A.M.E. Zion Church parsonage on Monday, November 5, 1928, in Sanford, North Carolina." At age five, while living in Franklin, North Carolina, "I realized my being, Juanita Fairbanks McKay."

Some 82 years ago at age twelve, J. Fairbanks Leach began her work in the Church. Her very first job was to co-labor with her mother as Church custodian. Her second job as Sunday School teacher lasted for one week. "My parents had indoctrinated me with servanthood; however, they didn't know I wanted to be discriminating as to who I served." Early in life she decided that "once I left the parsonage life, wild horses could not bring me back." She also didn't want to go to Livingstone College terrified that she would fall in love with a preacher. "Tide and time helped me make up my mind that I'd be an A.M.E. Zion Nun." Being at the mercy of a pastor's itineracy mode was her main objection to parsonage life. "Four different schools before high school graduation were a bit much. My mother's uncomfortable experiences and mine, blemished my idea of parsonage life."

Her beloved mother, Mattie Pearl McKay, passed away in 1946. "Death produced a huge void in my life. My mother would not see me graduate as valedictorian and she was not there to see me off to Livingstone College. My life was desolate without my mother."

J. Fairbanks Leach is a "witness that God charts our course in our mother's womb. We may veer from his path, but He brings us back." In May 1977, she received an invitation from the Women's Day chair at St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church to be their Speaker. She had not met or heard of the pastor. On December 17, 1977, Juanita Fairbanks McKay, the lady, "who had plans of a Convent in Zion" and the Rev. Samuel E. Leach, Sr. were pronounced husband and wife. "To this day," she said, "I wonder how it all happened."

As God intended, the love of parsonage life somehow crept into her very being, "I determined it was because I was loved, and I loved the lover." She said: "Very early on, I made a pact with my husband. If he would not insist that I sit in the third row at Church wearing a wide navy blue hat, navy blue and white suit with navy blue J. Renees', but rather, allow me to use whatever gifts I thought God had favored me with, I vowed I would never embarrass his ministry." She admitted this was easier said than done "for one who loved being in the trenches with the members trying to build up the Kingdom of God while trying also to maintain the dignity needed as a well-disciplined, sweet, hardworking pastor's wife."

J. Fairbanks Leach was never a first lady. "I was the pastor's wife." Her beloved husband promised she would never have to live in a parsonage that was not comfortably habitable. "He and the Lord erased my aversion of parsonage life." She has concluded that "God put me in a parsonage to frame, and fashion me into a better person for his servitude in years to come. Being in a parsonage with this pastor was a delight, rain, or shine. God kept us well-bonded."

She credits several women who actively mentored and influenced her life: Mrs. Ola Crawley, Rev. Amelia Tucker, Mrs. Edra Mae Hilliard, Mrs. Emma C. Clement, Dr. Abbie Clement Jackson, Mrs. Janie Speaks. "These were Titus II Women who held my attention captive as they taught by precept and example."

Her love affair with the Connectional Lay Council began in 1972 when Mrs. Betty Stith was president. She received her first appointment with the Connectional Lay Council from Mrs. Mary Taylor and retired from the Council after serving nineteen years on the Executive Board.

Writing has long been a driving passion for her. In 1985, Rev. Lula Williams, 2nd president of the IMSW Fellowship, commissioned her to write a Prayer Service for an IMSW Fellowship meeting in Boston. She was also commissioned by Mrs. Annette Whitted, Secretary of Bureau of Supplies, to write a skit for the Bureau of Supplies Handbook. This was her first published work.

In 2002, Mrs. Joan Miller encouraged her to seek the office of president of the A.M.E. Zion International Minister's Spouses & Widows(ers) Fellowship. She served two terms. "It is providential that offices I've held placed me in work relation with many stalwart, teaching men in Zion Methodism. Rev. D. J. Hughlett, Rev. Charles Mack, Rev. Andrew Mapp, Rev. V. V. Alexander, Bishop William A. Hilliard, Bishop Clarence Carr, Bishop Richard Thompson, Bishop Nathaniel Jarrett, Mr. David Aiken, Bishop Darryl Starnes, Bishop Kenneth Monroe and Dr. Otis McMillan." She acknowledges these men and women "because in one way or the other, they each helped me be creative in work ethics and improve the use of my calling as I sought to edify the saints in Zion."

On September 5, 2005, the Leachs were residing in Chicago, II., where Rev. Samuel Leach was pastor of St. Matthew-Gordon A.M.E. Zion Church. After a brief illness, Rev. Leach had been given a green light by his doctor resume his pulpit duties. "We were ecstatic. My husband had received a pivotal report; we praised God greatly. At 1:30 pm, a quixotic bride of twenty-eight-years opened our storm door. At 1:34 pm, I was a Widow." Rev. Samuel E. Leach, Sr. died on the kitchen floor. "The parsonage that was suffused with joy, now only utter sadness." Bishop Milton Williams graciously gave her sufficient time to leave the parson-

age. She moved to Xenia, Ohio where her son, Michael Fairbanks Shelby lives. She said, “I smarted from an aborted parsonage life. I was suddenly alone with windows fogged with apprehensive idleness. I had no meals to prepare, sat at table alone, no preparation of music for choir practice, no ‘Hey Baby’, nothing to daily occupy myself with in my new home.” She added, “once again, my Maker and life orchestrator had plans for me.” She “began cruising many new avenues on her journey.” She became the volunteer Program Director at her housing complex, which she said, “has quickened my computer usage.”

J. Fairbanks Leach has “never *not* been under obligation to God through Zion Methodism.” In November 2019, she received a call from IMSWF Spiritual Life chair, Rev. Patty Smith, inviting her to coordinate ‘a’ Prayer Service for the Ministers’ Spouses. She said, “Yes,” without hesitation. “I now have determined the invitation had been exposed to the first cousin of ‘Gorilla glue’. Two years and three months later, I’m delighted to serve as Prayer Coordinator.” She held the office as president of the IMSWF eight years, and retired while serving as Education Committee chair of the Connectional Lay Council. For the past fifteen years, she has served as Worship Coordinator for the Wright Place Interfaith Vesper Service.

J. Fairbanks Leach said, “musings from a parsonage window differ greatly from an apartment window. However, ‘I wouldn’t take nothing for my sojourn’ in both. What a blessing to be in a nonagenarian [a person who

is from 90 to 99 years old] space and still employed by my Maker. My maxim has been, is and will be, ‘To be used of God, to sing, to speak, to pray. To be used of God to show someone the way. I long so much to feel the touch of His consuming fire; to be used of God is my desire’, to His Glory. ”

She asked if I had ever heard “I Pray We’ll All Be Ready When Jesus Comes”. She said “years ago, when I had a reasonably fair high soprano voice I sang a song, “When Jesus Comes Again” and had the solo lead in 1975 with our Columbus-Cincinnati District choir. “I don’t believe it was ever published with these words . . . *I know Jesus is coming back again, no more pain, no more sorrow on that day for you and me, O what a day that will be when Jesus comes.* I’ve never forgotten those very potent words.” She added: “I do pray we’ll all be ready. Scripture relates: We know not the day or the hour when the Son of man will return.”

I had not heard “I Pray We’ll All Be Ready When Jesus Comes,” however, I did listen it to on You Tube sung by the Chicago Mass Choir and encourage others to listen to it as well.

She always closes her emails and correspondence with, “*Serving until emancipated by Him, J. Fairbanks Leach,*” which is a true testimony to her life.

“Together We Can Be THE Dream”

Submitted by Debra Chappelle-Polk
Zion Spotlight Editor, The Star of Zion
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New York, NY

On January 16, 2023, The A.M.E. Zion International Ministers’ Spouses & Widows(ers) Fellowship (IMSWF) Spiritual Life Committee held a virtual commemorative service honoring Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In lieu of a traditional organ prelude, Dr. King’s “I Have A Dream” speech was played as invitees waited for the service to begin. Participants and members of the IMSWF dressed in African attire. Portraits of Dr. King, President Obama and Malcolm X, along with other iconic paintings and an “I Voted” flyer could be seen hanging on the walls of their homes. The IMSWF logo was also prominently displayed.

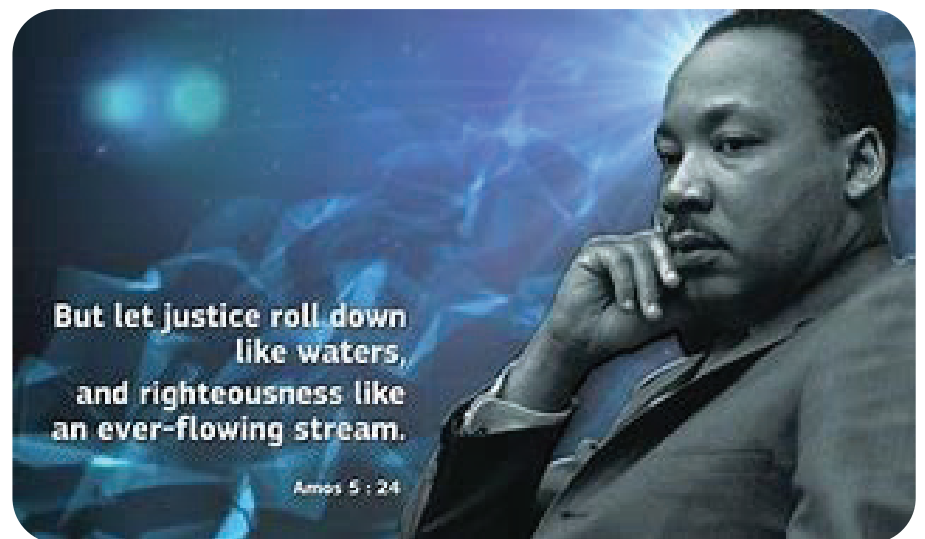
The Rev. George Maize, III opened the service with a soul-stirring rendition of “Lift Every Voice and Sing”.

IMSWF President Rev. Patty Smith followed: “It is truly a pleasure to see all of you today on this Martin Luther King [Jr.] holiday, a day that we remember with peace and justice, and day we are also commemorating justice and just how much we are still striving in our country, but we know that with God all things are possible.” Rev. Smith acknowledged ministers and pastors, missionary supervisors, bishops, spouses and widowers and thanked them “for being on the call on this wonderful occasion.” She also extended thanks and gratitude to J. Fairbanks Leach, prayer coordinator, “because together tonight we can and we will be the dream.”

Spiritual Life Chair Rev. Michele Long followed with prayer, thanking God for “bringing us together as a community of people, who care for one another with kindness and compassion.” She also welcomed everyone on the call. “Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is an honor to greet you on this MLK Night of Observation. I pray that everyone has a blessed night.” Rev. Smith asked Sis. Jeryl Anderson to bring observations and greetings from the IMSWF Executive Board. Sis. Anderson thanked God “for providing the opportunity for us to come together to praise His name on such a wonderful night in history.”

J. Fairbanks Leach stood in for Bonita Keene in leading the Call to Worship. “This is the day we celebrate faith, heritage, culture, and Community. Let us rejoice and be exceedingly glad. This day we celebrate the faith that sustained Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. We rejoice and are exceedingly glad to share this faith. Our remembrance is of the past; we stand in the present and we envision our bright future here and with our Lord and Savior. We have come too far to turn around. We rejoice and are exceedingly glad.”

Lucille Gooden read a speech written by Coretta Scott King on the Meaning of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday: “It is a day of interracial and



intercultural cooperation and sharing. No other day of the year brings so many people from different cultural backgrounds together in such a vibrant spirit of brother and sisterhood. Whether you are African-American, Hispanic or Native American, whether you are Caucasian or Asian-American, you are part of the great dream Martin Luther King, Jr. had for America. This is not a black holiday; it is a peoples’ holiday. And it is the young people of all races and religions who hold the keys to the fulfillment of his dream.”

Ruthie King led the Litany, which read in part:

- Ldr: What do You require of me? Peo: (God’s voice): I have shown you what is good.
- Ldr: But, what do you require of us? Peo: To do justice.
- Ldr: We are blessed in many ways, may we share our gifts and blessings with our neighbors and community.

Old Testament scriptures were read by Classie Green, Isaiah 51: 2,4, 5; I Sam. 12:24 and II Chron. 15:7. Waltrina Barnett, read from New Testament scriptures Matthew 6:1-4; Luke 6:38 and I Peter 4:10. Latonya Jarrett led Dr. King’s prayer, “Forgive Us for What We Could Have Been but Failed to Be.”

With design and purpose the Commemoration Service was composed of prayers that Dr. King himself actually prayed and three of his masterfully preached sermons. Four soloists sang Dr. King’s best-loved songs: Mamie Armond “Just A Closer Walk with Thee.” Other musical selections were “Precious Lord” (Rev. Gary Smith), “If I Can Help Somebody” (Rosa Randall) and “There Is A Balm In Gilead.” (Lillie Carter).

Rev. Andrea Wiley, in the introduction to “A Knock at Midnight” said, “The world saw the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as a marching protest leader, but Martin Luther King, Jr. was first and foremost a preacher.”

He said of himself, “in the quiet recess of my heart, I am fundamentally a clergyman, a Baptist preacher.” Rev. Wiley said “the three remarkable sermons you will be hear are coming from three Sons of Zion Methodism: Rev. O’Neil Wiley, Pastor Asbury Chapel AME Zion, Pascagoula, MS; Rev. William C. King, Jr., Pastor, Price Memorial AME Zion, Youngstown, OH., and Rev. Todd N. Jarrett, Pastor, St. Paul, AME Zion, Detroit, MI. Rev. Wiley apologized in advance for “facilitating your appetite with only 10 minutes of sermonic genius from the Lord himself.” She also apologized to the preachers “for imposing such strict timeframes.”

Rev. O’Neil Wiley delivered “**Paul’s Letter to American Christians.**” On the top of the “imagery” letter it says, “read to your congregation as soon as possible and pass on to other churches..., including churches in America.” Paul applauds America’s scientific, technological accomplishments and medical advancements, and wonders if America’s moral and spiritual progress is commiserated with its marvelous accomplishments. “It seems to me,” Paul says, “that your [America’s] moral progress lags behind its scientific progress. You’ve allowed your mentality to outrun your morality.” Paul urges “America to keep your moral advances abreast with your scientific advances; and to American Christians, I say to you as I said to the Roman Christians years ago, be not conform to this world, but ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Paul’s “imagery” letter spoke to the “reality” of America today and the Christian Church today.

Rev. William C. King, Jr., followed with “**Loving Your Enemies**” which Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. preached on November 17, 1957, at his home church, The Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. “I am forced to preach under something of a handicap.” He explains the statement by saying “his doctor had suggested he stay in bed that morning.” Dr. King tells the congregation “That although I have preached from these passages of scripture before and the concept is basically the same, I’ve added new insights I’ve developed along the way which require further illustration.” Dr. King said “the whole idea of love, the whole philosophy of love is recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 5, and commands us to love our enemies. Dr. King said this was so basic to him, because “it is part of my philosophical

and theological orientation.” The sermon continued. “These are certainly great words. Many have argued that this is an extremely difficult command, leading many to say this was further proof that Jesus was an impractical idealist who never quite came down to earth.” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. disputed this assertion. “Jesus wasn’t playing. Jesus was very serious when he gave this command. He realized that it is hard to love your enemies..., [however] we have the Christian and moral responsibility to seek to discover the meaning of these words and discover how we can live out this command.” Dr. King’s sermon gave instructions as to how to do this.

Rev. Todd N. Jarrett delivered “**A Knock at Midnight**”, a sermon Dr. King preached in June 1967 at Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. It begins: “Although this parable is concerned with the power of persistent prayer, it may also serve as a basis for our thoughts concerning the many contemporary problems and the role of the church in grappling with them. It is midnight in the parable, oh but is also midnight in our world and the darkness is so thick, we can hardly see which way to go.” Luke 11:5-13 relates the parable Jesus that told of a man who knocks at midnight for three loaves of bread. Dr. King extends the meaning of “midnight” to regard his time in 1967 as midnight in the social order, the psychological order, and the spiritual order. “Our slave fore-parents realized that dawn would come.” Dr. King said, “faith in the dawn comes from the belief that God is good and He is just.” He reminded the congregation that “our eternal message of hope is that dawn will come.” It was a powerful sermon delivered 50 years ago and remains relevant today.

The last musical selection was fittingly “Let There Be Peace On Earth,” by Winifred Still Davis, followed by Renee Ellis’ recitation of “Free at Last! Free at Last!” The Benediction was offered by Rev. Esther Rose.

In a moving and poignant moment toward the end of the service, Rev. Mamie Maize Cooper and Dorian Carson offered a musical narrative of “Lift Every Voice and Sing.”

*“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’”
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

South Atlantic Episcopal District
QUADRENNIAL
Celebration
Mrs. Lovetta Holmes, Missionary Supervisor
March 31 at the Kenneth Monroe Transformation Center at 6 pm
745 Saluda Street
Rock Hill, SC 29730
For Information Contact: Mrs. Mary Christian 803-318-4278
Let us Celebrate our Missionary Supervisor



From Darkness to Light

Submitted by Mrs. Lucy Beamon,
Elizabeth City District Director of Christian Education

The Elizabeth City District Christian Education Department Black History Program was held on February 4, 2023, at Bay Branch A.M.E. Zion Church, where the Pastor is Rev. Dr. Joseph Walton. We had an awesome time sharing the *"From Darkness to Light"* infor-

mation we received from the Church School Herald-Journal. The history of our awesome denomination was presented by the District youth. Our District, under the leadership of Presiding Elder Rev. Dr. Donald Jones, always incorporates the wonderful information we receive from the Christian Education Department Literature, into our teaching during District Days, District Conference, and other events. This enriches our churches and youth with Zion facts they can use in their lives when they talk about our amazing denomination!

Dr. Harold Middlebrook Speaks for Asheville WHOMS Prayer Breakfast

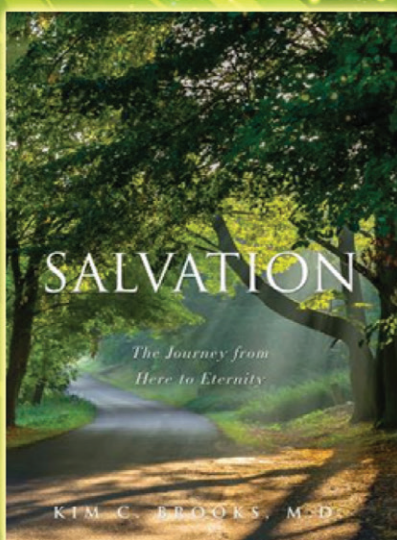
Submitted by Ms. Ruth L. Thompson, Reporter

Dr. Harold Middlebrook was the featured speaker for the Asheville District WHOMS Prayer Breakfast held Saturday, January 21 at Young's Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, New Market, TN. Host pastor was Rev. Luke Curry. Presiding Elder was Rev. Herbert Grant. Missionary President Mrs. Jacqueline Collins. Yams Coordinator, Mrs. Beulah Greene served as mistress of Ceremony. The theme was "Legacy of Courage and Love". Prayers were prayed by Missionary officers Mrs. Vivian Dockery (Courage), Mrs. Ann McAdams (Love). Excerpts from Dr. Kings speech were by Ms. Jennifer Cody.

Dr. Middlebrook was a personal friend of Dr. King. He participated in several sit-ins and was jailed with him. He has appeared in several films on the Civil Rights movement. In 2022 he was awarded the Legacy Award from the Emerald Youth Foundation of Knoxville, TN. He said "Dr. King was a preacher, the son of a preacher, the grandson of preacher and the nephew of a preacher". He began his message speaking of Joseph the dreamer. He said, "dreaming can get you in trouble. Having no aspiration is even worse. It's important not just to dream yourself but to help someone else catch the dream. When you leave Christ there is no where to go but down, we lose sight of who we can be. We have centered on the dream speech but not the substance of what the dream is about. There has to be an exchange of ideas. We have to learn how to talk TO

each other and not AT each other. We must learn how to have a common purpose, a common goal. If you don't know where you're going you won't know when you get there. If you don't know your history, you can't know your present. Our problem is not the other race, it's US. We have met the enemy and the enemy is US. Martin took his lesson from Jesus. MLK taught love can win over violence. They killed Jesus. He's still living. They killed MLK, he's still living. It's not how long I live, it's what I do while I'm here". Dr Middlebrook challenged the congregation to "leave a legacy, something for folk to remember you by when you're gone. Give away something you hold dear. Go out of your way to do something for others. If you want somebody to remember you when you're gone, do something while you live. The era of MLK is past. What do we do with NOW? What you do for others will ultimately give you your crown. I once heard Martin share three attitudes of life. Dr. Middlebrook concluded his dynamic and powerful message by listing these as 1. Thief- What's yours is mine and I'll take it. 2. Levite and priest-What's mine is mine, I'll keep it. 3. Samaritan-What's mine is yours; I'll share it. If I can help somebody as I pass along, my living will not be in vain".

The service closed with remarks from Presiding Elder Grant, the singing of "We Shall Overcome" and the benediction.



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Zion Honors Zion Women

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Melanie Miller

Since 1987, every president of the United States of America has signed a proclamation declaring March as Women’s History Month. Women’s History month was set aside to acknowledge and honor the accomplishments of American women. We take this opportunity to highlight the accomplishments and leadership of some women in The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (A.M.E. Zion Church). These women are not the only proven leaders in our great church nor are they the only virtuous women of noble character. However, they and others embody the words of Proverbs 31:10-31. We appreciate that several AME Zion members took the time to submit accomplishments of the following women for us to honor this month:



Rev. Frances Boomer

Pastor, St. Luke AME Zion Church, New Bern District

North Carolina Conference, Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District

Rev. Boomer is being honored for her service to the church and the community-at-large. She is the faithful, compassionate, and innovative pastor of St. Luke AME Zion

in Maysville, NC. Rev. Boomer is the first African American Woman to be elected and to serve as Chairperson for Craven County School Board. She has a total of over forty-six years in education and has received numerous awards for her service. Rev. Boomer is always willing to take the lead on community projects and outreach to meet the needs of the people. As pastor and a community leader, her ministry and service embodies the motto of St. Luke, “Everybody is Somebody at St. Luke.” She is most deserving of this honor.

Rev. Frances Boomer, “We Honor You!”

Rev. Dr. Myrtle Bowen

Presiding Elder, Harrisburg District

Philadelphia/Baltimore Conference, Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District



Rev. Dr. Bowen is the definition of a pioneer. She is the first African American woman chaplain promoted to the rank of Colonel serving in the United States Air Force Air National Guard. As Air National Guard Assistant to the Command Chaplain, Africa Command, Kelley Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany, she advises the Command Chaplain and staff on matters of National Guard policy, program operations and utilization of the National Guard’s chaplain community, interfacing with United States Air Force and Army Reserve programs. She recently retired as an Architectural Engineer with the Master Planning Division for the federal government. She serves as the Second Vice President of the International Ministers and Lay Association and a stalwart leader as the presiding elder of the Harrisburg District.

Rev. Dr. Myrtle Bowen, “We Honor You!”

Sis. Glenda Davis-Canteen

Past South Atlantic Lay Council Regional Director

Member, Shaw Temple AME Zion Church, Smyrna, GA

Atlanta District, Georgia Conference, South Atlantic Episcopal District

Sis. Davis-Canteen has worked in



education for over 35 years positively impacting the lives of children through her teaching and administrative gifts. She currently serves Georgia’s North West Region’s Early Education Community Partnership Coordinator in the Quality Innovations and Partnership unit. Sis. Davis-Canteen serves as a deaconess in her local church, Shaw Temple AME Zion Church. She is a life member of Women’s Home and Overseas Missionary Society, life member of the Lay Council, and member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. In 2017, she received the International Ministers and Lay Association’s Samantha Wormley Lay Leadership Award. Her favorite scripture is, “And whatsoever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” Colossians 3:17 (NIV)

Sis. Glenda Davis-Canteen, “We Honor You!”

Rev. Dr. Amy Ciceron

Pastor, East Stonewall AME Zion Church, Charlotte District

Western North Carolina Conference, Piedmont Episcopal District

Rev. Dr. Ciceron is the newly appointed Pastor of East Stonewall AME Zion Church on the Charlotte District. She previously pastored Shiloh in the Statesville District, and St. Julia in the New Bern District. She teaches Theology and Evangelism to fourth year conference studies students in the Western North Carolina Conference. She freely gives of her time, expertise, and knowledge to challenge her students in ways that make them better holistically. She inspires her students to dig deeper to explore new and more diverse perspectives. Her presence is described as “refreshing!” She is a natural born spiritual leader and mentor to her students and those she shepherds. She is unknowingly, making positive impacts and major impartations to God’s people. Rev. Dr. Ciceron is well deserving of this honor.



Rev. Dr. Amy Ciceron, “We Honor You!”

Ms. Queen E. Degraphenreid

*Social Justice Advocate
Member, Simon Temple AME Zion Church,
Central North Carolina Conference, Eastern North Carolina
Episcopal District*

Continuing the legacy of the “Freedom Church”, Ms. Degraphenreid will celebrate 60 years in social justice on August 28, 2023. That date is remarkable in that it coincides with the 60th Anniversary of the March on Washington. Ms. Degraphenreid’s service in Zion lay leadership expands from local Lay President to the Connectional Lay Council, serving the longest tenure as Social Political Action Committee Chair. On the 30th Anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, she was one of 30 women inducted into the National Voting Rights Museum. As a community activist, she has served in the leadership of the Fayetteville Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Ms. Degraphenreid, a woman deserving of our recognition.



Ms. Queen E. Degraphenreid, “We Honor You!”

Rev. Dr. Erlinda Dobson

*Presiding Elder, New Bern District
Pastor, Bryant Chapel AME Zion Church,
New Bern District
North Carolina Conference, Eastern North
Carolina Episcopal District*



Rev. Dr. Dobson continues to be a trailblazing presiding elder and pastor as she implements programs and activities to assist all people. She is an activist, and she is always willing to lead in any humanitarian effort. Rev. Dr. Dobson received the prestigious Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the Ole North State Medical Society's Gold Medal, and the International Ministers and Lay Association's Sojourner Truth Award. In addition, she serves on Zion's Christian Education Board. Even during an economic recession, the congregation at Bryant Chapel built a 2.5-million-dollar church under her leadership. She is well known preacher and impactful teacher, but better known to her family as a loving wife, mother, and grandmother. Unselfishly and unequivocally, she makes a difference in Zion!

Rev. Dr. Erlinda Dobson, "We Honor You!"

Rev. Dr. Willa Estell

Presiding Elder, Maryville District

*Pastor, St. Paul AME Zion Church, Maryville
District*

Executive Secretary, Presiding Elders Council

*Tennessee Conference, Midwest Episcopal
District*



Rev. Dr. Estell is a compassionate and detail oriented hard worker who serves in many noteworthy capacities in The AME Zion Church. She is the Executive Secretary of the Presiding Elders Council, a member of the Board of Global Missions, an Alternate Delegate to the World Methodist Council, the Coordinator of the Midwest and Trinidad-Tobago Leadership Training Institutes, the Coordinator for the Leadership Training Institute, Treasurer of the Tennessee Conference, Chairperson of Conference Admissions Committee, Vice President of the Trustee Board, Coordinator of the Intercessory Prayer Ministry, Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, and Chairperson of Specialized Ministry. She worked as chaplain for Blount Memorial Hospital and Blount Memorial Hospice and completed residency chaplain at The University of Tennessee Medical Center in August 2022. She is the proud mother of three and grandmother of two.

Rev. Dr. Willa Estell, "We Honor You!"

Ms. Jessica Gamble

*Camden District President, Women's Home
and Overseas Missionary Society*

*Member, St. Paul AME Zion Church, Camden
District*

*New Jersey Conference, North Eastern Epis-
copal District*



Ms. Jessica Gamble has served as the Camden District President of the Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society for six years. Previously, she served as the District YAMS Coordinator for 12 years. She is described as "creative, innovative, dependable, detail oriented, and a wonderful person to work with and to work for." She is the Assistant Registrar at Princeton University, a dedicated member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and works for several other community organizations and church ministries. She is the mother of two "AMAZING" Zion young ladies, Miss Shanice Gamble Union, the chair of the Technology Ministry at St. Paul and Camden District Assistant Chairperson of YACM and Miss JonBonae Shipmen, an author, and the Graphics Designer for the St. Paul Technology Ministry.

Ms. Jessica Gamble and your daughters, "We Honor You!"

Rev. Mary Helen Giles

*Pastor, Reeveytown AME Zion Church, Cam-
den District*

*New Jersey Conference, North Eastern Epis-
copal District*



Rev. Giles is a Woman after God's own heart. Although she is retired from working as a Supervisor for the United Parcel Service (UPS), God called her to the preaching ministry, and she has been working for Him ever since. She is a pastor, preacher, teacher, missionary, and evangelist who drives folks to run errands, doctor appointments and provides rides to the airport. She is described as "kind, compassionate, and a loving and loyal friend." She is one sharp dresser who has more hats than one can ever wear and reminds us "you wear the hat, don't let the hat wear you"!

Rev. Mary Helen Giles, "We Honor You!"

Rev. Dr. Laticia Hill Godette

Presiding Elder, Camden District

*New Jersey Conference, North Eastern
Episcopal District*



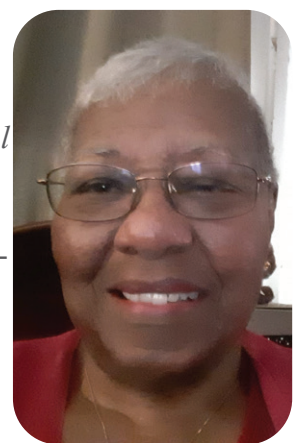
Rev. Dr. Godette is described as "Black Woman Excellence!" She is a devoted wife, mother of three beautiful young ladies, and a successful business owner, who serves as an inspiration, role model, and Godly example. She is the first woman to pastor a "first church" on the Washington District and in the North Carolina Conference. In 2021, she became the first woman to serve as Presiding Elder of the Camden District and in the New Jersey Conference. She is a philanthropist who gave over 1.5 million dollars to churches and Livingstone College, as well as scholarships to help students. Her continued generosity, authenticity and love for God's people is unmatched. She pours out her heart daily on the Prayer Line and freely shares the "Blueprint" for success on her Business Line. As a result, many people have been, and are being, saved, delivered, set free and EMPOWERED! Dr. Godette walks the talk and well deserves this honor!

Rev. Dr. Laticia Hill Godette, "We Honor You!"

Mrs. Doris Hollis

*Camden District, Lay Council President
Member St. Paul AME Zion Church, Camden
District*

*New Jersey Conference, North Eastern Episcopal
District*



Sister Hollis has served faithfully as a Sunday School Teacher, Choir Member, Missionary, church historian, and mentor to new leaders at St. Paul AME Zion Church, Ewing, NJ. Mrs. Hollis currently serves as the Camden District President of the Lay Council and has held that office since 2001. During her tenure, she initiated the Grandparent Luncheon and Celebration, which is held annually to recognize grandparents representing all the Camden District churches. Mrs. Hollis is devoted to providing support, resources, and guidance to the local Lay Council Presidents, and to the clergy and lay members of the New Jersey Conference.

Mrs. Doris Hollis, "We Honor You!"

Rev. Dr. Evalina Huggins

Presiding Elder, Baltimore District

Pastor, Scotland A.M.E. Zion Church, Balti-



more District

Philadelphia-Baltimore Conference – Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District

Rev. Dr. Huggins is a compassionate, committed, Christ-loving change maker, leader, visionary, and teacher. She is described as “seemingly stern and of no nonsense but is a source of strength and resilience, who makes it fun to serve under her leadership.” Her academic achievements, authorship, interest and love for our young adults, and service on many boards speaks volume of her versatility. She has a heart for doing the work of the Lord in innovative ways. Rev. Dr. Huggins has a wonderful sense of humor and a contagious laugh. Her love for the AME Zion Church shows as she travels the Episcopal area assisting other colleagues in conducting workshops training ministers and laity at no charge. Her servant leadership skills make her a role model for those coming behind her, be they male or female, as she prepares leaders of the future. As a conference studies instructor she was purposeful in developing curriculum that was practical and theological. She makes every effort give an understanding of God’s Word and how to apply it to our lives. The tenacity she has in all that she does helps to inspire others.

Rev. Dr. Evalina Huggins, “We Honor You!”

Rev. Dr. Charlrean Mapson

Pastor, Price Cathedral AME Zion Church, Wilmington District

Cape Fear Conference, Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District

Rev. Dr. Mapson has truly been a trail-blazer in our beloved AME Zion Church, and we celebrate how she shares her love of God with others with her service. She is the former General Youth Secretary of the Women’s Home and Overseas Missionary Society, serving from 2003 through 2011. She served four charges as pastor, including the Johnson Chapel Church, Leland, NC; the historic St. Mark Church, Whiteville, NC; where she led the congregation in a \$250K renovation; and the historic St. John Church in Wilson, NC. She is currently the proud pastor of the Price Cathedral Church in Wilmington, NC. Rev. Dr. Mapson is grateful to be on the journey to the episcopacy and has a powerful PLAN to help take Zion higher by promoting: personal care and mental health for ministers, leadership in a post pandemic era, autism awareness, and nurturing ecumenical relationships.



Rev. Dr. Charlrean Mapson, “We Honor You!”

Rev. Rochelle McEntyre

Presiding Elder, Key West District

Pastor, Cornish Memorial AME Zion Church, Key West District

South Florida Conference, Alabama Florida Episcopal District

Rev. McEntyre is being recognized for her unwavering dedication, service and effective leadership to the Key West District, Cornish Memorial AME Zion Church and the community she serves. Her commitment to God’s work, her faith, and the church has not gone unnoticed, as she was appointed ten years ago as the first woman to pastor Cornish Memorial and a year later the first woman presiding elder of the Key West District. She is noted for reaching people, “Beyond the Walls” of the church. She just celebrated her first year of marriage to Rev. Rev. Travis McEntyre, the pastor of Harvest House Baptist Church, Henrietta, NC. She is the author of “First Lady, The Truth Shall Set You Free,” and has worked as a Nursing Director in geriatrics and memory care for over 25 years. Rev. McEntyre currently is the President and CEO of “Asha Vital Health Consulting, LLC. She is the First Vice President of the International Presiding Elders’ Council.



Rev. Rochelle McEntyre, “We Honor You!”

Rev. Dr. Melanie Miller

Pastor, St. Paul AME Zion Church, Camden District

New Jersey Conference, North Eastern Episcopal District



Rev. Dr. Miller is a life-long learner having earned two doctorate degrees, a courageous servant leader for God and country, an effective personal and professional counselor, and one who has dedicated her life to caring for others. She served as the first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director for Chaplain Programs in the U.S. Navy. She has written numerous articles for the *Star of Zion*, *Lenten Dove*, *Missionary Seer*, and other professional publications. She has pastored four Zion churches, Sycamore Hill, Gatesville, NC; Martin Temple, Compton, CA; Varick Memorial, Hackensack, NJ; and currently serves as the only woman pastoring a “first church” in the North Eastern Episcopal District at St. Paul Church, Ewing, NJ. She represents The AME Zion Church as a chaplain in the Navy with distinction as an officer and a religious leader. She facilitates the practice of religion in a pluralistic environment, counsels military personnel, and advises the officers in charge.

Rev. Dr. Melanie Miller, “We Honor You!”

Dr. Lisa Darlene Moore

Corresponding Secretary for the Assembly of Christian Educators

Jackson-Panola District, Christian Education Director

Member, Cathedral AME Zion Church, Jackson-Panola District

South Mississippi Conference, Southwestern Delta Episcopal District



Dr. Lisa Moore is an anointed treasure within The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Possessing a genuine gift and passion for education, philanthropy, music, and advocacy for God’s people is her superpower. Dr. Moore has blessed her faith community in the South Mississippi Conference and abroad with service as a Choir Director, District Director of Christian Education, and Corresponding Secretary for the Assembly of Christian Educators. Furthermore, she created a community sponsored campaign to supply computers for rural churches, sponsors an annual Christmas Toy and Clothing Drive, created local college scholarships for AME Zion high school graduates, and so much more. It is the selfless work of Dr. Moore for the Kingdom of God that has endorsed this nomination of recognition for a work well done.

Dr. Lisa Darlene Moore, “We Honor You!”

Dr. Da’Tarvia Parrish

Professor of Humanities, English and History, Livingstone College

Member, New Hope AME Zion Church, Salisbury District

Western North Carolina Conference, Piedmont Episcopal District



Since 2005, Dr. Parrish has served as a professor of Humanities, English, and History at Livingstone College in Salisbury, North Carolina. She developed the Honors Program at Livingstone College and serves as an Associate Professor of English. Her teaching areas include African American history and literature and Southern history and literature with an emphasis on issues of race and gender. Her research interests are interdisciplinary: geography and African American writers; photography and Southern women; film and historical fiction; visual culture and the Black Church; civil rights law; and narrative fiction. Dr. Parrish freely lends her expertise and heart to her church and community through community workshops and presentations, mentorship, and grant funding initiatives. Her academic achievement and accomplishments are beyond amazing!

Dr. Da’Tarvia Parrish, “We Honor You!”

Rev. Dr. Tonya M. Pass

*Pastor, Brighton Rock AME Zion Church,
Norfolk District*

*Virginia Conference, Mid-Atlantic Episcopal
District*



Rev. Dr. Pass accepted her call to ministry in 1983 and has been pastoring in The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church since 2012. She is a passionate leader, teacher, and coach. She desires to motivate men, women, boys, and girls to reach their maximum potential spiritually, mentally, financially, and physically. Dr. Pass uses her education, a Doctor of Ministry (DMin), a Master of Social Work (MSW), and a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW), and skills to organize her community. Her goal is for the community to join her mission to provide a holistic approach to serving her church and her community. Rev. Dr. Pass is a Social Worker, who is highly recognized for her service to the community, especially helping children and families in Virginia's child welfare system.

Rev. Dr. Tonya Pass, "We Honor You!"

Mrs. Sonya McLaurin Powell

Member, St. Thomas AME Zion Church, Goldsboro District

*Cape Fear Conference, Eastern North Carolina
Episcopal District*



A lifelong member of the Freedom Church, Sonya serves faithfully at St. Thomas AME Zion

church of Roseboro NC. Mrs. Powell holds positions at her local church, the Goldsboro District, Cape Fear Conference, and Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District levels, and has served as a Delegate at the General Conference. She was elected and has served several terms on the Sampson County Board of Education, which included serving as Vice Chairperson. As a former high school English teacher, she continues to serve out of her love for children. She is dedicated to working with young people and helping them to continuously improve their lives. She is noted for helping to guide former students into teaching careers.

Mrs. Sonya McLaurin Powell, "We Honor You!"

Mrs. Linda Johnson Sutton

*President of Voter Registration and Education,
Winston-Salem District*

*Chairperson, NC State NCNW Civic Engagement
and Public Policy Program*

*Member, Goler Memorial AME Zion Church,
Winston-Salem District*



Western North Carolina Conference, Piedmont Episcopal District

Mrs. Sutton has dedicated a lifetime of work and service to The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and the fight to secure the dignity and rights for all people. Her steadfast involvement in the spiritual, educational, social, and political life of citizens has earned her many awards and recognitions from local, state, and national organizations. By bringing together groups of individuals and organizations to increase voter registration, education, and civic engagement in the community-at-large and within Zion, she believes that voting rights can change laws and public policies that affect the quality of everyday life for people while on this life's journey.

Mrs. Linda Johnson Sutton, "We Honor You!"

Mrs. Alyce West

*Member, Clinton Memorial AME Zion Church,
Jersey City District*

*New Jersey Conference, North Eastern Episcopal
District*



Mrs. West is described as "AWESOME!" She is always taking care of the community and making sure that community has what they NEED all year long. She works to provide for her family and considers everyone she meets "family." She has devoted every waking moment helping those in need including collecting, purchasing, and donating backpacks and coats for students, and food for families in the community. Mrs. West's work truly speaks for her.

Mrs. Alyce West, "We Honor You!"

Rev. Gloria Clemons White

Presiding Elder, Central Valley District

*Pastor, Hilliard Chapel AME Zion Church,
Central Valley District*

*California Conference, Western Episcopal
District*



Rev. Clemons-White was the first female pastor appointed to the Historical Kyles Temple, AME Zion Church, Sacramento, California. She served until June 2017, when she was appointed the first Female Presiding Elder of the Central Valley District, of the California Conference, of the AME Zion Church. Rev. Clemons-White is an active member of her community as a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Links, Incorporated, Nation Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), National Council of Negro Women and the Northern State Ecumenical Council. Most important to her is "Having a firm and unmovable faith, a committed love for God and His people, and an earnest desire to 'serve' God through preaching and teaching of His Holy word."

Rev. Gloria Clemons White, "We Honor You!"

Sis. Lorean G. Wilson

*Traveling Minister, Bryant Chapel AME Zion
Church, New Bern District*

*North Carolina Conference, Eastern North
Carolina Episcopal District*



Sis. Wilson is a resident of Cove City of North Carolina. She is a hairdresser by trade but wears many hats. She is a traveling minister in The AME Zion Church and serves as the YACM Coordinator for the Women's Home and Oversees Missionary Society. In 2020, Sis. Wilson founded the Cove City Community Outreach Ministries. This ministry has been a blessing to so many residents of Craven County and the surrounding areas. The ministry sowed seeds of love to their neighbors by hosting free food drives, COVID vaccine clinics, and a senior enrichment seminar.

Sis. Lorean G. Wilson, "We Honor You!"

Contributors: Ms. Donita Burston-Monroe, Rev. Michelle Davis, Ms. Antoinette Ford, Ms. LaTisha Gassaway, Mr. Harry Hines, Ms. India R. Johns, Ms. Tawana N. Lefeged, Miss Shanice Gamble Union, Rev. Renesa Mayo, Rev. Lisa McDow, Esq., Ms. Linda McRae, Rev. Lakeisha D. Mobley, Rev. Renata E. Moseley Harper, Ms. Ida Ositelu, Rev. Dr. Tonya Pass, Sis. Tasharah Person, Ms. Yvonne Smith, Ms. Melva Polk Wright, Ms. Affie Sawyer, Ms. Patricia Scott, Miss JonBonae Shipman, Rev. Donna Stewart, Rev. Dr. Mary Thompson, Dr. Audrey Toney, Ms. Debra Valentine-Gray, Rev. Netecia Walker, Rev. Katina D. Washington, Rev. Keitha Wiggins-Kennedy, Ms. Shauna Wilkins, Sis. Lorean Wilson, Salisbury District CED Youth

Livingstone College to host leading public health expert, chair of Biden Administration's COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force STEM program will unveil new instrument during visit

Submitted by Kimberly Harrington
Director of Public Relations
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Feb. 2, 2023

SALISBURY – A member of the Biden Administration whose work is dedicated to bridging racial gaps in healthcare and within the COVID-19 crisis will visit Livingstone College next week.

Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith, appointed by President Biden to chair the Presidential COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force, will visit the historic black college on Feb. 8. There will be a brief program at the college's new F. George Shipman Science Annex, where STEM students will participate in scientific demonstrations during her tour of the facility.

Livingstone's science program will also unveil a new instrument at the program that no other HBCU in North Carolina its size can boast.

"It is an honor to have one of the nation's leading public health experts on the campus of Livingstone College, especially during the month that we celebrate the contributions of African Americans," said Livingstone President Dr. Anthony J. Davis. "Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith is among those highly regarded in her field, coupling her passion for medicine with her commitment to social equity. Consistent with the population we serve, Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith's insight will significantly impact our students and the greater Rowan Salisbury community."

The Health Equity Task Force is part of the government's efforts to identify and eliminate health and social disparities that cause disproportionately higher rates of exposure, illness, hospitalization and death related to COVID-19, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health.

Nunez-Smith was there when the first COVID-19 patient arrived at Yale New Haven Hospital at the start of the pandemic, and she has since become intricately involved in the nation's pandemic response. Her work on the Governor's Reopen Connecticut Advisory Group resulted in her being sought after by the Biden-Harris campaign to serve on their COVID-19 Advisory Board, which led to her chairing the task force.

At Yale University, Nunez-Smith is the inaugural associate dean for Health Equity Research; a C.N.H. Long Professor of Internal Medicine; and founding director of the Equity Research and Innovation Center among many other titles. She established the Eastern Caribbean Health Outcomes Research Network and was recently elected to the National Academy of Medicine. She has led many research projects and published numerous papers on the experiences of minority students and faculty.



Having grown up in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Nunez-Smith told the Yale News that people died too often and too young. Her own father had a stroke in his 40s and was left paralyzed. It was then that she learned the term "underserved community," marginalized by place and race.

She observed those same inequities as a practicing physician, seeing patients whose conditions were shaped by societal inequities rather than science, and noticed them again with the COVID 19 pandemic.

Dr. Nunez-Smith is board certified in internal medicine, having completed her residency at Harvard University's Brigham and Women's Hospital and fellowship at the Yale Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholars Program, where she also received a master's in health sciences. She attended Jefferson Medical College and earned a Bachelor of Arts in biological anthropology and psychology at Swarthmore College.

The program is limited to invited guests but will be rebroadcast on the college's official YouTube channel.

Presiding Elder Laticia Hill Godette Makes Large Donation to Hood Theological Seminary

Submitted By Hood Theological Seminary

Presiding Elder Laticia Hill Godette, CEO/Owner of Ottendorf Laboratories has presented Hood Theological Seminary President Vergel Lattimore with a donation in the amount of \$48,000. This adds to the \$30,000 raised by the North Eastern Episcopal District of the A.M.E. Zion Church and brings the total raised to \$75,000 for Hood's Firm Foundation Service held Wednesday, February 8, 2023. In addition, \$2,000 of the \$48,000 was given to cover the African Bishops. Presiding Elder Godette graduated summa cum laude from Hood Theological Seminary in 2014 and she is a distinguished alumnus. Presiding Elder Godette has made history five times in the A.M.E. Zion Church. Most recently, Bishop Dennis Vernon Proctor appointed her as the first woman to serve as the Presiding Elder of the Camden District and in the New Jersey Annual Conference. Currently, Presiding Elder Godette is working with the seminary to establish an endowed scholarship to help students attend Hood.



Livingstone's inaugural MBA cohort receives free laptops

Submitted by **Kimberly Harrington**
 Director of Public Relations
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Jan. 20, 2023

SALISBURY – Livingstone College gave away free laptops again – but this time, to a unique set of students.

The college's inaugural Master of Business Administration program began this semester and each student in the alpha cohort received a free and new laptop computer this week.

"We wanted to provide this history-making class with some tools that will help them as they navigate their way through our inaugural MBA program," said Livingstone President Dr. Anthony J. Davis. "We are advancing on this campus and this alpha cohort is evidence of more great things to come."

Livingstone College received approval last year from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to offer its first graduate degree program.

The graduate business degree is specifically designed for students and professionals who desire to advance their careers in business, excel as business executives or become suc-

cessful entrepreneurs. Upon completion of the MBA program, students will have increased their business knowledge; grown their professional network; and boosted their career and salary prospects.

Though the spring semester has started, interested students for the summer cohort can apply and get more information by calling the Office of Admissions at (704) 216-6001.

The MBA program will be offered on the main campus of Livingstone College at 701 W. Monroe Street Salisbury, NC. Instruction will be a 100 percent traditional face-to-face format. To accommodate family responsibilities and employment, graduate students will have the flexibility to take classes during the evenings (Monday through Thursday) with some classes also being offered on Saturday. The MBA is a 36-credit hour degree program. Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA to meet graduation requirements.



The FBI of Charlotte will host a collegiate academy at Livingstone College on Tuesday

Program's aim is to attract more diverse workforce

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Feb. 6, 2023

SALISBURY – Livingstone College and the FBI Charlotte office are partnering to host an FBI Collegiate Academy on Tuesday, February 7, 2023, on the campus of Livingstone College.

The FBI Collegiate Academy gives college students a look into the mission of the FBI. The event will include presentations about the many career paths offered and the need and desire for a more diverse workforce.

Students will also get a hands-on demonstration from the Evidence Response Team about crime scene investigation.

This initiative is part of the FBI's Beacon Project, which aims to foster

a genuine and long-lasting relationship with Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

"The Criminal Justice and Sociology Department is excited to have the FBI Collegiate Academy at Livingstone College," said Dr. Latarcia R. Barnes, department chair. "This is a great opportunity for our students. It will provide them with relevant information if they want to pursue a career with the FBI. In addition, the students will be exposed to demonstrations, which are always enlightening. We are all excited and are looking forward to this wonderful experience."

The news media is invited to attend, please arrive between 10:15 and 10:30 a.m. for demonstrations. The event will be held in Tubman Theater. RSVP to Kimberly Harrington at kharrington@livingstone.edu.

Livingstone College celebrates Founder's Day with \$7M upgrades to residence halls announce- ment at Livingstone College on Tuesday Program's aim is to attract more diverse workforce

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Feb. 10, 2023

SALISBURY – Livingstone College made a major announcement at its Founder's Day program Friday that will contribute millions of dollars into refurbishing the campus residence halls.

"In my first 120 days, I have secured capital investment to the tune of \$4 million that we will use to begin refurbishing our student residence halls," said Livingstone President Dr. Anthony J. Davis before a full audience.

"Wait a minute, that's not all," Davis said, adding that he has found an additional \$3 million in the college's budget to go toward the project, for a grand total of \$7 million.

Davis received a standing ovation for the announcement.

"The least we can do is make students comfortable while they are on their journey," Davis said. "We will begin construction in May. I'm paying it forward because my students deserve it."

In addition to this announcement, Davis also said Mondale Robinson, a 2011 graduate of Livingstone College and the mayor Enfield, has pledged \$60,000 per year over the next 10 years.

And, Dr. Laticia Godette, owner of Ottendorf Laboratories, presented the college with a check for \$50,000, as part of an ongoing pledge.

Failing infrastructure has plagued the 144-year-old historic black college with students often venting their frustrations on social media. Davis referenced a social media comment from an individual who said the college "should have closed a long time ago."

"Initially I was bothered," he said. "But I realized that of all that was said, that was most factual. This institution should have been closed a long time ago, and would have been closed a long time ago, if not for two words – but God," again to thunderous applause from the audience.

What many don't know is that Livingstone College provides \$4 million annually from its operating budget for scholarships and persistence grants to help students stay in school, having to defer maintenance projects – until now.

Davis, as the newly-elected 13th president, said one of his priorities was to refurbish the student residence halls.

"He's going to make 13 a lucky number," said Bishop Kenneth Monroe, chairman of the Livingstone College Board of Trustees and senior bishop of the A.M.E. Zion Church.

Founder's Day celebrates the first and founding president of Livingstone College, Dr. Joseph Charles Price. A direct descendent of Price, great-grandson Phillip Sherrill, attended to give remarks on behalf of the family.

In 1879, Price left the United States and went to Europe to secure \$10,000 to start this college, Sherrill said. "It's incumbent upon all of us to make sure this school never closes."

Speaking to students, he said, "All I ask is that you do your best, you try your best and you come out of here making it a better place, and when you do leave, that you give back."

Dr. Jamal-Harrison Bryant, pastor of New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Lithonia, Ga., was



the keynote speaker. Quoting an educational philosophy, he said, "Every unnecessary help is a stumbling block to developing independence. I don't want the help if it will impede the development."

He shared his story of dropping out of school in the 11th grade and his guidance counselor suggesting he go into the military. He ended up getting his GED and enrolling into Morehouse College, becoming the first person to do so without having taken the SAT and without having the appropriate GPA.

"A historic black college saw my value and saw my possibilities," he said.

Bryant later earned his Master of Divinity degree from Duke University, where 43 years before he attended, his grandfather was the head cook. He then earned a doctorate degree in philosophy from Oxford University in Great Britain and later a doctorate from The Graduate Theological Foundation.



He started an A.M.E. church in his living room in Baltimore, Md., that went from 43 members to 10,000 at its peak.

A third-generation preacher in the A.M.E. faith, he was led to switch denominations and become a Baptist minister at his current church. He said he didn't understand why the move until a woman at the church approached him and ask if he

remembered her, and he did not.

It was his guidance counselor from high school, who told him she owed him an apology for not believing in him.

The program ended with a processional to the Price Mausoleum on campus, where there was a brief memorial service and the laying of a new wreath, which is an annual tradition on Founder's Day.



Livingstone College hosted its 22nd Annual United Negro College Fund (UNCF)

Submitted by the Star of Zion

Livingstone College hosted its 22nd Annual United Negro College Fund (UNCF) "Share Your Love" Hall of Fame event on Thursday, February 9, 2023 at the college's School of Hospitality and Management. This event is a service and celebration of Livingstone College leaders.

President Dr. Anthony J. Davis welcomed the honorees stating, "As inductees this year, you have the special distinction of being honored during my inaugural year as 13th president. As we recognize your achievements and selflessness for the greater good in your communities, it underscores the legacy of this great institution."

Dr. Da'Tarvia A. Parrish '00, associate professor of Humanities served as the Mistress of Ceremony while alumnus Leon Gatewood '80 served as the disc jockey for the evening. Rev. Eldren Morrison opened the event with an Invocation that followed with greetings from Vice President of Institutional Advancement Pete Teague, and student leaders - Student Government Association president Michael Gilyard and Miss UNCF Akera Barnes. Guests dined with catering provided by alumnus Steve Widemond, whereas the program reconvened when student Hope Hart beautifully sang *Amazing Grace*.

President Davis provided the Statement of Occasion and Deborah Johnson, Director of UNCF and Special Projects recognized past honorees in attendance. The program continued in comedic love with Dr. Parrish introducing and sharing the biography and contributions of the 2023 honorees. The honorees are: Retired Budget Analysis and Athlete, Mr. Archie L. Dawson '71; Retired Educator, Mrs. Peggy M. DuRante '57; Retired Anson County Government Official and Fulness Media, LLC

Owner, Mr. Daniel Gatewood '87; Retired Educator and Ministry Leader, Dr. Carolyn Lee Hart '67; CEO, Funeral Director and Embalmer, Dr. Kimberly Kelsey; Bishop of the AME Zion Church, The Right Reverend Eric L. Leake; Professional Sports Medicine and Training Consultant, Mr. David M. Mills; Entrepreneur, Mr. Rufus Mosley, Jr. '85; Founder and CEO of Peaches and Sour cream Children's Foundation, Mrs. Robin Muldor-Engram '87; Founding Principal of Black Male Voter Project and Mayor of Enfield, NC, Mr. William Mondale Robinson '11; Retired Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Alumni Affairs Director, Dr. Willie J. Tabor '71; Entrepreneur and Philanthropist, Mr. Troy Lamont Veale '95; Pastor and Community Leader, Reverend Dr. Monte D. Witherspoon-Brown '06; and Executive Assistant to the President and Vice President of Communications, Dr. State W. Alexander, III.



A highlight of the evening was alumnus and 2023 honoree William Mondale Robinson pledging \$600,000 over a ten year span, and the surprise induction of Dr. State Alexander. In closing, President Davis affirmed to the honorees, "We need more people like you to help sustain the viability of historic black colleges and universities, especially our beloved Living-

2023 LC NPHC at City Hall

Submitted by the Star of Zion

Under the leadership of Associate Vice President of Student Affairs and Student Engagement Terri Stevenson, Livingstone College's PanHellenic Council met at Rowan County's City Hall on February 7, 2023 in an effort to recognize the contributions of Black Greek-lettered organizations to the local town and beyond. Approximately 50 members of the nine organizations joined Stevenson as she read the following before the members of City Council.

Recognizing African American history is evident 365 days of the year, we are collectively appreciative of this opportunity afforded by our Mayor, Mayor Pro-Tem, City Council and City Hall staff. With sincere humility, we recognize living and triumphant legends who have helped shape Salisbury-Rowan history. It is their tireless labor and greatness on whose shoulders we stand.

These individuals were and still are embedded in the community and have always exhibited excellence. We attend church with them, and they celebrate and mourn with us. They are our community. They are black history!

We are here collectively to commemorate the City of Salisbury and Rowan County work of countless fellow members of our nine National Pan Hellenic Council (NPHC) organizations, most of whom shared an affiliation with this city's treasure, Livingstone College.

Servant- leadership is what each NPHC member commits as citizens in whatever community we reside. Livingstone College's 13th President Dr. Anthony J. Davis reminds us, "If service is beneath us, then leadership is beyond us." Whereas each of us, the nine NPHC organizations have chapters through the world. In Salisbury, members of these organizations are represented tonight, and are permanently positioned in history for their sacrifices and leadership. They include; Honorable Mayor Wiley Lash, Honorable Mayor Alvina Heggins, Honorable Mayor Pro-Tem O.K. Beatty, longest serving councilman William Pete Kennedy, Granite Quarry Mayor Mary Ponds, National NEA President Elizabeth Duncan Koontz, longest serving East Spencer Alderman, John Noble,

and former County Commissioner, George Knox. All are members of one of these nine NPHC organizations, and there are still countless of others who are currently serving in various capacities today.



The nine organizations are all represented here tonight; Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated, and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Incorporated.

We extend a special thank you to the Livingstone College students for leading this initiative and who are in attendance tonight. They are the 'why' Livingstone College is committed to voter engagement. These student leaders will one day become City Council leaders and beyond. Again, we are grateful for the opportunity to reflect on how the City of Salisbury has been uniquely progressive and largely because of people who have taken a lifelong oath to serve the communities in which we live through these Black Greek letter organizations known as the National Pan-Hellenic Council. Our colors may be different but our commonality is service.

Say His Name

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Holy Orders: Reimagining Biblical Holiness Through the Experiences of Black Women in America as a Theological Standard of Reconciliation

Submitted by Angellica S. Sweat

For I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt, to be your God; you shall be holy, for I am holy. –Leviticus 11:45

Black women are holy. Naming black women as holy requires a subversive theological interpretation to homogenic renderings of biblical text related to sanctification, purity, and holiness. God's first order to Israel in Leviticus 11:44-45 to become holy in response to God's holiness, offers an invitation to expanded theological definitions of holy with respect to race, gender, and class. Previously interpreted through lens of Eurocentric biases and patriarchy, commentators have employed the Levitical laws to impose control upon African Americans. While theological discourse has primarily focused on latter chapters of Leviticus for defining holiness, I contend that God's initial order to the exiled community of Israel to 'become' holy reinstates a theological precedent for reconciliation whereby black women can be redeemed as holy. It is on these premise that I propose a womanist methodological framework of Leviticus 11:45 to become a standard for reconciliation of Black Women in America.

Womanism refers to "black feminist" approach "committed to the survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female." To subvert biblical interpretations of holiness and racial ideologies, black women must be preserved as a source of holy presence both in scripture and society. With over two hundred years of enslavement, followed by another two hundred years of systemic oppression, the ongoing estrangement of African Americans from biblical interpretation necessitates these three questions: (1) What constitutes holiness within

for those who are enslaved? (2) How can the biblical laws help us to reimagine the religious identity of African Americans outside of traditional biblical interpretations? and (3) What interpretations of holiness emerge from the centering of black women and their lived experiences as viable sources of biblical interpretation?

Black Antiquity and Blackness

Held in contention with these questions is the religious identity of black women in America underwritten by Eurocentric patriarchal understandings of scripture. Monique Moultrie in her book *Passionate and Pious*, points out how scripture has justified the sanctification of the black woman as a means of becoming holy. Biblical antiquity reveals a similar ideology related to the treatment of women. In Torah, the sacred agency and body of women is dehumanized through acts of rape, incest, trauma, violence, and upheld as sacrificial societal offerings within Israelite society. Narratives that negatively depict women such as Eve's decision to partake in wisdom in the Genesis, Jezebel's sexual independence are offered as symbols of immorality. Whereas, narratives such as Deborah devotion to God in judging nations, Esther sacrifice of personal choice for the Jews, and Bath-Jephthah's death for her father's vow points toward a subversion patriarchal structure and the sacrifice of personhood as means to redeem women.

Renderings of text such as the curse of Ham, constructs of master-slave dominance, holiness codes, and divine conquest through genocide further add tension to the biblical hermeneutic by endorsing whiteness as a standard for redemption, chattel slavery as God's

will, black bodies as needing to be subjugated, and violence as God ordained respectively. Thus, black women are caught in the biblical cross hairs of race and gender. Valerie Cooper expresses this “double dilemma” of black women by arguing that black women in America like Bat-Jephthah are “excluded from the centers of power by virtue of her gender and by virtue of her race.” Upheld as the catalyst towards sin and the agents of redemption, women of the African Diaspora have become casualties of Western Christianity’s interpretations of biblical holiness.

Holiness Movements of the Early Church

Those who hold the ability to translate scripture, become the primary source for scriptural authority of both God and creation. Jeffrey Stackert commentary on Leviticus suggest that the priestly perspective of Leviticus aids to demonstrate God as the Holy One who “dwells in splendid and uninterrupted repose.” For Israel, God’s declaration of singular lordship and relationship to Israel as YHWH (יהוה) demonstrates God’s intention of inhabitation with creation. This situates Israel in the Torah as being intrinsically connected to the creation narrative, the Abram promise of descendants, exilic redemption, and covenant of God’s habitation. By claiming to be YHWH, God redeems the formerly enslaved Israel and reconnects Israel back to their original identify found in creation. First passed through oral tradition, the book of Leviticus offers an “an embodied and enacted spirituality that cannot be abstracted from physical, social, and economic practices.”

God’s Desire for Holiness

Early translations associated with holiness upheld Eurocentric dominance and dismembered creation as having hierarchal order through patriarchy as early as the 16th century. French theologian, John Calvin’s explanation of holiness begins with the total depravity of humanity within proximity to a holy God. Calvin distinguishes humanity as neither equal nor in relationship with God. Calvin further argues that such impurity influences our inability to see our individual humanity as unholy; hence, proof of holiness is attainable in the reflection of a holy God alone. Calvin’s beliefs suggest that individual sin is only redeemable through progressive acts of stringent obedience to God. Unsupported by the biblical text, claims of obedience come after Israel receive covenant and become exiled from Egypt. God’s choice to dwell among Earth and with Israel precedes obedience; thus, holiness is an invoked response to God’s faithfulness rather than an avenue for holiness among the enslaved.

These acts give way to the 17th century Puritan ideologies which upheld scripture as the authoritative power for redemption from the inevitable sinfulness found in civilization. Both Calvin’s and Puritan renderings of holiness delineate social or communal responsibility as a source of sin and redemption. Both suggest a literal reading of God’s order of holiness as being singular and unattainable due to human nature. Despite this, Leviticus point toward holiness being associated with and through union with God. Those exiled by Babylonians or by Europeans can hence find solace in their redemption not predicated by their own holiness, but by the holiness of a God who desires to dwell and fellowship with creation.

Humanity’s Identity Beyond the Law

John Wesley in the 18th century uses both Calvin’s progression towards holiness and Puritan strict adherence to biblical text to formulate faith in the law. For Wesley, faith does not negate the necessity of the biblical law; rather it upholds the scripture as a source whereby humanity is justified. In a sermon Wesley suggests that “the whole law of God is holy, just and good...” Wesley concludes, “God is holy; I am unholy.” The distinguishing of God as holy and humanity as unholy beckons further consideration as to God’s request of the Israel community. God states to Israel, “you shall be” holy. The primitive root in Hebrew translation is קָדַשׁ. First noted in Genesis when God beckons the becoming of creation by saying “let there be.” This is to suggest that what God beckons to become has no capability of becoming. Why then would God demand holiness of Israel if not attainable?

Wesley’s adherence to God as holy is a direct dissent of his claim of humanity inability to be viewed and upheld as holy. Such prescriptive theology only is logical if trying to exclude holiness from a sect of humanity – such as African American or women. God demands holiness because holiness is within all of humanities capability.

Holy Communion

While it is noted as God speaking to Moses, the intended audience of the text seems to expand the tribe of Levi, a male order of priest, and to the those of exile, which by circumstance would include women, daughter, and sons. Wil Gafney advises that following exile, that the constructed identity of Israel is culturally based and diverse due to marriage to non-Israelite women listed in the latter parts of Genesis and Exodus. By making this claim, Gafney uplifts two critical considerations regarding the community of exile who hear the oration of God as both multiethnic and multigendered. Hence the recognition of holiness is not limited to those of one gender or ethnicity. Subsequently, the holy order given by God is indicative of community from diverse backgrounds

Israel’s adoption by God in fellowship and identity as holy reiterates communion with creation. Leviticus 11 makes clear the relationship between physical and biological matters and the religious identity of Israel and the Genesis creation story. 19th and 20th century interpretations of holiness excluded holiness as an ecological union. Sanctification and behavioral based purity focused on the responsibility of individuals to uphold their own holiness. While Leviticus maintains the separation between ordinary and holy, clean, and unclean, pure and impurity, close readings of the text reveal God’s intention for holiness to include creation. Leviticus 11 mirrors original command for humanity to maintain and live in union with creation noted in Genesis 2:15. Just as God desires to inhabit Earth, Leviticus ensures that humanity has divine responsibility for making earth suitable for dwelling.

Reclaiming Black Women as Holy

To be holy, is to be in harmonious and divine fellowship with self, God, creation, and humanity. African Americans have long created a “canon outside of the cannon.” The canonical interpretation offered in Leviticus allow for those enslaved and their descendants to regain scriptural authority and identify holy.

In *Womanist Midrash: A Reintroduction to the Women of the Torah and Throne*, biblical Gafney offers a womanist framework for introducing the narratives of marginalized alongside that of dominate interpretations. Gafney proposes a midrash where individuals engage in interpreting the Torah through historical social critique and with the invisible narrative of the marginalized in an ongoing dialogue. While Gaffney acknowledges that the Hebrew text does not acknowledge nor uphold the experiences of the enslaved, as well as, women and girls, Mitzi Smith shows the impact of such isolation and the threat it imposes to the survival of black women. Smith adds to the womanist endeavors implying that womanism “seeks to eradicate hegemonic interlocking systems of oppression.”

By upholding black women as sources of holiness, womanist theology makes space for holiness to be reimagined beyond the interpretations of oppressive structures and marginalization. Just as Israel could declare if God is holy, we are holy, black women are affirmed as holy. Neither act nor obedience to constructs of society can justify black women as holy. Black women are holy and must be seen as holy due to their innate creation. As God reminded Israel of their Exile, the inclusion of gender and ethnic diversity also becomes holy. Composed of diverse cultures, Israel’s holiness is not predicated upon genetics or predisposition. Israel is holy with and through their diversity. Counter narratives that perpetuate blackness as unholy and excluded those due to race, gender, and class must be exorcised from communities of faith. Such God talk does not support or uphold, the community in which God calls holy. Understanding both the contextual and universal implications of holiness, those of the Earth have a responsibility to protect the Earth. As a result, to be holy becomes more than the prescriptive standard for

behavior; to be holy is to be restored back to union with God as originally intended.

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Super Sunday at the Theater

Submitted by Rev. Dierdre Parker-Rowson
 Entertainment_Arts@StarofZion.org, The Star of Zion
 Email: Entertainment_Arts@StarofZion.org

February 12, 2023

Raleigh, NC- On Sunday February 12, 2023, there was a phenomenal occurrence in America. No, not two black men at the helm of opposing football teams in the Superbowl. That was phenomenal, but that is not the only phenomenal occurrence in America. The Duke Energy Center for the Performing Arts, in Raleigh, NC was the place of a sold out showing of DREAMGIRLS!

This show, based loosely on the Motown Girl groups of the 60's, follows three young ladies on their quest for stardom in the music industry. These young ladies are surrounded by men who orchestrate, direct, and ultimately damage the bond of the three of young girls as they grow to womanhood. This show made its Broadway debut on December 21, 1981 at the Imperial Theater with Jennifer Holiday, The Honorable Sheryl Lee Ralph, and Loretta Devine as the Dreams and has been trilling and exciting audiences ever since. In 2006 Dreamgirls became a movie which garnered an Oscar for Jennifer Hudson for her performance as Effie White. The performance that went down on Superbowl Sunday was as phenomenal as the fact that it was sold out on one of the biggest "stay-at-home-and-watch-TV" nights in the country.

From the sound of the cow bell for the opening number, "I'm Looking for Something" to the final "Baby, we'll be there...", this show was a fast-paced journey through the world of R&B and the challenges that the Dreams faced as black women in America in a time when the world was reluctantly opening up for more opportunities for them.

Of this production, Director/Choreographer Christopher D. Betts, says "Not unlike the world of the play's circumstances, we are currently living in a moment of civil rights activism and social Justice. The American Theatre is undergoing a social Justice reckoning, and the industry is beginning to include people who belong to the communities represented onstage, as leaders of the theatrical process. My leading this theatrical



process is an example of this."

The costumes were vibrantly colorful, and matched perfectly the era they were meant to portray. The staging and choreography assisted in the masterful way in which this story was told. But it was the voices and the energy of the cast that made this sold out show the exciting and memorable theater-going experience that it was.

These actors have experience in multiple Broadway shows, and other credits on the big screen and small screen. They are singer and back-up singer for some of the most popular music artists of today. The stand out performer of Superbowl Sunday's show had to be Saint Aubyn as Jimmy Thunder Early. Aubyn's theater credits include *Ain't Too Proud: The Life and Times of the Temptations*, for which he received a grammy nomination. His vocal range was astounding. His comedic timing was impeccable, and his energy was infectious. It was the non-verbals that drew the audience in. The way he used his facial expressions and body posture, let you know that his character was fully alive in the moment. He was not merely hitting his mark and waiting for his turn to deliver his lines. Saint Aubyn brought *Thunder to Jimmy Early*.

The Role of Effie White was masterfully played by mara Jade, who is a vocalist, actress, songwriter and producer. John Legend describes her voice as having "fire in it." She has electrified stages singing with the likes of Madonna, John Legend, PJ Morton, Usher, and Tori Kelly. Electrify us she did, with a show-stopping, ovation-inducing version of *I Am Telling You, I'm not Going*.

Lorrell was Played by NYA, whose credits include the US National Tour of Motown the Musical. Her rendition of *Aint no Party* was a cheeky combination of fun and frustration. To round out the dreams, Deena was played by Najah Hetsberger. The chemistry between the principal characters was obvious and made everyone of their interactions *feel* real. The audience was able to feel as if we *all* were a part of the giant tree, branching out toward the sky.

The GOAT is an EGOT

Submitted by Rev. Dierdre Parker-Rowson
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February 6, 2023

Charlotte, NC-When it comes to eliciting honest, gut wrenching, tear-streaked, snotty-nosed, raw emotion, *nobody* can deliver like Viola Davis. She is the G.O.A.T. She has graced the stage, the big screen, the small screen, and all points in between. Her work has been recognized by her peers, the press and many other organizations that reward individual exceptionalism. Davis won the Emmy for her role as Analise Keating in her TV show *How to Get Away with Murder*, making her the first black woman to win the *Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Drama Series* in 2015. She won the Oscar for Best Supporting Actress in the movie *Fences* in 2017. That performance also garnered awards from The British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA), and the Golden Globes. She won her *first* Tony for her performance in the role of *Tanya* in August Wilson's *King Hedley II*.

As of this year's Grammy Awards, not only is Viola Davis the GOAT, she is now an EGOT. She won the Grammy for *Best Spoken Word Album* for her narration and storytelling of the audio version of her book, *Finding Me*.

With this win, Viola Davis has joined an elite group of entertainers who have received an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony awards. *EGOT*. Viola Davis, along with Whoopi Goldberg, and Jennifer Hudson, make up the triumvirate of *black women* who

have achieved this coveted acronym.



The story that Davis tells in her memoir, reminds us of the obstacles that we all face every day. It also encourages us to continue until we overcome. Her life, her achievements and her coveted EGOT status prove that all things truly do work together for good.

Viola Davis has taken all the things that would have destroyed her, and used them to lift as she climbs. Davis and her husband, Julius Tennon, have launched a production company, JuVee Productions. This company develops and produces independent film, television, and theater that tells stories that are more inclusive of the wide spectrum of humanity. Among her many achievements, Viola Davis is an advocate for human rights and the equal treatment of women; especially women of color. This EGOT is truly the GOAT.



Misty Copeland's The Wind at My Back: A Beautiful Tribute to a Mentor

Submitted by Rev. Dierdre Parker-Rowson
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February 15, 2023

Charlotte, NC- Misty Copeland has broken many racial barriers in the ballet world but also has enlightened American culture of the racial parallelism between ballet and America. She no longer must prove herself, yet she keeps proving why she is celebrated as one of the greatest ballet dancers of our generation. In her latest book, *The Wind at My Back: Resilience, Grace, and Other Gifts from My Mentor, Raven Wilkinson*, Copeland illustrates the destined meeting and beautiful relationship between herself and mentor, the late Raven Wilkinson: the first Black woman to receive a contract with a major ballet company—The Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in 1955.

When they first met, Wilkinson had recently lost her job of thirty years at the New York City Opera, having performed as a dancer turned character actress. Copeland was in a place of stagnancy as a solo dancer with American Ballet Theater. They needed each other. Copeland writes: "I truly believed that [Raven] would be the wind at my back that I'd been searching for my whole career, that extra push to help me prove not only to the world, but also to myself, that I'm enough." Misty and Raven's budding relationship became a generational legacy built by resiliency in a racially exclusive art form.

Copeland's *The Wind At My Back* builds upon her poignantly written 2014 debut memoir, *Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina*. She writes with more grit and a keener cultural sensibility of the barriers and the breakthroughs experienced by Black ballet dancers in the historically white and exclusive ballet world. Copeland writes that Wilkinson's



"gentle manner and infinite patience helped me to open up about my deepest fears, that like so many other Black ballerinas before me, I wouldn't get to see the full realization of my dream: that one day I could shatter the glass ceiling." Having experienced numerous threats of violence and intimidation by the Ku Klux Klan in the 1950s during her career with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, Wilkinson's grace and fortitude inspired Copeland to begin pushing her artistic director at ABT to see her value as a ballet dancer capable of principal roles—which would eventually come with her coveted Firebird role in 2012.

Throughout their seven-year friendship, leading to Wilkinson's death in 2018, Wilkinson pours into Copeland not only as a ballerina but as a woman. Copeland celebrates the myriad ways Wilkinson supported her, including in her relationship with her husband, Olu, during their dating years. Copeland says that Raven was "that missing piece that helped me to connect the power I felt onstage to the power I held off it."

The Wind At My Back: Resilience, Grace, and Other Gifts from My Mentor is a touching tribute from the younger generation to the elder generation, with the intersection of ballet and race as the centerpiece. For Copeland, her memoir reveals the importance of a mentor, who like Wilkinson, is willing to pour into the next generation of world-changers humbly, intentionally, and lovingly.

Asia Brian Brown is the Author of *Take Me Back Home New Orleans*, and *Cemetery Psalms*, both available @Amazon.com

Misty Copeland Photo Credit: Kevin Winter/ GETTY

Fyzical Therapy & Balance Center Improving Patient Well-Being

Submitted by Daman De Leon
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On Friday, February 3rd, 2023, I had the opportunity to interview two Zionites and their essential contributions to their community. Dr. Ryan Hubbard, along with his brother, Mr. Johnathan K. Hubbard are the founders of the Fyzical Therapy & Balance Center, located in Charlotte, North Carolina. The Center offers a variety of therapeutic remedial exercises and programs to promote physical therapy to individuals from all walks of life. I was privileged to bear witness to some of the apparatus used for the physical therapy sessions. The Fyzical Therapy & Balance Center boasts of several certified Physical Therapists with many years of experience.



Located in the prestigious Pineville area, the Center conveniently is innovating various programs in alliance with other businesses/groups to promote various health-based initiatives to serve the community-at-large. Dr. & Mr. Hubbard's vision entails a healthier society where physical therapy services increase the Patient's overall outlook on life.

Native Charlotteans, the Hubbard's were actively proud member of the Marvin AME Zion Church located in Waxhaw, NC. They received their educations at Charlotte Christian School and Davidson College. Johnathan has a vast financial background for Wachovia, Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley, and currently serves as a complex director leading the wealth-management for Ameriprise, based out of Chicago. Dr. Hubbard completed medical school at the Georgetown University School of Medicine, followed by training in physical-medicine and rehabilitation for four years at the world-rekknowned Mayo-Clinic. Dr. Hubbard has also

worked with Dr. James Andrews and the world-rekknowned Andrews-Institute in Minneapolis, MN. Dr. Hubbard currently serves as a practicing physician in Sports-Medicine in the Washington D.C. area.

"One of the main ideas is to put the Patients first, meet the Patients where they are, and help them get back to a functional place"

-Dr. Ryan Hubbard

Dr. & Mr. Hubbard's primary vision is to provide the physical therapeutic services needed at a more sufficient rate, providing additional options were rehabilitation can be more affordable for certain groups of people, and address an issue that continues to affect African-American Communities and other marginalized communities of color.

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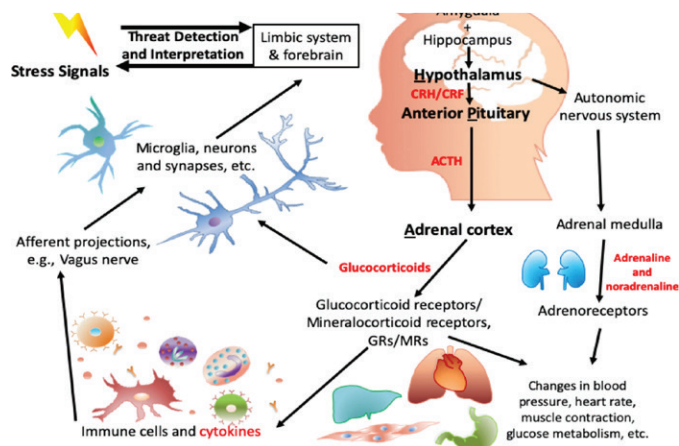
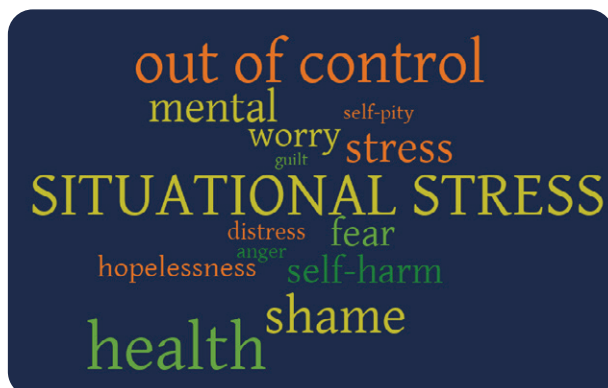
HEALTH & Wellness

Stress: A Silent Assassin

Submitted by Daman De Leon
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Being stressed is more harmful than you realize. 2 out of every 5 Americans are stressed and don't realize it. Various factors contribute to one being stressed out, however the daily routine of our everyday transactions play the most pivotal role in how we allow ourselves to become stressed.

Stress leeches health out of your body, and, if not adequately mitigated, can eventually lead to anxiety. Stress and anxiety not only negatively affect your emotional and mental health, but they can also weak havoc on your physical body. Here are some of the most common physical symptoms of stress:



Your heart. Stress causes the heart to speed up. Often, blood pressure increases and your heart seems to be ready to burst out of your chest. This increased demand on the heart can also produce an irregular heartbeat called an arrhythmia.

Your lungs. People suffering from high stress tend to breathe heavily and rapidly, putting a heavy strain on their lungs. Sometimes this can result in a panic attack. During a panic attack, one of the primary symptoms is gasping for air, resulting in hyperventilation. This rapid intake of air provides more oxygen than your body actually needs and results in a corresponding drop in carbon dioxide in your blood. This drop forces your heart to work even harder and strains your respiratory system.

Your stomach. Stress really puts a heavy strain on your gastrointestinal system. The longer your stomach stays in a state of agitation, the greater the possibility of ulcers and irritable bowel syndrome. You can experience all the symptoms of a digestive system out of balance: indigestions, acid reflux, constipation, nausea, and diarrhea.

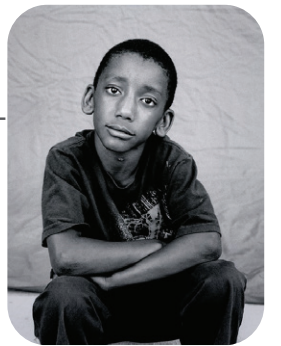
Your muscles. Many people manifest their stress in a specific region of the body, such as the back, face, or neck. The constant contraction of these muscles leads to tension and pain. The longer tension is put on these muscles, the harder it is to release the resulting knots and experience true relaxation, even in sleep—some people clench their face and jaw muscles and grind their teeth.

Your skin. Stress has a way of returning your skin to a state of adolescence—skin prone to breakouts of rashes, acne, and psoriasis.

Your immune system. Stress is a little like the story of the boy who cried wolf. In this story, a young boy persistently sounds the alert, warn-

ing of a wolf. Of course, each time is a hoax; there is no wolf. When you are constantly under stress, you are yelling wolf to your immune system. Eventually, it wears down and can no longer respond appropriately to a real danger.

Your reproductive system. Chronic stress can result in painful periods and fertility issues. It's as if your body recognizes "now is not a good time" and reduces your chances for reproduction.



Your weight. Your body has a variety of stress hormones. One is cortisol, which increases blood sugar levels while suppressing the immune system. Its job during stress is to get you physically pumped up with energy and systemically less reactive. While this is a good idea if you need to race across an airport to catch your plane, it's not especially helpful in everyday life. Cortisol causes people to put on excess weight, leading to hypertension and cardiovascular problems.

Your Mind/Brain. Stress is painful, especially when it is manifested in chronic headaches and migraines. Females are almost twice as susceptible to tension headaches than men.

It is no wonder, with the range of physical symptoms associated with stress and anxiety that people search for answers. If you are struggling with some of the physical symptoms of stress or anxiety, here are some common ways to combat the stress in your life:

- Exercise
- Meditation
- Yoga
- Deep breathing
- Eating healthy
- Getting adequate sleep
- Spending time with people you enjoy
- Scheduling time to focus on your favorite hobbies
- Professional help

Managing how we handle our bodies is essential to enjoying a sustainable existence. TRUE wealth is HEALTH, and we are given only one body, thus we are ordered by God our Creator to be good stewards (1 Timothy 4:8)

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Official Statement

of the Board of Bishops of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Regarding the Killing of Tyre Nichols

"Thus says the Lord; A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more."
(Jeremiah 31:15 NRSVue)

We find ourselves once again agonizing and lamenting the murder of another black life by police violence. While every act of violence is painful, when it comes at the hands of those who are sworn to protect and to serve, it is all the more evil. Our moral consciousness and our shared humanity demand that we never become numb to such devaluing of human life.

Tyre Nichols name is added to the incomprehensibly long list of those who've suffered public lynchings. Emmett Till, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and so many others, are incontrovertible evidence of America's deep fear, devaluing, and even loathing, of black and brown bodies. The fact that this most recent fatal assault came at the hands of five black police officers sharpens the pain while proving the depth and breath of the systemic culture that refuses to see the Image of GOD in Black lives.

Another mother weeps, another father mourns, another community is outraged, and yet not one of us believes this will be the last time; however this perpetual assault on black lives must be continually confronted with every fiber of our being until it does end. Our fervent prayers are lifted as we also protest. We lament as we also demand that our political leaders legislate. Congress must pass the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act. We also support Attorney Benjamin Crump's call for the passage of "Tyre's Law" to enforce accountability for police to intervene when they witness unlawful practices.

So, yes we pray for the family of Tyre Nichols. We pray for the Memphis community and for our nation. We pray for Memphis Police Chief Cerelyn "CJ" Davis, a life-long member of the AME Zion Church, who has acted swiftly, courageously, and with appropriate measures to ensure accountability and transparency. Her rapid response, compassion, and integrity must become a model for law enforcement agencies nationwide.

United in the demand for justice and the prayer for healing.

The Board of Bishops of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

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DONE THIS THE 31ST DAY OF JANUARY, 2023

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Clinton College Girls Basketball

Submitted by Zion Shoulders
Sports Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: Sports@StarofZion.org

College Basketball is one of the most viewed sports. It's filled with action— whether the men's or the women's teams are playing, one can always expect an exciting match. One of the few negative aspects of college basketball is that we do not get to see some of the teams we love play all the time. The small schools. The Private Colleges. The HBCUs. It's unfair because these athletes compete at a very high and exciting level also, but don't always have the media attention or budget to gain exposure nationally.

16 points per Game, 46% from the field, along with 5 rebounds and 3 assists is an incredible stat line. The only problem is that many probably don't know who this Superstar is. Rayanna Davis is her name. A 5'6 guard from Newberry, South Carolina who is dominating this season and has thus far helped lead her Clinton College Gold Bears women's team to a current 13-2 record.

It's March, which means it's playoff time. As the season was coming to a close, I talked to Coach Quick, The head coach of Clinton College's Women's basketball team. I wanted to talk to one of his superstar players and get his opinion on whom the right person would be. Before I could finish my sentence, Coach Quick said "How about Rayanna?". I knew something good was coming after that swift response.



Rayanna Davis is the current captain of her Gold Bears women's team. Even though she looks like a superstar this year, she explained to me that her previous ones were not always this good.

"I didn't get to play that much my first year." Rayanna said. During her freshman season at Clinton, Rayanna was the backup guard. She explained how frustrated she was because she didn't really get much time on the court. "I mean when the starting guard got tired, I would sub in, but not as much as I hoped to". So many athletes feel frustrated when they can't immediately translate their high school game into a college setting. She explained to me that she never sat on the bench before in her career, so this was an unfamiliar feeling for her. Rayanna didn't let that stop her though. She explained to me, It just made her work harder and go harder in practice.

Rayanna is a true hooper. After graduating with her Associate's degree at 21, she went back home and became a head coach. She was the Women's head coach for a year at Mid-Carolina Middle School in South Carolina, where she helped influence and teach youth about the game she loves. Rayanna's love for the game never wavered and her ultimate goal was just to stay around it. When Clinton College opened its Bachelor's program in Business Administration, Rayanna made the decision to return in 2021.

I asked Rayanna what she loves most about her basketball team and coaches, and she responded by saying, "It's a family". When schools value an athlete as if they're their own children, that is when lives start to change. Clinton College has been shaking up the collegiate world in every aspect, and it is amazing to see. Good Luck to Rayanna and The Lady Golden Bears as they push to win a championship this year.



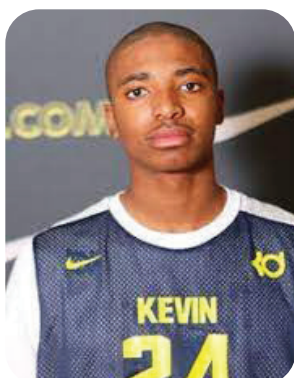
Mikal Bridges

Submitted by Zion Shoulders
Sports Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: Sports@StarofZion.org

Professional sports in America does a great job implementing rules and regulations. We see athletes all the time get penalized for various things. From little rule breaks like wearing the wrong color shoestrings in a game, to much larger and more serious situations in life like Domestic Violence or assault. The executives of various professional leagues want to ensure players are always held accountable. But is respect always shown both ways?

Over the past few years, one aspect I find odd in professional sports is players find out that they are being traded via social media and not firsthand from the organization they were a part of. Some players have spent their entire careers playing for one team. Blood, Sweat, Tears, and everything above, and then find out from a friend via text that they were just traded.

Mikal Bridges is a current NBA basketball player for the Brooklyn Nets. Prior to his time at the Nets, he played for the Phoenix Suns. Other than being one of the best 2-way players in the league, he has been doing something special for a very long time now. He never missed a game. Dating back to his high school days, Mikal Bridges has never missed a basketball game. It is something that is quite rare because being a professional athlete, you take so much wear and tear on your body you are bound to at least miss a game. Not Mikal Bridges. From



his High school days to Villanova to the NBA, he has yet to miss a game.

On February 9 at 1:05 am, A NBA insider reported that Mikal Bridges had been traded in a deal that swapped him and Kevin Durant. One would think players would be one of the first to know when they are traded, but that is far from the truth.

"He was just like I'm sorry," Bridges said.

His former teammate, Damion Lee called him and broke the news to him. He had no clue what Damion Lee was talking about until he went on his phone to check Twitter to see that he was traded.

This is a huge problem when it comes to these professional leagues. They want to implement practices that are put in place to help make the game a better and safer place for everybody, and then look over the obvious practices of ethics and morality when dealing with its players

One of Mikal Bridges pinned tweets on Twitter had a picture of him hugging his mother on draft night with the caption "I don't ever want to leave @Suns". Mikal loved that place like home. It's been all he knew for the past 5 years. And in a blink of an eye, he's gone like nothing

The NBA is a business first. Players know what they get themselves into when they sign their first contract. Being traded is all a part of the game, but there has to be some moral and ethical standards added to ensure respect on both ends.



Men's Golf Receives Championship Rings

Submitted by Tiana Cephers
Sports Information Director
tcephers@livingstone.edu

January 30, 2023

The Livingstone College Men's golf team was honored for its successes during the 2021-22 season and was awarded the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Championship rings on Saturday during halftime of the men's basketball game against Winston Salem State University.

Following a successful regular season, the Blue Bears finished the two-round championship tournament with a team score of 582 (+14) to capture their first title since 2018. The team was also ranked the No. 1 HBCU (Historically Black College or University) Division II team in the nation.

Xavier Proctor of Livingstone College was also named 2022 CIAA Player of the Year while Graham of Virginia Union was named 2022 CIAA Rookie of the Year.

Livingstone College Head Coach Andre Springs was named 2022 CIAA Coach of the Year after leading the Blue Bears to four first-place finishes in CIAA Southern Division



matches during the regular season.

Following the championship event, the 2022 All-CIAA Golf team featured the top five players from both the CIAA Northern and Southern Division based on average scores during the regular season.

Those selections included four members of the Livingstone College men's golf team, Xavier Proctor, Ronald Otile, Emmanuel Jakisa and Joel Basalaine.



2022 CIAA Golf Championship All-Tournament Team

Joel Basalaine, Livingstone – Low Medalist

Just Like Everyone Else

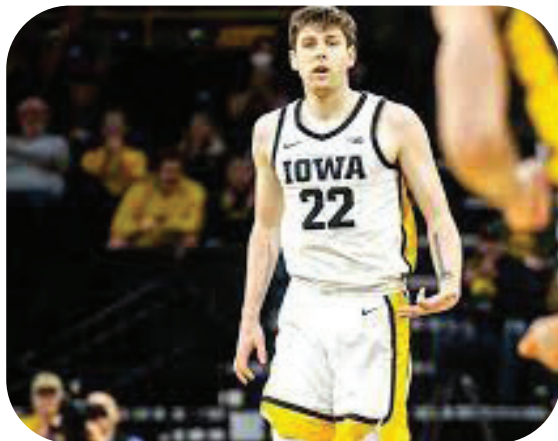
Submitted by Zion Shoulders
Sports Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: Sports@StarofZion.org

One aspect that seems to always be overshadowed is athletes' mental health. I'm not sure if it is because of the money they make or their popularity, but it is often overshadowed. Imagine going to your job and every single day and doing one simple thing wrong and having 50,000 people criticizing and talking about you. It would take a toll. But life is more than working, so when these athletes have to go through the mental distress of the media and fans alongside just the natural occurrences of everyday life, it can cause drastic mental health issues.

A University of Iowa forward, Patrick McCaffrey, did what we haven't seen many athletes do yet. He took a mental health break. Patrick discussed via social Media in January that he needed help battling his anxiety and was stepping away from the game indefinitely. It is one of the first times we have seen an athlete openly discuss their battles with mental health.

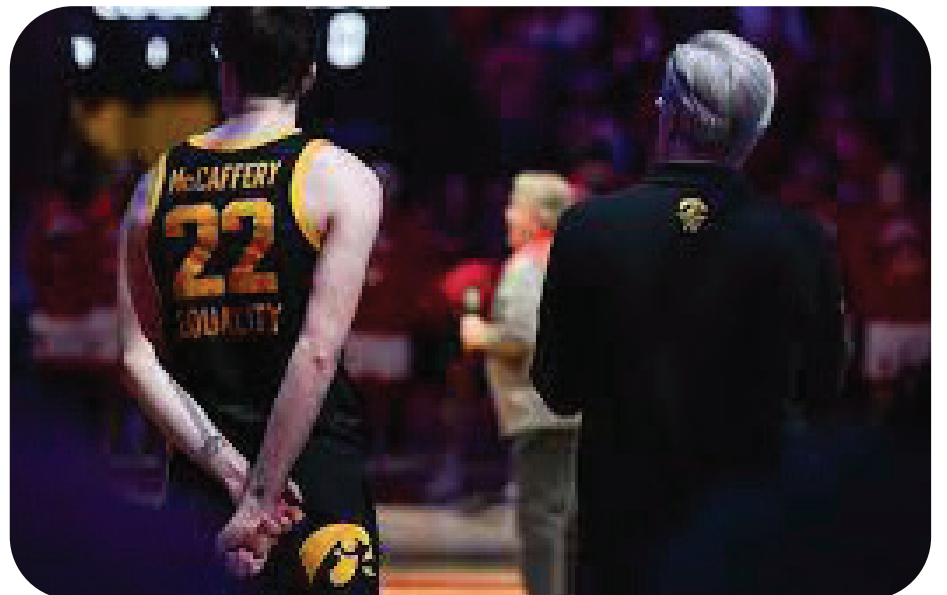
3 weeks after stepping away from the game, Patrick was ready to get back with his team. When about to check in to the game for the first time in over 23 days, the crowd gave him a well deserved standing ovation.

Patrick didn't have to make the announcement he was stepping away from the game, but he did. He could've been discreet about his situation and let everything be handled privately and not in the public eye.



When Patrick did this in January, he helped set a standard. He helped athletes understand it's ok to take a break. It's ok if this game is taking a toll on you. It's ok to fix yourself before you give your all to a university or team.

Mental health is real. It can affect anybody and everybody. Being an athlete is no different, and I hope Patrick helped set the precedent for mental health breaks in sports.



Elizabeth (Connie) Harrison Jackson

Elizabeth (Connie) Harrison Jackson passed on to be with the Lord on December 21, 2022. She began a remarkable life on August 31, 1955 in Loudon, TN to the late Reverend Nathaniel Harrison and the late Mary-Katherine Brown Faulkner. She is preceded in death by her mother-in-law, Edith Davis Jackson and one sister, Mardeskia Kay Mason.

Elizabeth accepted Christ as her Lord and Savior at a young age and was baptized at Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Zion (A.M.E Zion) Church in Loudon, TN. She continued to be a faithful and devoted member of the A.M.E. Zion churches, always putting the Lord first. After graduating from Loudon High School in the year of 1974, Elizabeth went on to receive her undergrad degree from Austin Peay, Clarksville, TN. Being a woman who strived for greatness, and one who always pursued knowledge, she acquired 2 master degrees in the fields of Special Education and Business from the Viterbo University in Lacrosse, WI. After obtaining her degrees she became a counselor at Lakeview Rehabilitation Center in Pensacola, FL. Following her success there, Elizabeth relocated to Alabama and took a position with Auburn University Montgomery (A.U.M.) as a counselor for Upward Bound. After several years she took another position at Alabama State University where she received awards for her counseling position at Upward Bound. Life took her back to A.U.M. a year later, where she was promoted to the role of Director of Project Management. She remained there until retirement.

Elizabeth was a devoted member of the A.M.E. Zion Church where she served



in the following capacities: District Officer of Christian Education, a Consecrated Deaconess, President of Lay Council, and Home Mission for the Cahaba Conference. For the last several years Elizabeth devoted her time and worked faithfully as the Secretary for the Cahaba Conference. In addition, Elizabeth has worked voluntarily as the secretary of the Alabama/Florida Episcopal District for over 20 years. Irrespective of what may have been happening in her life, Elizabeth always did what it took to get the job done, often being the only one striving to ensure she completed all task at hand. Her unselfishness and drive will never go unnoticed or forgotten! She was a woman of unconditional love. A woman of faith. A very strong woman who persevered and fought for what she believed in with every breath she had. She gave her all to the work of the Lord, to her husband, her children and her grandchildren. Always unselfish and always putting the needs of others first, she has impacted the lives of so many, and she will be deeply missed. So even though this

ray of light has now returned to the almighty creator, we all shall keep her close in spirit, remembering the amazing woman, wife, mother, family member and friend that she was.

Michelle Earline Cash

Michelle Earline Cash, affectionately known as Mickey, gained her wings on Wednesday January 18, 2023, after a lengthy battle with breast cancer.

Born to Richard Earl Cash and the late Frances Etta Geraldine Eason Cash on May 4, 1959, in Edenton, North Carolina, Mickey grew up in Otisville, NY and graduated from Minisink Valley Central High School in 1977 where she excelled in Academics and Sports and made history as the first African American homecoming queen in the school's history. After high school, Mickey furthered her education at Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mass Media as member of the Eminence class of '81.

After graduation she relocated to Maryland and began her professional career holding positions with Children's Hospital, The National Association of Broadcasting, America Online, and the Department of Transportation and at her time if illness AFL CIO FCU and Hard Rock Café.

In 1985 she joined John Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church under Rev. G. Ray Coleman, where she tirelessly served the Lord and her church on many ministries, clubs, boards, and organizations. Until her transition, Mickey was currently the President of the Local Lay Council of John Wesley, President of the May Birthday Calendar Club, member of the Scholarship Committee, Senior Ladies Usher Board, Fellowship Gospel Choir, member of the Historical Society, member of the Pastors Executive Council, Life Member of the Women's Home and Overseas Missionaries, Co-Director of the Ministry of Care, member of the Dr. E. Franklin Jackson Memorial Flower Club and member of Deaconess Board #1. Her past memberships and service included former Sunday School teacher, member of Hospitality Committee, Board of Trustees, Budget Committee, Zions Finest and member of the board of the John Wesley AMEZ Church Federal Credit Union. She also served as the Financial Secretary for the Washington District/Philadelphia Baltimore Conference under the leadership of Dr. Gregory R. Smith and Dr. Rita J. Colbert.

Always the party planner, Mickey loved family and was a major part of bringing the family together for countless family reunions and other get-togethers.



Left to cherish those memories, her father Richard Cash, 3 brothers Derrick Cash, Rodrick Cash and Bryan Cash and 1 sister Carlee Pitchford (Warren). 3 God Daughters Essence Hudson, niece Mallory Pitchford and niece Haley Pitchford. She also leaves behind 4 nephews Richard Cash, Rodrick Cash, Jr., Bryan Cash, Jr., and Phillip Cash, 4 great nieces, 1 great nephew and a host of aunts, uncles, and cousins. Devoted Cousins Stephanie Hudson, Patience Hudson, Marva Bond, Marchellanie Ingram, Tre'Tel Ingram, Genevie and Bobby Goodman and Michael Goodman and a devoted Aunt Alma "Aunt Jackie" Goodman. Childhood friends Kim Ramsey-White and Christopher Edwards and Hampton friends Stephanie Anderson Fennell, Mrs. Phyllis Anderson,

Rosalyn "Roz" Richardson-Stroble, Rhonda Taylor, Warren Winston and Darlene Jennings-Milner, Bryan "Dap" Moody, Michelle Moore, Maureen "Mo" Page, Caralis "Brue" Kimbrue and Denise Abrams.

There will always be a special connection with the Alto's with an Attitude of the Fellowship Gospel Choir.

A special thanks to a true church family which is John Wesley AME Zion church. Each act of kindness from each and every member has not gone unnoticed. We thank God for allowing our paths to cross.

Mickey never saw a shoe she did not love. She was the proud owner of over 200 pairs of shoes and boots and wore them well.

Mickey's Motto

"BUY THE SHOE AND THE OUTFIT WILL COME!!!!"

Virginia Meritha Woodruff

MISS VIRGINIA MERITHA WOODRUFF was born in Los Angeles, California on July 14, 1954, to the late Rev. Dr. George C. Woodruff, Sr. and Berta Mae Thompson Woodruff.

Virginia accepted Christ at an early age and was a lifelong member of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

Virginia lived in Los Angeles California, Prescott Arizona, Dallas Texas, Norwood and, Salisbury, North Carolina, Indianapolis IN, Raleigh, and Charlotte North Carolina.

Virginia was educated in the public schools of Dallas, Texas and Norwood, North Carolina. She was a graduate of South Stanley High School, Norwood N.C. Virginia was a committed sports enthusiast and while in H.S. she was on the coaching staff with her High School basketball team. Virginia could converse with the best of them when it came to sports - Dallas Cowboys. After High School she continued her education by attending Livingstone College, Salisbury NC.

Virginia was a 1976 graduate of Livingstone College where she was affectionately known as Woody. At Livingstone she sang in the concert choir and pledged Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and she loved being an AKA.

After graduating college with a Bachelor's degree in History and Education Virginia moved to Indianapolis Indiana where she briefly worked at an Insurance Company and did substitute teaching in the Indianapolis Public School System. She quickly decided that the below zero temperature's reminded her of what she missed about N.C. She returned to N.C where she resided in Raleigh and was employed by North Carolina State University. She was a member of Rush Metropolitan AME Zion Church in Raleigh NC where she served as Deaconess, Chairperson of the Board of Trustee and active with the Woman Home and Overseas Missionary Society.



Virginia later moved to Charlotte North Carolina where she transferred her church membership to Marvin AME Zion Church. She remained actively involved with her Church, Social and Community organizations until she experienced health challenges.

Virginia was affectionately known as, the Family Historian because she had such an exceptional memory.

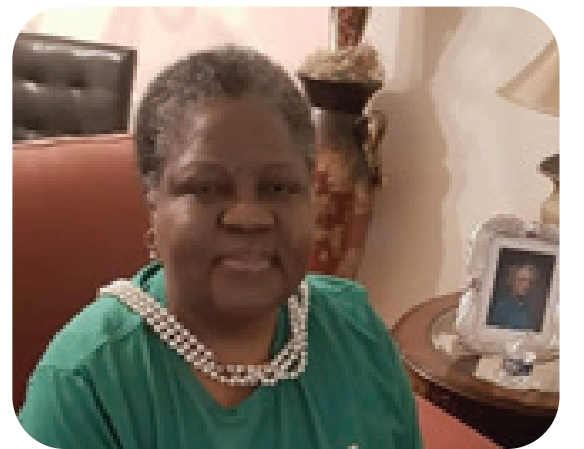
Virginia departed this earthly life on Sunday January 22, 2023, at Mecklenburg Health and Rehabilitation, Charlotte North Carolina. She was preceded in death by her parents Rev. Dr. George C. Woodruff Sr. and Berta Mae Thompson Woodruff; Great, great niece Ny'Lah Woodruff Durham, brother Matthew Thompson, sisters, Gertrude (Trudy) Woodruff, Lola M. Elkins.

She leaves to cherish her memory her siblings – sister, Rev. Elizabeth C. Woodruff (Indianapolis IN); Georgia B. Woodruff (Charlotte NC); brother, Rev. George C. Woodruff Jr. (Boston MA)

Niece - Adele M. Woodruff; Nephew - Derick J. Walker (Indpls. IN); Niece - Mya C.B. Ragland (Hampton GA); Nephew Gregory J. Martin; Niece Christinia J.C. Elkins (Indpls. IN)

Great Nieces - Jamila R. Hughes; Ave'Rein M. Rayner (Indpls. IN); great nephew Andre A. Ragland, Jr. (Hampton GA); Gregory J. Martin Jr. (Indpls. IN); great niece Aymarie B.C. Ragland (Hampton GA)

GG Niece – Genesis QJ Martin; GG nephew Christian J. C. Elkins; GG niece Christiana J.C. Elkins (Indpls. IN), GG nephew Amon M. Liggins, cousins Luther Thompson Jr, Tamaisa Green (James), Darian Woodruff (Monica), Gussie, Virginia (Dooley), Charmyn, Troyce, Famon, and a host of other relatives, play sister Robin Duncan, friends, Chakiyana Boutte and her (AKA) Sorority sisters, church family and friends.



Homeletics Job Description

Hood Theological Seminary (HTS) invites applications for a full-time, tenure-track faculty position in Preaching and Worship at the Assistant or Associate Professor rank. Primary responsibilities include offering required and elective courses in preaching and worship in both the Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry programs, advising and mentoring students, administratively overseeing the Seminary's weekly chapel service, conducting relevant research/scholarly activities in the field, and offering meaningful service to the campus and community. Minimum qualifications include Ph.D. or DMin. by August 2023, potential for excellence in classroom instruction, willingness to work collaboratively with colleagues, and commitment to the Seminary's institutional mission. As HTS also offers both hybrid and online course delivery, experience and/or certification in online instruction is desired. Semester teaching load is two courses in Track I (each course meets Mon., Tu., Wed., or Thu.) that are repeated in Track II (Fri. night or Sat.; i.e., four courses, two preps). Position involves advisement of Doctor of Ministry professional projects as needed.

Please send letter of application, curriculum vitae, single page statement of teaching philosophy, and three letters of recommendation to Rev. J. Frances King at jking@hoodseminary.edu. Deadline to submit application is March 31, 2023.

Hood Theological Seminary, founded in 1879 and located in historic Salisbury NC, is sponsored by the A.M.E. Zion Church, and has a diverse faculty and student body. In 2013 the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada reaffirmed HTS's accreditation for ten years. In 2014 the University Senate of the United Methodist Church reaffirmed HTS's place on its list of approved seminaries.



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Campus Ministry Job Description

WingspanILM is an ecumenical ministry representing the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, the Presbyterian Church (USA), and the United Methodist Church. All these denominations are represented on the board. WingspanILM Board also values and includes student involvement on the board. The campus pastor will be accountable to these four church traditions.

WingspanILM Mission Statement:

Our mission is to help college students explore their faith and to prepare them for serving God and loving others. We seek to create a place where ALL students feel loved and fully accepted, regardless of theological traditions or church backgrounds. Through group discussions, speakers, and fellowship, we want to develop a welcoming place to help students grapple with important questions and develop a deeper faith.

WingspanILM Vision Statement:

Our vision is to assist students in service to God, love toward others, and involvement in the community.

WingspanILM Objectives:

- To create a place where students of varied theological traditions and church backgrounds feel welcome to explore their Christian faith.
- To utilize group discussions, speakers, Bible study, and personal relationship, to help students grapple with important questions, develop a deeper faith, and enjoy Christian fellowship.

Credentials and experience for a UNCW campus minister:

- A heart for college students and a gift for providing a welcoming space for students to be nurtured by the Gospel and disciplined alongside others hungering to follow Christ in this world.
- Degree Credentials: a B.A. or B.S., a M.Div., and preferably experience in ministry with youth, college students, or young adults.

Responsibilities:

- Develop a Christian organization on campus (WingspanILM)
- Meet weekly with participants of this organization.
- Develop personal relationships with students.
- Help students remain grounded and grow in their faith as they attend UNCW.
- Counsel students.
- Develop small groups for Bible study, fellowship, and prayer.
- Cooperate with other campus ministries.
- Encourage students to connect with local churches.
- Be accountable to the WingspanILM board as an employee of the organization.

Salary: \$55,000 plus health insurance and retirement provisions

Full-time employment (averaging 40 hours a week). This ministry requires both structure and flexibility. The campus pastor and student leaders will establish regular worship and programming. The ministry of the campus pastor will align with the schedule of campus life, requiring some weekend commitments and allowing for breaks between semesters and during the summers.

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If interested, send a resume and a cover letter addressing the below question to:
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For Further Questions, contact:

Charlrean Mapson, Board President at PriceCathedralPastor19@gmail.com
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THE VIRGINIA CONFERENCE
QUADRENNIAL CELEBRATION

7:00 P.M.
Friday, April 14, 2023



Honoring
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*"A Woman on a
Mission of Love"*

THE GATEWAY
DINING EVENT CENTER
VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY
ETTRICK, VIRGINIA

For Additional Information Contact:
Ms. Faye Boisseau (804) 307-4747

Samuel DeWitt Procter Conference is 20 years old

Submitted by Rev. Ronald Nathan
 World Politics Editor, The Star Of Zion
 Email: WorldPolitics@StarOfZion.org

The Rev. Samuel DeWitt Procter (1921 – 1997) man of God. The prominent Baptist preacher, civil rights activist and public official left his mark on Duke, Kean, North Carolina Agricultural and Technology State, Richmond, Rutgers, Vanderbilt, Virginia and Union universities.

He further impacted the Abyssinian Baptist Church, Harlem, the American Baptist Churches USA, the National Baptist Convention USA Inc, the United Theological Seminary, and Crozer Theological Seminary,

As a public servant he served the Kennedy administration, the United Negro Fund, the National Urban League and the Children’s Défense Fund. Internationally, he was an associate director of the Peace Corps in Africa. However one of his lasting contributions is the inspiration he gave to the Samuel DeWitt Procter Conference (SDPC) which is celebrates its 20th anniversary this year.

The Samuel DeWitt Procter Conference, Inc. (SDPC), is a 501(c)3, 501(c)4 and United Nations Non- Governmental Organization, founded in 2003. Its’ mission is to nurture, sustain and mobilize the African American faith community in collaboration with civic, corporate, and philanthropic leaders to address critical needs of human and social justice within local, national and global communities.

Its theme this year is ‘Where Future Meets Legacy: Theo-ethics, African Spirituality and Afrofuturism’. SDPC remains one of the few annual conferences that insist on challenging the Black Church, to address the



SAMUEL DEWITT PROCTOR CONFERENCE

underbelly of the status quo and how it impinges on the lives of persons of African De-scent.

What is also outstanding about this conference is the number of institutes that are mobilised to address critical needs of human and social justice within local, national and global communities. Three of which I shall mention as they fill the gap between conferences. The Micah Institute, which focuses on education and resource development, and aims to reposition clergy, congregations and church leaders’ understanding, value for, and practice of faith, God, and money.

Also the Generation Now Procter (GenNowProcter), is a national youth social justice movement, fully committed to expanding and sustaining its faith-driven advocacy, activism, and education beyond the church.

Then there is the Pan African Institute, an ecumenical, multi-faith, advocacy, and educational arm of the SDPC which seeks to connect Africans in diaspora to African foreign policy, renaissance ideas, and fellow collaborators across the globe.

Like the Rev. Dr. Samuel DeWitt Procter, the SDPC has established a prophetic trail upon which many others have been rescued, facilitated, renewed and now follow.



About This Course

The Bible contains examples where both individuals and Israel found themselves in seemingly hopeless & even impossible situations. Yet God delivered them. Modern times are no different. Many churches today are experiencing significant challenges and decline, which, if left unaddressed, threatens the very survival of their ministries. But there is hope! God still has the power to deliver and offers us an opportunity to participate in His process for revitalization & growth.

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 - Joseph C. Price

sankofa

Looking Back to move forward

Written by, Bobby E. Wright, Ph.D.
Presented by, Rev. Dr. Sarah Fleming

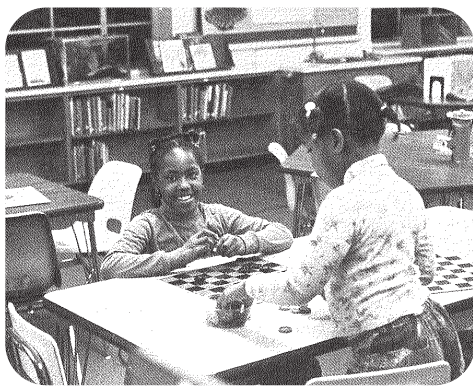
The picture is from: Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu's book: *Developing Positive Self-images & Discipline in Black Children.*

One of the most tragic beliefs widely shared by Blacks throughout the world is that white controlled educational institutions --- regardless of whether they are elementary schools or universities --- will educate our children. That faith continues to prevail in spite of the overwhelming evidence which disputes the belief. Blacks continue to ignore the irrefutable truth that in a racist social system, all institutions will reflect, protect, and sustain values that are consistent with racism. This should not be considered surprising or profound since all institutions serve to perpetuate the social theory of the group which created them. Therefore, in any social system established by whites, the institutions will reflect racism. Likewise, white established institutions in Black "controlled" countries will continue to protect the welfare of whites even after the Whites ostensibly leave. A present example is Zimbabwe, where Blacks accepted a constitution which gave a 4% White minority control of the judicial, military, and economic institutions in return for their agreeing to stay in the country. They also accepted as a leader of the Whites, the former prime minister of the country, Ian Smith (an individual that is responsible for tens of thousands of Black's deaths and indescribable Blacks suffering). Further, even the indigenous liberation forces, the Patriotic Front, accepted the condition that Britain, a white country, could write the constitution for Zimbabwe. The behavior of Brother Mugabe of the Patriotic Front, a self-proclaimed Marxist and Brother Muzorewu, the collaborationist and Christian minister, reinforces the concept that white institutions always prepare Blacks to protect White interests regardless of their political ideology. This is consistent with the theory of Neely Fuller (author of *The United Independent Compensatory Code/System/Concept*) as explained in "The Cress Theory of Color Confrontation:"

Fuller goes further to develop the concept that racism is not merely a pattern of individual and/ or institutional practice but is indeed a universally operating "system" of white supremacy rule and domination in which the effective majority of the world's white people participate. He discounts as invalid theories which state that the evolution of economic systems has necessitated or produced this state of affairs. Instead, he turns such theories upside-down by suggesting that various economic systems such as capitalism, communism, and socialism have been devised, used and refined in the effort to achieve the primary goal of white domination. In other words, the goal of the system of white supremacy is not for anything other than the establishment, maintenance, expansion and refinement of world domination by members of the group which classifies itself as the white race.

What does the above discussion have to do with educating the Black child? EVERYTHING. Education is a political dynamic and for a people who have no social theory, reading, writing and arithmetic should be much less important than what is written and read. Therefore, in order to liberate the minds of Black children, a Black social theory must be developed.

There is an African proverb which warns the traveler of life that "if you



don't know where you are going, then any road will get you there," i.e., since you don't know where you are going, just take any road, what does it matter? Blacks throughout the world are doing just that.

A social theory determines the destiny of a people by establishing guidelines of life. It defines their relationship with other living things, it defines values and rituals, methods of education, how enemies are to be dealt with, etc. The ultimate achievement of a Black social theory would be the recreation of Black culture. The eminent Black scientist, Dr. Cheikh Anta Diop, succinctly placed culture in its proper perspective by stating the following:



I consider culture as a rampart which protects a people, a collectivity. Culture must, above all, play a protective role: it must ensure the cohesion of the group. Following this line of thinking the vital functions of a body of African human science is to develop this science of collective belonging through a reinforcement of culture. This can be done by developing the linguistic factors, by re-establishing the historical consciousness of African and Black people so as to arrive at a common feeling of belonging to the same culture and historical past. Once this is attained, it will become difficult to "divide and rule" and to oppose African communities one against the other (Diop, 1976).

Black children can be educated only after Blacks develop a "philosophy of education," which must be contained in a Black social theory. There is no alternative to this dictum and even independent schools will fail to reach their full potential. It should be clear that Black independent schools can exist by themselves but will be limited in what they can accomplish as long as there is an absence of other Black institutions, e.g., economic, military, religious, etc. Further, neither can exist in a vacuum; their values and purposes must be consistent with the ideals that are contained in a social theory.

One of the most valid methods of evaluating the condition or status of a people is to examine the process of their child-rearing practices. The Black child today, whether in the United States, Africa, South America, etc., stands as a tragic example of a powerless, directionless people. Throughout the animal kingdom, there is generally an inviolate law which dictates that the young are to be protected at all costs. Yet, in Black communities, not only are children not protected, but in too many cases are offered as sacrificial lambs to a devouring enemy. Therefore, one continues to witness the sorry spectacle of Black parents delivering their children to an overt and covert hostile white enemy with the pathological demand that they educate them. There is very little that explains this type of mass human behavior except "mentacide," a concept developed by the author: "the deliberate and systematic destruction of a group's mind with the ultimate purpose being the extirpation of that group." The concept of mentacide has been extensively researched and is now in preparation for publication.

In the United States, Blacks operate under another dangerous mentacidal assumption. Many believe that there is value in an integrated educational environment, thereby accepting the fatal implication that "education is objective and neutral." Blacks persist in this behavior despite the fact there is no significant evidence which shows positive educational achievement such settings as opposed to "segregated educational experiences." In Chicago, the Black leadership is demanding

that a school system comprised of a ratio of 80% children of color vis-avis 20% white children be integrated at all costs. Further, they proclaimed a victory when the Black Administration of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (DHEW) refused federal funds to the Chicago Board of Education and referred the case to the Department of Justice. Black leaders and parents are so observed with the concept of “the closer we get to whites, the whiter we will get” syndrome that they are willing to pay any price, including the destruction of our children’s minds. They totally ignore the fact that since 1954, we have completely lost all control, regardless of how minimal, over our children’s education. In the south, under the guise of integration, thousands of Black teachers and administrators of formerly all-Black schools were replaced with Whites and now unemployed. In Chicago, the Black leadership accepted a plan whereby the teaching and administrative force would remain at 65% White and 35% “other.” In other words, throughout this nation, when Blacks speak of integration of schools, they do not show any concern over who teaches their children. In fact, Blacks take the general position of, “we don’t care what color the teachers are as long as they are qualified.” Yet, if Black parents were asked, what are the qualifications for teaching, they could not tell. However, there is still a more tragic consequence, the behavior attitude of most Black educators. Even as those educators observe and experience their own personal economic destruction and destruction of the minds of their children, they still exhort the virtues of “integrated education.” Dr. Chancellor Williams in his incomparable book, *The Destruction of Black Civilization—Great Issues of a Race from 4500 B.C. to 2000 A.D.*, thoroughly analyses the black educator:

Those Negroes who are frantically fighting to escape from the African race by way of “integration” and amalgamation will continue to meet everlasting and universal opposition from the whites. The Negro drive to be with whites in every situation is equaled by the determination to prevent it. Yet, the whites must truly feel a sense of pride in seeing this Negro leadership so clearly validating their own beliefs in white superiority. Their pretend “Quality Education” “objective actually collapses under the wheels of busing for “racial balance.” They are proclaiming to all the world that, regardless of general desegregation, in any all Black or predominantly Black population, the Blacks themselves are utterly incapable of achieving or maintaining high standards of excellence in education or, indeed anything else. Here we have within the race, the intolerable situation of an anti-Black group proclaiming the race’s inherent inferiority more effectively than the whites ever could—precisely because this group is regarded as “Black” (1974).

Clearly, I am not suggesting that Whites are omnipotent. On the contrary, history tells us that they will be had. However, it will not be Blacks engaging in mythology, denial, or escapism, etc., but only by our actively and consciously participating in the destruction of racism, which means the destruction of civilization. We must accept the indisputable fact that “racism” and “Western civilization” are synonymous events and as the song says, you can’t have one without the other.

“My God Is Able”

Article Five

“A Tribute To Albert Joseph Daniel Aymer”

The Storm From the Caribbean That Landed In North Carolina

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Dwayne L. Tutt

Over the last several months, I have shared stories with you about some of the great leaders in Zion. My hope was that we would see how God has blessed the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Zion has been blessed with leaders who had visions and chased visions with faith. My desire was for Zion to see how God uses human beings to improve the conditions of His people. God has blessed Zion in our past, God is blessing Zion now, and God will continue to bless Zion in our future. Today, I want to share another story which reminds us that My God Is Able. As I move to this story, I first want to remind Zion of what many of us were taught in school.

We were probably told stories about Pilgrims and Puritans around what was called Thanksgiving Day. We probably were taught about their voyage on the ship called the Mayflower. Many history books written in

We must be about the business of liberating the minds of Black children. In order for that to occur, the minds of all Blacks who interact with them must also be liberated. There is no other way. It is relatively easy to educate Black children, even about their Africinity. But, it is extremely difficult to reinforce the education. Therefore, even sitting in the same classroom, White children will be “educated” and Black children will be “trained.” The White child will be taught how to rule and the Black child trained to be ruled. “Training” is defined as teaching a group what to think rather than how to think, making them dependent rather than assisting in developing skills which could be used for independent activity, rewarding behavior that operates against their own group’s interest, promoting individual rather than group achievement, and installing negative self-concepts and low self-esteem. The opposite of the above mental process (training) is education in which the learning process becomes a liberating force.

A final word about Black Independent Schools is that they are important not only for how they teach but for what is taught. Their purpose of instilling within Black Children an “Afrikan Worldview” is the most important activity those children will ever experience. Black parents whose children are not in independent schools should at a minimum expose them to a well-structured supplemental Black educational program. Some of the most dangerous Blacks in the world are many of those brothers and sisters who finished graduate school “with honors” and yet operate against the interest of Blacks because of their Eurocentric orientation. The writer does not mean to imply that Blacks should not attempt to achieve levels of “training” in White institutions, but should be aware that it is not “education” they are receiving. Further, there is no attempt here to glamorize the “street mentality” that is so prevalent in the Black community today and which is creating widespread destruction. One of the most prevailing mental myths in the Black community is that “street sense” is positive. What is really being inferred is that Whites do not control the streets in the Black community nor the behavior of Blacks on those streets. It is untrue, Whites have more control, or at least as much control, over brothers and sisters in the streets as well as those in universities. “Street sense” generally prepares Blacks to deal with another in very generally prepares Blacks to deal with one another in very destructive ways and the whites wipe out the “winner.” The population of prisons, drug programs, and funeral homes verify this reality. Yet, Black children in increasingly large numbers are having to choose between two white institutions: the public schools and the public streets. Both will lead to destruction.

The solution to our problem is the development of a Black social theory which will lead to the salvation of our children’s minds. We must accept the fact that all activities are political and whether they operate for or against our interest will be determined by our developing the ability to realistically assess and control the dynamic relationship between us and our enemies.

A “Black Social Theory” will lead us out of the whiteness of Eurocentric madness and into the Blackness of Afrikan salvation.

A Luta Continua---Lasima Tushinde Mbilishaka (The struggle will continue and we will conquer without a doubt).

America will chronicle stories about the Pilgrims and Puritans landing at Plymouth Rock (Plymouth Colony) in 1620. When we were in elementary school, we were probably taught that Pilgrims and Puritans came to America to practice their freedom of religion. The fact is this was pretty much true.

However, I fear many people in America were not taught about the role religion would play in the development of America. Specifically, within the geographical area of America we today call “The North”. It is important to remember that many of these religious



dissenters from England were believers in Jesus Christ. Many wanted to know the truth about God and how to serve God. Furthermore, many of these people left England with strong Christian Faith and some were ministers. Their commitment to their faith can be seen by the first colleges in America.

I remind you that Pilgrims and Puritans landed in what we call the second colony in America in 1620. Please remember the first colony in America was Jamestown, VA. The Jamestown Colony was financed and developed by England businessmen to produce a profit in the newfound world. These business minded men founded Jamestown in 1607 and in 1619 a slave ship landed offshore. Said another way, just 12 years after the founding of Jamestown, VA, an African Slave ship strangely comes to Jamestown. When this happened, I contend the South was born and the economic power of this country began. As an economist, I say let there be no doubt in your mind that the forced labor of African people built the great economic power of America. That is just a fact!

Now in 1620 the Plymouth Colony (The North) was founded and by 1636 (Only 16 years later) the Northern Colony founded the first college in America. Of course, that college was Harvard University. The name Harvard came from a benefactor named Reverend John Harvard. The university was founded by religious people called Calvinist Congregationalists. The educational mission for Harvard University was to educate ministers. I repeat the mission was to train ministers. Did I say the mission was to train ministers?

The first colleges / universities in America were founded by religious people (Northerners) for the purpose of training ministers! They wanted their leaders to have a "higher education". Today when we hear the words, "higher education", we think about studies after high school. However, that was not what a "higher education" meant for the people who founded this country. It meant learning about God ... higher education. It must be noted that the present-day, so-called Ivy League Schools (Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, Penn, Brown, Dartmouth, and Cornell) had a mission to some degree or another around training ministers. The ministers were going to be leaders of society and they needed to know God ... they needed a higher education. They were the men who would build the country.

Fast forward to the American Civil War. As you know the war was over African Slavery. The South wanted to keep African Slaves and were willing to separate from the Union to start their own federation of states. The North wasn't going to allow the South to separate from the Union. The Union couldn't afford to let the South stop shipping cotton, sugar, tobacco, hemp, and other agricultural products being produced in the South. So, the fighting began! The war lasted from 1861 to 1865.

After the American Civil War, a group of African Methodist Episcopal Zion ministers from the North (Northerners) decided to minister in North Carolina. A group of these ministers in 1879 (Just 14 years after the American Civil War) founded Zion Wesley Institute / Livingstone College. The purpose of this school was to train black ministers. The institute was first located in Concord, North Carolina. Later the institute moved from Concord, North Carolina to Salisbury, North Carolina.

AME Zion Bishop J.W. Hood and Dr. Joseph Charles Price played a huge role in raising funds to allow the mission of Zion Wesley Institute to continue training ministers in Salisbury, NC. After securing 40 acres of land from the estate of J. M. Gray, Livingstone College was founded. Dr. Joseph C. Price became the founder and the first president of Livingstone College. It is often forgotten Joseph C. Price was a preacher! History reports that Dr. Price was a great preacher!

In 1903 as Livingstone College grew, the decision was made to create a formal seminary within the campus. In 1906, a cornerstone was



laid for the seminary, and it was called Hood Seminary. The name was given because of the great work Bishop James Walker Hood had done throughout the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

On February 10, 1960, because of a land gift of \$20,000 by Bishop Walls and Mrs. Dorothy Walls, a new building to house the seminary was constructed. In 1967, Bishop Walls and Mrs. Dorothy Walls gave another \$75,000 to Livingstone College to create Heritage House.

Then in 1994, a man named Dr. Albert Joseph Daniel Aymer arrived at Hood Seminary. He was appointed as Dean of the Hood Seminary. His goal was to train ministers.

Dr. Aymer was born in Liberta on the island of Antigua. His birthdate was December 23, 1936. He lived in Antigua until 1959. After answering his call to the ministry, he enrolled at Caenwood Seminary in Jamaica. After which he began to serve in the United Methodist Church. He was awarded a fellowship by the World Council of Churches and then studied at Lancaster Theological Seminary in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and earned a Master of Divinity Degree. Later he continued his pursuits of "higher education" at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. There he earned a Masters, and Ph.D. in New Testament Studies. In 1994, he accepted the appointment as Dean of Hood Seminary. From that first appointment as dean, God used him in a **spectacular** way within the AME Zion Church.

When he arrived at Hood Theological Seminary the seminary was operated as a department within Livingstone College. He was 58 years old and had a comfortable life as a senior pastor in the United Methodist Church. As he thought about taking the position at Hood Seminary, his three daughters encouraged and challenged him to do more for black people.

The Salisbury Post and writer Mark Wineka provides the following shared by Dr. Aymer in 1994. "I followed the words of John Wesley ... go not to those who want you but go to those who need you most." Then after arriving at the seminary, Dr. Aymer said, "God you're having fun with me."



Given Dr. Aymer's background, he knew the seminary needed to become its own independent seminary. In 1994 the seminary was not accredited. He set a goal to work through the very difficult process of theological accreditation for the seminary. He also knew he would need to grow enrollment from only 30 students. So, he began a faculty recruitment initiative to expand academic offerings within the seminary. He then proceeded to attract top notch professors from some of the top seminaries in the United States of America. God used him to bring these professors to a small black seminary called Hood Theological Seminary in Salisbury, NC.

By 1998, Hood Theological Seminary achieved full accreditation in the Association of Theological Schools in the U.S.A. and Canada ((ATS). The following year in 1999, the United Methodist Church recognized Hood Theological Seminary as an approved seminary to train their ministers!!! That was huge because the United Methodist Church pays tuition for their ministers who attend approved seminaries. Then Dr. Aymer asked for and received permission from the Trustee Board of Livingstone College to permit him to make Hood Theological Seminary an independent school with its own Board of Trustees within the AME Zion Church. Then the AME Zion Church and the Board of Trustees of Hood Theological Seminary appointed him as the first President of Hood Theological Seminary. During this period the ATS granted the seminary permission to offer advanced graduate degrees for those seeking to be trained in ministry including the Doctor of Ministry Degree.

Then around 2002, God opened President Aymer's eyes to see an old run-

down Days Inn Hotel. The hotel was going on the market to be sold. The hotel was situated such that it was visible from Interstate 85. Dr. Aymer then proceeded to work with the AME Zion Church to purchase the property. Bishop George Edward Battle, Jr is on record as providing his personal name and contact information for records if someone needed his voice regarding the acquisition of the property.

After the purchase, Dr. Aymer and his team designed the new seminary using part of the old hotel rooms and converting them to dorm rooms. He took some of the buildings, and converted it to a chapel, he made classrooms, bookstore, and office space for his faculty using the old building infrastructure. He converted some of the old hotel office and hotel dining areas into what he called a “refectory”. The refectory would become a place where all ministers would **ALWAYS GATHER DAILY TO SHARE A MEAL**. He hired a catering service, and they provided the daily meal ... the idea is very biblical. While I studied at Hood Theological Seminary, my New Testament professor one day said, “if you want to study Jesus, study who he ate with.”

I started studying at Hood Theological Seminary in the 2004 – 2005 academic year. I sat in a classroom which had technology which allowed ministers in Alabama to sit with us in the same classroom in Salisbury, NC. I didn’t know I was zooming before Zoom!

It was at Hood that I studied Methodist Theology and Systematic Theology, Old Testament and New Testament studies, Hebrew (from Dr. Aymer) and AME Zion Church History from an adjunct professor who would become a Bishop in the AME Zion Church (Bishop Michael Frencher, Sr.). Dr. Aymer took over a department in 1994 that had 30 students and grew it to a student enrollment of 300. Look at God!!!

Dr. Aymer is the man who once told me after I shared my vision with him. He looked me in the eyes and said, “what stops you”?

Zion as we head into the 2024 General Conference, what stops us? What keeps us thinking we cannot make our dreams a reality in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church? Are we not a denomination which has survived over 200 years in America? Have we not survived through banks not wanting to loan money to our ministries? Have we not lived through a Great Depression? Have we not lived through a Great Recession? Are we not living through a period in which young folks and specifically young men don’t see who Zion really is and what we have accomplished in America? I contend our best days are ahead of us if only we stop letting negative thoughts and negative people stop us.

I am an ordained Elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and we have a great history. Dr. Aymer now rests from his labor. He died November 5, 2021. However, I am a witness of what God can do with someone who is willing to not be stopped. Dr. Aymer also said, If God asks you to do something or go somewhere, you should probably realize God already has gone ahead of you to pave the way”.

Bishop George Edward Battle, Jr is quoted as saying the following about Dr. Aymer, “The legacy of a great leader is when he leaves an institution with a firm foundation for the next person who follows him. That is what Dr. Albert J.D. Aymer has done for Hood Seminary. He is a great leader!”

Zion, the truth is I feel like taking my text and preaching, “My God Is Able”.



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