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THE STAR OF ZION

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ZION



THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH
The Freedom Church

HAPPY MOTHERS DAY

THE STAR OF ZION

Official Voice of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church



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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SOMEBODY PRAYER FOR US

Submitted by Reverend Leona Nicholas Welch

I declare without a doubt, Dear People of God- I declare that in the wake of the pain and suffering, the chaos and troubles of our world today, that in the wake of all of our protest and cries for peace and justice - even in the flow of our celebrations and good times -through it all, WE STAND IN THE PRAYERS OF GENERATIONS of saints who went before us.



Even before we entered our mother's womb, SOMEBODY PRAYED FOR US. With this thought, I have concluded that this present generation must make a practice of praying for our future generations. I am an avid believer in generational prayer.

Someone might think this is a strange idea; but listen. I believe that my future loved ones are already in the mind of God, and that being the case, they need my prayers now, in this generation. I believe that Almighty God, Our Creator, keeps the prayers that I send up now for my future family, tucked into His eternal bosom and applies them to the lives of those who come after me, long after I am gone.

Somebody prayed for me long before I got here. I am the grateful benefactor of the prayers of my great, great, great, great grandparents, who had no idea who I would be, what I would look like, or how I would act, or even that I would be here.

My Sisters and Brothers, I am committed to pray for my future loved ones. I can rest assured that when I leave this earth for my heavenly home, my prayers will one day cover the family that I will never see. God's got me now, through prayers prayed for me long ago. God's got my future loved ones through the prayers I say for them now.

As an aside here, let us understand also that the prayers we pray for one another today, affect future generations. When someone's life is in jeopardy from pain, chao, distress and loss, they most likely are not able to live up to their full potential. This means that they cannot positively affect the lives around them. Subsequently, these individuals cannot fully impact the future, since our future is built from our present existence. Praying someone back to empowerment is also a way of praying for future generations.

But for today, my Dear People, let us focus on praying directly and intentionally for those who are either in or to be placed in the mind of God for future existence. Let us learn to pray for future generations. Let us not forget that this link from one generation to the other is key to God's word. It is important to God's intentions.

God meant to hook us up with both, our past and our present. FAITH OF OUR FATHERS (And Mothers) is a reality. It describes a very crucial connection. It's about a lifeline, a God- connection, from them to us, and from us to those yet to come. Otherwise, why would God have bothered to even speak of His love and goodness moving through generations. Why would He have spoken these words:

For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations (Psalm 100:5, NIV).

Why would He have said: *One generation shall commend your work to another (Psalm 145:4), or, Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, Oh God, til I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come (Psalm 71:18).*

This generation thing is obviously important to God. Guess what, it is obviously important to human beings too. How many hits do you think ANCESTRY.COM gets in the run of a week? If the generation hook-up were not important to us, would we go digging into archives, checking out DNA to

find out who came before us? What were they like? What traits did they pass on to us – what bad habits, what gifts did we get from them? What’s in our blood line? Were my great, great grandparents slaves? Was somebody a king or queen in Africa? Did I inherit diabetes? Strong bones? A healthy mind? Whose skin color do I have? JUST WHAT IS IN MY DNA?

Let me pause for a minute on this question of DNA, Dear Friends. We will not have all the answers to our earthly DNA, but I can assure you today, that you should know what is in your SOUL’S DNA -that is your DIVINE NATURE AFFECT-your DNA.

You can know why you resemble your heavenly Father, what is in His Divine Nature that makes you act the way you do - after you have accepted His Son, Jesus Christ. You can know what has a lasting AFFECT on your behavior. If you have accepted Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of your life, you can know your spiritual DNA.

I know what runs through the veins of my soul: NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD OF JESUS, shed for me on Calvary. IT GIVES ME LIFE! Jesus’ blood coursing through the veins of my soul gives me Grace. Because of my inheritance in Jesus, Love courses through the veins of my soul. Peace

flows through the veins of my soul. The Strength and Power of Jesus course through my soul. God’s Goodness and Compassion course through the veins of my soul.

I INHERITED THE DNA- THE DIVINE AFFECT OF MY FATHER THROUGH HIS SON, JESUS, BECAUSE I AM BORN AGAIN TO SHOW THE WORLD JUST WHAT I AM MADE OF – JUST WHO MY SOUL RESEMBLES.

My prayer is that the DNA of my soul in Christ courses through the soul veins of my loved ones now and those yet to come – FOR ALL GENERATIONS. I pray that everyone who carries my physical DNA will carry my Spiritual DNA, and that they will fall in love with Jesus and commit their lives to Him, just as I have done. This is the ultimate GENERATIONAL CONNECTION for which I pray.

Dear children of God- Dear blood-kin of Jesus, the continuum must not be broken. God’s connection from generation-to-generation rest on us. Let us not break the chain. SOMEBODY PRAYED FOR US -had us on their mind. In this present generation, we are the selected somebodies to pray for the generations to come. It’s on us. Amen!

MOTHER ZION HOSTS NY PHILHARMONIC LIBERATION & SPIRIT SERIES

Submitted by Debra Chappelle-Polk
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“When Black people couldn’t go to Carnegie Hall, Mother Zion became Carnegie Hall for Black people in New York City. In fact, it was built to be just that.” That is what Rev. Dr. Malcolm J. Byrd, Senior Pastor of Mother A.M.E. Zion Church in Harlem told the audience on March 1, 2023 at one of the first events in The New York Philharmonic, LIBERATION & SPIRIT series. Through the efforts of Rev. Byrd and Mr. Gary Padmore, Vice President, Education & Community Engagement, Mother Zion has become community partners with The NY Philharmonic.

The evening’s program included a panel discussion entitled **The Unanswered Questions: What Does It Mean To Be Free?** which explored the intersection of music with questions of racial justice and the struggle for liberation. Gary Padmore introduced the moderator, Dr. Fredara Hadley, Ph.D., ethnomusicology professor at The Juilliard School in the Music History Department. The panelists were composer-in-residence for the Jacksonville Symphony, Dr. Courtney Bryan, and award-winning musicologist and author of *We Hear Here*, Dr. Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr.



Continuing the historical narrative, Rev Byrd said “this is a very special place. Before the stained glass windows were installed, Mother Zion was intended to be a multipurpose auditorium for religious purposes, but most importantly as a room where we could be ourselves in all spheres of excellence with our dignity still intact.”

Dr. Hadley said she was struck by Rev. Byrd’s comments and asked the panelists to share their thoughts. Dr. Bryan said, “this is an amazing unique space.” Adding, “I have always been appreciative of a sacred space where Black people could be their full selves, no matter what their job is or their place in society..., a space where people could respect one another and affirm each other’s personage.”



Dr. Ramsey said churches, like Mother Zion served the community in so many capacities. “It wasn’t just worship. It was a place where you could be educated; often people learned to read in churches.” The idea that it is a multipurpose space has always been fascinating. “As musicians, we’re interested in what that means about what music was played and heard.”

Both panelists were asked to share how the church has influenced their music. Dr. Bryan said she grew at St. Luke’s Episcopal, an Anglican church in New Orleans. LA., with a congregation of people from the Caribbean, Central and South America, West Africa, and the U.S. She said “it was natural for her to hear a blend of those cultures ---the Anglican hymns along with the Gregorian chants, spirituals, West African drums and tambourines.” She said “that mix” has influenced the way she thinks about music and her musical artistry. She said many of the churches she’s been affiliated with have the political and spiritual linked together. “The powerful sermons of Rev. Shirley Caesar and Rev. C.L. Franklin kinda sneak into you.” As she listened, “the words spoke to her on a deeper level on the issues of police brutality and the lack of justice. “I’ve always been drawn to Black liberation theology, what we can do while we’re here and being aware of the spiritual nature of stuff, and Frederick Douglass sitting here with you.”

Dr. Guthrie Ramsey, who grew up in a church on the south side of Chicago, nodded in agreement. He said his earliest musical memory, was at age 5, “feeling the fire” as he walked into Mount Moriah Baptist Church, and recognized the musicians were at the center of it all. “I was fixated and I think I got hooked at that moment on the power of music.” As an adult, he became a “gigging” church musician. He learned that the repertoire was the same, but the preaching was different. To illustrate his point, he played different versions of “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.”

Dr. Hadley asked the panelists **The Unanswered Questions: What Does It Mean To Be Free?** Dr. Bryan said, “freedom is something that you’re always grasping for; it’s not a thing that you grab and hold, but something we’re always fighting for.” Her first album is entitled *Quest for Freedom*.

Dr. Ramsey said, “freedom comes as a cleansing.” He gets his most profound thoughts at the piano. “His goal,” he said, “is to always to move something up. Move something up as a people; move something up in yourself.”

Dr. Hadley said she was reminded of the quote “the spirit will not descend without a song” and the idea “that music is the portal that can usher us into a space of liberation, even if it’s just a moment.” The term black liberation theology wasn’t used during slavery, however, “the wisdom and the depth of black liberation theology is woven into the lyrics of the spirituals.” She said, “one of the powerful things about being here, is that it reminds us that freedom wasn’t something benevolently bestowed or given. It was something that was fought for and paid for in blood many times over.” She said her parents, who are in their 70s, didn’t think her generation would have to fight these same battles.

She asked the panelists, as musicians and composers in what ways does music give us those opportunities? “Is it a burden or it is a necessity of music to create moments of reprieve for the musician, as well as those who are engaged in music?”

Dr. Ramsey said he never attempts to assign a utility to an art form primarily because a musician may have one plan for the music that may “go totally left”. People ascribe different meaning to music; even while listening to the same music in the same space. “That’s what keeps us researching to figure out why those people are listening to that music at this time in this space.” Dr. Hadley said “that’s the intersection described in his book *We Hear Here*.”

Dr. Bryan said she finds that protest songs can use the same musical elements of spirituals. She said she’s always been drawn to the spiritual “A City Called Heaven” Many in the congregation recited the words to “A City Called Heaven”. It was truly an audience-participation moment as Dr. Bryan played her arrangement of the song on the piano. Singer and Julliard music major Daniella sang a stirring rendition of “Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child” accompanied by Dr. Guthrie Ramsey on piano, who thanked her “for a cacophony of her range.”

Rev. Byrd is indeed a man of the cloth and a man of his word: the evening was enlightening and entertaining. In his closing remarks, he paraphrased a quote about Mark Hopkins (American educator and Congregationalist theologian), that “sitting on end of a log and a pupil on the other, automatically constitutes a university, because Hopkins was so brilliant. That is what has happened here tonight at Mother Zion. We

are in the midst of brilliance with these incredible scholars and musicians.” Rev. Byrd asked the audience to look up. “When you look up, the church appears to be the hull of a ship.” Renowned African American architect George Foster intentionally designed the space with the Negro Spiritual in mind. It was designed with the idea that “one day, marginalized people would land in a place free from suffering and degradation.” He added, “as we leave, consider this space as what it means to be free.”



Highlights of the 108th Guyana-Suriname Annual Conference & Dedication of the Bishop W. Darin & Devieta Moore Community Family Life Center

Submitted by Ms. Hannifah Jordan

As we approached our first in-person annual conference since the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic, the joy of gathering for great worship and teaching filled the air. The Guyana-Suriname Annual Conference began the evening of March 16, 2023. We were celebrating our 108th year as an annual conference, and the conference was expected to be memorable in every way.

Following the organization of the conference, Holy Communion was served by Bishop W. Darin Moore and the Elders. Presiding Elder Dr. John D. Givens was the preacher for the Holy Communion Service and brought a dynamic message titled “**Don’t Put a Limitation on God**” from Genesis 1: 26-28. We were reminded that we were created with no limitation on what we can do or become.

Bishop W. Darin Moore gave his Episcopal Address on Friday, March 17, 2023. He spoke from the scripture Ephesians 1:15-23. The Congregation was reminded the church must be incarnational and interconnected, offer hope for the hurting and offer love for the lonely.



Election of a ministerial delegate and a lay delegate to the 2024 General Conference was held on March 17, 2023. Presiding Elder Orette Darrell and Sis Hazel Lambert were elected to represent the Guyana Suriname Annual Conference.

The preacher for the Missionary Service, Rev. Dr. Tonya M. Pass, Pastor of Brighton Rock A.M.E Zion Church, Portsmouth VA, Virginia Conference, delivered a powerful message titled “**Walking in the Promises of God**” from Deuteronomy 28: 9-14. We informed that God does not want us to forget about his word and his promises, the Lord will make a way for us, and we are joint heirs with Christ.

Our Missionary Supervisor, Mrs. Devieta Moore was honoured by the missionaries during the Missionary Service by a spoken word acrostic of her name DEVIETA meaning “Devoted, Elegant, Virtuous, Intelligent, Eloquent, Talented, Amazing”. A gift of a gold cricket bracelet with the name Devieta engraved was presented to our Missionary Supervisor for her compassion and leadership for the last four years.



On Saturday, March 18, 2023 all churches travelled to the mining Town of Linden to participate in the Christian Education program. This program was moderated by the Conference Director, Ms Andrea Jordan where the children and youths blessed the Conference with their gifts in song, dance and poetry. Rev. Joshua M. Walker, Pastor of Trinity A.M.E Zion Church, Pittsburg PA, Allegheny Conference was the preacher at the Christian Education Service. He brought the message titled “**Tell Your Story**” from the gospel of Luke 9:28-36. Rev. Walker



informed us that sometimes God must take us by ourselves and he separates us to show us something extraordinary. Therefore, we must wake up from our spiritual sleep and listen to Jesus.

Following the Christian Education program was the dedication service of the new church edifice at Amelia’s Ward, Linden. The new building was dedicated as a family enrichment Life Center and named the “**Bishop W. Darin and Devieta Moore Community Family Life Center**”. The ground floor of the building will be used for the Stars of Zion Playgroup and Daycare Center and the second floor will be used as a parsonage. The building was constructed by donations from faithful partners in ministry from throughout the Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District. Bishop W. Darin Moore expressed thanks to the faithful partners and presented a plaque with the names of each contributing partner. He also acknowledged the outstanding efforts of both Presiding Elders Givens and Darrell along with Rev. Dorothy Patterson to complete the building project.

In attendance at the dedication was the Mayor of the Town of Linden, Mrs. Waneka Arrindell who brought greetings on behalf of her family and the Town of Linden. She expressed congratulations to the church and encouraged the teachers to transform lives by showing love to the children. She paid tribute in song by singing a verse of the famous song “I believe the children are our future”.

Reports on the stewardship for the past conference year were presented by the Presiding Elders, Dr. John D. Givens and Orette Darrell, Pastors, Field Worker, District Presidents of the Women’s Home and Overseas Missionary Society, Conference Director, Christian Education Department, Delegates and special committees on State of the

Church, State of the Country, Conference Board of Trustees, Holy Orders, Conference Studies etc.

Bishop W. Darin Moore brought the word for Sunday Worship on March 19, 2023. His message was titled “**Don’t Give Up**” taken from Psalm 30:1-5. He reminded us that God wants us to grow spiritually and be a witness to others. On the other hand, the devil will discourage us and use us to discourage ourselves and others. Therefore, the church is the place to be plugged in to get the spiritual power. He advised that God gives the test then gives the lesson. The test is designed to teach us that God is greater than anything we’re going through, that whatever we are going through has an expiration date, and what we are going through will teach us more about who God is.

On Sunday, March 19, 2023, Sis. Shivaughn Lachish, Sis. Deborah Cornelius-Todd, Sis Velma David and Bro. Brian Russell were ordained Deacons and Rev. Andrea Reman was ordained an Elder in the life of the church. With their ordinations as Deacons, Rev. Shivaughn Lachish, Rev. Deborah Cornelius-Todd, and Rev Velma David were given first-time pastoral appointments and Rev. Brian Russell appointed as Assistant Pastor to Rev. Patricia Williams. This was one of the largest ordinations done in the history of the Conference.

Acknowledging that there are some challenges in the annual conference as there are with many of our churches around the world, Bishop W. Darin Moore encouraged members to attend worship in person as often as possible and to be excited about Jesus. He cautioned that we are losing our young boys to gangs and the street. Therefore, churches must incorporate activities to get our boys involved and feel like they can participate in worship and related activities. He also encouraged officers holding multiple offices to identify someone to train so that new officers can be created who will share their talents and gifts with others.

Our conference was blessed with the presence of overseas visitors who travelled with Bishop W. Darin Moore and Missionary Supervisor, Mrs. Devieta Moore, namely Sis Shauna Wright, Rev. Dr. Tonya M. Pass, Pastor of Brighton Rock A.M.E Zion Church, Portsmouth VA, Virginia Conference, Rev. Joshua M. Walker, Pastor of Trinity A.M.E Zion Church, Pittsburg PA, Allegheny Conference and his wife, Mrs. Sunni Walker, Rev. Dorothy Patterson, Bro. RaMon Shelton and Presiding Elder, Dr. John D. Givens.

We give God praise and thanks for a wonderful and successful 108th Annual Conference. To God be the glory great things He has done!



BOY AND GIRL SCOUT SUNDAYS AT WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

Written by Georgette Williams
Submitted by Debra Chappelle-Polk
Zion Spotlight Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: ZionSpotlight@StarofZion.org

On Sunday February 12, 2023, Pack and Troop 147 of Washington Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church in St. Louis, Missouri, celebrated Boy Scout Sunday. This was the first in-person Boy Scout Sunday celebration since the pandemic caused the church to be limited in its function in March of 2020. The boys participated in the worship service by leading the scripture and prayer.

Over 31 years, when Bishop Clarence Carr was Pastor of Washington Metropolitan, he tapped Fred Lee to be the Scoutmaster. The Boy Scouts are still going strong at the Met, as Rev. Dr. Anthony Witherspoon gives them his full support.

Eagle Scout is the highest award a Boy Scout can earn. Washington Metropolitan currently has 19 boys who have achieved this amazing feat and there is another scout who will complete his requirements in the next year.



In May of 2021, the troop lost their Cubmaster, Karl Douglas. He was a long-time volunteer and member of the church, whose passing left a big hole in the hearts of the troop. The troop had to readjust and take on more responsibilities with less help, but the volunteers who remain, have stepped up to the plate. Volunteers Charles White and Erika Carmichael still carry on the torch and still operate with motto “Let Our Boys Be Boys!” Charles is a former Trustee and choir member and has worked with the Boy Scouts for many years. Erika has volunteered since her Aunt Lynn Carmichael, “Den Mother Soul” passed away. Mrs. Carmichael was one of the original volunteers. Erika is a Trustee and has a daughter in Girl Scouts, who will graduate from High School this year.

On March 12, 2023, The Girl Scouts of Washington Metropolitan celebrated Girl Scout Sunday. This day is celebrated by Girl Scouts all across the country, as it is the day that Juliette Gordon Low officially started “Girl Guides” in Savannah, GA in 1912. The name would be changed to Girl Scouts in 1915. Two of Washington Met graduating Ambassador Girl Scouts participated in the service by reading the scripture, reading the history of our troops and rendering the sermonic selection. One of Daisys led the prayer.

Washington Metropolitan Girl Scout Troops, a/k/a. WMGST was founded in May of 1993 when the former first lady Susan Powell-Jones invited 11 volunteers to help with four Girl Scout troops. Thirty years later, we are still on the journey to “build girls of courage, confidence, and character who help make the world a better place.” Rhonda Lee (wife of Fred Lee) and Georgette Williams are the only 2 original volunteers who still work with the girls.

Over the years, we have had 30 girls earn either the Bronze or Silver

Award and six to earn the highest award in Girl Scouting – the Gold Award. We currently have four girls working on the Silver Award and three girls going for the Gold!

Our current volunteers are Rhonda Lee (30 years of service), Carlonda Williams (19 years of service), and Eugenia Jones (4 years of service). Eugenia proudly wears the name tag of her mom, Eugenia Jones who was one of the original 11 volunteers. Evelyn Gilliam (28 years of service) serves as our Troop Advisor.

Georgette Williams - Director of Girl Scouts

The message was given by Georgette Williams (Director of Girl Scouts of Washington Metropolitan). Her message “Mind Your Own Business” used the scripture reference I Corinthians 12:12-27. Sis. Williams encouraged people to “accept their assignment”, “ask for assistance” and “acknowledge the authority”. Everyone has been given some “business” so that the church can be uplifted.



We are thankful to our Pastor, Rev. Dr. Anthony Witherspoon for his support of the scouting program of our church. He has a passion for the young people and makes sure we have what we need to keep our program thriving and relevant.



Fred Lee - Scout Master. Pack and Troop 147 on Boy Scout Sunday Washington Metropolitan Girl Scout Troops on Girl Scout Sunday

Pictures Courtesy of Richie Williams and Antoine Luckie

Black Leaders who have been involved in Scouting.



Wilmington District Pastor Envisions All Women for Last 7 Words Service

Submitted by Rev. Sheryl L. Bradford, MA

April 7, 2023

Rev. Nathaniel A. Johnson, MA (far left on picture), pastor of Summerville AMEZ Church in Leland, N.C. and District Director of Evangelism answered, “God gave me the vision to choose all women for the service,” when asked about the rare occasion of seven women preaching Jesus’ last words on Good Friday of Holy Week. The seven last words of Jesus service has become a familiar occurrence throughout Black Christendom, but most often it is dominated by a panel of male clergy.

Not only did the service, which was held at Summerville, showcase seven female preachers, but all of the initial women chosen to present were pastors on the Wilmington District in the Greater Wilmington, N.C. area/Cape Fear Conference. The number of women that God continues to call into ministry continues to grow and the AMEZ Church is having to fully embrace their gifts and talents because of the changing landscape in which it exists. The Wilmington District led by Presiding Elder Alexander Jones (far right on picture) is a prime example having close to 40% of its pastoral charges led by competent, dedicated females. Hopefully, this trend will continue throughout Zion and influence all ranks of clergy and administration.



The service themed, “Women of the Word,” was held on April 7, at 7pm. Rev. Johnson led the worship service which began with the first word being offered by the Rev. Karen McKracken, pastor of Christian Chapel AMEZ Church with a sermon topic, “Let it Go!” (third from left on picture). She was followed by Rev. Sandra Carter, pastor of Mt. Hebron AMEZ Church and she asked the church if they were “Bound for Paradise?” (second from left). The featured choir for the evening hailed from St. James AMEZ Church, Leland and they gave soul stirring breaks between the powerful messages. The third and fourth words came from Rev. Patricia Smith (St. Andrews AMEZ Church) and Rev. Celeste Navarro (Warner Temple AMEZ Church), who subbed for a pastor that had schedule conflicts. Their powerful topics included “God’s Tender Love,” and “Purpose for Your Pain” (fifth and eight from the left). Rev. Carol Robbins (St. James, Leland), the fifth word, asked the question, “Thirsty for What?” and Rev. Vanessa Middleton (St. James, Southport) proclaimed that it was “Paid in Full” when she presented the sixth word (sixth and fourth from the left). Closing out the service was the Rev. Valerie Robbins, pastor of Bowens Chapel AMEZ Church with “Gone the Last Mile of the Way” (second from the right). The service ended with a heart felt selection from the choir; and a meal-to-go— so characteristic of the hospitality of the Summerville Church family!

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Theological Preparation for Effective Leadership in a Diverse Society

“Lead Me to Calvary” The Seven Last Words of Christ

Submitted by **G. Joyner Johnson**

Photographs by **L Kennedy, A. Robinson**

On Good Friday evening 2023, the Little Rock AME Zion Church and several other congregations, under the leadership of Pastor Dr. Dwayne A. Walker celebrated the Seven Last Words of Jesus Christ. The invitation had been extended to seven pastors/preachers from local churches to each preach a Word.

The Little Rock Choir, later joined by the Torrence Chapel Choir, provided the inspiring music with hymns and songs of the season. After the devotion by local ministers from Little Rock, Dr. Walker presented the preachers of the evening.

Preaching the First Word “Father, Forgive Them” from Luke 23:24, was Rev. Kinston Jones, Pastor of Torrence Chapel AME Zion Church, Cornelius, NC. The title was “Forgiveness Is the Key.” Forgiveness is not about keeping score but about losing count.

The Second Word, “Today, Thou Shalt Be with Me in Paradise.” from Luke 23:43 was preached by Rev. Dr. Johnnie Henderson, Assistant Professor of Liberal and Religious Studies, Livingstone College, Salisbury, NC. His emphasis was on Jesus’ promise of “Paradise.”

Rev. Dr. Anthony Davis, Pastor of Union Bethel AME Zion Church, Cornelius, NC., preached the Third Word, “Woman, Behold Thy Son...” John 19: 26-27. His title “His Love Continued to The Cross.” The darkness had not come at this time because even though Jesus was suffering, he was able to see His Mother and John to assure that she would be cared for by John.

Mark 15:34 was preached by Rev. Raymondo Brady, the pastor

of Sills Creek AME Zion Church, Mooresville, NC. He chose the title “Child Abandonment.”

Rev. Dr. Amy S. Ciceron, pastor of the East Stonewall AME Zion Church, Charlotte, NC, preached the Fifth Word from John 19:28, “I Thirst!” Her subject was “Drinks on Me.” After Jesus had fulfilled His prophetic assignments and was in proper alignment with what His Father wanted him to do, his physical need for water came upon him and He thirsted.

Rev. Al Hamilton, the Chief Financial Officer of the AME Zion Church, Charlotte, NC was the preacher of the Sixth Word. From John 19:30 his word was “It Is Finished!” The title of the sermonette was “Done, Not Finished.” As humans when we have moved on beyond our abilities, we say “I’m done, moving on.” But this time God’s will as had been prophesied was finished, therefore Jesus’ assignment was finished.

The Seventh Word, “Father, Into Thy Hands I Commend My Spirit” from Luke 23:44-46 was preached by Elder Chester F. Brown III, pastor of the Greater Mount Mariah Primitive Baptist in Charlotte, NC. The title of his sermon was “I Put It All in His Hands.” Jesus had been in some bad hands after He rode into Jerusalem. Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin, Judas and Pilate who washed his hands. But now he put his spirit into God’s hands. He entrusted His spirit into the hands of His Father as they had an important, impactful and intimate relationship between them

Afterwards, Dr. Walker opens the doors of the church inviting anyone who felt so moved, to join in Christian Discipleship. He expressed the sentiments of all in attendance who were uplifted by these dynamic preachers. TO GOD BE THE GLORY!



Livingstone College STEM program featured as cover story for 'Salisbury Magazine'

STEM to hold Open House on Saturday

Submitted by Kimberly Harrington
Director of Public Relations
Email: kharrington@livingstone.edu

April 17, 2023

SALISBURY – It's a new day for STEM at Livingstone College. The opening of the new F. George Shipman Science Annex that features an immersion theatre and the college's recent acquisition of a unique research instrument has set it apart from its peer institutions.

So much so that the April edition of *Salisbury the Magazine* featured the college's Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) program on its front cover. Specifically, the cover photo features freshman Sydney McDonald and international student Eve Beyan of Liberia, West Africa.



The feature story focuses on Dr. Dawn McNair's influence on the science program at Livingstone and her vision of exposing students to more extensive and in-depth research projects, and the progress the college has made thus far.

McNair is the dean of math and science and associate vice president of research at Livingstone College. She earned the latter title after securing a \$2.2

million grant from the National Science Foundation, the largest in the college's history.

Part of that money was used to purchase the liquid chromatography mass spectrometer (LCMS). The instrument is typically reserved for schools with doctoral students and highly active research projects, but Livingstone College was able to secure it. In the article, McNair says it is an "anomaly" to see this equipment in a school that serves only

undergraduate science majors.

Livingstone is making the equipment available to high school teachers and local law enforcement, since it can also be used for forensics.

McNair also talks about the coveted White Coat Scholar program she introduced upon her arrival at the college.

"Our STEM program is emerging and competitive as we elevate our profile in the higher education ecosystem," said Livingstone's 13th President Dr. Anthony J. Davis. "Our students are now seeing themselves in STEM roles and in graduate schools that they didn't think was possible before because of the exposure and the experiences they are earning at Livingstone."

To read the complete article, click the link below or visit www.Salisburythemagazine.com and click on "Issues."

<https://salisburythemagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2023/03/April-2023-STM.pdf>

Open House is Saturday

While the immersion theatre is intended to offer students a virtual reality experience in human anatomy, astronomy and earth science, it will be used this Saturday during open house to show two 30-minute 3D feature films.

The STEM Open House is Saturday, April 22, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the F. George Shipman Science Annex on the campus of Livingstone College, 701 W. Monroe Street. The drop-in event will feature the two films and science demonstrations. Parents or guardians can also sign up their children for the free STEM summer camp during the program.



National civil rights champion, Attorney Ben Crump hosts police and bail reform panel discussion at Livingstone College

Submitted by Rev. Sam Brown
Education Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: admin@starofzion.org
Photographer: JaPharii Jones

March 23, 2023

Salisbury, NC - A beautiful, sunny, spring day was the backdrop for a much-needed conversation about reform in many components of the criminal justice system. Over 1000 attendees crowded the historic Varick Auditorium. This throng of on lookers was comprised of the Livingstone College community, local leaders, and activists from the city of Salisbury, and others from all over the country within the Equal Justice Now network. The criminal justice department of Livingstone College along the Attorney Crump's Equal Justice Now curated two panel discussions- one focusing on bail reform, the other being centered around police reform. Both panels included community activists, academicians, legal and law enforcement professionals, and subject matter experts.

The panel discussions were moderated by Eric Kowalczyk and Bakari Sellers. Panel participants included: Mecklenburg County Sher-

iff Gary McFadden; Mecklenburg County District Attorney Spencer Merriweather; James Buie, retired Gaston County police chief and author of "From the Ground Up: How to Refine American Policing Now"; Gemale Black, Salisbury-Rowan NAACP president; Dr. Latarcia Barnes, chair, Livingstone College, Department of Criminal Justice and Sociology; JaPharil Jones, president of Black Lives Matter 757 (Virginia); Melanie Reid, associate dean of faculty and professor of law at Lincoln Memorial University in Knoxville, Tenn.; Rep. Joe Towns of Nashville, Tenn.; Attorney Dominique Calhoun of Houston, Texas; and Carleena Deonanan a defense attorney of Raleigh.

"Sometimes meeting in the middle is what is needed for actual progressiveness and actual change," said Thomas Lucas with Equal Justice Now. Equal Justice Now is a social welfare organization that advocates against false arrests, wrongful convictions, and incarceration. Its goal in holding the panel at Livingstone College is to have conversations about bail and police reform.

"It's imperative to us to make sure that people are knowledgeable about the bail system," said Lucas. "Knowledgeable on what over policing is

and how to combat it and how we can bring police departments and communities closer.”

Lucas has been with the organization since it started five years ago.

“As a young African American man, I always lived wanting there to be equal justice,” explained Lucas. “It’s always been in me to want to fight but with positivity, strength and nonviolence.”

Following the panel discussion Ben Crump hosted a press conference on the stage of Varick Auditorium to provide updates on the Shanquella Robinson case, emphasize the ongoing push for ‘diplomatic intervention’ by President Biden, and demanded justice for her death. Shanquella died in Cabo on Oct. 29, 2022, and details surrounding her death remain limited. “We expect nobody to sleep peacefully until we get

justice for Shanquella Robinson,” said Crump. According to Mexican prosecutors, one of Robinson’s friends was the direct aggressor of her death, and an arrest warrant was issued. Crump’s team believe that person is in the U.S. and are seeking answers as to why nobody has gone to arrest them.

“We have a process in place to extradite people who have come to America from Mexico, from Mexico, and from all over the world to seek a better life,” said Dawn Blagrove with Emancipate N.C.

“The Livingstone College community is committed to using its influence to amplify the call for justice for Shanquella Robinson.” Commented Livingstone President Rev. Dr. Anthony Davis.



LIVINGSTONE COLLEGE TO HOST ATF RECRUITMENT EVENT LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY SEEKING TO DIVERSIFY ITS WORKFORCE

Submitted by Kimberly Harrington
Director of Public Relations
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March 31, 2023

SALISBURY – Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) Special Agent Tanisha Jeter, a Livingstone College alumna, is coming to Livingstone College April 5 and she's bringing a host of law enforcement personnel with her.

The mission: To diversify the criminal justice landscape by recruiting fellow Blue Bears to the agency.

Like many other criminal justice entities across the country, diversifying the workforce is a top priority for ATF in order to help change the system from within. And what better way to accomplish that than by visiting colleges and recruiting graduating seniors.

The ATF's Law Enforcement Leaders of America (LELA) will host a panel discussion from 9-11:30 a.m. on April 5 at the Tubman Theater on the campus of Livingstone College. It is open to all students, regardless of major or classification. Students from other schools are also invited.

"Join us to hear from a spectacular panel of criminal justice professionals, representing multiple agencies, to promote a more diverse landscape for the next generation of criminal justice professionals," said Jeter, who is ATF's Diversity Career Impact Program coordinator.

"Students are presented a unique opportunity to hear from multiple criminal justice professionals regarding tools, tips and even pitfalls of the hiring process; successes and shortcomings of the panelists; and hiring and internship opportunities," Jeter said.

Additionally, students will learn how to prepare for the job (credit, drug use, social media, friends, writing skills); how to land the job (appearance/attire, following up, physical fitness, truthfulness/polygraph); and why diversity/representation in this field is important.

Jeter said she can't stress enough that the panel discussion is not just for students in criminal justice majors, but to those seeking to make a difference in their communities with or without a badge. Examples include working in the lab (STEM), ATF industry operations investigators, ATF intelligence research specialists, law clerks, aspiring attorneys, SBI crime scene agents, and so many more.

"A biology major, a women's basketball player, a psychology major or a track athlete may not have even considered using their skills and knowledge for our field," she said. "They may think that we are typical police officers who respond to 911 calls. We are not. We are so much more."

In addition to Jeter, who will serve as moderator and was recently recognized by ATF for Women's History Month, two other Livingstone College graduates are scheduled to participate in the panel. They are Mercedes Trammell-Fordham, associate warden for custody at Piedmont Correctional Institute; and Demeer Gray Sr., Bureau of Prisons education specialist/teacher.



Other panelists include:

- Sandra Hairston, United States attorney for the Middle District of North Carolina;
- Eddie Buffaloe Jr., secretary of North Carolina Department of Public Safety;
- Kevin Canty, North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation special agent in charge;
- Deputy Whitney Browning, United States Marshals Service;
- Joe Bright Jr., retired first sergeant of the NC State Highway Patrol/current BLET daytime coordinator at Wake Technical Community College;
- Major Rico Boyce of the Raleigh Police Department; and
- Investigator Devante Mackins of the NC Public Defender's Office.

"Livingstone College students can walk across the stage and into careers with the federal government as special agents with the ATF," Jeter said. These jobs start at \$58,000 per year, depending on residence, and salaries increase exponentially each year. Some applicants can start at \$62,000 per year by meeting certain criteria.

In February, Livingstone College hosted an FBI Collegiate Academy with a similar mission to diversity its workforce.

"The time is ripe for students to enter the criminal justice field as there is a focus on diversity and inclusion," said Dr. Latarcia R. Barnes, chair of the Livingstone College Department of Criminal Justice and Sociology. "The hope is that diversity will help to solve a lot of the challenges that law enforcement is facing in today's society."

For more information, email Barnes at Labarnes@livingstone.edu or call (704) 216-6954.

CLINTON COLLEGE PARTNERS WITH MOOLAH WIRELESS TO PROVIDE FREE TABLETS

Submitted by Kristen Brown
Media Contact
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April 14, 2023

Clinton College announced today its partnership with Moolah Wireless, an Atlanta-based mobile and technology company. Created by CEO Vernell Woods, Moolah Wireless began an initiative to provide historically black colleges and universities with a way to bridge the digital divide faced by students on campus. This partnership will allow students at Clinton College to receive a free Moolah tablet that comes with a built-in Wi-Fi hotspot to allow them continuous online access.

“We are excited about this recent partnership with Moolah Wireless,” said Dr. McCorn, President of Clinton College. “This initiative aligns with our strategic goal of expanding and strengthening technological resources for our students to achieve excellence in academics. After a successful rollout on our campus, we look forward to extending this initiative to our local community members.”

The first rollout phase for students will take place on Saturday, April 15th, during the college’s annual spring festival.

About Clinton College

Clinton College is a historically black, private institution founded in

1894 by the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Today, the doors of the institution are open to all, those who have achieved academically and to those who have yet to reach their full potential. The mission of Clinton College is to create a holistic environment that cultivates an inclusive community of students, faculty, staff, and administrators who are prepared to excel in academic achievement; experience moral and spiritual growth; demonstrate positive and effective leadership skills as lifetime citizens in a global society. For more information about Clinton College please visit www.clintoncollege.edu.



LIVINGSTONE COLLEGE PRESIDENT MAKES COVER OF ‘HBCU MATTERS’ MAGAZINE TO ALSO BE HONORED AMONG POWER 100 IN STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

Submitted by Kimberly Harrington
Director of Public Relations
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March 28, 2023

SALISBURY – Livingstone President Dr. Anthony J. Davis is featured on the front cover of a nationally-distributed magazine and will be honored this summer among the 100 most powerful and influential people and/or organizations in the state of North Carolina.

Davis appears on the winter/spring 2023 edition of *HBCU Matters* as the cover story under the headline, “A Story of Triumph: From a foster care home in the north to college president in the south.”

In it, the writer shares Davis’s journey of growing up in foster care his entire childhood to becoming President 13, the moniker he uses under his administration as the 13th president of Livingstone College. He is an anomaly in that regard, as less than 1 percent of former foster care children rise to the ranks of college president, while just 3-4% obtain a four-year college degree.

“He was born when his mother was only 14 years old. His grandmother, their intended caregiver, died the night he was born, and both he and his mother became wards of the state,” the article, written by Drexel B. Ball, reads. “Davis remained in foster care until he emancipated himself 90 days prior to aging out.”

Davis is leading the institution from which he earned his undergraduate degree, becoming the first alumnus in 25 years to serve as president.

HBCU Matters is a biannual magazine published by Black Business Media, based in Winston-Salem. *Black Business Ink* Magazine, its sister publication, will celebrate its 20th anniversary this summer by hosting the *Black Business Ink* POWER 100 Awards Ceremony.

Davis will be among those honored as 100 of the most influential and powerful leaders and organizations from across North Carolina.

“The individuals and organizations that comprise the POWER 100 have provided outstanding service in their communities, particularly among marginalized communities,” said Richard L. Williams, founder, publisher and editor of the award-winning publication. “It’s a privilege and an honor to recognize these North Carolina icons.”

The awards ceremony begins at 7 p.m. on June 8 at the Steven Tanger Center for the Performing Arts, 300 N. Elm St., Greensboro. It is a singular event of the annual State of Black North Carolina Conference.

“I am happy, humbled and honored to serve as Livingstone’s 13th president and equally grateful for the exposure my position is giving to the foster care system,” Davis said. He gives credit to his foster care mother, Louise Moore, who cultivated his intellectual prowess, and to his biological mother, Wanda Gibbs, with whom he later reunited and who encouraged him to pursue higher education.

To read the full cover story that features Davis, visit www.hbcumattersmagazine.com or click this link: <https://online.fliphtml5.com/jetbe/zlbi/#p=1>



Casting the Vision

Rev. Dierdre' Parker - Rowson
Entertainment & Arts Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: Entertainment_Arts@StarofZion.org

April 5, 2023

Charlotte, NC- A visionary is a person who thinks about, and plans for the future with imagination and wisdom.

Darin Kent, the Chief communications officer of the A.M.E. Zion Church, is a visionary. We were able to catch up with Mr. Kent between his myriad responsibilities and to talk about his vision for the communications department.

As the Chief Communications officer, what were your immediate goals for Star of Zion?

So, I came in with the expectation to manage a communications department primarily. I knew I was supposed to manage a newspaper, but the day to day Editor in Chief responsibilities that came along with that, were a huge learning curve for me. My background is livestream, video, photography... things of that nature so I had to learn all the things that are necessary to be able to maintain the Star. As you well know, if the paper does not run, the subscriptions do not come and in turn the department is not properly funded. So, I had to get that under my belt by understanding the process from beginning to end. Once I got a handle on that, I started on my next level of goals which was building the internal infrastructure here at the office. We're still working on that so that we can communicate more effectively than we have in the past. We've done decent with it but we still have a long way to go.

Then there were the conversations between me and my board chair, Bishop George D. Crenshaw. His vision and mine for the department aligned in so many different areas, thankfully. He definitely saw more digital happening. We shared the vision of having a network where we could view and showcase all of Zion's content. So AMEZTV was the plan we implemented "right out the gate." We also had thoughts of putting together a production department where we can have production equipment on site, to be able to put on an event from setup to strike. We are now at a good place where we own a lot of our own video equipment. The next thing we will attack is working on sound reinforcement. We will in the future acquire a sound board, speakers and things of that nature. There were deliverables that I had...hold on one moment. That's my wife."

Mr. Kent was in his office as we conducted the interview via Zoom. One of his daughters played quietly in the room just out of view of the camera. While she was out of view of the camera, she was never out of her father's sight. He finishes up the call with his wife, and then turns his attention to his daughter, who wants to use a purple crayon, but she doesn't have it. "Just use another color," he says gently. Then he turns back to the interview.

You have Star of Zion, AMEZTV, the whole communications department, you are a husband and a father. How do you juggle all of that?

"I'm still learning that. I'm understanding more and more that it's not going to get done in the same kind of time that I was doing it early on in my career. Now in this space, there are many moving parts. It is necessary to have buy-in from people. It is important to understand what is required to secure that buy-in and it takes time to clearly communicate the vision once you receive it from God. I'm learning to pace myself because we want the content that we put out to be of good quality. The personal life is definitely challenging right now." *Mr. Kent and his wife have a set of twins just months old and two daughters. "Right now, it's all hands on deck now with the boys. Eventually we will get someone to come into help with the boys. The girls are a little older now, so they need a different type of attention. Listening to them, talking with them, seeing who their friends are, and even watching the type of media that they consume and things of that nature. We are still working through, still putting addressing daily fires. It's fun and challenging at the same time. Maybe when you interview me a year from now, I'll be able to say 'yeah, it's all running smooth.'"*



Where do you see AMEZTV two years from now?

Streaming services like this, based on my research, are heavily dependent on original content. That original content, is what keeps the subscribers. I don't know that we currently have enough quality original content. It's not the content itself. It's the presentation of the content. Our preachers, our teachers, are dynamic and are certainly speaking truth to power however, we are not doing the best job at marketing and branding them. I see AMEZTV as being a platform where we can start small, with our original content. Then we can reshare content that has already been out there; worship services, leadership/ training institutes, conferences etc., and then work on polishing how that looks. Our job is to make disciple and there are many ways to do that in digital media. It's always about the next thing. This (AMEZTV) could get stale really quick, so we want to keep things vibrant. We want to come up with seasons and series, to keep them coming back for the next opportunity to grow and go. There are so many options for viewing. There are so many people in the world. It is a huge opportunity, but it is also a huge undertaking. I'm sorry...

He turns to his daughter again. "Yes, my dear." She has a question about the sheet that she is working on. She wants to know how many more she has to find. He takes his time with her. Tells her that there are three more, and then gives her a little hint to help her find it. He apologizes to the interview. Then he adds:

My heart for the church is tremendous. It gave me my purpose. I mean I was going to church with friends and of course because of my mom, but I was lost. Greater Centennial gave this young kid the opportunity to put together announcements and commercials. I found my identity in this work. I want to be able to do so much more. I just want to make sure that I am maximizing this opportunity to bring something new and innovative to the church. I just want to make sure I am making God proud, my father and family proud. I just hope I'm doing well by them.

We at Star of Zion are certainly proud of the visionary that is Darin Kent. We believe that God, his father and his family are proud as well.

The Air-apparent: A movie Review

Submitted by Anthony G. Marshall

April 14, 2023

Atlanta, GA- As we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, this time of the year produces at least one faith-based film release. Strangely enough this year was noticeably bare of films dealing with the subject matter in question so instead, we're going to have to focus on another "rise" that may not be as spectacular but nonetheless still interesting. The rise of the Jordan empire within Nike is our theme for today's review of *Air*, a remarkable biographical sports film, who's script was met with rave reviews even before being picked up by Amazon Studios in 2021. The film almost went straight to streaming on Prime Video but after some strong test viewings it was given a theatrical release, and after watching it, I can tell you it's quite deserving of its theatrical release.

It's hard to think of a time where Nike wasn't the top or near the top when it comes to athletic wear, but that's exactly where we start off in this ensemble feature. Nike is on the brink of bankruptcy in 1984, and in desperate need of a new basketball star to lead their struggling brand. Sonny Vaccaro played by Matt Damon, a talented yet down on his



luck marketing executive for Nike has the unenviable task of attempting to land the most talented and marketable player in the NBA draft while the company is not exactly the most popular. The hills and valleys that follow as the company banks its entire stake on UNC hero Michael Jordan are both gripping and hilarious. While Damon's portrayal of Vaccaro takes center stage, Ben Affleck, Jason Bateman, Viola Davis, Chris Tucker, Marlon Wayans, Chris Messina, and Matthew Maher are a (pardon the pun) "Dream Team," all bringing something different to the table and completely shining at various parts in the film. While the story of insurmountable odds in sports cinema is not a new one and can easily become cliché, the movie does a brilliant job of telling a formulaic story but somehow putting a fresh and enjoyable spin on it. The film is informative without being boring and entertaining without relying on the same tropes of similar movies. While most of us know the outcome of the film and that "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1), *Air* still does an exceptional job of making the audience feel every bit of the struggle and even making it feel as if defeat is imminent and all is for naught. The flaws to this film are minimal as the only truly glaring blemish appears near the end as Sonny delivers a final desperate monologue that comes off a bit unoriginal and sticks out from an otherwise refreshing film. A very small complaint from this slam dunk of a film and an early favorite for one of the best films of the year.

Anthony G. Marshall is a contributing freelancer and professional actor. When he is not claiming to be an encyclopedia of movie facts, he is often screenwriting or cooking.

Men of Change Leaves Charlotte

Submitted by Asia Briana Brown

Sunday, March 12, 2023, marked the final day of the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition, *Men of Change: Power. Triumph. Truth* for Charlotte. *Men of Change*, which shared space and free admission between the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture and the Levine Museum of the New South, featured prominent African American men both past and contemporary, who have greatly contributed to the artistic, literary, political, social, professional, and overall culture of America today.

Some of the men profiled in Charlotte's *Men of Change* included Charlotte-born artist, Romare Bearden, Alvin Ailey, Muhammad Ali, Tony Dungy, and Ryan Coogler. Within the companion gallery guide for Gantt and the Levine Museum, these men are described as "icons often rendered invisible by a country yet uplifted by a culture. They are men whose stories are the legends of the past, the inspiration for the now, and the beginning of the future." The men profiled are held in grandeur, as their illuminated images are displayed as beautiful installation art. One of the gems among this legacy of gems is Charles Hamilton Houston, a prominent lawyer also known as "The Man Who Killed Jim Crow." His incredible resume is so luminous that I was shocked that through my seven years of higher education—including an un-



dergraduate minor in African American studies and one year of law school—I had never heard of this man. Houston trailblazed the fight against institutionalized segregation in the United States, by heading many civil rights cases and training many Black lawyers in the mid-1930s and 40s, including Thurgood Marshall. Houston's story alone revealed how important and necessary exhibitions like *Men of Change* are to society, to continue educating America and the world that is influenced by it.

Men of Change captures the essence and the truth of the contributions and narratives of the African American men featured. As noted in the Gantt and Levine Museum gallery guide, this exhibition "do[es] not represent an end to a conversation about change; rather. They represent a beginning ... our choices [for the men selected] are a drop in a river of change agents and the reflections of a broader community." Having witnessed the diversity of visitors who have toured *Men of Change* in the Gantt and Levine

Museum, this exhibit is a testament to how these men, both named and unnamed, are indeed reflections of a broader community willing to accept these African American men's indelible contributions and impact on American culture and human culture globally.

Asia Briana Brown is a writing coach, spoken word artist and author of *Bring Me Back Home New Orleans* and *Cemetery Psalms*

The Resurrection of Blue Monday



Rev. Dierdre' Parker - Rowson
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April 10, 2023

Southport, NC- At the mouth of the Cape Fear River in Southeastern North Carolina sits a picturesque town that is in the throes of gentrification. This is a familiar story. Gentrification has been creeping into our neighborhoods all over America for decades; *centuries*. The very definition of the word is offensive: *The process whereby the character of a poor urban area is changed by wealthier people moving in, improving housing, attracting new businesses, typically displacing current inhabitants in the process.* This seems to indicate that there should be some debt of gratitude that the *poor* owes to the *wealthier* for their displacement. This definition does not take in to account the erasure of the history and culture that existed in neighborhoods before the gentrifiers come along.

Those whose history is being erased, are the only ones who can keep their history and culture alive. Members of Historic Saint James AME Zion of the Wilmington District in the Cape Fear Conference are keeping the culture and history of their town alive as members of a non-profit organization call *Southport Unity Committee*. The group, has been working diligently to keep the beauty of its culture alive through various activities often held in the park named for Alvin C. Caviness, long time principal of Brunswick County Training School.

Being from that small town I had the privilege of being present at the "resurrection" of the Blue Monday Celebration. While the origin of this holiday is a mystery to many of us, there was talk that it had something to do with mourning. Those of us who grew up in this town remember that it was a time of excitement and fun. It started out at the church but the day always ended with families gathered at the "hut" where there was music food and laughter. This Blue Monday revival was very much the same except for a few differences. What did not change is that it was a place where people gathered and were able to share music laughter and fun.

I spoke with the president of the Southport Unity Committee, Terrance Galloway and asked him why these types of events are so important. He had this to say:

"Kids these days spend a lot of time playing video games. Many of them are violent. Activities like the things we used to do back in the day, get kids outside. It also gives them an opportunity to interact with the older folks, and they can learn things about our culture and about the history of our people in a casual and fun setting. So, we get the kids together and we feed them and we have a little fun, and it takes their minds off of things that are going on in the world."

Miss Emma Myles, a community activist, has lived in Southport all her life. She is well know in the community for the work that she does throughout the county. There are not many events in town that she doesn't attend. She too had fond memories of Blue Monday. "Community get together, family cookouts, hiding eggs. We used to look forward to coming together at the church, hiding the eggs and stuff. Mostly just getting together and having fun."

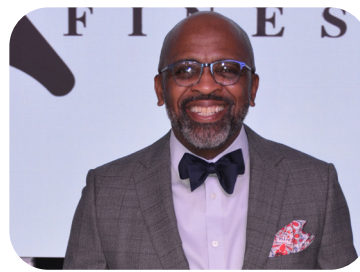
Monique Jackson-Morgan, mother of a six-year-old and an eight year old, talked about what events like Blue Monday mean for her children. "It's the gathering and fellowship of friends and family. Most of the kids out here are related. They get the opportunity to play and have fun in a safe environment. I don't have to worry about anything bad happening to them. There is so much going on in the world. But at these events they can just have a good time. These events show our community in a positive light."

Derrick Parker, the vice president of the group, was asked about why the Unity Committee is necessary. "We were talking about how kids don't have anything to do like we did when we were kids. The kids need something to do." Many of the places that the kids used to play have been changed and this leaves few spaces where kids can play safely. "We had to do something about that so we decided to form this group. We have activities like this (Blue Monday) to give them something to do." One of their biggest activities an annual kickball game that pits the hometown team against the rival town within the county. It is well attended, and bring young and old out to support their teams.

While gentrification continues in Southport and many other towns, and cities, and neighborhoods all over the country, we can keep our history and our culture alive by events like this and by getting together and share the stories of how this were, and who we are with the next generation. We at Star of Zion pray that the Southport Unity Committee will continue to tell the stories and share the love.

The Finest Day

Zion's Finest: An A.M.E. Zion Singing Showcase Finale Taping



Rev. Dierdre' Parker - Rowson
Entertainment & Arts Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: Entertainment_Arts@StarofZion.org
Photographer: Dr. Vincent Howell

April 18, 2023

Winston Salem, NC - I love TV singing competition shows. It's the human drama for me. Not only do you get to discover amazing unknown talent, but you learn the stories behind the person. You learn what music means to them, and how they use it to overcome the pitfalls of life. In these competitions, the competitors use their God-given gifts to beautify the world around them. If you are like me, then you have probably watched every singing competition show that there is.

There is a new singing competition show whose inaugural season has had me on the edge of my seat for weeks. Zion's Finest: An A.M.E. Zion Singing Showcase. It features singers from all over the A.M.E. Zion Church, and is viewable on all the Star of Zion, and A.M.E. Zion streaming platforms. Each week we have watched as the competitors have auditioned before a cadre of distinguished judges who offer suggestions and feedback.

And can we talk about the judges? Dr. Tony McNeill sought-after workshop clinician, lecturer consultant, mentor, and guest choral conductor, throughout the country. David Scott Cunningham, Pastor of China Grove AME Zion Church Pineville, NC, and national recording artist Ashia Bello (Anthony Brown and Group Therapy). These judges guide and mentor the contestants, week after week as we make our way to the series finale where only one will be crowned Zion's Finest and receive a \$1000 cash prize as well as a recorded song that will be featured on the Zion's Finest Compilation album.

After watching for weeks, I had the privilege of being present at the live taping of the finale. For someone who loves TV Singing competition shows, I was as happy as a hog in a mud wallow. It wasn't just the singing; it was the entire experience. Goler Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, in Winston Salem NC, is such a beautiful facility perfectly equipped for such an undertaking as the finale of a singing competition show. Since

I am not tech savvy, I won't be able to wow you with all of the built in media friendly features that made this place perfect. What I can tell you, is that the hosts, from the pastor (Rev. Dr. George Banks) to the person who greeted us at the door and all points in between, were generous, helpful and operated in the spirit of love.

My first experience of being a part of an audience for a live taping of a show was stellar. It was made so by the professionalism of the media team. From start to finish, even with start-overs; they kept the audience engaged and the performing finalists calm. It wasn't long before this went from being the taping of a show to a spiritual encounter. As each of the three finalists took their turn on the stage, it was obvious that, for them, this was not a competition, but an opportunity to lift up their voices in praise and adoration to the Great I Am. With their voices they led us into their secret place with God. We, the audience, went willingly with them. As I opened my eyes, I realized that I wasn't the only one with my hands in the air and I wasn't the only one with tears streaming down my face because these voices didn't just entertain us, they ushered us into worship. In that moment we became one people, with one goal in mind. Praise and adoration to God.

These shows have been wonderfully produced by the Communications Department of the A.M.E. Zion Church with its main sponsors, The Star of Zion and The A.M.E. Zion Publishing House and the Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District of the A.M.E. Zion Church. This inaugural season has been produced by Mr. Darin Kent, directed by Mrs. Dana Radcliffe, musically supervised by Mr. Ramon Shelton, and hosted by Pastor R.J. Chandler Sr.

If you haven't been following this season's episodes, you still have time to catch them before the finale airs. You will even have the opportunity to vote live during the finale, so its important to catch up on the entire series available by searching for Zion's Finest on Facebook, and YouTube. Take a minute to subscribe, like, comment and share Zion's Finest to your virtual following. Trust me you don't want to miss a minute of it! Zion's Finest airs Thursday nights at 8pm on all Star of Zion and A.M.E. Zion streaming platforms with the finale airing in the beginning of May 2023.



The Importance of Black Doulas & How to Access Care

Submitted by Angel Eason
Lifestyle Editor, The Star of Zion

Did you know that Black women are three to four times more likely to experience pregnancy-related death than White women? (Creanga, A., 2017).

May is International Doula and Maternal Mental Health Month and I had the opportunity to speak to two doulas who are members of Zion about their journeys as doulas and how Black women can access care.

What is a doula?

A mother's helper, a mother's servant, she is there to help mom mentally and emotionally and to be an advocate during pregnancy and childbirth. We also encourage and empower mothers to advocate for themselves. - Doula Raye

A birth coach, professionals that focus on physical, educational, and mental health for moms. We are on the holistically side of the birthing experience. - Deb the Doula

Why did you become a doula?

I have worked with children my whole life. I had a daycare and was a newborn photographer at a local children's hospital. Diane Holt, a local preacher, has an organization called Durham Baby Cafe. She asked me if I wanted to come aboard and I said absolutely. She helped me to become trained as a doula and it has been 5 years. - Doula Raye

I became a doula because I did not have the best birth experience with my firstborn. There were a lot of red flags I missed that could have been life-changing for me and my family. There was so much information that I did not know going into labor. I made it my mission to educate and help as many people as I can so they will not have the same, or worse experience as I did.



I am trained with DONA International, one of the largest doula organizations, and Urban Baby Beginnings. It consists of childbirth, breastfeeding, and the anatomy of a woman's body classes. It also teaches you how to counsel and properly teach birthing families how to advocate for themselves. - Deb the Doula

Why should Black women consider adding a doula to their birth team?

We really fill in that gap. I found in my experience that women and Black people in general are fearful of the medical community and rightfully so. The doula is going to act as a liaison and to make sure her birth is the way she wants it as best as we can. Emergencies come up but childbirth should not be institutionalized and completely medical because it is a natural process. - Doula Raye

It will change the outlook on birth labor and get a lot of education that is not shared during the prenatal appointments. Doulas break down medical terms and share alternatives that they can have in the hospital during the birthing experience. - Deb the Doula

How can women find Doulas in their local area?

If you are in New York, go to the New York State Department of Health website and type in doula. Our email addresses and phone numbers are on there. You can also search on Facebook for doulas in your local area. - Doula Raye

You can join groups on Facebook. Urban Baby Beginnings has a database to find doulas.

I offer my services for free to families who are in a home visiting program at Up Center located in Virginia. My childbirth education classes and other groups are free to all of Hampton Roads, Virginia. - Deb the Doula

How much does a Doula cost to have on a birthing team?

It is based on location and insurance. I do not charge for my services.

The community I serve cannot afford to pay. - Doula Raye

I have seen ranges from \$500 to \$2,000. It depends on what you want and what the doula has expertise in. Some doulas starting out might have lower-scale costs. Check to see if your insurance will cover the cost, I know Medicaid and Tricare are starting to. Deb the Doula

What advice do you have for mothers-to-be?

I would remind them that this is their pregnancy, their birth. Create a birthing plan that is the biggest thing, so that everything you want to happen (safely) can happen. You may want to squat rather than laying down. You may want to have your baby at home. This is where the doulas come in. We are not only massaging mom, but we are also letting the doctors know that we are watching. We die three times more during childbirth than our white counterparts. Don't be afraid to reach out. You have a voice in your childbirth and healthcare. - Doula Raye

Breathe and do not stress. Breathing is going to be a big part of labor and mental health. Really prepare and educate yourself. Take a childbirth education class, a good one. I offer one for free. My childbirth education class is in-person and virtual. - Deb the Doula

Have questions for Doula Raye and Deb the Doula? Contact them below.

Have other topics you want me to cover? Reach out at lifestyle@starofzion.org.

Reference:

Creanga, A.A., Syverson, C., Seek, K., & Callaghan, W.M. (2017). Pregnancy-Related Mortality in the United States, 2011-2013. *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 130(2), 366-373.



"If a Doula were a drug, it would be unethical not to use it."
- John Kennell, M.D.

A portrait of Mrs. Sheila Wells Monroe, a woman with short grey hair, wearing glasses and a white collared shirt with a purple circular badge on the left side. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background of the portrait is white, and the entire image is framed by a gold glitter border.

Quadrennial
CELEBRATION

June 9, 2023. 6:00pm

**Mrs. Sheila Wells Monroe, Supervisor
Dean of Missionary Supervisors**

Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District

Simon Temple AME Zion Church
5760 Yadkin Rd. Fayetteville NC 28303



COMMENCEMENT: NEW BEGINNINGS AND NEW CHALLENGES

Submitted by Dana G. Stille
Financial Freedom Editor, The Star of Zion
FinancialFreedom@StarofZion.org

Across the country many students will celebrate the completion of undergraduate studies this month during commencement ceremonies at their respective higher education institutions. After years of hard work and dedication, graduating students are excited to celebrate their accomplishments and begin a new phase of life. Leaving the student life behind, graduates eagerly look forward to launching their professional careers and making money.

Over the past two years many college graduates were fortunate to enter a job market full of opportunities. In fact, some college graduates had received job offers at the start of their senior year, several months prior to graduation. This year, however, recent economic challenges have tempered the flow of job offers and opportunities.

On March 16, 2022, in an effort to curb inflationary pressure, the Federal Reserve began raising the federal fund interest rate. The Fed continued to enact rate increases 8 additional times since then, with the most recent increase occurring on March 22, 2023. Increases in interest rates result in increased costs of borrowing for both consumers and businesses. These increased costs often serve as a deterrent to making future purchases. Additionally, the recent regional bank failures added stress to the banking system causing deepened concerns about future business expansions and a slowdown in hiring practices.

Landing a job that provides a source of stable income and sets the pathway toward financial freedom is a top priority for all college graduates. Changes in job market conditions have shifted the immediate job plans for many, and some graduating students find themselves forced to consider different options. These options include forgoing entry into the job market and enrolling in graduate school instead, accepting a job outside of their college major or original plan, or working in an on-call, temporary or freelance capacity.

The economic future and job prospects for new hires remains uncertain. As graduating students celebrate their successes, and continue to seek employment, it is important to remember that finding a job requires patience and hard work. Job seekers should tap into their networks, attend job fairs, and research prospective companies. Landing a dream job is possible, it just may take a little longer. Congratulations to the class of 2023!

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/jobs-new-college-graduates-2023-labor-market-openings-7195e28>

<https://www.marketplace.org/2023/04/05/class-of-2023-graduating-into-a-challenging-job-market/>

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Beyond Qualified!

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

April 15, 2023

As Mother's Day approaches, we are reminded of the profound impact mothers have in our lives, whether they are our biological parents or not. In the world of sports, we often see coaches and players receive recognition (as they rightfully deserve), but all too often, it is not women, especially black women.

It's time to recognize Black Women in Sports. One name that may not be familiar to many, but should be, is Sheila Johnson. Sheila Johnson is just one of many trailblazers who have left a lasting impact on the lives of countless individuals in the business and Sporting World. Like a mother, she has shown love, provided resources, and led change, inspiring the lives of many. Not only is she the first African American Female Billionaire, but her achievements and contributions are only a testament to her work ethic and dedication to promoting social change.

In a predominantly male-dominated field, she has forged her own path in the sports industry. Sheila's contributions to society and sports are so significant that she should be taught in history books. She holds the distinction of being the first African American woman to have an ownership stake in three professional sports franchises: the Washington Mystics, the Washington Capitals, and the Washington Wizards. As if that wasn't impressive enough, Sheila is the Team President and Managing Partner of the Washington Mystics, a WNBA team.

When it comes to being a Team President and Owner, making the correct personnel changes, and having people rely on you is a daily challenge. But Sheila Johnson has provided so much more to the world, like being a trailblazer, philanthropist, and advocate for social change.

On other fascinating part of her resume, which many may not know, is that she co-founded BET. Yes, THE BET. Sheila founded the network with her ex-husband, Robert L. Johnson, in 1980 and has been on a mission ever since.

Beyond her business acumen, Sheila's social activism sets her apart. She is a vocal advocate for gender equality in sports and the professional world. Sheila is also a co-founder of WE Capital, a venture capital consortium dedicated to supporting women-led enterprises that promote



social change.

Empowering the younger generation is something our world needs the most, and Sheila exemplifies this ethos day in and day out. From donating millions of dollars to New York schools to building and owning her own hotel company, Sheila has positively impacted countless lives through her life's work.

In addition to her notable achievements in the business and sports worlds, Sheila Johnson is also a renowned painter and pianist. The *Sheila C. Johnson Design Studio* at SUNY Morrisville, a design center founded by Johnson, encourages active dialogue on the role of innovative art and design.

Sheila Johnson's unwavering dedication to promoting social change in both the sports and business world serves as a powerful motivation for everyone to pursue their passions and persevere in the face of challenges. As we celebrate Sheila's remarkable achievements, it is evident that she has played a motherly role in the lives of many, nurturing and inspiring countless individuals through her life's work. Sheila is an exemplary figure, and her impact will hopefully continue to inspire generations to come.

What is the Secret?

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

April 15, 2023

Dawn Staley, or Coach Dawn Staley as she is affectionately known, is the current head coach of the South Carolina Gamecocks Women's Basketball team and is widely regarded as one of the best coaches in all of sports. Her journey to coaching excellence started with her own remarkable career as a basketball player.

Hailing from North Philly, Dawn dominated the high school basketball scene before becoming a standout player for the University of Virginia from 1989-1992. She was a three-time Kodak All-American and a two-time ACC Player of the Year, a college career that many kids can only dream of, but for Coach Staley, it became her reality.

Her success didn't end in college, as she went on to represent Team USA in the Olympics. Dawn, being Dawn, of course, exceeded all expectations. She not only represented Team USA but also helped lead them to three consecutive Olympic Gold medals in Atlanta in 1996, Sydney in 2000, and Athens in 2004.

After a brief professional basketball career along with 6 WNBA All-Star Selections, Dawn Staley realized her passion for coaching and made a seamless transition to the coaching profession. In 2008, she was hired as



the head coach of the South Carolina Women's Gamecocks, where she has made a significant impact on the lives of many young women.

In the world of professional sports and coaching, it's rare to see a coach remain with the same team for 17 years. Usually, coaches either face challenges and get fired or pursue better opportunities elsewhere. But Dawn Staley is anything but average. With a remarkable track record of two National Championships, five regional championships, seven SEC Championships, and three Naismith Coach of the Year honors, it's evident that there's a winning formula that Coach Staley possesses.

For Coach Staley, coaching is not just about basketball, but it's also about life. She understands that there is more to life than just being a basketball player, and she goes above and beyond to be a life coach to many young women. She genuinely cares about their well-being, taking the time to talk to them about their day, ensuring that their lives are good at home, and supporting their academic struggles and successes. It's not just part of her job requirements; it's a way of life for Coach Staley.

Former players, such as National Champion and Wooden Award Winner Aliyah Boston, have nothing but high praise for Coach Staley. Aliyah, likely to be the number one pick in this year's WNBA Draft, credits Coach Staley for her success, saying this after winning a National Championship in 2022, "God has blessed us with great teammates who made the decision to trust Coach Staley, trust the process, and we're victorious tonight."

Trusting a coach is what parents value the most when sending their kids off to college. For Aliyah's parents, it was no different. Being a highly touted high school player, there were hundreds of colleges reaching out

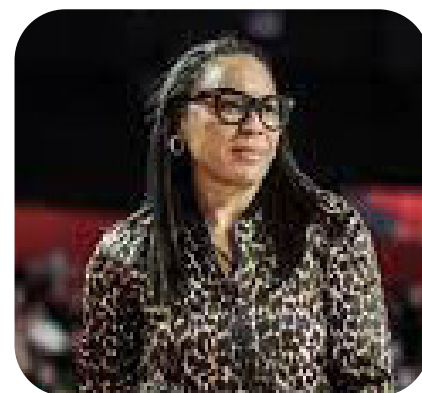
to Aliyah. Coach Dawn and South Carolina were some of the lucky few to make it to Boston's final list, and from there Coach Dawn just had to be herself. After countless conversations with Aliyah and Aliyah's parents growing to love Coach Dawn, Boston ultimately signed with South Carolina, and the rest was history. Boston's mom said, "My husband was probably most ecstatic over everybody in the whole world because he loved Coach Staley. He thought, and this was before Aliyah signed, that this was the coach for her."

One common denominator in all the great things former players have said about Coach Staley is that she wants her players to win not only on the court but also off the court. She genuinely cares about their holistic development as individuals.

Indeed, Coach Staley's influence extends far beyond the athletic field. She has leveraged her platform to advocate for social change, courageously taking a stand against injustices and advocating for social change.

During the 2020 protests in response to George Floyd's murder, she made it known that she would not stand for police brutality against people who look like her. She bravely spoke out, led protests, and urged for social change in the lives of Black people, even putting her job and career on the line. Coach Staley is not one to shy away from taking a stand for what she believes in.

As we celebrate Mother's this month, we also celebrate Coach Dawn Staley and the remarkable career she has had and continues to have. Being more than a coach is not always easy but she does it with a Mother's heart.



HOOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY 2023 COMMENCEMENT



Commencement Speaker
Dr. Delores Brisbon

May 20, 2023 | 10:30 A.M. EST

Varick Auditorium @ Livingstone College
701 West Monroe Street
Salisbury, NC, 28144

► **MORE INFORMATION** WILL BE FORTHCOMING AND POSTED AT



REV. DR. CHARLES FRAZIER STANLEY

September 25, 1932 – April 18, 2023

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Ronald Nathan
World Politics Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: WorldPolitics@starofzion.org

On Tuesday April 18, 2023 the world woke up to the news that Dr. Charles Frazier Stanley, eminent, prominent conservative, evangelical preacher, teacher, writer and broadcaster had passed away.

His focus was clear and unambiguous “I have one goal: Get the truth of the Gospel to as many people as possible, as quickly as possible, as simply as possible, in the power of the Holy Spirit and to the glory of God”. A look at his life and ministry attest to such a missional commitment.



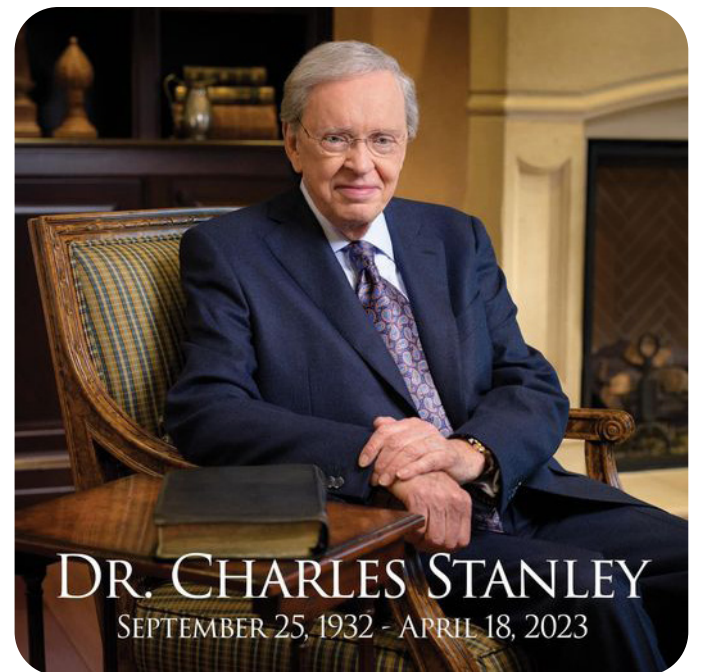
As pastor of First Baptist Church in Atlanta for 49 years he became a household name in Georgia. As the principal personality with the ‘In Touch Ministries’ and ‘In Touch with Dr. Charles Stanley’ he became a global influencer. According to his organization’s website his sermons, podcasts and devotionals were heard by some 115 million household worldwide.

As the author of 60 books and having served as the president of the Southern Baptist Convention for two terms during the 1980s he became a colossal figure in evangelical circles.

Dr. Stanley who hailed from the moderate arm of the Southern Baptist Convention and therefore was not as vocal on issues

of race, women in ministry and social justice as the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church would of liked. However, we do recognise and salute his deep commitment to the ‘Evangel’ that God through Jesus Christ was good news to all of humanity.

Our prayers go out to Dr. Stanley’s family and loved ones, the members of First Baptist Church in Atlanta and all his ministerial colleagues at In Touch Ministries.



EUROPE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH ITS PAST AND ITS PRESENT

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Ronald Nathan
World Politics Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: WorldPolitics@starofzion.org

“Christianity as a default, as a norm, in Europe has gone, and probably gone for good, so says Stephen Bullivant, professor of theology and the sociology of religion at St Mary’s University, London, England.

The truth is that Europe stopped being led by Christian principles and values centuries ago. Its wholesale capitulation into the Trans-Atlantic Trade in Africans was a clear demonstrated of the continent’s backslidden state.

Several European nations have been trying to address their ‘seared consciences’ in regards to their historical involvement in the Trans-Atlantic trade in Africans in recent times yet wishing to avoid the economic issues related to restitution and reparations.

Take for example, France recognized that the slave trade was a crime against humanity in 2001 (the Taubira Law) but refuse to consider repaying Haiti, the US\$21 billion it paid as compensation to the French government as compensation for freeing itself from slavery.

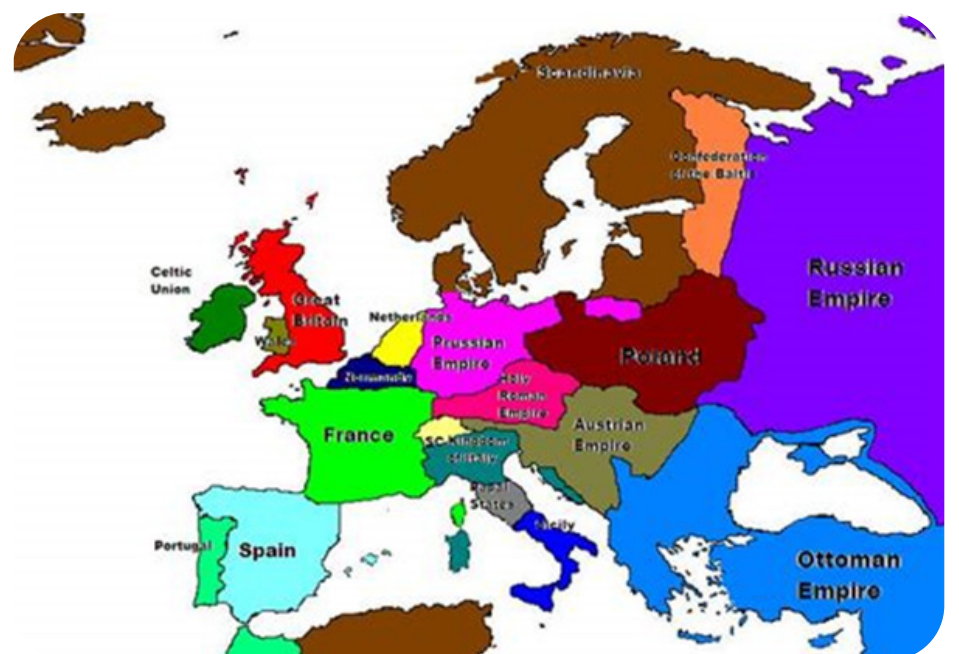
The United Kingdom’s recent so called surprised discovery that the royal family was personally involved in financing slavery is a joke. Yet the former British Prime Minister David Cameron had the gall to tell the Jamaican government and people ‘it is time to move on’ from talking about slavery and agitating for reparations.

In the Netherlands, the Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte apologized for the Netherlands “slavery past,”. Going further than many of his European colleagues he stated “For centuries, the Dutch state and its representatives facilitated, stimulated, preserved, and profited from slavery. Along with its’ formal apology, the Dutch government is ex-



pected to allocate US\$219 million as donations to create awareness and 27million Euros towards a slavery museum. Yet discussions about reparations with its former Dutch colonies in the Caribbean is still being ignored.

So the order of the day is that Europe continues to want to take a moral high ground by pointing to its role in the Abolition of Slavery and downplaying the brutality of its colonial past. Support for this position recently surface through Nigel Biggar, Emeritus Regius Professor of Moral Theology at the University of Oxford open justification of the British Empire’s treatment of indigenous peoples and the enslavement of Africans.



Sudan-Civil War or Unusual Business?

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Ronald Nathan
 World Politics Editor, The Star of Zion
 Email: WorldPolitics@starofzion.org

Sudan has entered into a fourth day of open warfare in its cities and villages. The streets of Khartoum, the capital is a battle zone, the airport been bombed, local hospitals targeted as images of mayhem flash across our television screens. Reports say that over a hundred and eighty civilians have lost their lives and thousands are injured. The five million eight hundred thousand people who live in this city on the banks of the River Nile, are now at serious risk.

These daily sights of carnage point to the growing levels of hostilities between two disparate military factions in a country where the political institutions are fragile at best and non-existent at worst.

The central cause of tension in this East African country since the people uprising in 2019 is the civilian demand for oversight of the military and integration of the paramilitary groups into the army.

General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, is the head of the Sudanese army and also the de facto leader of the country after a military coup in April 2019.

General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, better known as Hemedti is the head of the Rapid Support Force (RSF), a paramilitary group. These two forces have fallen out and have gone to war in the nation of 42 million people.



The Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I, once called war 'the very refinement of barbarism'. This refinement comes at a huge cost. Conflicts historically has been a part of the human experience, a reflection and expression of their social, political and psychological diversity.

A growing factor in Africa when conflict turns into war, such as it has in

Sudan and Democratic Republic of the Congo is the rich pickings that continue to fuel the war. War has to be financed and in resource rich countries such as Sudan war is big business.



Both of these Sudanese generals have access to the resources of the country legal or illegal and have armed themselves to the teeth to defeat the other. They run roughshod over the will of the people in the hope of gaining the spoils of the nation. Caught in the middle of this conflict is Sudan's youthful population.



It is our prayer that these leaders will count the cost of this war to the people of the Sudan and despatch their ambassadors of Peace. Peace-making in Africa is complicated by the availability of mineral resources to warlords. An essential part of peace-making in Africa will require surrounding countries and the international community to bring policies to bear that will cut off the ability of the warlords to trade and therefore continue hostilities. Until then agitators

will not beat their swords into ploughshares nor their spears into pruninghooks and they will continue to study war.

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Drawing Wide the Circle-Expanding our Territory

Submitted by Rev. Andrea A. Wiley
Photos: Syteria H. Puryear

The International Ministers' Spouses and Widows (ers) Fellowship (IMSWF) is on a new journey as we continue to strive to reach the thousands of spouses, widows, and widowers throughout our Zion.

Under the leadership of our new International President, Rev. Patty Smith and the newly elected Executive Board Members, we are committed to the goals that have been set before us. Our Mission remains to strengthen the cultural, social, intellectual and spiritual life of the members of our fellowship.



Our Founder
Mrs. Beulah Crockett
~ "Passing the Torch" ~
Our 2022 – 2026
President
Rev. Patty S. Smith



Our IMSWF Quadrennial Theme is as follows:

- 2022-2023-Drawing Wide the Circle: Building our Faith through Increasing our Membership & Use of Technology in Communications (Website, On-line Membership, Pay Dues, Download Forms & Order Promotional Items) Connect our website to the official AMEZ Star of Zion webpage.
- 2023-2024-Drawing Wide the Circle: Empowering our History & Purpose through Faith (Motivated with Love)
- 2024-2025-Drawing Wide the Circle: Implementation of a PK (Preachers' Kids/Teens/Adults) Seminar & Faith-Based Seminar to Address the Ministers' Family (Activated by the Holy Spirit)
- 2025-2026-Drawing Wide the Circle: Faith Workshop & Prepare For Election (Operating through Faith)

The Biblical Scripture is 2 Corinthians 5:7 - For we walk by faith, not by sight.

The IMSWF met in the Western Episcopal District in February 2023, hosted by Bishop Brian R. Thompson, Sr. and Missionary Supervisor, Rev. Mrs. Felica Thompson. Mrs. Sylvia Wade Parker, MSWF Episcopal Director and the members of the Western Episcopal District MSWF greeted us in grand style.

Our IMSWF Meet and Greet was held on Thursday, February 16, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Los Angeles, CA. Mrs. Tawanda Harris of the Long Island District, New York Conference shared an awesome word as our guest speaker for the day. A wonderful time of fellowship and worship was had by all. We were grateful for the warm hospitality and love in the room.



The Candidates seeking office for the Episcopacy and WH&OMS were invited to meet and greet us. We had an opportunity to pose for a picture as a Divine 9 Group with representation of our spouses and widows(ers). Also, we were grateful to have Missionary Supervisors Rev. Felica Thompson, Lovetta Holmes, Vicki Frencher, Jean Leake, and Laurenna Crenshaw join us. Former Missionary Supervisors Barbara Carr, Aurelia Brown, and Shirley McCoy graced us with their presence. We were blessed to have former executive board member Vanessa McLamb in attendance as well.

We are excited about all that is being offered to our members and we invite you to join us each third (3rd) Monday of each month on our Monthly Prayer Call on Zoom as we gather from around Zion in prayer and praise to God. We are ever grateful to our Prayer Coordinator, Mrs. J. Fairbanks Leach and our Spiritual Life Chairperson, Rev. Michelle




Long for leading us each month.




Our 3rd Monday Monthly Prayer Call

~ KEEPING IT SPIRITUAL! ~



Meet our Spiritual Life Chairperson, Rev. Michelle Long! Rev. Long has taken us from a conference call to the Zoom platform. What a wonderful difference she has added to the team including our talented Prayer Coordinator & former International President, Mrs. Juanita Fairbanks Leach.

Rev. Long is of the Central NC Annual Conference. Her Pastor and Spouse is Rev. Vincent Long of Bethel AME Zion Church.



Join us every 3rd Monday for our **Zoom Prayer Call** at 8:30 PM (EST).
Set your event calendar reminder.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5422606310?pwd=cjdJUis4L25Rek1SaVRJQ3V1RUoydz09>

Meeting Id: 542 260 6310 -- Pass Code: 091 920 20
Please use these directions for using *phone only*:
Toll-Free Number: 1-646-558-8656

Join Our Facebook Group

We ask that all Ministers' Spouses, Widows and Widowers join us on our Facebook Group page for more detailed and updated information as well as archived items. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/426800679391311>

Zion's International Ministers' Spouses & Widows-ers Fellowship | Facebook

God is truly blessing us, as we expand our territory and draw wide our circle of fellowship. We invite all our Ministers' spouses, widows and widowers to join us on this journey.

Meet the New Executive Board

2022 - 2026 IMSWF Executive Board



President: Reverend Patty S. Smith; 1st Vice President: Reverend Robin Stitt (Pictured Below)
 2nd Vice President: Mrs. Delores Cowherd; 3rd Vice President: Mrs. Tojuana McLendon
 Recording Secretary: Reverend Andrea Wiley;
 Finance Secretary: Mrs. Bessie Baker
 Treasurer: Mrs. Jeryl Anderson
 Spiritual Life Chair: Reverend Michelle Long
 Newsletter Editor: Mrs. Syteria Puryear
 Parliamentarian: Mrs. Belinda Gibson
 Historian: Connie Shumake (Pictured to Right Side)
 Acknowledging our Immediate Past President: Reverend Margaret Anderson

Pictures from Our Meet & Greet in LA



Executive Board Members



(Unable to Attend:
 Rev. Michelle Long,
 Mrs. Bessie Baker & Mrs. Jeryl
 Anderson)



THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH
 THE INTERNATIONAL MINISTERS' SPOUSES and WIDOWS(ERS) FELLOWSHIP
 "Drawing Wide the Circle"

Name: _____ Date: _____
 Last First Middle Initial
 Address: _____ Street & Number City State Zip code
 Please check one: Spouse _____ Widow _____ Widower _____
 Spouse's Name: _____ Last First Middle Initial
 Phone: () _____ E-mail _____
 District: _____
 District President: _____ Last Name First Middle Initial
 Address: _____ Street & Number City State Zip code
 Phone: () _____ E-mail _____
 Conference: _____ Month of Conference _____
 Conference President: _____ Last Name First Middle Initial
 Address: _____ Street & Number City State Zip code
 Phone: () _____ E-mail _____
 Episcopal Area: _____
 Bishop _____ Supervisor _____

Patty S. Smith
 International MSWF President
 Make checks payable to: NATIONAL AME ZION MSWF

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION
 Regular Membership: \$15.00 Life Membership: \$200.00
 Constitution and By-laws: \$10.00 Lapel Pin: \$10.00

Mail Form and Check to: Michelle Long, Membership Chair
 4146 Thomas Sam Dr.
 Rock Hill, SC 29732
 Info: (803) 627-6129 settav@bellsouth.net

Copy as Needed Your Interest Is Appreciated!

Membership Info and Form

International Membership is only \$15.00 per year. This amount is due within 30 days of the beginning of your Conference year. Life Membership is a one-time \$200.00. Please send all inquiries and/or your completed IMSWF Membership form and your International dues to:

Rev. Michelle Long,
 Spiritual Life Chair
 4146 Thomas Sam Dr.
 Rock Hill, SC 29732
 803-684-3520 (H)
 803-627-6129 (C)
 settav@bellsouth.net

Ways & Means Projects

Please consider purchasing these lovely and functional writing instruments with the MSWF logo. Only \$3.00 and they make great MSWF group gifts, Mother's or Father's Day gifts, or honorariums, etc. More items to come!

Contact:

Mrs. Tojuana McLendon,
 3rd Vice President
 Ways & Means
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 Salisbury, MD 21801
 704-796-2979
 tojunamac41@yahoo.com

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PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO OUR BY-LAWS

(For your consideration and more info to come)



Page 1

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO OUR IMSWF BY-LAWS

ARTICLE IV - Membership Regulations and Fees
 Members shall be required to hold membership in a local A.M.E. Zion Church and be in good standing with an annual up-to-date membership. Members shall be currently spouses and/or widows(ers) of A.M.E. Zion ministers. Our international fiscal year runs August 1st through July 31st.
 a. Annual Membership Fee shall be \$15.00 per individual per year Annual Conference year.
 b. Memberships shall be purchased or renewed thirty (30) days following the close of each Annual Conference.
 c. The Executive Board sets the dues every Quadrennial, but members must ratify the amount.
 d. Life Members fee is a one-time payment of \$200.00 per individual. Life members are exempt from annual dues.
 e. The J. Fairbanks Leach Dime Door Rally Contributions should be received in the month of February each year for the support of the regular membership dues for Widows and Widowers.
 f. Active members are asked to contribute \$40.00 annually to the J. Fairbanks Leach Dime Door Rally to offset the cost of membership dues for Widows and Widowers.

ARTICLE VIII - Executive Board Members Duties
 2. The duties of the **First Vice President** shall be to perform the duties of the President at her/his request in his/her absence. If a vacancy in the presidency occurs by resignation or by death during her/his term in office, the First Vice President shall serve as President the remainder of the term. The First Vice President shall serve as Chairperson of the Program Committee and Chairperson of the Scholarship Committee.

Note: Refer to Page 23 for following change- SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION
 Submit Application to the IMSWF 1st Vice President
 The Deadline for submitting application shall be May 1st of each quadrennial Year

Delete Social Security number on Scholarship Form
 Rationale referring to 1st VP, the specific address & email for application submission will always be included within the Scholarship advertisement.
 Rationale referring to deletion of Social Security Number- Scholarship funds are awarded directly to the recipient; SS# is risk of identity theft

10. The duties of the **Historian** shall prepare an archive of minutes, pictures, programs, election results, Newsletters, By-Laws, Memorabilia, etc. He/she shall prepare historical data in/on current technology. This information shall be placed in the MSWF office file at the **AME Zion Headquarters** in Charlotte quarterly and following each Bi-annual and Quadrennial meeting. The Historian shall serve as Custodian of the repository so designated by the Board in CLC office in Charlotte, NC.

15. Each officer is to contribute \$40.00 annually to the J. Fairbanks Leach Dime Door Rally.

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PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO OUR IMSWF BY-LAWS
 (Continued)

ARTICLE IX - Split Election
 1. During the Quadrennial meeting in the year 2026, the following Officers will be elected:
 PRESIDENT FINANCIAL SECRETARY
 2ND VICE PRESIDENT SPIRITUAL LIFE CHAIRPERSON
 ASSISTANT RECORDING SECRETARY NEWSLETTER EDITOR
 2. During the Quadrennial meeting in the 2030, the following officers will be elected:
 1st VICE PRESIDENT 3RD VICE PRESIDENT
 RECORDING SECRETARY TREASURER
 PARLIAMENTARIAN HISTORIAN
 REPORTER CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Thereafter, every four years elections will alternate between #1 and #2 above.
 Rationale: So as not to begin a Quadrennial with a completely new slate of Officers

ARTICLE XII - Standing Committees:
 Add #13. MONTHLY PRAYER CALL COORDINATOR
 The Prayer Coordinator will facilitate the Monthly Prayer Call and other special request by the body.
 The President has the authority to appoint and/or nominate a Prayer Call Coordinator to work with the Spiritual Life Chair. The Executive Board must vote to approve.
 The Monthly Prayer Call was inspired by Rev. Patty Smith, as Spiritual Life Chairperson during March 2019, under the administration of Rev. Margaret Anderson. Mrs. J. Fairbanks Leach was our first Prayer Call Coordinator and has served from March 2019 to present.

Article XVI - Fellowship Symbols
 Mrs. Juanita Fairbanks Leach will be given recognition for the Fellowship song: "We Are Drawing Wide the Circle". The song will be inserted into our By-Laws.
 (The song will follow the "Fellowship" song.)
 Rev. Michelle Long will be given credit for the idea of the IMSWF Blanket/Throw.

Respectfully Submitted for your Consideration,
 The By-Laws Committee

Syteria H. Puryear, Chairperson
 Andrea Wiley, Secretary
 Bessie Baker, Financial Secretary
 Belinda Gibson, Parliamentarian
 Connie Shumake, Historian
 E. Delores Cowherd, 2nd Vice President

April 2023

Patty S. Smith, President & Ex Officio
 Robin Stitt, 1st Vice President

A GLOBAL LEADERSHIP VIEW OF THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH



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EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
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 Email: encedistrict@gmail.com
 District includes: Albermarle, Cape Fear, Central North Carolina, North Carolina, Virgin Islands
 Mrs. Sheila W. Monroe, Missionary Supervisor



2. Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr.
PIEDMONT EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
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 District includes: Blue Ridge, West Central North Carolina, Western North Carolina, Jamaica (all divisions)
 Mrs. Camille C. Starnes, Missionary Supervisor



3. Bishop Dennis V. Proctor
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 Mrs. D. Diane Proctor, Missionary Supervisor



4. Bishop Mildred B. Hines (Deceased)
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 Mrs. Gelenia Aaron Frencher, Missionary Supervisor



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 Mrs. Laurenna Crenshaw, Missionary Supervisor



9. Bishop Hilliard Dogbe
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 West Africa Address: A.M.E. Zion Church Episcopal Residence/Office; P.O. Box GP 22220, Accra, Ghana / Aggrey Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, P.O. Box MP 522, Mamprobi-Accra, Ghana, West Africa
 Office: 233-30-703-0241 Cell: 233-24-782-2440
 Email: hdogbe@hotmail.com bishopwwa@gmail.com
 District includes: North Ghana, West Ghana, Mid-Ghana, Liberia, East Ghana, Cote D'Ivoire and Togo; Mrs. Cynthia Dogbe, Missionary Supervisor



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Dr. Mary Love
Dr. Shirley Welch
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Rev. Dr. Gregory R. Smith
Dr. Brenda L. G. Smith
Mr. Herbert Watkins
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sankofa

Looking Back to Move Forward

THE ORIGINAL STATUE OF LIBERTY PRESENTED TO THE U.S. WAS A STATUE OF A...”BLACK WOMAN.”

Presented by Rev. Dr. Sarah Fleming

April 19, 2023

Did you know the Original Statue of Liberty presented to the U.S. was a...”Black Woman.” There is a lot of history that didn’t make it into the history books for our schools. READ, get you a book and educate yourself. A History Lesson: It is hard to believe that after my many years of schooling secondary and post) the following facts about the Statue of Liberty was never taught. Hundreds of thousands if not millions of people including myself have visited the Statue of Liberty over the years but yet I’m unable to find one person who knows the true history behind the Statue-amazing. Yes, amazing that so much important Black history (such as this) is hidden from us (Black and White). What makes this even worse is the fact that the current twist on history perpetuates and promotes white supremacy at the expense of Black Pride.

UPDATE: Since this article was published it came to light that it as in all likelihood not true (please update us if you have any info that says otherwise)...HOWEVER, there is more to this story. The original design for the statue WAS of a Southern Egyptian peasant woman, possibly a Black Muslim woman.

During my visit to France I saw the original Statue of Liberty. However, there was a difference, the statue in France is Black. The Statue of Liberty was originally a Black woman, but, as memory serves, it was because the model was black.

In a book called “The Journey of The Songhai People,” according to Dr. Jim Haskins, a member of the National Education Advisory Committee of the Liberty-Ellis Island Committee, professor of English at the University of Florida, and prolific Black author, points out that what stimulated the original idea for that 151 foot statue in the harbor:

He says that what stimulated the idea for the creation of the statue initially was the part that Black soldiers played in the ending of Black African Bondage in the United States. It was created in the mind of French historian Edouard de Laboulaye, chairman of the French Anti-Slavery Society, who, together with sculptor Frederic Auguste Bar-

tholdi, proposed to the French government that the people of France present to the people of the United States through the American Abolitionist Society, the gift of a Statue of Liberty in recognition of the fact that Black soldiers won the Civil War in the United States.

It was widely known then that it was Black soldiers who played the pivotal role in winning the war, and this gift would be a tribute to their prowess. Suzanne Nakasian, director of the Liberty, Ellis Island Foundation’s National Ethnic Campaign said that the

Black Americans’ direct connection to lady Liberty is unknown to the majority of Americans, BLACK or WHITE.

When the statue was presented to the U.S. Minister to France in 1884, it is said that he demonstrated that the dominant view of the broken shackles would be offensive to a U.S. South, because since the statue was a reminder of Blacks winning their freedom. It was a reminder to a beaten South of the ones who caused their defeat, their despised former captives.

DOCUMENTS OF PROOF:

- You may go and see the original model of the Statue of Liberty, with the broken chains at her feet and in her hand. Go to the Museum of the City of NY, Fifth Avenue and 103rd Street write to Peter Simmons and he can send you some documentation.
- Check with the N.Y. Times magazine, part II May 18, 1986. Read the article by Laboulaye.
- The dark original face of the Statue of Liberty can be seen in the N.Y. Post, June 17, 1986, also the Post stated the reason for the broken chains at her feet.
- Finally, you may check with French Mission or the French Embassy at the U.N. or in Washington, D.C. and ask for some original French material on the Statue of Liberty, including the Bartholdi original French material on the Statue of Liberty, including the Bartholdi original model.-with Edwin Cobb, Gemini Hodge and Deverick Murray.

Reminder:

The earthly goal of salvation is not to become a Christian but a fisher of men!

Submitted by Rev. Deborah Johns

Before I begin, allow me to define a few terms:

- A Christian is a person who has repented of their sins and confessed that Jesus is their Lord and Savior and believes in their heart that he arose from the dead

(Romans 10:9-10).

- A disciple is a Christian and a student of the one they follow so that they can emulate them.
- A Fisher of men is a disciple who has fully embraced and are not novice in the sanctification process and do the work of the evangelist.
- The sanctification process, is one in which you present your body as a living sacrifice and renew your mind with the the word of God and practice it in your everyday life (Romans 12:1-2). It is the process of putting off your old nature and putting on the nature of Christ (Ephesians 4:22-24).

When Jesus began his earthly ministry he began preaching “Repent! For the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew 4:17).” For those who would listen he asked, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men (Matthew 4:19).” Those who dared to follow him, left everything to begin their journey of becoming fishers of men.

In fact, the text says, “They immediately left their nets and followed Him (Matthew 4:20).” They left their jobs and family to start this journey. They would spend three and a half years in their training program where they observed everything Jesus did and they heard all of Jesus’ teaching. Jesus then gave them opportunities to serve as a part of their on the job training. What did they do? They first studied the laws of God with fresh insights from Jesus (sermon on the mount- Matthew 5-7). Then they baptized people understanding the need for confessing and repenting of sins (John 4:1-2).

They learned who Jesus really was to humanity (Matthew 16:13-20). They cast out demons, learning about spiritual warfare (Luke 10:17). They evangelized communities in preparation for Jesus’ coming, understanding the need to preach and teach the gospel message (Luke 9-10).

After their on the job training was completed, Jesus released them into the world saying, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20).”

In the world we live in today it seems rather extreme to forsake everything so that we can follow and serve Jesus. Logically speaking, we have to work so that we can eat and pay our bills. If we have children, we do not have time to drop everything and start a new life. If we have a spouse, they would most likely be against it anyway! Yet that is exactly what those first disciples did.

When you think about it, that is exactly what Jesus did! He left everything to put on an earth-suit so that he could live and die for the whole world. For thirty three years he dwelled among us and suffered the same temptations we suffer, yet he overcame all of it so that he could show us the way.

But how can we possibly measure up to what the first disciples did?

How can we leave everything? Perhaps we can begin by making a commitment to read the Bible as a lifestyle, one chapter at a time and one book at a time until we complete the entire sixty six books. While reading through the Bible, Perhaps we can make a commitment to study the Bible one topic at a time.

Starting with topics that we find interesting to us or topics that we have questions about or topics in areas that we struggle in personally. (Yes, reading and studying the Bible are two different things but both are necessary.) The first disciples studied Jesus for

three and a half years before serving, perhaps we should too. After all, Jesus is the word become flesh(John 1).

What if by making this first commitment, God then directs us in our personal roadmap toward the destiny he has for us individually. Just like each of the 12 and the 72, they had different stories, different ministries and different destinies. God has a different plan for each of us. Yet, we must say yes to his plan and we must be willing to do the work of becoming “fishers of men.”



We all know that thousands of people heard Jesus teach and preach during his earthly ministry. Yet, there were only a few who actually followed him and even fewer who completed the training program to be able to “go.” Today there are billions of people who hear but still few who follow and obey. There are hundreds of millions of Christians yet how many are “fishers of men”? Yet, Jesus never said to follow him to become Christians or disciples but “fishers of men.”

No matter where we are in Christ today, the good news is that we can repent of not doing what he asked and begin today. If you are a Christian, commit to becoming a disciple. If you are a disciple, commit to becoming a “fisher of men.” If you are a “fisher of men”, you have overcome! Remain steady and produce as much fruit as you can with the help of the Holy Spirit.

The Good Samaritan “Officer Alex Silvey”

Submitted by Rev. H. Wesley Brabson II.

Dateline: March 1 & 2, 2023 Location: Loudon Tn. Love’s Fuel Center Interstate 75 north Exit: 72 Start Date & Time: 12pm on March 1, 2023 Ending Date & Time: 9:30a March 2, 2023

My name is Rev. Hobert Wesley Brabson II, I am the proud pastor at Harwell Chapel, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Etowah, Tn. Where my Bishop is Michael A. Frencher Sr. Presiding Prelate of the Mid West Episcopal District and my Presiding Elder is Rev. Dr. Richard M. Gadzekpo of the Chattanooga, Tn. District.

March 1, 2023

This is my Good Samaritan Story. First a little background about me. I live in Cleveland TN, I work as a City Planner for the City of Chattanooga, TN. On this day I got off from work early at 12:00pm to drive to Knoxville, TN. to celebrate my good friend receiving her last radiation treatment and to be with her as she rung the bell signaling the completion her treatments. I spent the rest of the day with her and her family, celebrating this great accomplishment.

I stayed at her house longer than I should because a terrible storm was predicted later on that night. I originally planned to be back home before the storm set in. (But you know what they say about best laid plans).

My friend ask me, why don’t you stay with your mother tonight because of the lateness of the hour and to the impending inclement weather. I thought about it, but I knew my mother was already in bed and I did not want to startle her at the late hour, besides I had to be at work at 7:00am in the morning. So we said our good byes and I started my journey homeward. I left her house around 11:15pm heading back home to Cleveland. (Normally the 90 mile trip takes me 1 hour and 15 minutes to drive home.)

I kind of thought about Noah and what he went through when it started raining. It was raining very hard along with the high winds and some thunder and lighting. I slowed way down to around 50 to 55 mph, because my visibility was awful in this driving rain storm. As I got



close to the 17th street exit around downtown Knoxville, I was in the far right lane because the 18 wheelers where driving 65 to 75 mph and beyond. I have to admit I was a little nervous as I putted along. As I was driving through this part of town I hit a pothole so hard I just knew that it had just busted that tire but it didn’t, so I was thankful and keep on going. As I drove 50 to 55 mph I had a big truck stay right on my bumper for miles he refused to go around me as I was in the slow lane, not the passing lane. That made me just a little bit more nervous. (Now you must remember the rain is still coming down hard in sideways sheets.) That truck is still right behind me and now I’m feeling some vibrations from my rear right tire.

I am now real nervous because I need to pull over safely with this tailgating truck driver riding my bumper, but as always the Lord was with me. I pulled over safely and I was talking to my great friend, Jim Williamson, at the time of the flat tire. I got out of my truck and it seemed like it started raining even harder.

I have to thank God for wise council, because I was going to attempt to change that tire on the shoulder of interstate 75 north bound in those terrible conditions, just about 5 or 6 feet from those speeding 18 wheelers at 11:45pm, in a driving rain storm.

My friend, Jim, advised me not to try to change the tire there, but rather drive very slow on the shoulder to the next exit and go to a gas station. There I could get under a canopy and change the tire in the dry. So I followed his wise instructions and drove very slow and got off on Exit 72 and rolled into the brand new Love’s Fueling Station in Loudon, Tn. It is now 12:00am and I must admit that I was feeling that this nightmares night would soon be over.

March 2, 2023

I got the jack and lug wrench out of the truck and put on my gloves, I was reminded that I still had my work clothes on. I’m wearing my nice Ralph Lauren button down Polo shirt and my light colored new khaki stretch slacks and my neutral colored timberland dock shoes.

Needless to say I was not dressed for the occasion! (But a man's got to do, what a man's got to do.)

So I get the tire tool out and stick it through a hole in the bumper to let the spare tire down. So as I turn the crank I didn't feel the weight of the tire as it should have been lowering. So I had to bend down and look under the bed of the truck to see the spare tire and to my horror there was no spare tire to be found! I was dumbfounded, lost, confused, dazed, and shocked, all at the same time. (Now what?) It is now about 12:30am on March 2, I'm about 60 miles from home.

When I told Jim what I just experienced, he told me he would come to get me and drive to Cleveland. (By the way: my friend Jim lives in Knoxville, TN. for the record.) I was so thankful to God and my friend Jim, for my anticipated ride home.

Jim started on his way and he said he would be there as soon as possible. I invited him to spend the night at my house and drive back in the morning. He informed me that he would have to drive back because he would have to drive his two children to school later in the morning.

About 20 minutes later, Jim calls me (I figured he was calling to give me a location update). I answered my phone with great anticipation, but he asked me a question first. The question was and I quote, "The tire that went flat on your vehicle, was it your right rear tire?" I told him reluctantly yes. He then asked me if I was in the far right lane on I-40 West bound close to the 17th street exit. Again I told him yes. He then informed me that he was now on the shoulder on I-40 west in this driving rain storm with a busted rear passenger's side tire on his Mercedes. Jim had ran over the same pothole that busted my tire. I said to myself, (What was the chances that he would hit the same pothole that I hit.)

Now I know how Florida Evans, the TV mom from the hit 70's show "Good Times," felt when she got the phone call that informed her that her husband, James Evans, had been killed in a car accident in Mississippi. This happened just before the whole Evans family, including "JJ", was about to move out of the projects in Chicago and move to a house in Mississippi. Florida was visibly upset when she shook her fist and yelled and I quote, "Darn! Darn! Darn!"

Jim told me that his tire was split on the side wall, I then checked my tire and it was also spilt on the side wall. Now Jim is on the side of the interstate trying to change his tire in this driving rain storm with 18 wheelers speeding by him, as close as 5 feet away. He informed me that he would call me as soon as he got the tire changed. (The time was now 1:30 am.) I am now parked at the edge of the parking lot in this driving rain storm. Now I am worried about Jim trying to change his tire on the side of the interstate. I am now starting to nod off and on, for over an hour.

I get a phone call from Jim at 3:00am and he informed me he could not get his tire changed. Before I had time to start feeling helpless again, he told me he was going to call AAA Auto Club and have them come pick me and the truck up to tow me home to Cleveland. I thanked my good friend and God the Father for taking such good care of me. So I am waiting with great anticipation for my ride home, once again. In the meantime I call my bosses voicemail informing her that I won't be in today.

I am now waiting for AAA to send a tow truck. It is now 4:00am no tow truck, I nodded back off, and it is now 5:00am still no tow truck. I nod off again it is now 6:00am, still no AAA tow truck. I'm now thinking about spending the night in my truck at the Love's Fuel Center, in Loudon, Tn. I get a phone call from Jim checking to see if I was on the move home yet, I told him no, I'm still here, it is now 7:00am. My friend Jim was very upset that I have been there for 4 hours since he called AAA and ordered the tow truck. He called AAA again and they just put him off, they eventually they told him they will be there between now being 7:10am to 9:30am. I now have officially spent the night in my truck at the Love's Fuel Center, in Loudon, Tn.

As I set there contemplating what to do next, I thought about my good friend Rev. R.T. Smith who lives in Niota, Tn. I called and told him what was going on and he told me he was on his way. Loudon is about 25 miles from Niota. I'm feeling much better about the day, R.T. should be here in less than an hour.

As I waited on R.T. to arrive, a Loudon City, Police officer named Alex Silvey, drives up and ask me how long I have been there, I told him since 12:00am. Officer Silvey then ask me had anyone stopped and ask if they could help you? I informed him that no one has stopped to help me. He then processed to get out of his patrol truck and started to bend down and start changing my flat tire. I was shocked to see this police officer start to change my tire! (By the way: I am very capable on changing that tire myself, but he didn't care about that, he just went work!)

Now I'm just standing there watching officer Silvey get that tire off. After he got the tire off he then proceeded to put my tire in the back of the patrol truck. I remembered that R.T. was on his way and he should be getting real close by now. So I called R.T. and told him that a Loudon Police officer has stopped and he is helping me, so he could turn around and head back home. (Later on that day R.T. told me he was just one exit away when he turned around.)

Officer Silvey, told me to get in and he was going to take me to a tire store that will give me a fair price for a new tire. I get into his patrol truck and he starts to drive me to the tire store. He told me that he was married with three young children and he was a Christian, he didn't have to tell me that because, I already knew that. (You can judge to spirit by the spirit.) He also told me that his old pastor just retired and went back to help at his home church as an assistant pastor and his church is looking for a new pastor.

I told him that I worked at Norfolk Southern railroad for 20 years. He then informed me that he almost had a job with Norfolk Southern but it didn't work out. I told him, he was lucky not to get that job.

I picked out a new tire and paid for it and they got it ready in twenty minutes. The shop tech put the tire back in the truck and we were on our way back to the Love's Fuel Center. When we got back, I figured Alex would take the tire out and be on his way. Then I could put the tire back on myself.

No that was not what he did, officer Silvey gets out of his patrol truck and starts to install that new tire back on my 1995 GMC Sonoma. He finished the job he started and ask me did I needed any more help, I told him no, and that I am ready to be on the road again. I ask him would he allow me to pray for him and he was pleased with my request. So I laid my hands on him and prayed his safety on the job, his family, and the City of Loudon's Police Department.

The reason that I wanted to tell this story is because I am an African American Male that is 6' 1" and I weigh 270lbs. Officer Silvey is a young Caucasian male; with the climate that is in the country today with all the terrible events that have been going on all over the country in the last few years, about policing.

I felt it was my Christian duty to tell this story of what this young police officer did for me in my hour of need. He is the quintessential of what most police cars in this country have on the side of their patrol vehicles and that statement is "Protect and Serve."

I just want to thank Officer Alex Silvey, his Chief Samuel Harrison and the administration for the City of Loudon, Tn. for allowing their officers to truly "Protect and Serve." Thank you again to Officer Alex Silvey, for truly being a Good Samaritan to me.

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CHARACTER LEADERSHIP

AS I SEE IT

Submitted by **Mr. Antonio R. Malakia**
President, Elizabeth City District Lay Council

Many of us have been leaders in certain ways and others. We have been leaders in our churches, our homes, our families, our schools, our jobs, and so on. And, we all have an idea what leadership is, in our own way. However, we will admit that we don't know everything about leadership.



In this article, I would like to address a little bit of what I perceive about leadership and about being a leader. I would like to focus on "character leadership". Just a little touch.

As Dr. John C. Maxwell (author of "The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader") stated: "The key to transforming yourself from someone who understands leadership to a person who successfully leads in the real world is character. Your character qualities activate and empower your leadership ability ...". In essence, character is a blend of mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual. It is the way someone thinks, feels and behaves; i.e., it is someone's personality.

So..., what is leadership? In brief, generally speaking, leadership is a blend of competence and character. When it comes to leadership, competency determines what a person can do; commitment determines what a person wants to do; and, character determines what a person will do. An individual's character provides the link of trust between a leader and followers. It is through trust that individuals bond to a leader.



A few young students defined leadership (or being a leader) as follows:

A 13-year old. A good leader will get things done without hurting too many people's feelings. It is important for a leader to listen to suggestions, plan a course of action, and make sure it is followed out.

- A 14-year old. Leadership is guiding and showing the way for other people, to get people to cooperate and do things together, and to make them cooperate with one another.

- A 15-year old. Leadership is the ability to be looked upon as a role model.
- A 16-year old. Leadership is being able to guide people in times of crisis, being able to make good decisions, and having a great sense of responsibility.
- A 17-year old. A Leader should be sensitive to someone's needs and feelings. A Leader should not turn his back on someone in need.
- A 20-year old. Leadership is servitude. It is not how well you boss people around or how charismatic you are. It is how well you serve.

The following are some of the characteristics of a good leader. A good leader should have integrity, empathy, compassion, confidence and positive attitude. A good leader should be a good decision maker, a counselor and a mediator. A good leader should be able to delegate, be quick to listen, be slow to speak, be slow to anger, be humble, be honest, be truthful, and be able to compromise. A good leader should be able to set priorities and goals. And, a good leader should communicate and not be arrogant.

As Christians, a good leader should be Christ-like

and should always pray for divine guidance. He should be a servant leader who puts the needs of others first. In Luke 22:26 NLT, Jesus said "... Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant".

A good leader should always lead by example. He shall be as good as his words, and his actions must support his words. No excuses are acceptable, unless he is drugged or sedated. In our churches and communities, leaders are seen as role models; therefore, they must live up to higher standards.



One of the most important elements of leadership is "communication". Many of our organizations fail because of lack of communication or just poor communication. If you are not communicating with your congregation, your organization or your people, then you are not leading them. If you are not responding to their demands and interacting with them, then you are not leading them. It is sad and disturbing to know that many of our church leaders don't respond to phone calls, texts or emails, and avoid interacting with their congregations.

In addition, I would like to add the following. As Zionites, the character of some pastors becomes questionable when their churches have, in leadership positions, members who are not disciples or who do not conduct themselves as disciples. It should be noted and emphasized that "being a disciple is a prerequisite for all leadership positions", whether clergy or lay.

The above is just my take on character leadership. Note that a lot has been written about leadership, and still a lot has yet to be written about it. And, I close with the following: "If you are not, please strive to be a great leader in your church, your home, your family, your community and your organization. Be a leader with a sound character."

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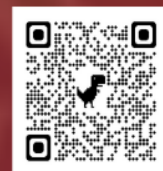


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