

LADY LOVE!
LADY D!
MISSIONARY
SUPERVISOR D.
DIANE PROCTOR

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Music exec and
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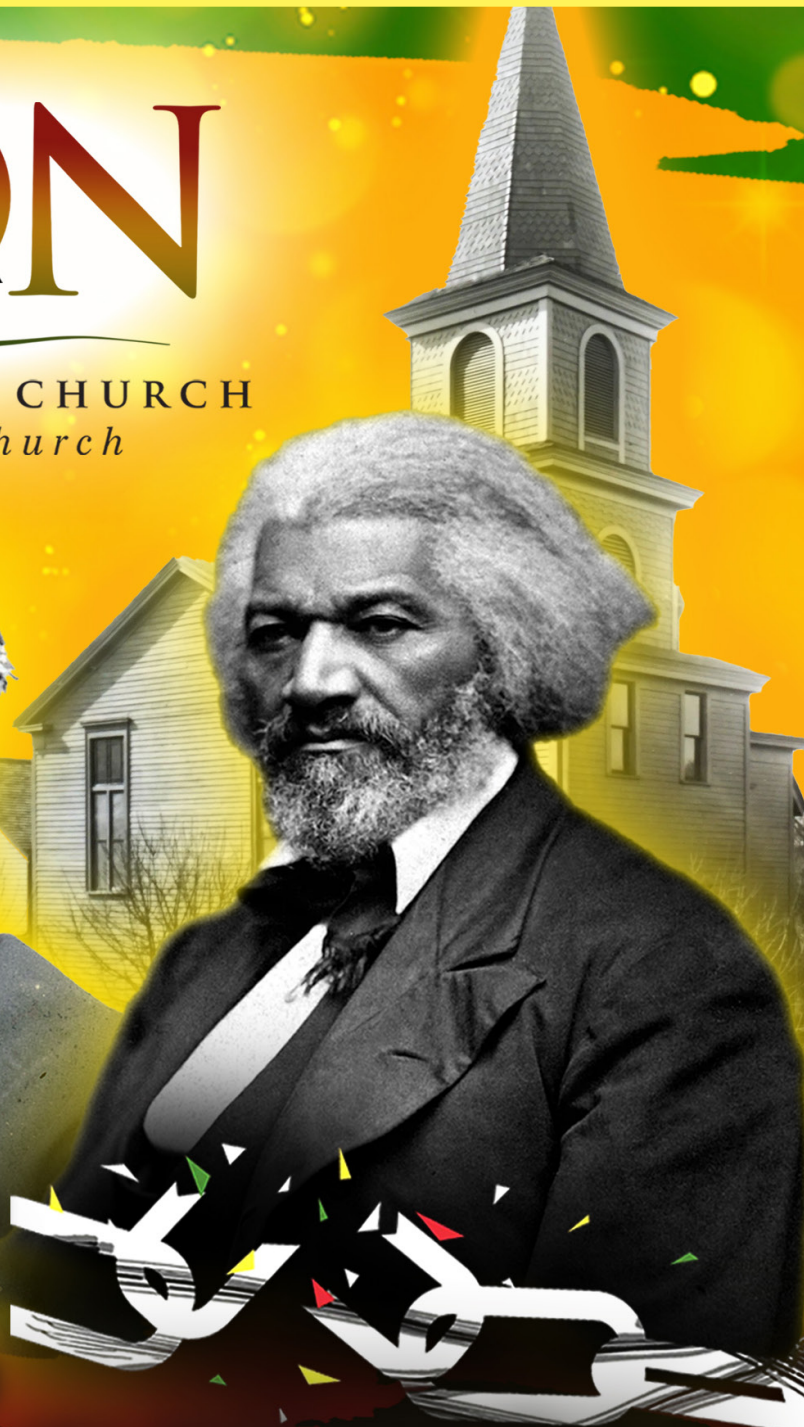
THE STAR OF ZION

JUNE 2023 | VOL 147 NO. 6 | STAROFZION.ORG | THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

ZION



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



JUNETEENTH

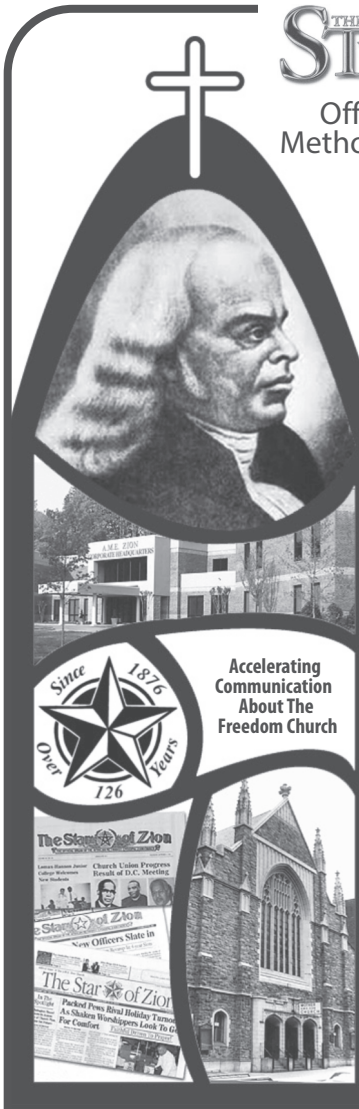
FREEDOM DAY

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Allison Lee
Social Justice Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: SocialJustice@StarofZion.org

"History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again."

— Maya Angelou

Juneteenth is a federal holiday that pays homage to the official end of slavery, with the news arriving to the last of the enslaved in Galveston, Texas on June 19, 1865 - more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed. This holiday is spent in celebration – recognizing the freedom that figuratively and literally unlocked those who were once bound in chains. It is spent in reflection – taking the time to ponder, abhor, and give thanks to the



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.

THE STAR OF ZION
(ISSN 0038-9870)
PUBLICATION NUMBER
05 19-200

The Official organ of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church; Periodicals Postage Paid at Charlotte, North Carolina.

Founded in 1876 and published once monthly from The A.M.E. Zion Church Headquarters, 3225 W. Sugar Creek Rd., Charlotte, NC 28269.

POSTMASTER: Send Change of Address to THE STAR OF ZION, Post Office Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221- 6770.

THE STAR OF ZION
published monthly from
The A.M.E. Zion Church Headquarters, 3225
W. Sugar Creek Rd.,
Charlotte, NC 28269.
Paid circulation 5,000.
Member of the Associated Church Press.

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One Year - \$38.00 Single Copy - \$4.00

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July 2023 Issue.....June 15, 2023
 August 2023 Issue.....July 15, 2023
 September 2023 Issue.....August 15, 2023
 October 2023 Issue.....September 15, 2023
 November 2023 Issue.....October 15, 2023

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strength that those who were enslaved had to exhibit when they should not have had to and did display valiantly and in a manner that exudes longevity – a strength that runs through the veins of their descendants in 2023. It is spent in acknowledgment – of the progress made nationally to recognize the true moment of freedom and an end to slavery, with a reminder that liberation is still a work in progress. 44th President of the United States, Barack Hussein Obama states,

Juneteenth has never been a celebration of victory or an acceptance of the way things are. It's a celebration of progress. It's an affirmation that despite the most painful parts of our history, change is possible – and there is still so much work to do.

Juneteenth is the long-awaited concession of what we have already known - that the experiences and lens of the Black American differs from our White counterparts and that our individual and collective stories matter. It is embracing celebration *and* holding space



for lament. Juneteenth is being present among good times *and* yielding to holy moments that come with tears as we are mindful. It is verbalized gratitude to the Divine for deliverance from the hand of the oppressor *and* questions raised pertaining to *why* the oppression was necessary from the beginning.

As we approach Juneteenth 2023, in our celebrating, may we make room for the next phase on the journey of holistic liberation for Black and Brown people? As we wear shirts with catchy quotes, may we incorporate readings from history books that are a reminder from whence we've come. As we participate in parades and listen to podcasts, may we create capacity for the action that undergirds a future of continued loosing, unchaining, and relief from the physical, sociological, psychological, and theological effects of generational and present-day trauma as we continue to move toward comprehensive...freedom.

Mia Burse, Buffalo District Missionary, Writes First Book to Encourage Financial Literacy in Children

Submitted by Mrs. Ebony Singletary

In today's ever-evolving world, it's becoming increasingly important to instill good financial habits in children from a young age. Understanding the value of money and learning basic financial concepts can lay a strong foundation for their future success. Mia Burse has written her first book, *Saving Money with Randall and Jerome*, with that goal in mind.

Mia and her twin nine-year-old boys are members of the St. Paul's A.M.E. Zion Church in Buffalo, NY. Mia is the Lead Associate for Global Outsourcing with Willis Towers Watson and has over 15 years of experience in the healthcare and defense contracting industries. She is passionate about teaching the next generation the financial strategies for success, from the basics of saving to the principles of investing. "This book was a labor of love for my twin boys, Randall and Jerome," Mia said about writing the book. "I wanted a creative way to teach them the principles of saving, spending, and earning money, and I am now excited to share that message with all children."

Saving Money with Randall and Jerome takes children on a journey with Randall and Jerome as they learn their first lessons about saving, earning, and spending money.

For Mia, writing the book was just the step in helping the next generation build a financial legacy. To further these efforts, Mia has founded Next Generation Ventures. Their mission is to provide a leadership development space where black and brown children receive economic empowerment and community mobilization strategies as early as possible.

Next Generation Ventures hosted a financial literacy fair for children in April 2023 to kick off Financial Literacy Month. At the event, children



had the opportunity to learn money basics, shop with local child business owners, and speak with bank representatives about opening a bank account.

With Mia and her delightful book on financial literacy for children, a new door of opportunity opens for young minds to embark on a life-long journey toward financial empowerment. By introducing children to these essential concepts at an early age, we can equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to make informed financial decisions in the future. So don't miss out on this incredible resource—grab a copy of *Saving Money with Randall and Jerome* today and join the movement to foster the next financially literate generation.

Saving Money with Randall and Jerome is available in paperback on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and the Kindle.



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Theological Preparation for Effective Leadership in a Diverse Society

Zion's own Rev. Monica Marshall and Rev. Dr. Dominique Robinson inducted into prestigious Morehouse College Board of Preachers.

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

Atlanta, Georgia - Thursday, April 13, 2023, at 11:00 am local time, hundreds of representatives from the faith community gathered in the Martin Luther King, Jr. International Chapel for the Benjamin Elijah Mays Induction Crown Forum. In this solemn yet festive occasion Morehouse College celebrates some of the best and brightest scholars, pulpiteers, and faith leaders of every rank and file for their contributions to society. "It is our hope that this experience of awareness, prayer, praise, prophetic and pastoral preaching, praxis, and philosophy will greatly enrich your life and bring you into a meaningful connection with God, nature, and people in a holistic understanding of Christian cosmology as moral cosmopolitans." commented Dr. Lawrence E. Carter, Sr.- Founding Dean of the MLK Chapel and Professor of Religion.

The keynote speaker for the hour was Rev. Dr. Thema Bryant. President of the American Psychological Association, the leading scientific and professional organization representing psychology with more than 120,000 members (apa.org). Dr. Bryant completed her doctorate in Clinical Psychology at Duke University and her post-doctoral training at Harvard Medical Center's Victims of Violence Program. The title of Dr. Bryant's sermons was "Saving Democracy While Thriving in the Wake of Cosmic Trauma." Musical selections rendered by the Morehouse Glee Club were directed by Dr. David Morrow.

The Star of Zion had the opportunity to speak to both honorees' days following the ceremony. "What a blessed and humbling honor to be inducted into the Martin Luther King, Jr. Board of Preachers! I am often amazed that after almost forty years in ministry, God continues to

bless me to be a blessing. What an experience to stand on that stage with my she-roles such as Ambassador Suzan Johnson Cook, Dr. Emilie Townes, Dr. Thema Bryant, my B.W. I. M. sisters, and our own Dr. Dominique Robinson. To God be the glory, great things He has done! I'm not tired yet!"- Rev Monica Marshall. The Rev. Monica H. Marshall is a native of Brooklyn, New York, and serves as the Pastor of the Varick Memorial AME Zion Church; Brooklyn's oldest continuously Black congregation. She answered the call to ministry and has pastored St. Thomas, Haverstraw, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and Shaw, Corona, N.Y. In 2012 she was appointed pastor of her home church, where she now serves and continues to preach and teach the Gospel.



Rev. Marshall proudly serves as the Chief of Protocol of the NY Annual Conference of the A.M.E. Zion Church. Her other conference responsibilities: a member of the Board of Examiners and The Chairman of the Board of Lay Activities. A published musician, she serves as the director of the conference's 150-voice Mass Choir. A mentor in The R.E.A.L. Black Women in Ministry Initiative, under the direction of Ambassador Suzan Johnson Cook, Rev. Marshall was one of the inaugural honorees at their 2022 Trailblazers & Unsung She-roles Gala, receiving the award for Pastoral Excellence. Rev. Marshall was employed for 26 years by the NYC Administration for Children's Services as a Contract Management Data Analyst. She retired from that position in 2013 and now pursues her ministerial calling on a full-time basis without distraction.



Rev. Dr. Dominique Robinson, a New Jersey native, is a millennial Womanist homiletician and justice advocate. Reared in the Pentecostal tradition, she answered her call to ministry at 13 and became a member of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church at 18 under Rev. Dr. Frances Murray Williams. An ordained itinerant elder in our Beloved Zion, she serves on staff at Shaw Temple A.M.E.

Zion Church with Pastor Eldren D. Morrison.

Dominique, a member of the illustrious Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, earned her Bachelor of Arts in Government from Georgetown University, Master of Divinity concentrating in Biblical Interpretation, and Master of Theology concentrating in Homiletics, both from Candler School of Theology. She earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Columbia Theological Seminary in Gospel and Culture. Her dissertation, "iHomiletic": Preaching that Clicks," is a groundbreaking research and consulting service to assist faith leaders with developing impactful ministry that employs technology and social media linguistics. She is a Ph.D. student at Christian Theological Seminary in the world's first African American Preaching and Sacred Rhetoric Ph.D. program.

Dr. Robinson is the John Hines Assistant Professor of Preaching at the Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, TX; she is the first African American theology faculty member in the history of the institution. She takes great pride in being the former inaugural Dean of Chapel and Assistant Professor of Religion at Wiley College in Marshall, TX.

Both women have earned much respect in their spheres of influence and have made invaluable contributions to the Freedom Church.

The Wilmington District . . . Serving the Flock

Submitted by LaVerna Hargrove
District Reporter

The month of April has been a month of executing plans and meeting objectives.

The Home Missions Department has been a part of the A.M.E. Zion Church since the inception of the church. Its structure, description, and departmental organization have been refined and adapted as time and circumstance dictated. Its objective, however, has remained the same—to give financial support to our churches on the district, conference, and connectional levels of the denomination as they spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Home Missions Department is now a part of the Department of Church Growth and Development. The guiding principle of the Home Missions Department, *Lifting as we Climb*, was clearly the character of the Wilmington District Annual Home Missions Service.

The Home Missions Department led by Sister Shelia T. Monroe presented its annual service on

April 23, 2023. at Zion Chapel AME Zion Church, Wilmington, NC.
Reverend Corrine Brown,

host pastor. Pastors of the Wilmington District conducted the devotional portion of the program.

Reflecting the theme, 'Serving the Flock', Rev. Carol Robbins brought the message "Don't

Leave Me Hanging" using Galatians 6:9-10 as the spiritual focus. Reverend Robbins pointed out that we are our brother's keeper, but it is our attitude toward our brothers and sister that determines whether we carry out the mandate to serve the flock or to leave them hanging. We are presented with many opportunities to serve; when we avail ourselves of these opportunities we are lifting as we climb. Knowing that the love of Christ within us keeps us from leaving any segment of any

population hanging, we cannot but climb and lift as we do.

The St. James A.M.E. Zion Church Mass Choir provided music that reflected the sermon topic.

The Home Missions Workers presented a Celebration of Life Tree as a memorial to those who did not leave the churches hanging but labored to lift the church to its present status. The tree was lit from within and decorated with 418 ornaments in the shape of the Home Missions Department logo in their colors of black and white. The Home Mission Worker of each church presented the names of those memorialized on the Celebration of Life Tree. Following a moment of reflection, Presiding Elder Dr. Alexander Jones Sr. led the congregation in a prayer of thanksgiving and gratitude for the lives and service of those who were celebrated on the Celebration of Life Tree. Reverend Dr. Jones acknowledged the tireless efforts of Sister Shelia Monroe for more than 25 years to provide support from the Wilmington District Depart-

ment of Home Missions for the financial support to spread the gospel through the auspices of the A.M.E. Zion Church. A brief reception was held following the service.



Reverend Carol Robbins, Pastor of St. James AME Zion Church, Leland, NC preaches "Don't Leave Me Hanging" at Annual Home Missions Service.



Tree of memorial/ honorarium ornaments



Shelia Momoe, President of the Wilmington District Home Missions Workers conducts the Annual 'Lifting As We Climb' Program. Mrs. Momoe has led this ministry for more than 25 years.



Memorial/ honorarium ornament



Reverend Dr. Alexander Jones thanks the Home Missions Department for its tireless efforts to help churches meet financial goals.

Come see THE SMALLS EFFECT in New Orleans

Karlease Smalls, Candidate for Connectional Coordinator of YAMS

Karlease Smalls

a native of New York resides within Piedmont Episcopal District, Western North Carolina Conference. While being a faithful servant on the Salisbury District, Karlease works diligently at Zion Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church, on various boards inclusive of being a Junior Steward. Karlease serves as the Sacred Health Ministry Coordinator on the Salisbury District. Working as a Registered Nurse, she is aware of the health disparities that are within our communities.

- Empowering
- Faith
- Fellowship
- Engaging
- Communities
- Together



Small Changes have BIG EFFECTS

BISHOP DENNIS V. PROCTOR, Presiding Prelate, North Eastern Episcopal District Receives NAN LEGACY AWARD

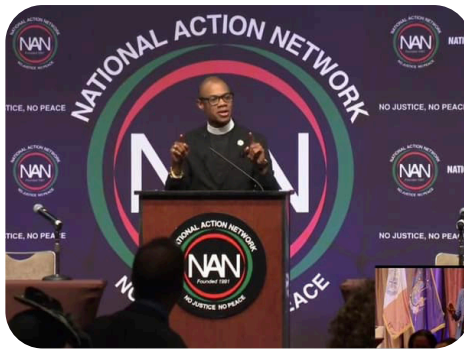
Submitted by Debra Chappelle-Polk
Zion Spotlight Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: ZionSpotlight@StarofZion.org

New York, NY - On Friday, April 14, 2023, Bishop Dennis V. Proctor, Presiding Prelate, North Eastern Episcopal District received the National Action Network's (NAN) Legacy Award at the Reverend Dr. William A. Jones Ministers' Luncheon. The Luncheon was hosted by Rev. W. Franklyn Richardson, Chairman, NAN National Board of Directors. In accepting the award, Bishop Proctor said, "I wish that my late father Rev. Emory C. Proctor had received this award. He was a fearless freedom fighter! He was a Freedom Rider and a tireless activist! So my liberationist theology is his influence." Over the years, Bishop Proctor has been a keynote speaker at several NAN Conventions. This year's honorees were Jacqueline L Burton, President, Conference of Black Churches; Rev. Dr. R.B.



Holmes, Jr., Pastor, Bethel Missionary Baptist Church; and Bishop J. Drew Sheard, Presiding Bishop, COGIC.

The Reverend Al Sharpton, founder and president hosted NAN's 32nd convention at the Sheraton Times Square Hotel in New York City. The theme this year was "Dealing With The Dream Under Threat" and was attended by thousands of people from across the country. In his President's Welcome, Rev. Sharpton said "We must renew our commitment towards equality, progress and justice for all." Tyler Perry received the President's Award at Keepers of the Dream, the Convention's premier event honoring those who keep Dr. King's vision for America alive. Kerry Washington and other stage and screen actors, entertainment and media personalities were in attendance. Earvin "Magic" Johnson, NY School Chancellor, David Banks, business leaders and members of Congress were among the speakers. Vice President Kamala Harris brought the keynote address to a standing-room-only crowd on Friday, April 15th and spoke on the issue of gun violence in the United States, voting rights, and women's reproductive rights.



Religious leaders and civil rights activists led panel discussions that addressed issues confronting Black Americans today. Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson, Chairman of NAN and the Conference of National Black Churches (CNBC) moderated the panel on Protecting Black History in Schools and in America. Rev. Dr. Malcolm J. Byrd, Pastor, (pic'd.) Mother Zion Church, was one of the panelists.

Rev. Dr. Mozella G. Mitchell: The Multitasker

Pastor, Love of Christ A.M.E. Zion Tabernacle, Brandon, FL, and Writer for the A.M.E. Zion Church School Literature Department

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

May 2023

New York, NY - Dr. Mozella G. Mitchell. Sunday School (or Church School as it has come to be called since the pandemic) participants will probably recognize the name as Dr. Mitchell is one of the writers of the book from which we study. In fact, it was a Church School participant from Mother A.M.E. Zion Church (the editor's home church) who visited her church in Brandon, Florida and suggested the Star of Zion do a feature on Dr. Mitchell.

The Rev. Dr. Mozella G. Mitchell is a minister and pastor. She has both pastored in Tampa and St. Petersburg and has been the Presiding Elder of the Tampa District. In 1993, she had a vision from God and founded The Love of Christ Tabernacle in Brandon, Fl., along with her two daughters Marcia Miller and Cynthia Woodson. As Presiding Elder of the Tampa District, she was given the assignment by the bishop at the time, the Rte. Rev. Richard K. Thompson. Love of Christ Tabernacle was established and incorporated as a 501c-3, nonprofit organization. Four years after opening its doors, The Love of Christ Tabernacle purchased the property next door to the church. The initial purpose was to provide a Christian daycare; however, it became connected to the Women at the Well Ministry, a single women's spiritual support ministry to serve and assist women with ministries centered around the needs of women in today's society, including elder women issues, single mother issues including job preparedness, financial assistance, affordable housing, feeding and others. The Tabernacle has been in the Brandon area and has expanded its ministries to include the Angel Tree Ministry which

provides gifts at Christmas for children of prisoners, Haitian Love a Child Ministry, among others, and the Something for Jesus to Do (SFJTD) prayer request ministry. The Tabernacle is continually seeking new service opportunities. *Then he said to his disciples. "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few."* Matthew 9: 37.

Dr. Mitchell has been a pioneering professional and scholar in the fields of religion and Christian ministry. In addition to her pastoral duties, Dr. Mitchell is Professor Emeritus of Religion and former Chair of the Religious Studies Department at the University of South Florida, Tampa, FL. She was the first woman Pastor of Mt. Sinai A.M.E. Zion Church in Tampa, the first woman Presiding Elder of the Tampa District (17 years), the first woman Presiding Elder of the Alabama/Florida Episcopal District, and the first African American and first woman Chair of the Religious Studies Department at the University of South Florida. Dr. Mozella says her "experiences in these roles have been phenomenal."



Dr. Mitchell is the former Chair of the Committee on Uniform Series, a branch of the National Council of Churches of Christ USA which designs, organizes, and develops the Sunday School Outlines and Home Daily Bible Readings for the Sunday School publishing boards of the numerous denominations of NCCC-USA (including the A.M.E. Zion Department of Church School Literature) and other affiliate Christian bodies

who use their productions. This was the culmination of a long journey to what may be called the pinnacle of leadership in this organization to which she was appointed by the A.M.E. Zion Editor of Church School Literature, Dr. Mary A. Love in 1984 after Dr. Love had assigned her to the group of Staff Writers for the A.M.E. Zion Church School Literature in 1982. She began in 1982 and continues to this day as a writer for the Young People/Adult Quarterly.

Her devotion, dutifulness, and diligence in this task in the Lord's service have kept her faithful and focused for which she has received many accolades and several awards for her labors.

Dr. Mitchell says that working with Dr. Love and other notable writers of the Church School Literature, such as Rev. Dr. Dorothy Johnson, Dr. Helen Scott Carter, who served both as editor/writers for the literature and on the Committee on Uniform Series of NCCC—USA, has enabled her to gain deeper insights and depths of biblical understanding and engagement with the work of church school literature from the standpoints of the many different cultures, races, ethnic groups, and denominations represented on the Committee on Uniform Series. "The conjunctive, interlocking, complementary nature of the two bodies (Church School Literature Department and the Committee on Uniform Series) became increasingly clear," says Dr. Mitchell, "as we worked together on interim assignments during the year and coming together at our CUS Annual Meeting in the spring of each year. Our writing for the particular age levels of church school literature in our denomination during the year while doing our CUS interim assignments was mutually beneficial. Doing one task was reflexive and complementary to doing the other. Each of us was assigned to the age level group in CUS that we wrote for in our Sunday School literature, which was helpful. But it should be noted that being involved in the development of the Sunday School lessons from scratch was particularly inspiring and discerning. And serving on different ones of the working groups that design the lessons from scratch was deeply engaging from the biblical standpoint especially. We worked on this development four years in advance and annually designed and approved the Annual

Guide for Lesson Development, which all the writers of the various denominations use as a basis for writing their Sunday Lessons for their Sunday Church School Journals."

Dr. Mitchell detailed the working groups that design the lessons from scratch: The Executive Committee and the CUS Chair, The Scope and Sequence Team, The Annual Study Plan Team, The Age Level Consultants and Home Daily Bible

Reading Consultant, The Age Level Conveners; and The Home Daily Bible Reading (HDBR) Chair. Dr. Mitchell has served as Chair of some of these groups and worked with practically all the groups in various capacities over the years. The work of CUS (consisting of representatives of writers, editors, scholars, and other leaders of the numerous denominations of NCCC-USA) is truly extensive and engaging.

She also explained the tasks of the various groups: The Executive Committee and CUS Chair guide the work and

assign leaders of various groups with the approval of the Committee as a Whole. The Scope and Sequence Committee (composed of members of each age level team etc.) does the most basic and extensive work of putting together the four-year scope and sequence of the study based on their overview of the biblical content. Their work is examined, voted on, and approved by the Executive Committee and the Committee as a Whole. The additional work is developed by the remaining groups and is contributed to and undergoes numerous reviews and screenings during the year and from year to year of the different work groups and at the Annual Meeting.

The finished product each year, known as "The Guide for Lesson Development," is used by the writers of the various denominations and publishing houses to produce their Sunday Church School literature. The material is adapted to the format and style of Sunday School literature. "Our format for the various levels of Sunday School literature (such as Primary, Intermediate, Young People/Adult)," says Dr. Mitchell, "is determined by the AME Zion Department of Church School Literature under the Editor's guidance, and this format has changed over the years."

She added, "the pivotal and crucial point of writing for the Church School Literature Department of the AME Zion Church is a pleasure after having played a significant role in shaping the work from which our Sunday School Lessons are written. It has been my privilege to work under the leadership of three Editors of AME Zion Church School Literature, the present being Rev. Dr. Adrian V. Nelson, II."

Dr. Mitchell also writes one of the "Theological Insights" appearing in the Sunday School Herald Journal each quarter. She is also the author of *See Yea, Lord! Moving with the Spirit: Fifty Years a Minister and a Scholar to the Glory of God*, Scriptor House Pub., Wilmington, Del., 2022; see www.authormozellamitchell.com; www.loveofchristamez.com

Dr. Mitchell earned a Bachelor's Degree in English from LeMoyne College, Memphis; a Master's Degree in English from the University of Michigan; a Master's Degree in Religious Studies from Colgate Rochester Divinity School; and a Ph.D. Degree in Religion and Literature from Emory University. She has earned many awards and annual listings for her work, including more than 20 years of listings in *Who's Who in America*; Professor Emerita from USF, and NCCC President's Award for Christian Service at the 2022 Christian Unity Meeting.

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 Acts

The 133rd Session of the Concord District Conference

Submitted by Cynthia Brown

Wednesday, April 19, 2023, began with a 6 pm Welcome Program from our host, the Rock Hill A. M. E. Zion Church, Concord, NC. They were welcoming the 133rd Session of the Concord District Conference and all in attendance received the well-planned program. Mistress of Ceremony, Ms. Lisa Grier Lea guided us through the program with greetings from, the Honorable Steve Morris, Cabarrus County Commissioners, Chairman; the Honorable Betty M. Stocks Concord City Council, District 3 and Mr. Robert Scott, Trustee Board Chairman at the Rock Hill Church. Several members of the church gave enlightening Historical Reflections on the Freedom Church, from Bishop James Varick to Eliza Ann Gardner, and the history of our Educational Institutions, Livingstone College and Hood Seminary in Salisbury, NC. The program also consisted of songs that made us feel welcome. Our Presiding Elder and Host Pastor, the Rev. Dr. Kevin W. McGill, Sr. was presented and gave remarks. We then transitioned to the Opening Worship and Communion Service.

As has become our custom, the Stewards, Trustees, and Clergy from all local churches processed in, and all Deaconesses were seated in their sections. The Rev. Robert Mathis presided over the service and the Mighty Concord District Choir set the atmosphere and we were blessed. The Word came from the Rev. LeaVee Jordan-Patterson, pastor of the Zion Hill Church in Concord. Her lesson text was from Mark 16:15-18. She concentrated on teaching on the Holy Spirit. We continued our custom of receiving the Holy Communion, which we were led by Presiding McGill and each pastor served their members, one church at a time. Elder McGill then declared the opening of the 133rd Concord District Conference.

Thursday morning began with songs of praise and testimonies and then with the Delegates and Pastors reporting church activities for the year. We also received and recognized our guests. The afternoon continued with the department and various committees reporting. Our Supernumerary preachers also shared during the conference and we were pleased to have retired preacher, Rev. John T. Asbury greet us. We had not seen in person for several years. The evening service brought the Annual Sermon with the Rev. Shirley McConnell presiding. The messenger for the night was the Rev. C. Rashard Alexander, pastor of the Bennettsville AME Zion Church in Norwood, NC. The Lesson Text: Exodus 2:8-10, "It's In the Name".

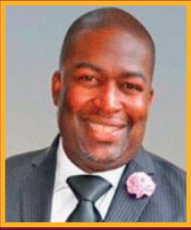
On Friday morning, April 21, 2023, the Necrology Service was held with Mrs. Priscilla Green presiding. She was assisted by other members lighting candles in remembrance of the deceased. The preacher for the occasion was the Rev. Robin H. Stitt, pastor of the Rocky Mount Church in Ansonville, NC. Lesson Text: Romans 14:7-12, "Your Appointment for Payday Has Been Confirmed". Following the service, a panel discussion was presented on the Theme: "A Relevant Ministry For Changing Times", with participants, Betty Evans, Cathy Holland,

Selenia Hinson, Rev. C. Rashard Alexander, and the Rev. Dr. Reginald Boyd, Jr. Thoughts were shared from each department to bring the theme alive and hopefully ideas to help individual churches to move forward if implemented. For the afternoon session, we were delighted to have an overview of the General Convention of the WH & OMS from the Executive Board member, 1st Vice President, Mrs. Angela Davis-Baxter. She shared a more detailed outlook for what to expect when we arrive in New Orleans in July. We are more ready than before. Before the dinner hour, we heard from Exhorter, Ms. Cynthia Brown, and Local Preachers, Bro. Kevin Bennett, Sis, Christie Felder, and Bro. Timothy Scott. We then received the report of the District Examiners.

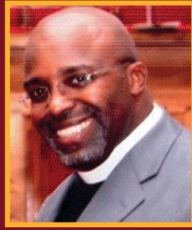
Friday Evening Worship was an Evangelistic & Healing Service. From the first note of the song that was sung, the Holy Spirit came and rested in the house. With songs of praise coming from Worship Leader, Rev. Solomon McAuley, and the District Choir, the Holy Spirit was invited in and people were being delivered from things that had them bound. We saw a glimpse of Heaven, where we will continuously praise Our God! The preached Word was delivered by the Rev. Dr. Evalina Huggins, the Presiding Elder of the Baltimore District – Philadelphia/Baltimore Conference. Her text: Romans 8:18 and the subject, "Get Ready For Your Next Move". Presiding Elder McGill thanked P.E. Huggins for the message and also for being with us all week. Elder McGill then called on all clergy to come lay hands and pray for her. Our many guests were recognized and then the Report from the Courtesy Committee was given. District Conference was officially closed.

But on Saturday, April 22, 2023, we again gathered at the Rock Hill Church with the Christian Education Department in charge of our Church School Convention. District Director, Ms. Nikisha Leak presided with our youth officers sharing the prayer and scripture. Roll Call for the pastors and delegates was done. Presiding Elder McGill called for nominations for a youth secretary and Miss Camille Mathis presented herself and immediately took the position. We then heard and received all reports from the church delegates. This is the year for youth officer elections to be held, so having to break down into groups, Youth Director, Ms. Marisa Black took the youth. The Children's Director, Mrs. Markita Hamilton worked with the children in the fellowship hall. And the adults remained in the sanctuary and heard from Bank of America Representative, Mrs. Frenchie Brown. Her workshop concentrated on Finances in relationship to College Preparedness and other Life Issues for older adults. We were blessed to transition into a worship service. The children gathered as a choir and rendered two selections, one was led by Marquan Scott, "How Great Is Our God. Also, guest musician, Mrs. Chad McDonald sang before the preacher. We received the Word from the Rev. Marcus Tolliver, pastor of the Metropolitan AME Zion Church, Chester, SC. He spoke to the young and the young at heart from Luke 5, "You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet" and (Because I Said So). After a very inspiring message, several young people gave their lives to Christ. It was a very good day! Many thanks go to our Host Church for meeting our every need and to the many visitors that graced us with their presence. God was Glorified!!





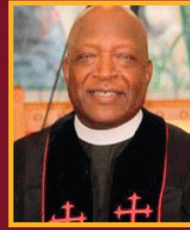
Rev. Dr. Jermaine Armour
St. Luke



Rev. Dr. Clifford Barnett
Warner Temple



Rev. Dr. Charlean Maspsen
Price Cathedral



Rev. Dr. Henry Young
Johnson Chapel



Rev. Patricia Smith
St. Andrew



Rev. Nathaniel Johnson
Summerville



Delma Jones
WH&OMS President



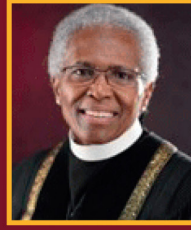
William Evans
Lay Council President



Cassandra Crumby
Christian Education Director



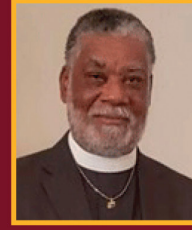
Rev. George Patrick
Blackwell Chapel



Rev. Dr. Edith Davis
Lees Chapel



Rev. Dr. Mary Nixon
St. Mark



Rev. Dr. W H. Ballard
Evergreen



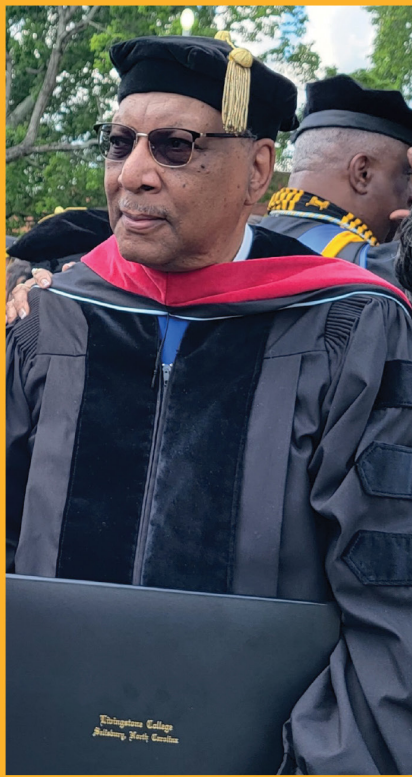
Rev. Carol Robbins
St. James Leland



Shelia Monroe
Home Missions President



Gayle Mack
President Conference Workers



THE PASTORS, OFFICERS AND LAITY OF THE WILMINGTON DISTRICT CONGRATULATE AND CELEBRATE!

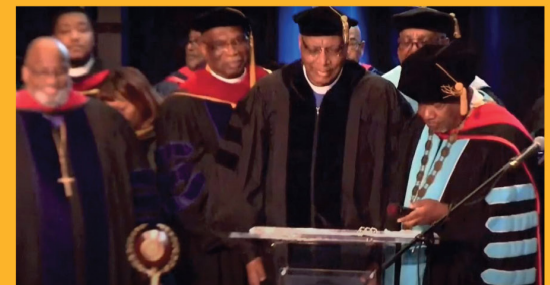
Reverend Alexander L. Jones, Sr.

Having been honored with a Doctor of Divinity Degree conferred upon him for more than 59 years of dedicated meritorious service to the

A.M.E. Zion Church

by Livingstone College, Salisbury, NC

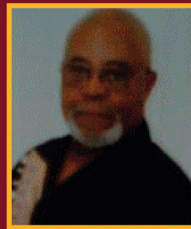
May 6, 2023



Delores Riley
NAACP Coordinator



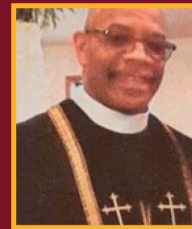
Marjorie Williamson
President District Ushers



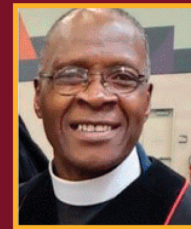
Rick Middleton
President Men of Zion



Waltrina Barnett, President
Ministers Spouses, Widow(ers)



Rev. Dr. Gonzales Harris
Walters Chapel



Rev. Avery McAllister
Browns Chapel



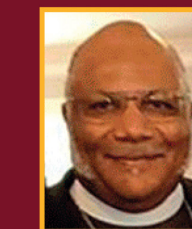
Rev. Vaness Middleton
St. James, Southport



Rev. Corrine Brown
Zion Chapel



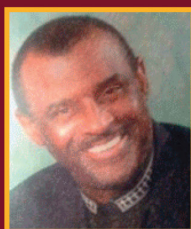
Rev. Valerie Robinson
Bowen Chapel



Rev. Leo Clemmons
Mt. Zion



Rev. Thomas Williams
St. Paul



Rev. Elijah Coleman
St. Philip



Rev. Katen McCracken
Christian Chapel



Rev. Annette Clemmons
Moore's Chapel



Rev. Sandra Carte
Mt. Hebron

Rev. Dr. Audie V. Simon, I

Celebrating 50 Years of Christian Ministry

Submitted by Mrs. Patricia Wilson
Ohio Conference – Cleveland District

In 2020, COVID-19 struck the world and a pandemic was declared. We locked ourselves in our homes and didn't go out unless it was urgent. In 2023, the world returned to some sort of normalcy. However, Cultivating Healthy Mindsets

Many of us still only venture out when necessary, staying away from large groups of people, known or unknown. But, on Sunday, March 26 many of us despite still wearing masks, using sanitizers, and not getting too close to people outside of our circle, ventured out to honor and recognize a man of God! A person who has faithfully served God for over 50 years! We came out in large numbers to the Embassy Suites in Beachwood, Ohio to celebrate the Reverend Doctor Audie Vincent Simon I.

The afternoon began with an hour of enjoying appetizers and catching up with those who have not seen each other since the pandemic. Hugs and conversations were plentiful. Our toastmaster for the afternoon was Rev. Dr. Curtis T. Walker Sr., the pastor of Beth-El A.M.E. Zion Church. Rev. Anthony L. Flowers (pastor of Emmanu-El A.M.E. Zion) welcomed the attendees and shared why this occasion was so special. Brother and sister, Luis Irzarri and Lillian Irzarri, members of Emmanu-El A.M.E. Zion sang "Even If" by MercyMe.

Following their duet, remarks were given by Rev. Dr. Curtis T. Walker Sr., Rev. Randy Reed (pastor of The Rock A.M.E. Zion), Rev. Anthony L. Flowers, and Rev. Dr. Rebecca Stitt (pastor of St. Peter's A.M.E. Zion). Each expressed thanks and shared memorable times with Dr. Simon. The four pastors of the Cleveland District; Revs. Flowers, Reed, Stitt, and Walker formed a choir and sang "My Tribute" by Andre Crouch. They were so good that they received invitations to sing for other occasions.

It was a very special moment when a card was shared. The card was from Dr. Simon's childhood Sunday School teacher's family at New Jersey A.M.E. Zion Church in Lexington, North Carolina. Proclamations from the City of Richmond Heights, Bedford Heights, and the NAACP were acknowledged, and an engraved plaque was presented to the honoree. Also in attendance were Rev. Dr. Vergel Lattimore, retired brigadier general in the United States Air National Guard and the current President and Professor of Pastoral Psychology and Counseling at Hood Theological Seminary, Salisbury, North Carolina, Rev. Dr. Michael Posey, Presiding Elder

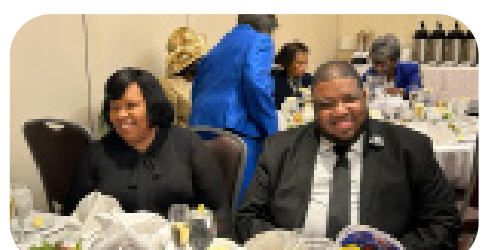
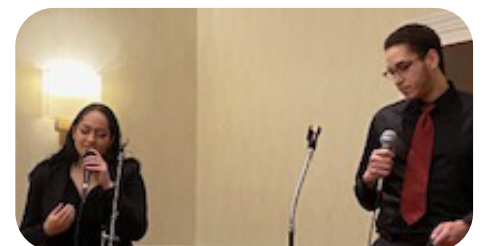
of the Columbus-Cincinnati District, Rev. C. Jay Matthews, pastor of Mt. Sinai Baptist Church in Cleveland, Ohio, and Rev. Terrance Jones, formal AME Zion General Officer and current pastor of Baum Temple A.M.E. Zion in Summerville, South Carolina.

Long-stemmed glasses were at each place setting to lift as Rev. Eli Smith (pastor of Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church in Jersey City, New Jersey) gave a toast to Dr. Simon. Rev. Smith said he could not just toast his friend but needed to share how the two of them became friends. He and Dr. Simon were classmates and roommates at Livingstone College in Salisbury, North Carolina. Since that time, they have been close friends. Close enough that Dr. Simon's children call him uncle and when Dr. Simon's daughter Anicka married, the two of them were cabin mates on the cruise ship.

Our bishop, the Right Reverend W. Darin Moore gave remarks. He shared how he knew the person who baptized Dr. Simon at New Jersey A.M.E. Zion Church, Rev. Dr. Belvie Jackson Jr. He knew him as an honest and humble man. He sees the same traits in Dr. Simon. He believes that Dr. Simon has a God-sized heart because God dwells within him. Bishop Moore quoted Philippians 1:6 "being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus". He stated that Dr. Simon is still doing a good work. He appreciates what Dr. Simon has done, and is doing, and that Dr. Simon has inspired others.

Before Dr. Simon made his remarks, his son Audie Vincent II spoke on behalf of their family. He told us of life as a preacher's kid (PK). Being a pastor is not a 9-5 type of job. He recalls the sacrifices made by the family. Being a shepherd called by God is something completely different. He remembers a time before cell phones when the house phone would ring at all times of the day and night. Calls were from family members to come to the hospital or to pray for someone. Dr. Simon received a call a long time ago, the "Commission Call", he answered and continues to answer. He thanked all the clergy and his father who answered the call and encouraged others to answer the call for one day they will not be able.

Dr. Simon's remarks were brief. This was a very emotional and humbling experience for him. He wanted us to understand that he didn't go, he wasn't sent, he was *CALLED!* He shared that if he never gets to preach again, that He has been faithful. He has been blessed throughout his ministry and thanks God. He knows that one day he will stop pastoring, but he will never stop preaching or proclaiming God's Word. Dr. Simon's final remarks were to thank everyone present for taking the time out to share this very special day with him.



Dr. Audie V. Simon I is a native of Lexington, North Carolina, and attended the Lexington City School System. He was baptized at his home church, New Jersey A.M.E. Zion by Rev. Dr. Belvie Jackson Jr. and his father in the ministry is Rev. John H. Partee. He has been affiliated with the Zion church all his life and proudly boasts that he is “Zion born and bred”.

Young Simon started preaching at the early age of sixteen (16) and was ordained a deacon in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in 1974 and an elder in 1975. He received his Bachelor of Science Degree from Livingstone College (A.M.E. Zion College), Salisbury North Carolina in 1977. He received his Master of Divinity degree from Hood Theological Seminary (A.M.E. Zion College), Salisbury, North Carolina in 1980. Dr. Simon continued his education and earned his Doctor of Ministry degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C. in 1985.

All his pastoral appointments are with the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and include:

- 1974 – 1976 Zion Chapel in Hiddenite, N.C./Mt. Vernon in Stoney Point, N.C.
- 1976 – 1978 Hickory Grove in Clemmons, N.C.
- 1978 – 1980 Third Creek in Cleveland, N.C.
- 1980 – 1982 Marable Memorial in Kannapolis, N.C.
- 1982 – 1988 Mt. Lebanon in Elizabeth City, N.C.
- 1988 – present St. Paul in Cleveland, OH

At each of his pastoral appointments, Dr. Simon’s goal is to leave each one more improved than when he received the pastorate. This remains evident today in the massive building fund efforts undertaken at St. Paul.

Dr. Simon has served as the Presiding Elder (1991 – present) of the Cleveland District of the Ohio Conference and is also the senior Presiding Elder of the Ohio Conference and Mid Atlantic Episcopal District (MAED). He authored a book in 1986, entitled, “A Project in Christian Stewardship”. Dr. Simon was sought by various religious denominations throughout the United States and Europe where he conducted workshops and lectures on Christian Stewardship.

Dr. Simon has served as a General Conference delegate in every General Conference since 1984. During the General Conference, he has been selected numerous times by his episcopal leader to serve on the Episcopal Committee. This committee helps determine the episcopal district a bishop will be assigned. He has served on the following Zion Administrative Boards:

- Publishing House
- Brotherhood & Pension Service
- Ministerial Relief
- Committee on Compilations

He is the C.E.O. of Simon Enterprises and has served on numerous boards and committees with the City of Cleveland, such as the Methodist Ministers Alliance and Credit Union Board. Dr. Simon is a proud member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., a Mason, and a 32nd Degree Shriner.

Realizing that innovation was crucial to the progress of St. Paul, Dr. Simon made and implemented substantial organizational changes. He created a Physical Healing

Drive (a more than two million dollar project) to repair the church’s physical plant, appointed women in leadership roles including members of the Trustee and Steward Boards, and appointed the first woman Superintendent of Sunday School.

Dr. Simon is overjoyed to be the father of fraternal twins: Audie Vincent Simon, II and Anicka Varenen Simon Seymour and four grandchildren: Genevieve, Audie III, Amir, and Zuri.

Congratulations Dr. Simon on 50 years in Christian Ministry.



DR. PEGGY LINDSEY OWENS
CANDIDATE FOR FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

LADY LOVE! LADY D!

MISSIONARY SUPERVISOR D. DIANE PROCTOR

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

Gratitude versus platitudes. What's the difference? Is there a difference? Yes, there is and the difference was on full display at the Quadrennial Luncheon for Missionary Supervisor D. Diane Proctor on Saturday, April 15th at the Westchester Marriott in Tarrytown, New York, as expressions of love, appreciation, and gratitude flowed the entire afternoon.

The grand ballroom was filled to capacity as bishops, presiding elders, clergy, district connectional officers, missionary officers, laity,



friends and family turned out to celebrate Mrs. Proctor.

The Rev. Dr. Laticia Godette, Presiding Elder of the Camden District, New Jersey Conference, served as Mistress of Ceremonies and all agreed she did an outstanding job. Dr. Godette told those assembled that while all ministries in the church are important, none are more vital than the ushers and asked all the ushers in the house to stand. They did. She then asked them to come forward and do the ushers' march. **"No music, no march,"** was the response, however, as soon as the NEED choir began singing "We Sing Our Praises to the King," the ushers marched as everyone sang along.

The NEED Youth Delegation, WH&OMS saluted the Missionary Supervisor with videotaped expressions of gratitude and appreciation to the tune of Lady Love, by Lou Rawls, thanking Mrs. Proctor for her guidance.



Mrs. Delores Cowherd, Vice President of the International Ministers' Spouses and Widows Fellowship (IMSWF) brought greetings on behalf of the Executive Board and the New Jersey Ministers' Conference Council.

District, Conference, and Connectional Officers, wearing their purple and gold colors, paid tribute to Mrs. Proctor and thanked her for her excellent leadership.

Albany District WH&OMS President Geraldine Alexander asked all the missionary presidents to stand. There was applause and **oohs** and **aahs** from the audience as the Missionary Supervisor was given her royal crown, scepter, and orb. Mrs. Alexander



said, "the orb is the power of God and is a reminder that your authority is derived from God above."

Ms. Verdelle Cunningham, Connectional Treasurer WH&OMS, quoted from 1 Corinthians 4:5 **"Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God."** Ms. Cunningham said it was a "bit-tersweet occasion" and thanked the Missionary Supervisor for her good work and contributions throughout the years.

Dr. Brenda L.G. Smith, (Golden Soror) and members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, brought greetings and presented their soror with two huge gift-wrapped boxes. The Missionary Supervisor led the AKA song and chant, "AKA All The Way." She also announced this was her "Golden Year."

Mrs. Joan Capel, Ecumenical Representative, brought greetings from the United Nations NGO, W.F.M.&U.C.M. "What becomes a legend most?" she asked and cited the attributes of a legend. "Mrs. Proctor is our legend." Mrs. Capel jokingly added that she could easily see she and Mrs. Proctor being best friends as kids. "Throwing water balloons out of windows, ringing doorbells and running, but on Sundays, they would get up and go to church." She said she would miss her and thanked her for her support throughout the years.

Presiding Elder and NEED Representative Derrill A. Blue, Rochester Syracuse District followed. Before his remarks, however, Dr. Godette took a moment of personal privilege to thank him for his hard work with the committee in organizing this event. P.E. Blue said on behalf of the Presiding Elders of the North Eastern Episcopal District, "We pause to celebrate our God-fearing Missionary Supervisor," and referenced Proverbs 31:30-31 **"Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised..."** He closed his remarks with the Maya Angelou quote: **"Nothing can dim the light that shines from within."** He thanked the Missionary Supervisor "for shining bright as our Supervisor for the North Eastern Episcopal District. We love you and we will miss you."

Before presenting Bishop Dennis V. Proctor, Presiding Elder A. Alfred Carson thanked Dr. Godette for "her professionalism, dignity, and humor," in serving as Mistress of Ceremonies. He also told a witty story he once heard about David Dinkins, former mayor of New York, and his wife Joyce. He then spoke about the Missionary Supervisor's call to serve. "She is," he said, "the epitome of we, not me."

Bishop Proctor commented on the Presiding Elder's Dinkins story and said the Presiding Elder "must have been eating rum cake." He



added that anyone who has visited the London Annual Conference would understand the rum cake reference. The Bishop's comments were just as amusing as the Dinkins story. Bishop Proctor said he was honored to be the Supervisor's husband. He said her family from the very beginning welcomed him with love and kindness. Quoting from John 12-24, *"Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."* The Bishop quickly added that he was by no means wishing for his wife to die, however, the scripture is appropriate as it captures how his wife has produced many good seeds.

The honoree addressed the gathering. She said she had been to enough of these occasions "to know that when you get to this point, you have heard enough speeches, you have eaten, and are ready to go." She promised not to be longwinded and would "but this is my last one, so I will take advantage." She made notes so that she would stick to the script. "I had nothing to do with this phenomenal affair." She said she heard it was going to be big, grand, and very, very nice, and "all I can say, is that you have never lied." She said the North Eastern Episcopal District is God's gift to the Proctors and she wanted to greet everyone with heartfelt gratitude and love. "I want to express my appreciation to all who showed up today for your presence and your presents, for which I am extremely grateful." When was in college she had lots of nicknames and recalled how she cried at her graduation from the beginning to the end. On that day, her nickname was Thumbelina, the doll that cried real tears. "I felt the same thing happening as soon as I walked to the door and saw all of you here. All I can say is, is all this just for me? Oh my goodness, I am so grateful, and thank you all." She said she had so much to be grateful for and "Yes, I say thank you, thank you; I say thank you a lot, but the important thing is that I mean it from the bottom of my heart." She thanked the ushers for doing the usher's march. She thanked the NEED Choir and brother TJ for singing her favorite song. "I had no idea we were going to get that type of concert." She thanked the Youth Director and the "creative way they said all those good things about me." She smiled and added, "I just hope you meant it." She said she absolutely loved the beautiful roses. She reminded everyone of the upcoming WH&OMS convention celebrating the D. Diane Proctor Agape Love Conference in New Orleans, made possible by Presiding Elder Godette. She thanked all the Chris-

tian educators for "working together on the battlefield for the cause of Christ." Thanks and gratitude to the IMSWF for the love extended to her over the years. She made special mention of Sis. Valentina Stubbs, who had to leave the affair early. "So somebody please go back and tell her that in all my thank you's, I called her name as well, because she has assisted me from the beginning."

She said she didn't have the words to adequately express her profound thanks to her Sisters on the Executive Board. She gave a special shout-out to Mrs. Sarah Cherrington for all her support throughout the years.

She thanked her sister Caroline Morris (Greenville, SC) and daughter Diandra Proctor-Harvin and her two sons (Dennis, Jr. and Emory Proctor, II) who were not able to be there. Of course, she thanked her husband. She asked all the Missionaries to stand and on the count of 3 do the "1,2,3 clap." It was a hilarious moment. It took one or two tries, but everyone got it right on the third try.

Before delivering the benediction, Bishop Proctor asked everyone to put their hands together once again for his wife and said "this is a marvelous day."

It was a marvelous afternoon filled with love, laughter, good food, and genuine expressions of gratitude. Congratulations to Missionary Supervisor Mrs. D. Diane Proctor for a job well done. To God Be The Glory.



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The Wilmington District celebrates the 2023 Lay Person of the Year

Submitted by LaVerna Hargrove, District Reporter
Deborah Price, District Photographer

The Wilmington District Lay Council presented its Lay Person of the Year Celebration on April 30, 2023. Warner Temple AME Zion Church, Wilmington, NC pastored by Rev. Dr. Clifford Barnett hosted the event and the district was welcomed by the President of the Warner Temple AME Zion Church Lay Council, Sister Sonja Green. The element of the quadrennial theme, "Serving the Flock", was presented in three ways:

Celebrating the 2023 Wilmington District Lay Person of the Year (the present); Celebrating **Those on Whose Shoulders We Stand** (the past); and the presentation of the Lay Academy **Preparing Ourselves for Future Service** by identifying and using our talents (future).

1st Vice President of the Wilmington District Lay Council Brother Reginald Ballard, presented each Lay Person of the Year of the local church, highlighting their service to the local church, the district, the connection and their community.

Stellar examples of long-time stewardship, works of faith, and newly developing personal ministries were presented as the Wilmington District Lay Council convened to select its 2023 Lay Person of the Year. After much consideration by a committee independent of the AME Zion Church, Sister Michelle Ballard Graham is the 2023 Wilmington District Lay Person of the Year. Michelle is a member of Summerville AME Zion Church, Leland, NC pastored by Reverend Nathaniel Johnson. At her church, she uses her talent for planning, organization, and administration to accomplish objectives, empower others, lead the Deaconess Board for more than 10 years, and provide technical support to communicate information to members of the church and to spread the Word of God through different platforms. Michelle is a compassionate, committed, activist for Christ. She is a Delta Sigma Theta Sorority member and has served in leadership positions within the organization.

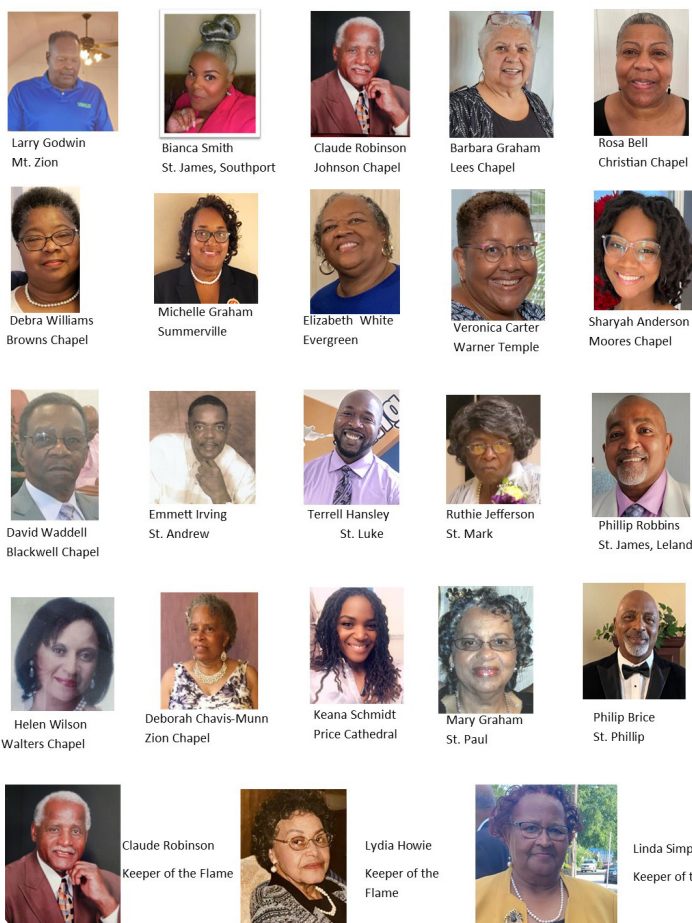
The Keeper of the Flame Award is an award given by the President of the Wilmington District Lay Council to persons who have worked in the local church for many years leading, filling in where needed quietly, but whose service may have been noticed as 'it's just what they do'. Mr. William Evans

presented this award to Linda Simpson of Evergreen A.M.E. Zion Church, Delco, NC; Mr. Claude Robinson of Johnson Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, Leland, NC;

and Mrs. Lydia Howie of St. Luke A.M.E. Zion Church, Wilmington, NC. All these recipients have served their local church for more than 20 years in the same position faithfully.

Reverend Dr. Alexander Jones, Presiding Elder of the

2023 Wilmington District Lay Persons of the Year



Wilmington District along with William Evans, President of the Wilmington District Lay Council presented each Lay Person of the Year with a Certificate in Celebration of their *Service to the Flock* and to the Keepers of the Flame.

Sister LaVonnia Lewis of St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church, Bolton, NC, presented an interactive Lay Academy on identifying and utilizing our gifts individually and cooperatively to 'serve the flock'. Sister Lewis was the Wilmington District 2022 Lay Person of the Year. Using the Talents and Gifts Assessment Inventory provided by the *Connectional Lay Council Facilitator's Guide*, she reminded the congregation that we must first *know our talents/gifts*. Through prayer and inventories like the one cited, we can know, then operate within our gifts for God's glory. Cooperatively, when we use our various gifts to accomplish a project or task, we are acting in the spirit of the scripture she used as her spiritual focus, 1 Corinthians 12:4-7. Knowing in what area to serve is a part of giving our best in service. Competent, focused service to the glory of God is the goal of all Christians.

The Wilmington District is blessed to have three centenarians:



Our Centurions are people who labored for the Lord through the auspices of the A.M.E. Zion Church at the local, district, and connectional levels.

The mission of the A.M.E. Zion Church to care for the whole person was their mission. To honor them for their service the WDLC asked that each church of the Wilmington District donate 5 bags containing the components of a spaghetti dinner that will feed a family of four. Each of the 5 bags should contain 1 2lb package of spaghetti, 1 16 oz can of green beans, 2 16 oz cans of Spaghetti sauce, 2 onions, and 2 6 oz cans of tomatoes. And any other items like coffee or some form of dessert they were guided to include. The dinners were divided among three food banks, one in each of the counties that comprise the Wilmington District in the name of our three Centurions. Those food banks were the Southport-Oak Island Food Bank, Boiling Spring Lakes, NC (Brunswick County); Bogue Community Center Food Bank, Hallsboro, NC (Columbus County); and UNC at Wilmington, NC Student Food Bank, Wilmington, NC (New Hanover County). The donations will feed more than 300 individuals.



Reverend Dr. Alexander Jones, Presiding Elder of the Wilmington District told the congregation that he hopes that the presentations inspire to give focused service to all levels of the church as service is an offering unto God. This would make the world a better place beginning at our small corner of the world and spreading like a ripple on the water.



Rev. Dr. Alexander Jones, Wilmington District Lay Person of the Year 2023, Michelle Graham. William Evans, Wilmington District Lay Council President, and Reverend Nathaniel Johnson, Pastor of Summerville AME Zion Church, Leland, NC

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Livingstone College to award honorary degree to music executives at May commencement, special announcement to follow

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

May 5, 2023

SALISBURY – Livingstone College will award seven honorary degrees on Saturday, May 6, during its annual commencement ceremony, which begins at 9 a.m. at Varick Auditorium on the campus.

Among honorary degree recipients will be award-winning music executives Adrian Miller and music producer Alexander Warren, aka Lex Lucazi, in addition to commencement speaker Tamika Mallory, social justice activist.



Miller has done it all. From radio disc jockey, A&R, breaking new talent, artist management, label founder/co-owner, masterminding successful digital and real-world marketing campaigns, executive producing, to film and television music supervision, he has been immersed in nearly every facet of the business and understands what it takes to elevate artists to the next level.

Over the course of his career, which included being at Warner Music Group under the tutelage of industry powerhouses Benny Medina and Quincy Jones, Miller has worked with artists that include Cypress Hill, House of Pain, Ice Cube, Giorgio Moroder, Prince, RZA, Rage Against The Machine, OutKast, The Pharcyde, Korn, Warren G, Incubus, Coolio, Method Man, Redman, Funkdoobiest, DJ Muggs/Soul Assassins, Erick Sermon, Keith Murray and Volume 10.

Among his many awards and certifications for hit records, Miller won a Grammy for Best Rap Performance for his work on Anderson .Paak's

hit song *Bubblin'*, and received the prestigious Cannes Lion Award for his work on the 2018 Apple Music Home Pod commercial by Academy Award-winning writer/director Spike Jonze.

Through his company, XYion, Inc., Miller works extensively with artists, not solely concerned with their music, but in building profitable business strategies that best protect their intellectual property and help them establish foundations for artistic freedom, career success and financial security.

He has been described as “a superb image maker and a moral force, focused and irrepressible” in a *Forbes* interview covering his expansive career.

Alexander Warren is an award-winning record producer and six-times platinum accredited musician. He appeared on the Grammy nominated “BET” award winning “TI vs Tip” album. He won the Native American Music Award's Song of the Year and Los Angeles Music Video Award's Song of the Year. He was nominated for the Canadian Indigenous Music Award and for the Tennessee Hip-Hop Awards.



He is currently the director of creative services in A&R for Xyion.

Embargoed Information:

Miller will announce on Saturday their partnership with Livingstone College to create a recording studio on the campus of Livingstone College, specifically called the Adrian M. Miller Conservatory in Frequency and Harmony” for this contributions to and support of the arts, and the scholarship of the next generation of musical artists and industry changemakers.

Livingstone College awards social justice activist Tamika Mallory with honorary doctorate degree

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

May 9, 2023

SALISBURY – Award-winning social justice activist Tamika Mallory is officially a Blue Bear of Livingstone College.

The national movement strategist and author received an honorary doctorate degree in humane letters on May 6 during the college's 141st commencement at Varick Auditorium, after delivering a powerful commencement address.



She told the Class of 2023 that they are the light of the world – the same light that Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said can drive out darkness, and the light that former First Lady Michelle Obama said can feed the person next to you and ignite our community.

“Shine bright, Livingstone College, class of 2023,” Mallory said. “Don't forget the legacy. Don't forget where you come from. Don't forget the stories. Don't forget the sacrifice ... Don't forget Dr. (Joseph Charles) Price ... but most importantly, don't forget your own big mama and papa, who also wouldn't die. Don't forget your people and lastly, don't forget yourself. Let us together, reshape a new world. Stand up, stand in your power.”

Mallory told the students to use their privilege of crossing this stage as a boat to safe harbor and “make sure you are the light for all of those coming behind.”

“I knew I made the right choice in having you deliver the commencement address for my first May graduation as president,” said Livingstone President Dr. Anthony J. Davis. He thanked her for the work that she does as a social justice practitioner and for speaking truth to power.



Mallory was the first of seven to receive honorary doctorate degrees at the ceremony. She thanked Livingstone for honoring her as a new member of Blue Bear nation.

Mallory is the author of *State of Emergency*, a declaration she made in the opening of her speech during the George Floyd protests in Minneapolis. She is the youngest ever executive director of the National Action Network and was instrumental in the creation of the New York City's Crisis Management System, an official gun violence prevention program that awards nearly \$27 million to violence prevention organizations annually.

She made history when she helped shepherd the largest single day demonstration, the 2017 Women's March on Washington, serving as one of its four national co-chairs. Most recently, she co-founded Until Freedom, an intersectional social justice organization that serves as a clearing house for organizers, activists, movement attorneys, artists, celebrities and formerly incarcerated individuals.

Mallory was honored as one of Time 100's Most Influential People and was featured on Fortune's list of the World's Greatest Leaders.

Music exec and veteran Adrian Miller announces creation of School of Music at Livingstone College

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

May 9, 2023

SALISBURY – Music executive and industry veteran Adrian Miller is “recording” his legacy on the campus of Livingstone College along with Alexander Warren, aka Lex Lucazi.

After receiving his honorary doctorate degree in humane letters at Livingstone’s 141st Commencement on May 6, the music mogul announced he was creating a recording studio at Livingstone College, named the Adrian M. Miller Conservatory in Frequency and Harmony” for his contributions to and support of the arts, and the scholarship of the next generation of musical artists and industry changemakers. The school is named after his son.

“Personally, this meant a lot to me to visit you all from LA (Los Angeles) and to be here today. While my family is not celebrating as much (due to a death), it bears my heart and soul and spirit to be here to say Livingstone will be announcing its music program: The Conservatory Adrian M. Miller School of Harmony and Frequency,” Miller said. “I could not have done this without my good brother, Dr. Lex, the multimedia expertise Symphony (Keith Anderson of Livingstone) and Dr. Davis (president). We look forward to giving you all the platform you deserve in the entertainment industry.”

The school of music will serve as a catalyst for the creation of a communications major and certification program among the college’s current degree program offerings.

There is a heightened interest among students in the college’s on-campus radio station, WLJZ 107.1 FM, particularly in music, audio production and engineering. In order to cultivate and sustain that growing interest, Livingstone is partnering with Miller to develop a music engineering degree/certification program in a newly-designed and equipped studio.

Miller, in partnership with Alexander Warren, aka Lex Lucazi, will assist in providing the capital to design, build and equip the music studio.

This will be “one of the first of its kind on an HBCU college campus,” said Livingstone President Dr. Anthony J. Davis.

Miller is an industry veteran who today manages Anderson .Paak and Flo-Rida, and was musical supervisor on the movie, “Friday,” and the third season of “Wu-Tang Clan: An American Saga.”



From radio disc jockey, A&R, breaking new talent, artist management, label founder/co-owner, masterminding successful digital and real-world marketing campaigns and executive producing, to film and television music supervision, he has been immersed in nearly every facet of the business and understands what it takes to elevate artists to the next level.

Over the course of his career, which included being at Warner Music Group under the tutelage of industry powerhouses Benny Medina and Quincy Jones, Miller has worked with artists that include Cypress Hill, House of Pain, Ice Cube, Giorgio Moroder, Prince, RZA, Rage Against The Machine, OutKast, The Pharcyde, Korn, Warren G, Incubus, Coolio, Method Man, Redman, Funkdoobiest, DJ Muggs/Soul Assassins, Erick Sermon, Keith Murray and Volume 10.

Among his many awards and certifications for hit records, Miller won a Grammy for Best Rap Performance for his work on Anderson .Paak’s hit song *Bubblin’*, and received the prestigious Cannes Lion Award for his work on the 2018 Apple Music Home Pod commercial by Academy Award-winning writer/director Spike Jonze.

Through his company, XYion, Inc., Miller works extensively with artists, not solely concerned with their music, but in building profitable business strategies that best protect their intellectual property and help them establish foundations for artistic freedom, career success and financial security.

Warren (Lucazi) also received an honorary doctorate in human letters from Livingstone College on May 6. He is an award-winning record producer and six-times platinum accredited musician. He appeared on the Grammy nominated “BET” award winning “TI vs Tip” album. He won the Native American Music Award’s Song of the Year and Los Angeles Music Video Award’s Song of the Year. He was nominated for the Canadian Indigenous Music Award and for the Tennessee Hip-Hop Awards.

He is currently the director of creative services in A&R for Xyion.



Clinton College Announces TRACS Accreditation Renewal

Submitted by Kristen Brown
Media Contact
kbrown@clintoncollege.edu

April 26, 2023

Rock Hill, SC - Clinton College has officially been reaffirmed for the next ten years by our accrediting agency, the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS), with no recommendations, findings, or suggestions. Clinton’s evaluation visit took place from January 24th-January 26th, 2023, and concluded with a notification of reaffirmation during a virtual meeting yesterday, April 25th.

“Being reaffirmed for another ten years with no recommendations, findings, or suggestions shows that Clinton College continues to operate at the highest level of excellence,” said Dr. Lester A. McCorn, President of Clinton College. “We are committed to continuing to strive for excellence as we fulfill our mission to prepare our students to be transformative leaders in a global society.”



TRACS is recognized by both the United States Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation as a national institutional accrediting agency for Christian post-secondary institutions, colleges, universities, and seminaries. Accreditation by TRACS signifies that the College complies with the requirement to meet national norms in the areas of curriculum; programs; faculty credentials; and measured student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional level.

“Accreditation requires leadership, collaboration, and supportive efforts from key personnel of an institution,” said Dr. Harriet T. Hobbs, Vice President of Institutional Planning, Effectiveness, Accreditation, and Research/Accreditation Liaison. “To lead an accreditation process and receive no recommendations, findings, or suggestions in the history of the College is commendable. I am appreciative to those that contributed to the process.”

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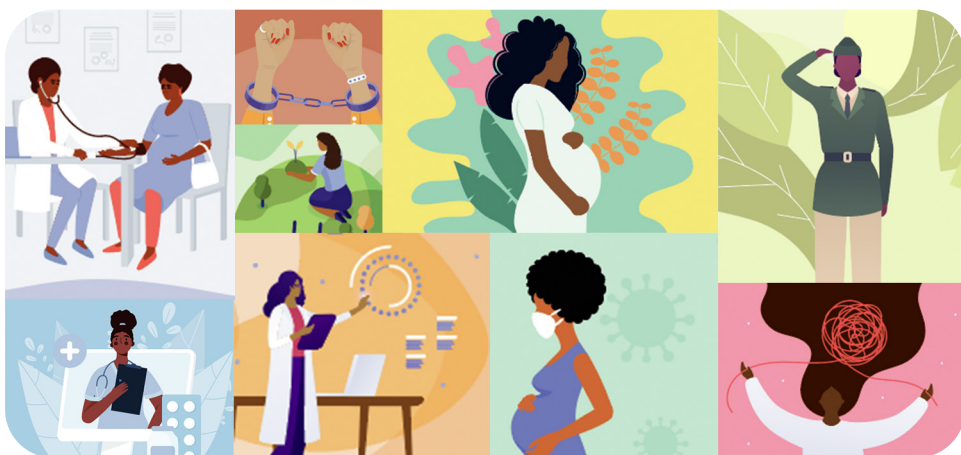
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Quadrennial Luncheon

Advocacy for Black Maternal Health – Mominibus 2023

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Allison Lee
Social Justice Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: SocialJustice@StarofZion.org

Two of my most salient identities are as an African-American and as a woman. As a child, I grew up in a community with other Black people through home, church, and school. It was a community that relied heavily upon: the importance of education, obeying adults – especially elders, achieving and excelling, working hard to both contribute to society and, simultaneously, stay in society's way, being aware of how the color of my skin is problematic for some, even though it is not actually a problem at all, and treating everybody – no matter who they are, where they are from, or what their personal beliefs are – with respect. Western culture and all, this background gave me a strong understanding of triumphs and difficulties for people of color both presently and historically. It instilled within me an appreciation for Black art, poetry, Negro spirituals, and hymns. Black culture and community have shone a light on the way in which my ancestors have forged a path of resilience in a world that



sought to bind their consciousness, enslave their bodies, and whitewash their souls. Being culturally reared opened my eyes at an early age to the uniqueness associated with being Black, and to the injustices heaped upon skin and bodies of a darker hue.

As a Black woman and one who finds meaning in equity and advocacy, I am naturally troubled by a group within the United States of America that is experiencing disproportionate death and inconsistent care – Black mothers. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the United States of America is the most dangerous place to give birth – as far as advanced countries go – pertaining to Black and Brown women, with Black women experiencing fatality as a result of birth at three times the rate of White counterparts. The healthcare disparity that affects pregnant women of color is one that, even with a growing awareness of ethical concerns for Black and Brown people in the medical arena, is still prevalent today.

In honor of this past Mother's Day, House Representatives, Alma Adams & Lauren Underwood, along with Senator Cory Booker, reintroduced, 'The Black Maternal Health Mominibus Act of 2023' – "a historic legislation" that speaks to the maternal mortality dilemma. Representative Adams shares that, "...80% of maternal deaths are preventable with proper care and treatment." On the announcement of the Mominibus, Senator Booker states,

No one deserves to be left behind by the health care system or face inadequate care during pregnancy, labor, and postpartum. This legislation is a critical step towards saving lives, ending disparities in health care and outcomes, and ensuring our healthcare system treats all moms with the care and dignity they deserve regardless of their race or circumstance. I am proud to join my colleagues in introducing this bill that would address the drivers of the maternal health crisis, invest in social determinants of health, and ensure comprehensive support for all people. It's time to prioritize the well-being of all, eliminate racial and ethnic disparities for Black and Brown moms, and create a brighter and healthier future for all families.

The Mominibus is made up of thirteen bills sponsored by Black Maternal Health Caucus Members. The legislation will:

1. Make critical investments in **social determinants of health** that influence maternal health outcomes, like housing, transportation, and nutrition.
2. **Extend WIC eligibility** in the postpartum and breastfeeding periods.
3. Provide funding to **community-based organizations** that are working to improve maternal health outcomes and promote equity.
4. Increase funding for programs to improve **maternal health care for veterans**.
5. Grow and diversify the **perinatal workforce** to ensure that every mom in America receives maternal health care and support from people they trust.
6. Improve **data collection processes and quality measures** to better understand the causes of the maternal health crisis in the United States and inform solutions to address it.
7. Support moms with **maternal mental health** conditions and substance use disorders.
8. Improve maternal health care and support for **incarcerated moms**.
9. Invest in **digital tools** to improve maternal health outcomes in underserved areas.
10. Promote **innovative payment models** to incentivize high-quality maternity care and non-clinical support during and after pregnancy.
11. Invest in federal programs to address **maternal and infant health risks during public health emergencies**.
12. Invest in community-based initiatives to reduce levels of and exposure to **climate change-related risks for moms and babies**.
13. Promote **maternal vaccinations** to protect the health of moms and babies.

Regardless of background, socioeconomic status, race, religion, etc., it is important that we as a society keep our attention on healthcare disparities overall, and specifically at this point, pertaining to women of color. Our awareness of the challenges and inclination to bear witness to systemic imbalances help to propel us forward in the quest for change.



Big George Foreman: A Movie Review

Submitted By Anthony G. Marshall

May 12, 2023

Atlanta, GA - If you have been an avid reader of my reviews, first of all from the bottom of my heart thank you. Second, I must apologize in advance as it seems like I only review Marvel and sports movies. I will attempt to buck this trend next month but not reviewing this month's movie that I believe would be on the audience of this publication's radar would've been a gaffe. So this month I'm taking a look at Big George Foreman, starring Khristian Davis, Forrest Whitaker, and Sonja Sohn and directed by George Tillman Jr.; Another entry into the genre of biographical boxing films, it's time to take a closer look to see how the story of the two-time Heavyweight champ, George Foreman does



against such contemporaries as 2001's Ali, 2010's The Fighter, 2016's Hands of Stone and Bleed For This.

The movie does a great job highlighting the struggles of Foreman from a poor kid, to a petty thief, to a young man desperate to make something out of his life after dropping out of high school and falling into the "sweet science". The feature also does a fantastic job of giving moviegoers an in-depth look at some of the more pivotal moments of George's life and career. From the highs of winning the title from Joe Frazier to his emotional spiraling after his famous "rope-a-dope" upset loss to Muhammad Ali. The perils of his life such as his divorce from his first wife due to his infidelity and his early rocky relationship with the Lord that leads him to becoming a preacher are also done well.

Through George's unique lens, we get an interesting look at the pugilist away from the ring. His remarking on some of his failures and missteps gives a compelling reenactment of what drove the boxing figure to make some of his most intriguing moves from starting up his youth center, returning to the ring in his forties, and even pressing the narrative of becoming one of the oldest boxing champions in history. Though the movie may fall in the middle to lower tiers when pitting it among the all-time great boxing or biographical features, it's still a competent film that does an adequate job of telling a basic "rise and fall and rise again" biopic.

Unfortunately, a lot of factors keep it from truly being a legendary film. This being Davis' first real headline role, he does a commendable job of shouldering the movie's heavy lifting, and his commitment is definitely on display. However, even with his glimpses of brilliance where you can see him as the titular brawler, the performance is flat in most places. Even veterans like Sohn or Whitaker who has a semi-uneven showing as his long-time trainer Doc Broadus isn't enough to hide the sometimes-weak portrayal. I

would however be remiss if I didn't highlight actor Sullivan Jones' tackling of Muhammad Ali who shines as the legendary fighter within his roughly six minutes of screen-time, but I digress. The movie also suffers from attempting to add a bunch of themes and other plot lines that end up going nowhere, including narration from Big George Foreman himself that comes in so infrequently it seems unnecessary to the prominence given to his relationship with his older sister, Mary, that it fools us into thinking we're receiving a focal point. This turns Big George Foreman into a bloated piece while not providing enough sustenance. This leaves George's faith as the only subject intriguing enough to follow along with. Overall, while an enjoyable film, it doesn't carry the powerful impact of Foreman's actual story and leaves Big George Foreman as just another piece of boxing cinema punching above its weight class and easy to forget.

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- DOCTORAL STUDENT IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

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Contact Me @ ijefferson4yams@gmail.com

Rev. Tonya Jackson: Zion's Finest

Submitted by Rev. Dierdre' Parker- Rowson
 Entertainment and The Arts Editor, The Star of Zion
 Entertainment_Arts@StarofZion.org

Winston Salem, NC - On May 4, 2023, the inaugural season of Zion's Finest singing competition came to an end with a fabulous finale that was taped live. It was mentioned in the previous article that Goler Memorial's facility has all the bells and whistles that made it perfect for the taping of the long-anticipated crowning of Zion's Finest. The three finalists, Rev. Brandon McLaughlin, Nicole McLaughlin, and Rev. Tonya Jackson took the stage with a rousing rendition of *The Lord Will Make a Way Somehow* as the opening number. The competition featured vocal performances that rivaled any contestants on *American Idol*, *The Voice*, *The Masked Singer*, or even *Star Search* (I had to blow the dust off that one). The show included a stellar performance by judge and recording artist Ashia Bello. The entire finale was a beautiful tribute to gospel music and specifically the finest voices in Zion as we were privy to behind-the-scenes discussions with the judges as well as a look back over the journey for each of the finalists.

As each of the finalists took the stage separately, the comments on the Facebook livestream began to paint a picture of how this would go. The viewers were invited to vote for their favorite singer. As the votes came in, with an overwhelming 82% of the vote, Rev. Tonya Elaine Jackson was crowned the winner of the inaugural season of Zions Finest. While some may have been unfamiliar with Rev. Jackson, many alumnae of Hood Theological Seminary were very familiar with her voice. She was asked often to lend her mellifluous anointing to the service to heighten the worship experience. And make no mistake, Tonya is a worshipper.

She was asked when she knew that her singing was more than just a talent.

She began singing at the age of three with her grandmother. But she can't point to a specific time when she knew it was more than a talent. To Tonya, singing was a way to not only express what she was feeling

but to identify what she was feeling. "I've always taken that very seriously", she says. "It wasn't always easy. And there were times when people were doing things (musically) that I could not do and it made me feel, self-conscious or

that I wasn't good enough. I don't think was until my twenties or even my thirties that I said to myself, 'You know Tonya, you are who you are. You do what you can do. If other people do different things, that's okay.' Music has always been a part of me, ever since I can remember."

Rev. Jackson ministers so authentically with her voice that it is no surprise that she was so well received. She was just scrolling through Facebook and learned of Zion's Finest. "I'll just put my name in. I don't know if anything will come of this, but we'll see. I had no idea that I would come *this* far. For me, it was a way of sharing or just ministering. When it comes to competition, I don't really care for those, because the gifts that we have aren't to see 'Are you better than me', but to minister. I just prayed, Lord, if it's only one person I hope this one person will be blessed."

For her initial audition, she sang *Alabaster Box*. "We had to do it without music and that made me a little nervous. But this is a song that I've always loved to sing, because here's this woman who people would've thought what are you doing here? You don't belong here. It really made me think about myself, and the story of my life. People have said so many things like that. It's really not about the crowd. That's what I love about this song. It ministers to me."

Rev. Tonya Jackson ministers to us through her voice with the songs that minister to her. The truth of that is what we feel when she sings and that is why she is Zion's Finest.

If you missed the finale or any of the episodes of the first season of Zion's Finest, you can find them on all the Star of Zion's streaming platforms.





CONGRATULATIONS TO THE VERY FIRST
ZION'S FINEST WINNER



Rev. Tonya Jackson
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Ariel Kent: A Rising Star in the World of Music

Submitted by Rev. Dierdre' Parker-Rowson
Entertainment and The Arts Editor, The Star of Zion
Entertainment_Arts@StarofZion.org

May 12, 2023

New York - The New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) has as its mission, the advancement of music education across New York State for its membership and students in member school programs. One hundred thousand students participate in spring adjudication festivals around the state. Approximately 7,000 students audition for the 5 All-State performing groups, and just under 600 are selected to participate annually. One student who was among the 600 who participated this year, is Ariel Kent. Ariel is a member of Greater Centennial A.M.E. Zion Church, in Mount Vernon, NY. She is the daughter of Warren and Trudy Kent and niece of our Editor in Chief, Mr. Darin Kent. I had the pleasure of speaking with the proud mom, Trudy Kent.

It is no accident that Ariel is a phenomenal musician. Her mother's commitment to her success is as inspiring as Ariel's awesome talent. It is hard work, dedication, and of course *practice, practice, practice*, that earned Ariel her coveted spot in the performance festival this year. Mrs. Kent is there to encourage and support her every step of the way. Ariel started playing the piano at age five with Mrs. Neal. "Mrs. Neal is absolutely amazing," says Mrs. Kent. "She doesn't care about the money; she just wants the kids to love music."

Ariel started with a keyboard. She started out practicing one to two minutes a day.



Mrs. Kent is a Social Worker for the Adoptive and Foster Family Coalition. During the pandemic, as a part of a virtual fundraiser, Ariel, and her older sister GiGi performed for the company. The executive director saw them perform and contacted her and said that they had a piano to donate and wanted to know if Ariel wanted one. They were impressed with Ariel's talent and noticed that she had a keyboard and wanted to bless her with a piano. All they had to do was pick it up.

To hear of her accomplishments, one would believe that she is a teenager. No. Ariel Kent is nine years old. Her mother speaks of her discipline, her knowledge, and her skills which again, all sounds like someone who is at least in high school. I mentioned that she sounds like a prodigy. "No, she's not a prodigy." Her mother says, "It's hard work. Being an African American girl in a mostly white community, you have to work hard. You have to work 10 times harder than your white counterparts." Ariel puts in the work.

Ariel is in the fourth grade. In the school that she is in, you have to choose an instrument. The piano wasn't one of the options. Ariel chose violin. Her music teacher says that a fourth grader rarely goes to NYSSMA because you have to be able to read music. Ariel reads music. Ariel performed at the Spring Adjudication in piano *and* violin.

Ariel performed on the violin for the judges and came out confident. "She knew she blew it out of the box," Mom said. She had some time to practice on the piano. When she came out from her piano performance she was crying. "Why are you crying?" Mrs. Kent asked. Ariel said that she had messed up. Her mother told her that it was okay. "This is your first time doing this NYSSMA thing. Look at the people that are here. These kids are at the top of what they do. You are one of four chosen from your school to perform at NYSSMA. The fact that you are here



means You Did It!"

She got her scores the following Monday. Ariel ran into the house and excitedly told her mother that she was one of the only kids to get a PERFECT score on the violin. A perfect score was 28. She got a 27 on piano. Ariel Kent's talent and hard work, along with the support of her family is going to take her a long way. Congratulations Ariel Kent, you are a phenomenal young lady!

Remember her name because I believe you will be hearing it again and again.

Music for the Second Act

Submitted by Rev. Dierdre' Parker-Rowson
Entertainment and The Arts Editor, The Star of Zion
Entertainment_Arts@StarofZion.org

To everything, there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven. This we know well. Societally we have been conditioned to believe that to be successful in any field, you must begin in your twenties, and reach your success goals by your mid-thirties, in order to peak in your forties. Then you must make way for the next generation. F. Scott Fitzgerald is quoted as having said that "there are no second acts in American lives." He obviously never met James V. Cockerham. Acclaimed Composer, Songwriter, Arranger, Musician, and Playwright, Mr. Cockerham earned a bachelor's degree in Sociology from Livingstone College. Forty years later, he earned a Master's Certificate in Orchestration for Film and TV from Berklee College of Music in Boston at the age of (65) sixty-five. If that weren't inspiration enough, he is now adding Author to his list of accomplishments. His book, *Looking: Past, Present, Future*, was launched with a tour that began at his beloved Alma Mater on April 23, 2023. The book is a look at his journey through life and music from his uniquely creative and innovative perspective.

I had the pleasure of speaking with Mr. Cockerham on the beautiful campus of Livingstone College just days before the book tour began. We sat in an empty classroom, but his presence filled it up. He is witty and wise; funny and formidable. Mr. Cockerham is living proof that

"age ain't nothing but a number."

We started with the correct pronunciation of his last name.

JVC: My son was in London and said, "Daddy, no one has trouble pronouncing our last name." Some people say Birmingham, Bucking-ham, and Cocker-ham. In London, It's Birming-am, Bucking-am, Cocker-am.

His laugh is infectious.

SOZ: Composer, Songwriter, Arranger, Musician, Playwright. Seven albums five CD's four musical stage productions, and your work performed at Carnegie Hall. All I can say I wow. With all of that, how significant is it for you to kick this book tour off here at Livingstone College?

JVC: I was praying about it, like what am I going to do with this thing? He woke me up at five o'clock in the morning. God has given me the vision for Varick Auditorium. You mentioned 4 stage productions. Now this is going to also be a stage production. This



will be my *fifth* stage production. So we have taken the CD which is called *LOOKING*, and we have Algebra Blessett, Regina Bell, and PJ Morton, all of them are on that project. My son plays bass for PJ Morton. He pulled all these people together, and they all call me ‘pops’, [he leans in and whispers] and I don’t know who they are. We laugh again. His joy for life is evident in everything about him. He has a way of making you feel comfortable, as if you are a member of the family. I doubt that he has ever met a stranger.

SOZ: Before I interviewed you, I googled you. I found your Twitter and I saw you reciting the lyrics from *Winning*. It was so beautiful. The intonation, the strategic pauses...when you’re writing music you feel all of that don’t you?

JVC: Yes. Yes

SOZ: What has music meant to your life? Hearing it, feeling it, creating it? It seems that music has been a golden thread throughout your entire life.

JVC: I remember sitting on my aunt’s lap banging on the piano. I remember being on my tip-toes, playing the piano. I remember my dad saying, “James, get off that piano, making all that noise.” Then I started playing melodies. He would say, “Shut the door”. Third grade is when I started really *feeling* music. I was at Livingstone when I started writing music. I was in corporate 35 years, last 12 in management. In 2020 I left that and started doing music full-time. You would think as an administrator I would know how to do a resume right? I filled out one hundred applications, sending out resumes. How many interviews do you think I got?

SOZ: One hundred?

JVC: Zero.

SOZ: Zero?

JVC: Every job I had I was a manager. I guess they thought, you ain’t coming in here taking my job! (More laughter) The stronger thought behind all that is that it was time for me to do music full-time. So, from 2020 until today I’ve been doing music full-time. You can tell I have enough to eat!

SOZ: For those of us who are starting over in the second act of our lives this is such an inspiration. What would you say to someone who is just starting in the music business? or in the second act of their lives.

JVC: Well, let me start with the second act. I was 65 when I got my master’s in Orchestration for film and TV from Berklee College. I got A’s in all classes cause I was there to *learn*. Once you have decided what your goal is in life pursue it with passion. If you love what you’re doing, keep doing what you love. Take your mind off money. When I first started recording, you had to have a records promotion person. They released incrementally throughout the country. Now you have access to the world. I can release something and get feedback from France. The question becomes how much time do you want to spend pursuing your dream. You have the dream. What are you going to do with it?

That indeed, is the question. We at Star of Zion are grateful for the time spent in the presence of the greatness that is Mr. James V. Cockerham. We wish him Grammys, Oscars, and Emmys in the future. We encourage you, our readers, to get to know his work and do your best to catch the stage production for his book, *Looking*. Available wherever books are sold. You can also follow him on Twitter @brockerham.



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Protein: The Antidote To Obesity & Overeating

Submitted by Mr. Daman DeLeon
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Now before we dive into this sea of information, one needs to know that Obesity is not the same as being “fat”. The human body requires a certain amount of fat for the metabolism, cardiovascular, and circulatory systems to all function productively and collectively. Studies have shown that generally speaking, what makes a person “Obese” is their body fat percentage. One can be overweight without necessarily being obese.

Studies also confirm That Processed Foods are Key to Rising Obesity

‘Protein hunger’ drives overeating, a large-scale population study shows.

Growing evidence that highly processed and refined foods are the **leading contributor to rising obesity rates** in the Western world is backed by a year-long study of the dietary habits of 9,341 Australians. The new study was based on a national nutrition and physical activity survey undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), and further backs the ‘Protein Leverage Hypothesis’. It was conducted by the University of Sydney’s Charles Perkins Centre (CPC) and published in the latest issue of the journal *Obesity*.

First **put forward in 2005** by professors Raubenheimer and Stephen Simpson, the Protein Leverage Hypothesis argues that people overeat fats and carbohydrates because of the body’s strong appetite for protein, which the body actively favors over everything else. Because so much of modern diets consist of highly processed and refined foods – which are low in protein – people are driven to consume more energy-dense foods until they satisfy their protein demand.

Processed foods lack protein and drive craving

“As people consume more junk foods or highly processed and refined foods, they dilute their dietary protein and increase their risk of being overweight and obese, which we know increases the risk of chronic disease,” said lead author Dr. Amanda Grech, a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the CPC and the university’s School of Life and Environmental Sciences.

“It’s increasingly clear that our bodies eat to satisfy a protein target,” added Professor David Raubenheimer, the Leonard Ullmann Chair in Nutritional Ecology at the School of Life and Environmental Sciences. “But the problem is that the food in Western diets has increasingly less protein. So, you have to consume more of it to reach your protein target, which effectively elevates your daily energy intake.

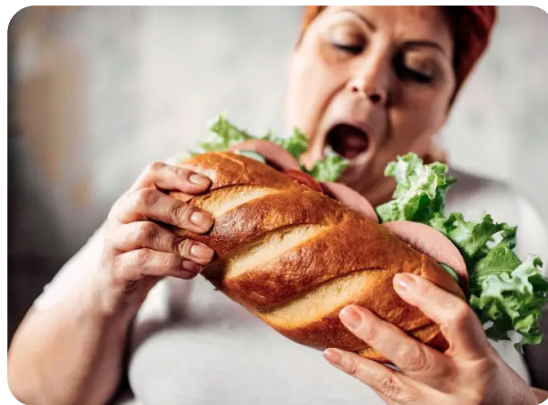
“Humans, like many other species, have a stronger appetite for protein than for the main energy-providing nutrients of fats and carbohydrates. That means that if the protein in our diet is diluted with fats and carbohydrates, we will eat more energy to get the protein that our bodies crave.”

Protein essential to good health

Proteins are the building blocks of life: every cell in the body contains them, and they are used to repair cells or make new ones, and it’s estimated that over a million forms of protein are needed to allow a human body to function. Protein sources include meats, milk, fish, eggs, soy, legumes, beans, and some grains such as wheat germ and quinoa.

The **University of Sydney** scientists analyzed data from a cross-sectional survey of nutrition and physical activity in 9,341 adults, known as the National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey which was conducted from May 2011 to June 2012, with a mean age of 46.3 years. They found the population’s mean energy intake was 8,671 kilojoules (kJ), with the mean percentage of energy from protein being just 18.4 percent, compared with 43.5 percent from carbohydrates and from 30.9 percent from fat, and just 2.2 percent from fiber and 4.3 percent from alcohol.

They then plotted energy intake versus the time of consumption and



found that the pattern matched that predicted by the Protein Leverage Hypothesis. Those who consumed lower amounts of protein in their first meal of the day went on to increase their overall food intake in subsequent meals, whereas those who received the recommended amount of protein did not – and, in fact, declined their food intake throughout the day.

A new study provides additional evidence that the consumption of ultra-processed foods is driving the obesity epidemic, causing people to overeat in response to the body’s strong appetite for protein.

Study Confirms That Processed Foods Key to Rising Obesity

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‘Protein hunger’ found to drive overeating

They also found a statistically significant difference between groups by the third meal of the day: those with a higher proportion of energy from protein at the start of the day had much lower total energy intake for the day. Meanwhile, those who consumed foods low in protein at the start of the day proceeded to increase consumption, indicating they were seeking to compensate with higher consumption of overall energy. This is despite the fact the first meal was the smallest for both groups, with the least amount of energy and food consumed, whereas the last meal was the largest.

Participants with a lower proportion of protein than recommended at the first meal consumed more discretionary foods – energy-dense foods high in saturated fats, sugars, salt, or alcohol – throughout the day and less of the recommended five food groups (grains; vegetables/legumes; fruit; dairy and meats). Consequently, they had an overall poorer diet at each mealtime, with their percentage of protein energy decreasing even

as their discretionary food intake rose – an effect the scientists call ‘protein dilution’.

While many factors contribute to excess weight gain – including eating patterns, physical activity levels, and sleep routines – the University of Sydney scientists argue the body’s powerful demand for protein, and its lack of highly processed and refined foods is a key driver of energy overconsumption and obesity in the Western world.

Explanation for obesity

“The results support an integrated ecological and mechanistic explanation for obesity, in which low-protein, highly processed foods lead to higher energy intake in response to a nutrient imbalance driven by a dominant appetite for protein,” said Professor Raubenheimer. “It supports a central role for protein in the obesity epidemic, with significant implications for global health.”

Seeking to understand how protein drives human nutrition has also sought taken Professor Raubenheimer to study the diets of people in some of the most remote places, from the Congo to the Himalayas. “The protein mechanism in appetite is a revolutionary insight,” he said. “Obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease – they’re all driven by diet, and we have to use what we’re learning to bring them under control.”

Summertime and Traveler’s Health

Submitted by Mr. Daman DeLeon
Health and Wellness Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: Health_Wellness@StarofZion.org

My personal favorite Season, Summertime, is upon us and I can’t think of anyone who loves to travel, both internationally and domestically, more than myself. I have relatives and loved ones all over the world, and there are always a few tips I adhere to that I encourage all to follow.

Warm weather often means more bug bites, a greater risk of heat-related illnesses, and more water and outdoor activities. Follow CDC’s tips below to protect yourself and others during summer travel.

Check CDC’s webpage for your destination to see what vaccines or medicines you may need and what diseases or health risks are a concern at your destination.

Make an appointment with your healthcare provider or a [travel health specialist](#) that takes place at least one month before you leave. They can help you get destination-specific vaccines, medicines, and information. Discussing your health concerns, itinerary, and planned activities with your provider allows them to give more specific advice and recommendations.



Make sure you are up-to-date on all of your routine vaccines. Routine vaccinations protect you from infectious diseases such as measles that can spread quickly in groups of unvaccinated people. Many diseases prevented by routine vaccination are not common in the United States but are still common in other countries.

Prepare a travel health kit with items you may need, especially those items that may be difficult to find at your destination. Include your prescriptions and over-the-counter medicines in your travel health kit and take enough to last your entire trip, plus extra in case of travel delays. Depending on your destination you may also want to pack a [mask](#), [insect repellent](#), [sunscreen](#) (SPF15 or higher), aloe, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, water disinfection tablets, and your health insurance card.

During Your Trip

If your summer travel means you will be outside in the heat, learn how to prevent, recognize, and treat heat-related illness. The more active you are in high temperatures, the more likely you are to get a heat-related illness. Take the following steps to protect yourself:

- Drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids.
- Wear a hat and sunglasses.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Plan outdoor activities during cooler parts of the day.
- Rest often and try to stay in the shade when outdoors.
- If you will be doing strenuous activities in the heat such as hiking or biking, try to adjust before you travel by exercising 1 hour per day in the heat.

Protect yourself from the sun. Now although people of highly concentrated melanin (African descent, Pacific Islander, Aborigine, etc.) naturally contain higher levels of protection from the Sun’s harmful UV Rays, it is still necessary to supply additional layering. Apply sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher when traveling. [Protecting yourself from the sun](#) isn’t just for tropical beaches—you can get sunburn even if it’s cloudy or cold. You are at the highest risk for UV exposure when you are traveling during summer months, near the equator, at high altitudes, or between 10 am to 4 pm.

Stay safe during water activities. If your summer travels include water activities, be careful when [swimming](#), [boating](#), or [diving](#), especially in countries where emergency services may not be quickly available. Avoid swimming in freshwater lakes and rivers. Infections such as [schistosomiasis](#) and [leptospirosis](#) are spread by contact with fresh water.

Avoid bug bites. Use [insect repellent](#) and take other steps to avoid bug bites. Bugs, including mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, and flies, can spread diseases such as malaria, yellow fever, Zika, dengue, chikungunya, and Lyme. These bugs are typically more active during warm weather.

Post-Trip. If you traveled and feel sick, particularly if you have a fever, talk to a healthcare provider and tell them about your travel.

References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (gov.) www.cdc.gov/summer-travel

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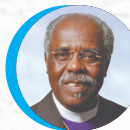
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So You Have Graduated, Now What?

Life After College Graduation With No Job

Submitted by Angel Eason
Lifestyle Editor, The Star of Zion
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College graduations are happening during this time of year. As a student, you have taken your general education courses, made it through statistics, and built long-lasting friendships. You have walked across the stage and now you are waiting for your physical diploma to arrive in the mail. Everyone including your aunts and friends are asking you what is next but you are unsure. This article is for you.

I had the opportunity to speak to Danielle Rowell, a virtual career coach, about navigating life after graduation with no job.

What is your first piece of advice for someone in this situation?

When I think about this question, I think about myself. I graduated college about 10 years ago and I was in the same predicament. I didn't have a job lined up. I was working odd jobs so that I could have money coming in. I wasn't sure what I really wanted to do but never gave up hope that I would find something that would put me on the right track. I honestly just started applying for jobs that fit my current skill set or something that seemed remotely interesting.

To the job seeker:

Sit down, think about what you might be interested in, and apply for different jobs. The important thing is to get your foot in your door. Once you are in the door, there are so many different avenues you can pursue within a particular career. Most jobs have human resources, finance, policy, and security departments. Put a plan together, put your resume out there, and get your foot in the door. After you get the job, figure out what you want to do.

What is the best way to put a plan together?

I work with many of my clients to develop their 3-5 year career roadmap. The purpose of this career roadmap is to have an idea of your dream job and/or position and then work backward to achieve it. So the plan should highlight where you are currently, your position/job at

years 3 and 5, and then what skills, knowledge, and abilities (KSAs) you need to achieve to move from your current reality to year 3 and then year 5. Now this doesn't mean at year 5 you've reached your ultimate career goal, you may have to develop another plan 3-5 years later, but the important thing is, you now have an action plan to move you one step closer to your goal.

Would you recommend a recent grad to take on a job not within their career field?

It depends on the individual. Some people will get their foot in the door and they know what their end goal is. Others, if they start in the wrong job/position, may take them down a rabbit hole and they can get stuck. If you are going to take a job outside of your career field, make sure you understand you are doing this to get from A to B. So that it does not send you down a path that is hard to come back from. Sometimes our first perception of things is our last perception. We don't want recent grads to go down a negative road because they hopped into something and it didn't work out.

How do you suggest a recent grad utilize their network? For example, faculty & staff, peers, etc.

Building your network is important. A lot of people overlook this. This is something I also work with my clients to understand to help them get to the next level. The same is true for students and recent grads, you have to build authentic relationships.

It is important to have career conversations with your professors, parents, friends, faculty, church family, etc., so they know and understand your aspirations and will keep you in mind if a job opportunity becomes available. You never know, that person may run into someone who may be looking for someone with your skills.

What free career resources are available for recent grads?

Start with the college and/or university you attend. Many schools have an entire office and/or online library dedicated to career development and free resources. Many schools also offer great internship programs as well. But when in doubt, Google! You can find lots of free career resources on the internet, whether it is from reputable sites like the Harvard Business Review, career coaches such as myself, or even government websites. Also, don't forget to check out the resources right within your local church.

What last piece of advice would you give?

Take a deep breath. It's going to be okay, you aren't the first and you will not be the last. I'm very faith-oriented. Being in this situation when I graduated, I remember just praying. I was home, with no job, and applying for jobs. I prayed hard. No lie, I got a phone call the next day from the pastor at my church asking for my resume. After that, I've never looked back. Believe in yourself and keep the faith; know that when you go to Him in prayer, He will hear you. He is a rewarder to those who diligently seek Him.

Get in contact with Danielle Rowell

Career Performance Coach

The Servant Coach, LLC

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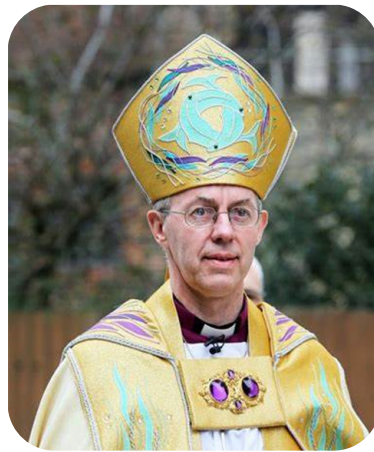
Hail King Charles III of the United Kingdom of Great Britain

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

The coronation of a royal monarch in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and its colonies provided a rare and unique occasion for the British people to party. This royal extravaganza will extend over the whole weekend Saturday, May 6 – Monday, May 8, 2023. This takes place amid a growing and deepening recession in the British Isles. This is due to a combination of factors, including their exit from the European Union and the economic downturn related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Every corner of the British homeland has been flooded with royal memorabilia, city-wide parties, 40 feet screens, and a massive tourism drive. Over 100 heads of state from Africa, Australia, Europe, and North and South America have made their way to the city of London to see the coronation of His Royal Highness King Charles III on Saturday 6 May 2023. Such is the importance of this high-profile event that 11,500 police and 10,000 soldiers will be called upon to create a wall of steel around this ancient city.

Elements of the coronation's pomp and ceremony date back to 1660 during the reign of King Charles II. He expanded Colonial America by adding New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the Carolinas. To the British Empire. Antique coaches drawn by the King's horses will be seen on the Pall Mall, Buckingham Palace, and Trafalgar Square offering the 100,000's of tourists who have made the journey to London a momentous opportunity. Some 550 million British pounds will be added to the tourism coffers each day of these celebrations. So amid the antediluvian rituals associated with the coronation of a British monarch, the nation understands that the Royal Family is worth its weight in gold.



Millions of pints of warm British beer will be consumed in a toast to the occasion. History will be made when the British people will have the opportunity to join the peers of the realm in swearing an oath of allegiance to the King. All the archbishops, bishops, ladies, and lords of the realm plus some 2,000 specially invited guests will fill the Westminster Abbey for the two hour

event. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Portal Welby, who is the senior bishop and a principal leader of the Church of England, the ceremonial head of the worldwide Anglican Communion, and the bishop of the Diocese of Canterbury will preside over the coronation of King Charles III.

The British monarch has been the supreme head of the Church of England since 1558. The monarch appoints all the senior clergy in England on the advice of the UK prime minister and after a selection process run by the Church of England. The Church of England, as the state church, will give its' blessings to the British King in a nation that is a post-Christian, multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multi-religious nation.

A shot of realism is exemplified by a local school in Tamworth, Staffordshire, England which will celebrate the occasion by holding a special collection for a local food bank. 2,500 food banks seek to address the growing poverty in the nation.

On behalf of the readers, subscribers, and editors of the Star of Zion Media group we wish King Charles III a long reign and pray for the prosperity of the peoples of the United Kingdom. May righteousness, peace, and justice be the distinguishing hallmarks of His Royal Highness's rulership.

Rev. Ronald A. Nathan is the World Politics Editor of the Star of Zion and the senior minister of the Hoggard A. M. E. Zion Church, Jackson, St. Michael, Barbados.

Africa's Space Program

Submitted by Rev. Ronald A. Nathan
World Politics Editor, The Star of Zion
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Twelve millennia ago, Africans were gazing into outer space looking for principles and scientific laws that would be useful to daily life. Today's scientists, archaeologists, and astronomers have concluded that the three pyramids in Giza, Egypt are a perfect reproduction of the 3 stars of Orion's belt.

The African Union (AU), which encompasses nearly the entire African continent, has decided that Egypt will be the site for its' continental African Space Agency. The AU's Outer Space Flagship purpose is to create a well-coordinated and integrated continental program that is responsive to the social, economic, political, and environmental needs of the continent, as well as being globally competitive. It also aims to develop a regulatory framework that supports the African space agenda and ensures that the continent is a responsible and peaceful user of outer space.

Some are skeptical about poorer nations of the world joining the space race but these have mainly been nations who were former colonial powers.

Egypt's Nilesat 101 launched over 40 satellites since the 1990's. Nigeria launched its first satellite in 2003 and recently South Africa's Cape Peninsula University of Technology from Cape Canaveral in January 2022 launched the first totally African-made satellite.

Between 2020 and 2025, African nations will launch over 100 new satellites, with Tunisia, Mauritius, Djibouti, Namibia, and Kenyan identifying major space projects.



What has all this space activity got to do with the lives of millions of African people eking out a living on the African continent? The outer space program focuses on Earth observation, meteorology, satellite communication, satellite navigation, and astronomy. These have a direct impact on improved agricultural productivity and resource management. There is the hope that pressing national concerns—poverty, education, and infrastructure among them—will be addressed in turn. After all, African economies are heavily dependent on agriculture and, as a result, seek to combat the effects of climate change.

Satellites could also connect more Africans to the global network, as just two-fifths of the continent currently have Internet access. This could have a knock-on effect on bolstering access to education, employment, basic services, and more.

Livingstone College names Queen Smith Head Women's Basketball Coach

Submitted by Tiana Cephers
Sports Information Director
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April 27, 2023

SALISBURY – Livingstone College President Dr. Anthony J. Davis has named Queen Smith as the new head women's basketball coach.

A native of New Haven, Conn., she was a standout tri-sport athlete competing in volleyball (All-Area), outdoor track (All-State), and basketball (All-State, All-Conference). She was a highly recruited full-scholarship athlete to play basketball at Quinnipiac College in Connecticut. During her career, she was the three-time Northeast Conference-10 Player of the Year, a feat no one else has ever accomplished in league history.

Smith became the 10th player in school history to score 1,000 points and earned an All-Star selection on the Eastern Collegiate Athletic Conference All-Star Team. She ended her career in the top 10 of all time in school history in scoring and top five all-time in assists (476) and steals (394). While remaining in the top 20 all-time in scoring, she still holds those rankings.

Smith is a five-time Hall of Famer including at Quinnipiac University, the Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame, and the Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame chosen for the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference.

She graduated in 1996 with dual bachelor's degrees in sociology, health, and science studies.

When asked what sparked her drive, Smith said, "Let your work do the talking on the floor," and "You can win, but you'll never outwork me."

Smith brought her unyielding work ethic forward to her scholastic, athletic, and mentoring endeavors. After college, she returned to her home city as a career specialist for the New Haven Board of Education. Concurrently, she was a head coach for women's volleyball, head coach for basketball, and assistant outdoor track coach for Wilbur Cross High School, where she was named Coach of the Year by two separate organizations.

She also ran the grant-funded National Youth Sports Program at Yale University, supervising all operations and project management aspects.



She was the activity director for nearly 10 years until tapped to be the assistant coach for the Yale Women's Basketball Team. Her ability to attract basketball recruits, strategize and elevate the development of the backcourt guard play allowed Yale its first post-season invitation to the NIT.

Through her sustained passion and off-court skills in community leadership, Smith was called to be the community outreach coordinator for Yale women's basketball and co-chaired the heralded Yale-New Haven Hospital/Smilow Center Pink Zone fundraising campaign. Bringing her players to work in various aspects, she raised both the city's awareness of Yale Athletics and student-athletes' sense of public duty. She has earned a State of Connecticut General Assembly Official Citation, a Secretary of State Public Service Award, a Partners in Education Award, and an Elm Ivy Award for all her work.

Smith moved to North Carolina in 2011 and lives with her husband, Dr. David Smith Sr., and their four children. Prior to Livingstone, she worked at the prestigious Governor's School located at South Pointe High School in Rock Hill, SC, where she facilitated the Accelerate Program for exceptional STEAM students. True to her creed of using athletics to cultivate exceptional character and citizenship, she continued to volunteer as a coach in recreation leagues and served as an assistant coach for two local high schools.

Over the years, she has enjoyed helping scores of students across a spectrum of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds realize their full aptitude. Her coaching technique stems from building self-value, dignity, integrity, and collective duty. It was this mantra that helped her turn around one team's 0-19 record to a 20-0 regular season win within five years.

"Queen Smith brings a breadth of experience in coaching at multiple levels and a demonstrated record of accomplishment for fostering the personal development of the student-athlete," said Davis. "Livingstone College is fortunate to have attracted a coach of her caliber to Blue Bear Nation. We are excited for her to cultivate passion, pride, and purpose in our women's basketball program."

"I expect that consistency, honesty, and accountability to self, the team, and the larger community will be the backbone of the Blue Bear brand profile," Smith said. "As such, we've already won the game."

CHRISTIAN COMEDY CORNER

"Failing Preacher"

Submitted by The Star of Zion

(Woman in Congregation speaking to other members walking in)

Woman #1: I wonder who will be the preacher giving the word of God today?

Woman #2: Dec. Cunningham, you know Vanessa's youngest boy!

Woman #1: Ooohhh Hallelujah!! Praise God! It's SO wonderful to see that boy come back from the seminary school where he learned more about the lord and his word!

Woman #2: Yes Lord, he's faired way better than her other two sons in education so I can't wait to be lifted and inspired by his young mind!

#Woman #1: Here he comes to the podium sister get ready!!

(Deacon Cunningham walks to the podium)

Deac Cunningham: God is good (Points mic to congregation)and All the time.... (Points mic again)

Loved ones we are GATHER here today to join your heart and God's word in holy matrimony!! I have a message about God's power!

You know, when Jonah ran from God he was eaten by a shark but the shark drank some of the water that Jesus turned into wine and threw him up!! He then landed hard in the water which made the water splash up and get stuck in the air so the people of Israel could escape from Goliath's fiery furnace. Then when Moses came back from the Garden and saw the Prodigal Son returning he told him to let God's people go and THAT loved ones is how God's people ate for 40 days and 40 nights after Pharaoh's army bowed down to the golden image!!!

Woman #1 and Woman #2: What in the world just happened?

Woman #3: I was trying to tell y'all that my husband said the boy failed the seminary school, but y'all were so happy I just had to let you find out the hard way!!



A Champion of Faith

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

May 15, 2023

Faith plays a prominent role in the realm of sports, serving as a guiding force and a constant source of inspiration for athletes throughout their careers. For many sports professionals, their religious beliefs serve as the foundation of their lives, influencing their behaviors both within and outside the athletic arena. While it may be uncommon to hear athletes openly discussing their Christian faith during live TV interviews, the sports community undoubtedly harbors devoted followers of Christ.

Simone Biles, a true Child of God, exemplifies the rare breed of athletes who openly display their devotion. With an astounding collection of 32 Olympic and World Championship medals combined, including 19 Olympic medals (4 gold, 6 silver, and 9 bronze), one cannot help but wonder what fuels such exceptional accomplishments. Simone Biles, guided by an unshakable faith in Christ, sets herself apart as a shining example to the world.

In 2021, during the Tokyo Olympics, Simone Biles made the difficult decision to withdraw. In an interview published by Christian Parenting, she revealed that her “demons” — doubts, fears, insecurities, and the immense pressure of competition — had become overwhelming. This resonates with anyone who has experienced the weight of life’s challenges. At the pinnacle of her career, when she could have shattered more records and added to her already impressive medal count, life simply became too much for her. She took the time to find



herself and in doing so connected closer to God in her journey.

What struck me about Simone and her honesty is the truth she shared. All too often, athletes and people of faith try to hide their inner pain and keep pushing forward. They mask their struggles, denying themselves the time and space to heal and reflect.

Simone Biles’ life has been a journey of triumph over adversity. At an early age, she entered the foster care system with her sister due to her parents’ battles with alcoholism and drug addiction. After several years, her grandfather and his wife Ronnie and Nellie Biles adopted her, and it was in those formative years, she discovered her love for gymnastics.

Across various platforms, Simone Biles openly professes her love for Christ. She understands the importance of sharing her faith with kids and the role it plays in navigating life’s challenges. Faith is believing in what you can’t see. Simone’s unwavering faith in Christ has been the foundation of her career and the reason why her accomplishments resonate with so many.

In a revealing insight, Simone Biles’ mother, Nellie, shared, “I am a very prayerful person, so I encourage my children to do the same thing too – to pray. I know it doesn’t matter what situation you are ever in, you just put it in the hands of the Lord, and he’s going to walk you through it.” This profound influence from her mother helps explain the roots of Simone’s faith and profound love for God, which have shaped her remarkable journey in sports.



FINANCIAL FREEDOM

Cast Your Vote For Financial Freedom

Submitted By Dana G. Stille
Financial Freedom Editor, The Star of Zion
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For a very long time I placed the major responsibility of achieving and maintaining financial freedom on my spouse and me. After all, as adults, we determine if job opportunities and additional streams of income meet our financial needs while also allowing us to maintain the quality of life that we desire. Directly related to this is the budgeting process – sometimes formal, sometimes not – but either way the budget creates a roadmap for us to stay within our financial limits even when unexpected expenses threaten to disrupt the achievement of our goals. When all goes well there may be excess funds available to save or invest as we continue to work toward financial freedom.

The onslaught of media coverage centered on whether or not the nation’s debt ceiling will be raised before disaster strikes has since morphed my thinking, and I now realize that despite the best efforts of my spouse and myself, our financial freedom is directly correlated to the decisions made our congressional leadership. Since 2001, the expenses of the US govern-

✓ VOTE
For
Financial Freedom

ment have been higher than the income received from taxes and other revenue. To close this gap and pay debts that Congress has already authorized, the US has had to borrow money. The debt ceiling, also known as the debt limit, is the maximum amount of debt that the US government can incur. Increases to the debt ceiling require congressional action.

The ramifications of Congress not agreeing to a debt ceiling increase would likely be felt around the globe. If the US cannot pay their debts citizens could expect a plunging stock market, massive layoffs, tightening in credit markets, and more recessionary pressure. There may be a delay in Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, and veterans’ assistance payments. A heavy decline in the stock market erodes retirement funds and investment accounts. Financial freedom is further delayed or in worst-case scenarios may no longer be feasible during one’s lifetime.

As you build your plan to achieve financial freedom, I encourage you to begin to think broadly, as I have. Yes, we must do our part to earn money, spend wisely, save, and invest. We must also do our part and cast our votes for those that we believe will work hard to safeguard our finances, our freedom, and our future.

The Whole Gospel Message: The Danger In Presenting It In Part.

Submitted by Rev. Deborah Johns
Texas Conference

When I was young, I was taught to tell others the need to “give their life to Christ” or to come to church so they could learn about salvation and be saved. Somehow, I believed that attending church and being saved were synonymous. If you attend church, I thought you were guaranteed to go to heaven when your time came. However, as I began to study to show myself approved (2 Timothy 2:15) and as I prepared to do the work of the evangelist (2 Timothy 4:5), I began to understand that I had many things wrong.

I realized that I only understood part of the gospel message. The part I knew came out of Romans 10:9-10 which says, “If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved, for with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation.” I believed that was all that was needed to confess and believe in Jesus. I also believed that if I could lead a person to pray this way, I thought my job was done.

It would be later, that I realized something was wrong. Many people who said they were Christians did not act like Christians. In fact, very little changed in their lives besides attending church, if they attended at all. At home, they still lived worldly lives. Even I had struggles trying to live the way I felt a Christian should. I did well for a while but would fall for the same temptations.

But as I studied what Jesus did and combined it with what Paul taught, I realized the gospel message had some necessary components that if missed, we remain in bondage to sin. Sin is the very reason Jesus came because the wages of sin is death and Jesus came to save (Romans 6:23).

So, what are the necessary parts of the gospel to overcome sin? The first was the need to confess our sins and repent. A general forgive me of all sins is not a real confession. We must name them one by one. And repent of them one by one to cover them in the blood of Jesus (1 John 1:9). Any unconfessed and un-repented sins will prevent us from prospering (Proverb 28:13). In the spirit realm, it gives the enemy permission to legally come against us. For example, if I ever told a lie, we must confess and repent of being a liar. This is how we acknowledge that we know and practice God’s laws.

In addition, we must confess and repent of any religious beliefs or practices before Jesus and confess Jesus as our savior and Lord. That would include, reading horoscopes, ancestor worship, tarot card reading, palm reading, any non-Christian religions or other practices that originate from other religions including belief in yourself to save yourself, yoga, karate, mindful meditation, etc. Why? Because you cannot separate religious practices from the religion they came from. Since Biblical Christianity is the only true way, all other ways come from the enemy.

As a part of our confessing our sins and confessing Jesus as our savior, we are to get water Baptized as the outward sign to the world of our cleansing and rebirth into a new life where Jesus reigns. Confession and baptism go hand in hand as John the Baptist taught and as Jesus and his disciples taught (Mark 1:4, John 3:22-23). It is also the first step in obeying Jesus as Lord.

Water baptism is a necessary step included in the gospel message which is why Jesus told Nicodemus that we must be born again of water and the Spirit (John 3:3-5). After water baptism, we are to pursue the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5).

By accepting Jesus as Lord (repentance and confessing and believing Jesus as Savior), we are given the right to become sons and daughters of God (John 1:12). But to accomplish that, we must submit our bodies as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). And that can only be achieved by renewing our minds with the word of

God (Romans 12:2) and we must learn how to “refute arguments *and* theories *and* reasonings and every proud *and* lofty thing that sets itself up against the [true] knowledge of God; and we lead every thought *and* purpose away captive into the obedience of Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One)” (2 Corinthians 10:5-AMPC).

Without renewing our minds, it is impossible to submit our bodies to God. Without submitting our bodies to God, we live in defeat of sin. If we live in sin, the wages of sin is death (Romans 6: 15-23).

So, the question is, why is it dangerous to present only part of the gospel? Because although salvation is free and it was by grace, there is a cost to follow Christ. We must give ourselves away completely to God to be used by God. The reward is great. It is eternal life with Christ. It is also the freedom we have when we overcome the world and sin. Why? Because God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only son so that we could have a chance to overcome sin and the world and be his children. His children obey his commandments and do the work of the evangelist because God desires that none should perish and he gave us the assignment to “go and make disciples Matthew 28:18-20, 2 Timothy 4:5.”

Therefore, it is not enough to confess Jesus as Savior if we are unwilling to make him Lord over our life. It is not enough to confess our sins if we plan to continue living in sin. It is good to get saved, but if we choose not to renew our minds and submit our bodies as a living sacrifice, we will never go and do the work of God’s children to make disciples. If we fail to go, however, God chooses to send us, we have not obeyed our savior. If we do not obey our savior, then is he really our Lord? (Luke 6:46, Matthew 7:22-23)



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Official Statement

from the Board of Bishops
of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
Upon the Death of Harry Belafonte

The Board of Bishops of The A.M.E. Zion Church join with the global voices lamenting the death and celebrating the life of Harry Belafonte, a human rights, social justice, and entertainment icon who used his platform to lift others, confront racism, and advance the causes of freedom and equality.

Harry Belafonte's courage, commitment, compassion, and charisma combined to make him one of the most consequential celebrity activists during the Civil Rights era and beyond. Without seeking attention, he raised money for the Montgomery Bus Boycott, provided financial support for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., his movement, and even the King family.

Belafonte generously funded organizations like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and the 1963 March on Washington.

Beyond the Civil Rights Movement, he mobilized political and cultural leaders, along with celebrities toward activism to support the South African Anti-Apartheid Movement and USA for Africa. In recent years, Belafonte has used his celebrity status and voice to urge Americans, including young blacks and latinos to exercise their right to vote.

Harry Belafonte once noted that Paul Robeson was a mentor of his who gave him a backbone and that Rev. Martin Luther King was a mentor who nurtured his soul. As the Freedom Church, we pause to reflect on the legacy of Harry Belafonte as a life lived out loud with a melodious harmony of love, justice, and soul.

The Board of Bishops of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

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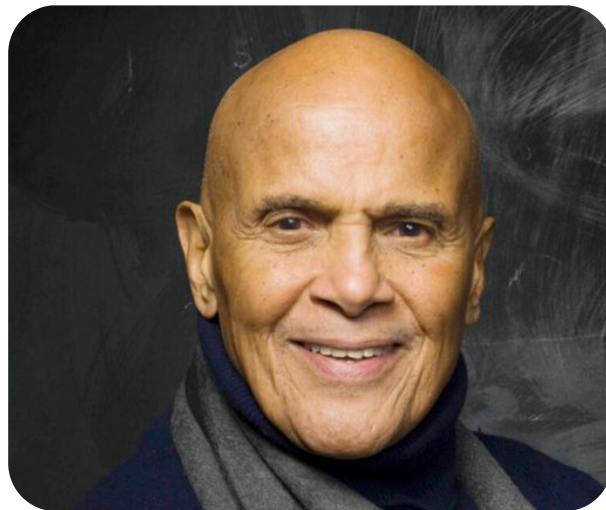
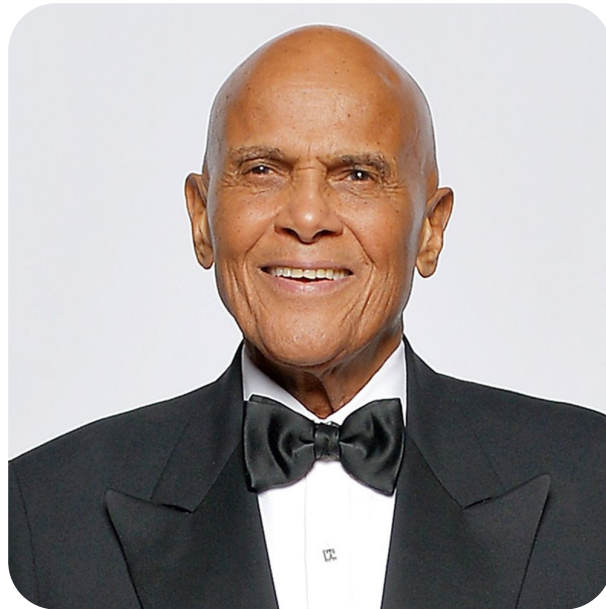
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DONE THIS 25TH DAY OF APRIL, 2023

Remembering Harry Belafonte

March 1, 1927 - April 25, 2023



Frank Taft Johnson

August 21, 1931 - April 21, 2023

Frank Taft Johnson was born on August 21, 1931, in Star City, West Virginia, and died on April 21, 2023, in Cleveland, Ohio. He was the fourth of seven children born to the late Frank and Bessie Scruggs Johnson. Preceding him in death was one daughter, Debrah Johnson, and five siblings: Beatrice Johnson, Kate Adams, Alverta McCoy, Vernon Johnson, and Tyrone Johnson.

Frank accepted Christ at an early age and was raised with strong family values.

Frank received his early childhood education from the public school system in West Virginia and graduated from Dunbar High School. He continued his education at West Virginia State College where he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture.

After College, Frank moved to Cleveland, Ohio where he began a long and productive career with BP Oil Company. He later transferred to Toledo, Ohio where he retired after



30-plus years as a supervisor. He and his wife, LaVerne eventually returned to Cleveland.

His favorite pastime was sitting in his big comfortable recliner chair with the remote in hand watching old TV programs, CNN, and sports, especially his Cleveland Cavaliers.

Frank leaves to cherish his life memory and mourn his passing, His devoted wife, LaVerne Johnson: sons, Kevin (Carolyn) Johnson, Keith (Sandy) Johnson, Mark (Lena) Johnson, Andre (Kolleen) Johnson, Rev. Al C. Hamilton, Jerry Hamilton, and daughter, Tracy Hamilton-Williams; sister, Marion Lockett; fourteen grandchildren, thirty-three great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandson. (ALL the Grands so lovingly called him "Grampa Bear"). As well as a host of beloved nieces, nephews, and other family and friends.

THE BOARD OF BISHOPS OF AME ZION CHURCH PRESENTS

JULY
21
FRIDAY
2023
9:30AM

Faith

THE 2023



PRACTICE

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