



THE CONNECTION

RHANDI M. STITH, EDITOR

“MAXIMIZING OUR MISSION BY MANAGING OUR MINISTRY:
THROUGH EMPOWERMENT”

Connectional Lay Council President Yvonne Tracey Journeys to Nigeria, Speaks at Hood-Speaks Theological Seminary 9th Convocation and Receives Honorary Doctorate



Students Making a Difference

There is a shattering of heart felt pride whenever you call the names of Bishop James Walker Hood and Bishop Ruben L. Speaks around the hallowed halls of Zion.

Such is the feeling today as we raise high the banner of the Hood-Speaks Theological Seminary in memory of two of Zion's peerless visionary educators and servant-leaders on this uniquely special day in the life of this institution of higher education; the special convocation for matriculation and the Awarding of Honorary Degrees.

Bishop Hood was a clergyman, educator and bishop. One of Hood's contributions as bishop was to help establish and guide Zion Wesley Institute (later Livingstone College) in Salisbury, N.C. He presided over its board of trustees for over thirty years, educated six of his children there, and donated a good portion of his annual salary to keep it open.

Bishop Speaks was elected the 76th Bishop and served eight years on the mission fields of Liberia, Ghana, and Nigeria. He served as a professor of Systematic Theology at Hood Theological Seminary Livingstone College, Salisbury, NC.

Onward with my task of the hour. Congratulations to the matriculating students, 2012 graduates and honorees who are standing on this celebratory academic mountain top experience. You have completed many academic rigors in and out of the classroom. Many of you have leaped over Old and New Testament Exegesis, some have hurled through Christology, while some have balanced Christian Ethics and others have leaped through over 2000 years of Church History and challenged the thoughts of theologian like that of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

I see, I see, I see.. your wanting eyes on the prize ...“sheep skins” that represent the evidence of your academic accomplishments. You are working toward earning the diplomas and soon you will have them in your possession to show with pride to family and friends.

Now what matriculating students and near future graduates? Oh, no, you can't stay here! You can't remain in this frame of mind. Oh, no! You must travel down from this euphoric mountain to the valley of wants and despair... the classroom, congregations, pupils, ministries are waiting for you.

Your continuing education must be a shared experience; you have a responsibility to pour into others what God enabled the Holy Spirit to pour into you.

God is holding you accountable to the mandate to multiply and re-produce your selves as scholars of the faith.

The mandate Jesus gave also applies to you in all your future endeavors “go ye into all the world and make disciples”.

Go forth in the spirit of Easter...for such a time as this,
Go Forth and be like Daniel in the lions den of economic despair...keep hope alive,
Go Forth and be like Sampson and push down the pillars of inequality,
Go Forth and be like Nehemiah who would not come down until the work was done,
Go forth and be like Joshua who took on the mantel of Moses,
Go forth like David and eradicate the Goliaths who intimidate and degrade the human spirit.
Go forth like Jesus Christ and just love everybody.

As Bishop Speaks said in his message The Challenge of the Sunrise...

“The God we serve controls human destiny.

He is the God that stepped out from nowhere and stood on nothing and called the world into being.

He reached into the immensities of His own omnipotence, caught the sun as it traveled from oblivion to oblivion and set it a blazing in the heavens....

He hung the moon as a chandelier in the halls of heaven...
He adorned the solar system with multitudes of twinkling stars and
He feeds the hungry sparrows”

The poet meditating upon God's watchful care... when discouragement tries to overshadow our willing spirit... burst forth into singing...

“Why should I feel discouraged, Why should the shadows fall
Why should my heart be lonely and sigh for heaven and home
When Jesus is my comfort, my constant friend is He
His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches me.
I sing because I'm Happy,,,I sing because I'm free
For His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches me.”

Go forth students and soon to be graduates...Go forth and take Jesus with you ...Jesus said...Low I am with you always even until the end of the earth.

Rise up students and soon to be graduates and in the name of Jesus commit yourself to making a difference....accept the challenges waiting for you in the valley. Amen.

Note: The above message was delivered by Dr. Yvonne A. Tracey at the Hood-Speaks Theological Seminary's 9th Special Convocation for Matriculation and Conferment of Honorary Doctorate Degrees, Ndon Ebom, Nigeria on March 17, 2012

9TH QUADRENNIAL LAY CONVOCATION HIGHLIGHTS

Episcopal Candidates' Forum Participants



Reverend Dr. Derrick R. Anderson



Reverend Dr. David R. Baker



Reverend Dwight Bernard Cannon



Reverend Dr. George D. Crenshaw



Reverend Dr. Michael Angelo Frencher, Sr.



Reverend Dr. M. Luther Hill



Reverend Dr. Kenneth Q. James



Reverend Dr. Terry L. Jones, Sr.



Reverend Dr. Seth O. Lartey



Reverend Barbara LaToison



Reverend Dr. Douglas Maven



Reverend Dr. Eleazar Merriweather



Reverend Dr. W. Darin Moore



Reverend Dr. Felix Kwabena Ofosu



Reverend Dr. A. A. Parsons, Sr.



Reverend Dr. Staccato Powell



Reverend Dr. Audie V. Simon I



Reverend Anthony Witherspoon

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General Officer Candidates' Forum Participants

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Reverend Robert E. Linder



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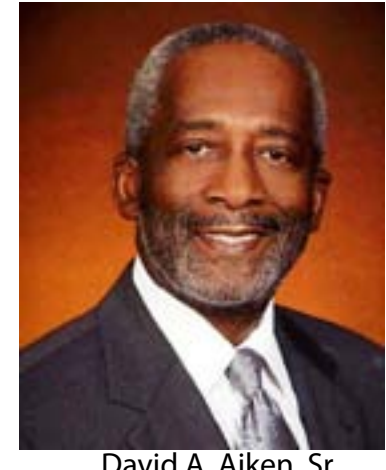


Reverend Dr. Bernard H. Sullivan, Jr. - INCUMBENT



Alista Cozzie Watkins

CANDIDATES FOR SECRETARY-TREASURER, BROTHERHOOD PENSION AND MINISTERIAL RELIEF



David A. Aiken, Sr.



Reverend Darrell J. Williams

9TH QUADRENNIAL LAY CONVOCATION HIGHLIGHTS

The committee in charge of the questions for the candidates forum asked all candidates three questions: 1. As it relates to the office that you are seeking, what do you believe is the greatest challenge? 2. What is your vision to address this challenge? 3. How will you inspire others with your vision and transfer it to them? Below are their responses

Dr. Derrick R. Anderson

Candidate for the Episcopacy

As it relates to the office of Bishop, I believe our greatest challenge is the growth and productivity of our beloved Zion. The vision that the Lord has given me to address this challenge is to invest in the leadership, discipleship, and stewardship of the local Church. I will work to insure that all leaders both clergy and lay are thoroughly trained to perform the duties of their office, and receive the resources and support they need to be productive. I will work to get churches to focus on ministries that evangelize the lost, meet needs, and make disciples. And I will offer responsible leadership that insists on transparency and accountability in the financial affairs and the business of the Church on all levels.

I propose to inspire others with this vision by seeking the input and involvement of all segments of the church in the planning and implementation process, and utilizing the gifts, abilities, and expertise of our laity and clergy.

The vision is transferred to the people as they take ownership of the vision having been given the opportunity of input and involvement.

Dwight B. Cannon

Candidate for the Episcopacy

As an episcopate, I feel that my greatest challenge would be the same challenge that the entire A.M.E. Zion Church denomination faces as we have entered the 21st century. That challenge is to decide what, who, when, where, why and how we stand today as it relates to our mission enterprise. It seems that mission has become an afterthought for many but there is not a more critical point in time to be attentive to mission's outlook than now. At this General Conference, the Church may be faced with every bishop in Africa having to leave their work. Five bishops have toiled and labored to leave a mission legacy and it is frightening to think that what they have planted might only be watered once or twice each year. Bishop S. Chuka Ekemam has proven that a visible and vibrant episcopate can grow and stabilize our Zion overseas. Bishop Warren Brown has demonstrated that "new societies" in our Zion need attention and they need to know their leaders. Bishop M. Bonnie Hines has verified that, male or female, the mission work wants "spiritually parental" oversight. Bishop Roy A. Holmes has proven that accountability from mission areas demand episcopal presence and involvement in the affairs of the Conference. My Bishop, the Right Reverend Richard K. Thompson, has established that financial resources are significant and central to moving mission beyond mere "handouts" to the poor to a partnering with fellow Zionites in a spirit of "helping hands!"

The issue of the Church's mission should be dealt with in terms of our defining of mission, who will be responsible for doing mission, when will mission be undertaken, where will we focus our mission service, why are we even involved in mission work and how must we do mission in light of the advancements in society?

When elected a bishop in our beloved Zion, I will build upon the lay, clergy and episcopal pioneers who paved the way, since 1876, for our mission accomplishments today. I will keep mission a priority on the agenda of the Church and allow Zion to hear from those targeted and working on behalf of our mission efforts, there will be reports from the fields on what they think and suggest for continuing/discontinuing mission. I will advocate a rethinking of mission in light of Luke 4:18-21 and Isaiah 61:1-2! Our mission definition and essence should be the Mission Dei, the Mission of God! We must do more than bring Churches into

our Connection! We must do as Jesus was anointed to do: preach to the poor, free sinners from the bondage of guilt and corruption, bring light to those in darkness and give sight to the blind. All this should be done without a spirit of proselytizing, whether they join us or not. When we build more ministries and less Church buildings, Zion will secure her foothold on the fields of mission. We will focus on building more hospitals, clinics, schools, homes for families, jobs for the un and underemployed. When this is done we will not need to win people to Zion, we will have won them to Christ. Of course the next question for some is, "Who and how will this be financed?" I contend that we can reap from the resources of the mission areas and utilize what Zion allocates to do what needs to be done, for mission's sake. Everyone on the mission fields is not poor and needy!

Thank you Connectional Lay Council of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church for this opportunity to share a nugget of my Episcopal strategy when elected. Other stratagem that I tend to employ will include the use of technology for Connectional meetings saving thousands of dollars in travel and still allowing for overseas representation; eventual autonomy of overseas work and the obtaining of a dual citizenship as a resident of America and the country to which I am assigned. This response to the Connectional Lay Council's inquiry concerning challenges that might be faced is more than a haphazard retort; it has been a quintessential concern, to me, since being actively involved on the battlefields and trenches of mission. This is evidenced in my thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master Degree in Divinity at Hood Theological Seminary. My thesis is entitled, "Rethinking Mission in Zion Methodism: The Case of South Africa (1968-2010).

George Crenshaw

Candidate for the Episcopacy

1. As it relates to the office that you are seeking, what do you believe is the greatest challenge?

I believe the greatest challenge that any candidate if elected will face is inspiring Zion to believe that our best days are ahead of us, and to believe it with such conviction that the thrust to propel Zion originates at the local level not the connectional level.

2. What is your vision to address this challenge? I will address the challenge of inspiring our Zion to return to her former glory by first of all Demonstrating Integrity. Joyce Meyer was correct when she said, "gifts will take you where character can't keep you." It is clear, the substratum, the corner stone of character is integrity. We will only receive the unconditional support and involvement of clergy and laity when they are assured that integrity will be employed at every level.

Secondly, I will address this challenge by Modeling Accountability. Every action that is taken by leadership at every level must be in the interest of our Zion. Every investment, every appointment, every decision must be a Godly decision with the intent of glorifying God by faithfully employing the resources; both human and financial in the best interest of our Zion.

And, finally I will address this challenge by Displaying Productivity. I will illuminate places where the grace of God expanded the borders of Zion through the ministry He has so graciously given to me. For rural congregations, I will illumine the phenomenal growth in South Carolina. For the suburban congregations, I will highlight the phenomenal growth in Smyrna Georgia. Administratively I will display twenty years as a trustee board member of Clinton Junior College,

fifteen and a half years as a Presiding Elder, and twenty eight years of pastoral experience.

3. How will you inspire others with your vision and transfer it to them.

First of all, I will inspire others by Equipping both clergy and laity. It is the job of the leader to ensure that persons are equipped to perform the tasks assigned to them. That requires that the leader provides inspiration and information.

Secondly, I will inspire others by Empowering them. Once persons have received information and inspiration, they must be granted the freedom and the expectation to complete the assignment they have been given.

The final way in which I will inspire others, is by seeking to Energize them. Persons are energized when their contributions are celebrated. Everyone wants to know that they are appreciated. As we celebrate others we will receive the best they have to give.

Michael Angelo Frencher, Sr.,

Candidate for the Episcopacy

Question: As it relates to the office that you are seeking, what do you believe is the greatest challenge? What is your vision to address this challenge? How will you inspire others with your vision and transfer it to them?

1. What do you believe is the greatest challenge?

I believe that the greatest challenge in the A.M.E. Zion Church is to convince more members that Evangelism is the key to Church growth. The challenge is to help members understand that every member in a real sense is an Evangelist, that is every member is responsible for going out to bring others into the Kingdom of God. This is not just the responsibility of the pastor.

2. What is your vision to address this challenge?

I believe that more teaching and training in evangelism is needed at all levels of our church. There ought to be more teaching and training at the Connectional, Annual Conference, District and local levels. As a Bishop in the A.M.E. Zion Church I would encourage more members to be involved in Evangelism and take advantage of every opportunity to receive the training that has been made available through our Department of Evangelism. I would work with this Department to make sure that resources about evangelism are made available to our churches to assist them in their teaching and training.

3. How will you inspire others with your vision and transfer it to them?

I would share with the churches in my conferences what other churches who have embraced evangelism are doing to grow their churches. I have just come out of the Evangelistic Congress held in Black Mountain, N.C. and was able to hear from some of the pastors who have a great zeal for evangelism and have passed it on to their churches. I would invite these individuals to share with my Conferences what they are doing, and how it would greatly benefit our connection if others were doing some of the same things. When people are able to see and hear what others are doing in evangelism it may inspire them to do more for evangelism.

Kenneth Q. James

Candidate for the Episcopacy

I am seeking the office of bishop in the AME Zion Church because I truly feel called to this task. In seeking this office, I recognize that there are and continue to be many challenges that face the church of Jesus Christ. The first, and perhaps

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greatest of these challenges is that of leading. Does that sound simple? It is not. Leading is not simple because first of all, people do not need to be led if they are not going anywhere. If all we desire is to do what we have already done, no leader people in a direction that sometimes they may or leadership is required. Therefore, the task of a leader is to cast vision clearly as well as to lead not want to go. However, the leader must see further than those he/she is leading and know that this is the way we must travel. The endeavor of the church is moving always in the direction of the Kingdom of God as the Lord directs. Keeping people focused on that ideal is always a challenge because so many distractions constantly present themselves. My vision for the church is best expressed in Ephesians 4:11-13: "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ." I deeply believe that God gives gifts to the church to assist God's people to accomplish the will of God, and my deepest, heartfelt desire is to use my gifts of pastor/teacher and leader to the glory of God, as well as to help and guide others in knowing and using their gifts to the same end.

The vision I have for the church is in itself a challenge because the issues and questions that face the church are ever changing. If simple answers are sought to the complex dilemmas we face, we are likely to end up going around in circles. We must seek more than leadership that offers innovation. Innovations, says Edwin Friedman, "are new answers to old questions." Instead, the church must seek people as leaders who will lead in a paradigm shift, because "paradigm shifts reframe the questions, change the information that is important, and generally eliminate previous dichotomies" (Edwin H. Friedman, A Failure of Nerve, p. 37).

My position regarding this vision and the leadership which the church craves and is calling for is a topic I wrote about in my book The First Yes: Rediscovering the Integrity of the Call to Preach. I believe that the church needs now more than ever leaders who will serve as both priest and prophet. The priests are "the repositories as well as the dispensers of the church's traditions. To carry on the traditions of the church is a high honor and a great privilege" (Kenneth Q. James, The First Yes: Rediscovering the Integrity of the Call to Preach, p. 189-190). At the same time, however, the leader most valuable to the church of God is equally and simultaneously a priest as well as a prophet, because "when God wants to lead the people to new places and new terrain in their journey toward the kingdom, the prophet's voice is called for" (James, The First Yes, p. 206). There is a significant cost to be paid for the lack of leadership. Once people understand the high price to be paid for misdirected, unfocused leadership, they usually want no part of it.

I believe that through the gift of teaching and leadership as a pastor and shepherd in the Lord's church which the Holy Spirit has graciously given to me that I will be able to share the vision I have for the people of God - "A More Excellent Way" - as we move towards the accomplishing of God's will, empowered by God's grace to "serve this present age."

Seth Lartey

Candidate for the Episcopacy

Question: As it relates to the office that you are seeking, what do you believe is the greatest challenge? What is your vision to address this challenge? How will you inspire others with your vision and transfer it to them?

Response:

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is a great denomination with a very rich heritage, which is consistent with Biblical foundations.

The greatest challenge for me as I seek the office of Bishop is to mobilize the Episcopal area, that I am to serve to return to the unwavering commitment of the purposes of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church; that is; to advance the church of Jesus Christ, safeguard the heritage, maintain Christian fellowship, edify believers, convert the world, transform society and perfect our unity and structure.

It is my vision to overcome this challenge through an effective Episcopal administration that emphasizes Discipleship, Evangelism, Christian Education, Christian Economic Stewardship and Missions. In order to get the Episcopal Area to embrace the vision, I will employ the means of "fasting", "prayer", "leadership training", "strategic planning", "lay empowerment" and "involvement and economic empowerment".

Barbara LaToison

Candidate for the Episcopacy

As it relates to the office that you are seeking, what do you believe is the greatest challenge? What is your vision to address this challenge? How will you inspire others with your vision and transfer it to them?

The greatest challenge I believe a Bishop faces is the relevance of the Church to society. "To serve this present age", is an issue of relevance that the church has to face for the twenty first century. As we face the twenty first century and seek to be relevant there are two demographic realities that the church and its leadership must face head on. The first is the generational shift. Research shows that by 2016 the largest age group population will be the millennials, those persons 17-39 years of age. At every meeting I attend, I hear the questions "Where are the Young Adults, and how can we attract them and keep them. The Second is reverse migration, the US Census reports that African Americans are now leaving the north and the east and are migrating back to the south and the west. These areas are the places where the AME Zion Church has placed the least amount of emphasis. At the CLC when this information was shared people sitting around me said "but they are not coming to our church".

My question to the above response is WHY? My vision to address this challenge is to "Launch Innovation, Lead Transformation, and Leverage Expansion to serve this present age. There are technological resources available that will allow us to launch innovative ways to re-attract, reattach, and retain both the millennial and those in the reverse migration. First we must stem the exodus from our churches of those who are Zion by birth. Secondly, we have to become competitive and move from our screening and selection process that is based on race, class and social economic status. Thirdly, we will need to strive to reach all. People now are both digital and relational we will need to connect with them digitally, that mean we will need to have websites, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, blogs and other forms of social media. Once we connect we will have to be relevant and relational, utilizing technology and audio visual media, as well as making sure that we have a warm welcoming spirit that says you are welcome not only to sit in the pew, but to sit at the table.

We need transformation that will attract the Millennials, bolster the Boomers, and care for the Builders. Our worship, witness, work, and word must be transformative enough that it reaches this multi generational audience. Transformation is a change process that is initiated as new information is received and assimilated. Therefore we must use modern media as a transformative tool that will 1) invite the unchurched, 2) initiate the Gospel to a visual culture, and 3) impart to people via the modes of communication they use daily.

Finally Expansion has to be a major component if we are to "serve this present age". Not only do we need to expansion to plant churches that will aggressively attract those in the process of reverse

migration, we also need, aggressive church planting both physical and virtual that will reach the millennials. New church plant are able to achieve this because statistics show that a church 20 years old or older adds only one new convert for every eighty-five members this is a 85 to 1 ratio. However, a new church plant brings in one new convert for every two persons a 2 to 1 ratio. Even as we look to plant new churches and expand our borders, our expansion and church planting will need some innovation. We may need to plant churches in coffee houses, warehouses, homes and possibly movie theaters.

The solutions above can only come to fruition if we have and pursue the vision for it. Vision inspires and is transferred when one person sees specifically, communicates clearly, pursues passionately, and shares shamelessly. I see very specifically not only the challenges and threats, but the opportunities they provide for our Zion. I have and will continue to communicate clearly the great opportunities that we face. I am passionate about Innovation, Transformation, and Expansion and I will continue to pursue it with passion. I am shameless in my sharing of the possibilities that are before us as we seek to serve the 21st Century.

Douglas Maven

Candidate for the Episcopacy

As it relates to the office that you are seeking, what do you believe is the greatest challenge? What is your vision to address this challenge? How will you inspire others with your vision and transfer it to them?

One the greatest challenges include the low morale at the local church level. As I travel our beloved Zion, many local congregations are struggling with the lost of membership, finding it more difficult to meet its financial obligations and desire greater denominational support.

My vision includes re-evaluating the strengths of the local church in the Episcopal area and providing an equitable redistribution of Connectional Claims. In addition, I would encourage pastors and congregations to engage in joint fund-raising to supplement their local collection of tithes and offerings. I would insure that Conference and District Directors of the various ministries, i.e., Christian Education, Lay Council, Evangelism, in consultation with the pastor, advise, assist and provide training at the local congregations in their respective Districts. Providing support at the local church will assist in addressing the unique and specific needs of that local congregation in their ministry context.

Nothing inspires others like success. Presiding Elders, Conference and District officers, Pastors and lay leaders will share models of success and challenges. I would maximize the use of technology for collaboration, planning and the sharing of information between Presiding Elders, Conference and District Officers, Pastors and local church Lay ministry Leaders.

I believe the morale of our constituency can be enhanced by improving our sense of connectionalism through collaboration, mutual sharing and support.

Rev. Dr. Felix K. Ofosu Candidate for Bishop 2012

I am seeking the office of Bishop in our great church. There are many challenges confronting this office but to me the greatest at the moment is how to shift our focus from money to that of winning souls and taking care of the flock of Jesus.

At the moment we run a budget of less than Nine Million Dollars. Looking at our responsibilities, the allocation we make for certain items on the budget and what is completely left out it is evident that this is not enough. Yet many churches are complaining about the amount of General Claims apportioned to them. The point is this, if just One Hundred Thousand Dollars is allocated

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to legal fees while the numerous legal problems that come our way will cost us nothing less than one Million Dollars, we are not running a realistic budget. Again there is seriously no pension for our preachers and no money to handle the minimum salary of preachers if that idea is to be practiced.

It is the responsibility of every bishop to make sure every conference and the entire Episcopal District pay their assessment in full. The bishop is therefore right to press churches and pastors for their general claims. This creates a tendency of focusing our attention on money and collecting of money in our church.

My vision to address this challenge is to make the church a tithing church. Tithing is not to be practiced only at the local church level but all levels, thus from the local church to the district, the conference, the Episcopal District and the Connectional level. We may study how some churches that are tithing churches go about their programs and adopt what we think will be good for our denomination.

The doctrine of Stewardship under which tithing falls if properly taught and understood put no compulsion on any one or any group of people. Your tithe is based on how God prospers you. The giving is done voluntary, with honesty and love. What is brought in to the storehouse, which is the church, is what is used to finance the church. Apart from doing the will of God and pleasing God the person who tithes lives under open heaven and receives abundant blessings from God. Tithing is Biblical and God's own way of taking care of His Church financially.

I believe in tithing, I will therefore encourage and inspire all who have the vision of tithing. I will inspire them and transfer my vision to them through teaching and witnessing about how tithing has been used to solve some financial problems of many churches and that of individuals. I will testify about my own experience and that of the church I ministered as a pastor for thirteen years.

When enough money is coming into the church to handle our financial needs, our bishops will no more get worried about how to solve financial problems they can therefore focus their full attention on winning souls for Jesus and taking care of His flock.

A.A. Parsons

Candidate for the Episcopacy

As it relates to the office you are seeking, what do you believe is the greatest challenge?

I believe the greatest challenge for the A.M.E. Zion Church is the need for restoration and revival. The present plight of the church can be summarized in the words of John Wesley prior to his death,

"I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And undoubtedly this will be the case unless they should hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they set out." (John Wesley 1786, Age 83)

What Wesley feared has come upon us, the people called Zion Methodists. There is an urgency to return to the founding principles and traditions of Methodism rooted and grounded in the Word of God. The doctrine, discipline, and spirit that Wesley spoke of led to the Wesleyan Revival, which lasted nearly fifty years. It was a revival of theology as well as a revival of life and it fulfilled the mission that Christ gave the church.

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ) is in a similar state as ancient Israel. We have dishonored God who has honored us for over two hundred and sixteen years. We have lost focus of our vision and mission in the world. We have allowed ourselves to become the very antithesis of our purpose and mission given by God

to the founding fathers of Zion Methodism. We are not in harmony with God's agenda; instead we are pushing our own agenda.

There is grave concern across the connection for the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. There is a sense of frustration, anxiety, uncertainty and distrust in leadership. We are in a state of unbalance; spiritually, physically, and financially. We are witnessing the effects of our sins, past and present. We can no longer deny nor ignore that warning signs are apparent and judgment has already begun at the house of God.

King Zedekiah lost his mission and realized judgment was inevitable, so he asked the Prophet, Jeremiah, "Do you have a message from the Lord?" (Jeremiah 37:17) This was the question he asked before he was captured on the plains of Babylon because he forgot his mission. We too are at a pivotal point and the cry from the people to leadership is, "Do you have a message from the Lord?" Jeremiah's message was a message of hope. "There is hope for your future," says the Lord. (Jeremiah 31:17). Zion Methodists can be assured that our God who is patient, long suffering and not willing that anyone should perish has not left us. We have strayed from his ways and he is waiting for us to return to Him. Wesley's final words uttered were,

"The best of all, God is with us."

What is your vision to address this challenge?

Dr. John C. Maxwell said, "Everything rise and fall on leadership." I would argue that leadership must take ownership of the plight of the church today. Leadership has to model God's terms for restoration and revival. It is the responsibility of leadership to lead the church into corporate confession of sins. The Word of God is fraught and superabundant with examples of leaders taking ownership and acknowledging sin. The importance of acknowledging sin is demonstrated by famous biblical leaders:

- Hezekiah – Before leading a religious reform "For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord... (v.9) For I, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this. (2 Chronicles. 29:6-9)
- Nehemiah – Before launching a rebuilding project

"...I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of Israel which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. (Neh. 16)

- Daniel – Before receiving a revelation of the future

And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; [21] Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. [22] And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. Daniel 9:20-22

- Ezra – Triggered a great revival of many returning to God.

Ezra 9:5-6) Then, at the evening sacrifice, I rose from my self-abasement, with my tunic and cloak torn, and fell on my knees with my hands spread out to the Lord my God [6] and prayed: "O my God, I am too ashamed and disgraced to lift up my face to you, my God, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens.[7] From the days of our forefathers until now, our guilt has been great. Because of our sins, we and our kings and our priests have been subjected to the sword and captivity, to pillage and humiliation at the hand of foreign kings, as it is today...[13] "What has happened to us is a result of our evil deeds and our great guilt, and yet, our God, you have punished us less than our sins have deserved and have given us a remnant like this.[10:1] While Ezra was praying and confessing,

weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God, a large crowd of Israelites--men, women and children--gathered around him. They too wept bitterly.

My vision to address this challenge will be to have leadership accept the responsibility and face the issue that caused our present plight. I would position people for spiritual growth through spiritual disciplines as outlined in the Word of God. As a result, true evangelism can take place.

The Holy Spirit must be present within the framework of our doctrine. My framework for modeling and implementing God's requirements for restoration and revival is penned in 2 Chronicles 7:14 and 1 John 1:9.

Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, pray, seek my face and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and restore their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14)

But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9)

Leadership must model 2 Chronicles 7:14 and 1 John 1:9, individually and corporately if we expect God to hear us, forgive us, and restore us (the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church). In order to serve this present age we must return to spiritual disciplines, the basic tenants of our faith. "Return unto me and I will return to you, says the Lord" was the message of the Old Testament prophets that was echoed throughout the pages of the sacred scrolls. The message for the New Testament Church is "repent" the equivalent of the Old Testament word, "return." When we repent and return to the God of our weary years and the God of our silent tears, we will once again experience revival among the people that John Wesley believed God gave a peculiar message, the people called Methodists.

How would you inspire others with your vision and transfer it to them?

God prepares leaders, in every era, who will address a certain crisis before the crisis arises. I would argue that when God sends a leader, and that leader is obedient to God's call, people are inspired to follow; like Nehemiah, who rebuilt the wall, the people had a mind to work, and Ezra who restored spirituality to a people returning from exile. Leadership must have a heart for God, a heart for the people of God, and a heart for the work of God.

Anthony Witherspoon

Candidate for the Episcopacy

The greatest challenge I would face in the office of Bishop in the AME Zion Church is that of holding up the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the moral and spiritual center of people's lives, and restoring confidence in the Zion Church as the agent of the personal, social, cultural, economic, and political transformation, or healing, that our constituents of all ages, abilities, financial means, and social locations really need. My vision is to accomplish this healing by exercising my teaching office: encouraging pastors to preach good news and BE good news; staffing our churches holistically and developing informed, relevant ministries through continuing theological education; utilizing the gifts of each pastor, minister, and lay leader in responsible ways; organizing congregations and District and Annual Conferences for service in the communities where they minister; developing Social Action committees that are linked to charitable, cultural, and political entities with a historic commitment to freedom and justice for "the least of these;" and strengthening Zion's ecumenical partnerships in local, regional, national and global ministries. I hope to inspire others as I am already and I am prepared to lead the Connectional Church by example, with integrity, compassion, intellect, business acumen, inner vision, and the unfailing guidance of the Holy Spirit.

9TH QUADRENNIAL LAY CONVOCATION HIGHLIGHTS

Reverend Malcolm J. Byrd, Candidate for the Editor of the A.M.E. Zion Quarterly Review and Secretary of the A.M.E. Zion Historical Society

What do you believe to be your greatest challenge?

My greatest challenge would be to encourage our Zion to view the A.M.E. Zion Quarterly Review as more than just a "clergy" publication. From our inception, Zion has been blessed by a cadre of thoughtful intellectuals. Those intellectuals included those who had received holy orders and those who did not. I believe that there is a great deal of stimulating thought among our lay people. It would be my hope that our lay community would endeavor to share in the continual intellectual history of our Zion.

What is your vision to address this challenge?

To address this challenge, I would work to insure that each edition of the quarterly review would include an article written by a lay member of the A.M.E. Zion Church on subjects as theology (that is sensitive to our Methodist Perspective), history, and Christian inspiration. I am fully aware that this cannot happen without the full support of our lay organization. I would work with the National President of our Connectional Lay Council to find the appropriate means to encourage thoughtful engagement among our lay people and to transfer that thought to print. If the church anticipates a future, it must first encourage continual thought and dialog on subjects and issues that affect its existence.

How will you inspire others with your vision and transfer it to them?

I come to the table with zeal and enthusiasm that has been nurtured by both mind and spirit. My recent prayers have not included a request to win this election. Please understand Zion, I really want to WIN! However, if the church decides that it is not my time, I pray that my running has encouraged some conversation on aspects of our history and theology that were in need of an intellectual "dusting off." I further pray that I have inspired my generation to follow their hearts, as I have done, without fear. They too can cast their lots in Zion. I asked God to use me and he has already answered my prayer. If elected, the energy that I brought to the campaign trail will, with the help of God, attend me as I discharge my duties for His sake and for the sake of the church.

Reverend Dr. William McKeith Candidate for the Editor of the A.M.E. Zion Quarterly Review and Secretary of the A.M.E. Zion Historical Society

The Question: As it relates to the office that you are seeking, what do you believe is the greatest challenge? What is your vision to address that challenge? How will you inspire others with your vision and transfer it to them?

The office of Secretary-Editor branches into two distinctive job titles: Secretary of the Historical Society and Editor of The Quarterly Review. Both positions have unique challenges. The Historical Society, however, faces the greatest challenges of the two positions.

Zion's historical documents and artifacts need to be preserved, digitized and catalogued, vaulted and made accessible to the general public.

But, firstly, the real question that needs answering is: Who has legal custody and possession of these documents? The Discipline: 2008 provides shared responsibility between Livingstone College and the Public Relations and Historical Society Board (by means of the W. J. Walls Advisory Board) for the preservation of historical documents and artifacts (p. 283). The Secretary of the Historical Society is a member of the Advisory Board (p. 283).

Furthermore the Secretary is charged, under separate provision, to "assist and encourage the establishment of archives" (p. 284). Moreover

the Discipline charges that the Secretary, as the Church's Historian, is directly responsible for the "collection and preservation of memorabilia and artifacts...and other items of value clearly identified with persons and events in the history of the A. M. E. Zion Church and shall deposit them in the archives of the A. M. E. Zion Church or regional depositories as may be appropriate" (p.284).

It appears that the Secretary or some designee of the College can have disciplinary authority over the Church's historical documents and artifacts. Seemingly the College has assumed that authority, perhaps, to the chagrin of the secretariat and other interested parties.

Upon settling this issue in favor of the Historical Society, the Secretary can proceed to the task of developing, however modest, an A. M. E. Zion Historical Society archive center. The greatest challenges to achieving this objective are many. Firstly, money has to be allocated for collecting, preserving, digitizing and cataloguing historical documents and artifacts. Secondly, personnel will have to be trained to become archivists. Thirdly adequate space, with the necessary vault, to host an archive center would need to be secured. And finally a staff would need to be hired for the ongoing operations of the work.

Rev. George H. McNeely Candidate for the Editor of the A.M.E. Zion Quarterly Review and Secretary of the A.M.E. Zion Historical Society

QUESTION-# 1- As it relates to the office that you are seeking, what do you believe is the greatest challenge?

The office that I am seeking is the Editor of the Quarterly Review and Secretary of the Historical Society of the A.M.E. Zion Church.

As it relates to that office, I believe that there are three major challenges associated with my vision. (1) Increase the circulation (2) Expand a vibrant historical society all over Zion. (3) Finding resources to preserve our history, important documents and artifacts as well as produce another comprehensive history of our denomination which covers the period following that of Bishop William J. Walls.

QUESTION # 2- What is your vision to address this challenge?

My vision to address these challenges are to continue to- (1) Publish scholarly and didactic articles which will appeal to a wider audience and be of interest to faculties, students, clergy and laity, (2) Highlight laity and congregation's history which would be an effort to expand the historical society and make it a more vibrant organization, and (3) Find more resources to preserve our history that can be met by creative fund raising and providing historical materials of interest to clergy and laity. These resources will be used to attract scholars who will do research and gather valuable data for the next phase of our history. Also to ensure that space is available to store and preserve our history using modern technology and methods now in use.

QUESTION #3 – How will you inspire others with your vision and transfer it to them?

It is my desire to promote this vision through the medium of the using the internet/ website, preaching, lecturing, other advertisement and traveling throughout the A. M. E. Zion connection. With my passion for this work and God's help I believe this will enable me to convince others to come on board to help me achieve the vision for which I have been given. No matter how long it takes the message will continue to go forth as that of the prophetic voice in the wilderness of one trying to move Zion forward and make it better.

Reverend Otis McMillian - INCUMBENT
Director of the Bureau of Evangelism of

the AME Zion Church

As it relates to the office that you are seeking, what do you believe is the greatest challenge? What is your vision to address this challenge? How will you inspire others with your vision and transfer it to them?

In my opinion, the greatest challenge to the ministry of evangelism is our attitude towards evangelism. Evangelism is largely viewed as optional across our denomination instead of Christ's mandate for His Church. It is my desire that we as New Testament Evangelist in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church will become "Better Waterers, and Better Planters." Apostle Paul writing to the church of Corinth gives us a valuable clue on increase and growth:

"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one; and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." 1 Corinthians 3:6-9

I believe church growth strategies and evangelistic campaigns succeed:

A) As the result of God's grace and favor
B) Depend on the choice of the right moment, the right message and the right method.

C) If we do not become discouraged by the rejection of the message

D) If we as evangelist understand who we are and what we are to do.

E) As the result of prayer.

F) When we have a proper attitude towards humanity.

Wanting our churches to grow isn't enough; we have to take intentional action to make it happen. Through training workshops we must develop healthy faith sharing congregations that will practice genuine hospitality thereby creating an atmosphere in which people feel welcome, feel that they belong and are good candidate to become Christian disciples. I desire to form partnerships with all the department of our denomination that will clarify the vision and raise the awareness of our true purpose as the Church of God; to reach the world for Christ

Reverend Doctor Esther M. Rose Candidate for the Director of the Department of Health and Social Concerns

As it relates to the office that you are seeking, what do you believe is the greatest challenge?

The greatest challenge for the office of the Director of Health and Social Concerns for the AME Zion Church is that of motivating and inspiring members to answer the call for personal involvement so that they may be empowered to take control of their social conditions in community and their total healthcare, physical, mental and spiritual.

What is your vision to address this challenge?

To address this challenge the vision given to me embraces a transformation process for those who are in professions calling them to service in the church through purposeful ministry using the gifts that they employ in the world for the edification of the church.

How will you inspire others with your vision and transfer it to them?

The vision is not my vision but comes from God who never prepares one for a calling without completing the response to that particular calling in others who are to be a part of his plan. When the call goes forth the Holy Spirit manifests the response in the hearts of those preordained for such a ministry. This move of the Spirit is what we see as "inspiration". This is a "God move" that is so awesome and powerful that it blows my mind even now!

9TH QUADRENNIAL LAY CONVOCATION HIGHLIGHTS

Rev. Dr. Bernard Sullivan- INCUMBENT
Director of the Department of Health
and Social Concerns

It is essential that this question "What is the greatest challenge to the Department of Health and Social Concerns" be addressed first and primarily within the context of the challenges that face our Zion. Those challenges are at least threefold. First the great gift of connection that promotes single minded communication and governance needs to be reconsidered, redeveloped and reestablished. Connectionalism is the oar that allows the old ship of Zion to fulfill the Pauline principle of "one thing I do". Connectionalism allows the church to mobilize the resource sails of our ship and sail in one unified direction.

In fact, the second challenge that confronts our Zion is the effective use of our resources. It is true that the resources of God are unlimited in the total cycle of the blessings of God to our Zion. Yet God also promised years of famine and years of plenty as we march towards salvation. God is unlimited, yet man can through less than optimal stewardship of God's resources, limit the resources of God. God's resources are limited through too little faith, too much fear and not enough frugality. In an era of relative famine, we are called by God and Zion to transform little faith into great confidence in God, church and "connectionalism", fear into boldness for "God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power love and a sound mind". Third we must replace lack of ineffective stewardship with faithful stewardship which includes transparency, accountability and collaborative effort. Within the ministry of General Officer, I suggest the construction of a detailed plan of shared economic, physical and intellectual resources.

This collaborative effort has the potential to eradicate the waste of duplication of vision, talent, mission and money. From the perspective of the Department of Health and Social Concerns, other bodies within our denomination have launched stellar programs in the area of the promotion of better physical health. It will be a part of my vision to collaborate with them in the support of their efforts and not to duplicate their efforts. My vision will focus pointedly on the establishment of a local church culture paradigm system and program that utilizes the gift of evangelism to plant wholistic programs that promotes the spiritual physical and mental wellbeing of the citizenry of our local church constituency and community. Preliminary collaborative efforts between the Department of Health and Social Concerns and the Department of Evangelism to inaugurate a Prayer Walk at the seat of the General Conference are underway.

The third challenge that faces our beloved Zion is the balancing act upon the tightrope of time to prayerfully promote new models of ministry while remaining faithful to the discipline, doctrines and duties that have brought us safe thus far. We must not fall prey to the trap of the neophyte one who believes that anything that was not created in the current generation is of no value. God remains the God of yesterday, today and tomorrow. We need the hindsight of yesterday to have insight for today. We need the insight of today to have foresight for tomorrow. The church must adjust to the times without losing its power to adjust to the times.

Within the context of these challenges, the threefold challenges of the Department of Health and Social Concerns are its justification of continuation in a man/woman reported "age of scarcity". We serve a God who is not scarce or scared. The second challenge is to collaborate with existing efforts that facilitates and increases the effectiveness and efficiency of their operations. This avoids the stewardship error of duplication of effort. The third is to present a program that meets the need of unmet needs in the communities served by our churches.

Our vision for the Department of Health and Social Concerns addresses both the challenges for the church and the challenges that face the

Department of Health and Social Concerns. The focused vision is twofold. The first vision is to create an atmosphere of openness that allows ministry to receive counseling that promotes spiritual, mental and physical wellness. A healthy pastor grows a healthy church. This will be accomplished through the following. 1. Identification of all individuals in Zion trained as professional counselors. 2. The organization of this group with the goal of organization being to remove barriers that interfere with clergy accessibility to counseling and to provide counseling opportunities in their respective areas. 3. That all clergy receive a mental health evaluation prior to entrance into ministry. The Director is in the final stages of the completion of a standardized Bible based evaluation instrument. 4. That an affordable retreat network be established for ministers in need of retreat. 5. That ongoing and systematic identification of funding sources occur to ensure affordability of services. That in four years, each episcopal area establishes a counseling outlet for ministers.

The second is to rekindle the spirit of the social gospel of the Freedom Church, so that in four years, each episcopal area has implemented at least one after school program in a local church that serves as a model for other churches interested in the establishment of an after school program. The after school program will increase the graduation rate of our children, reduce violence in our communities serve as a source of evangelism to children in our community and provide an additional source of revenue for our church.

A Cozzie Watkins
Candidate for the Director of the
Department of Health and Social
Concerns

Over the next several years Zion will see a market rise in the church's need for health literacy. The national statistics from the Center of Disease control on disease, death, and the social impact on society as a whole is staggering. The interpretation and correlation of this data to drive best practice will be the responsibility of the Department of Health and Social Concerns. Hence, I believe:

As it relates to the office of Health and Social Concerns the greatest challenge is identifying persons with the skill sets to meet Zion's needs. This can be done by making a call for persons with skills in healthcare, psychology, sociology, certified counselors, retired, an actively working. The second solution in identifying resources is to establish a network within the Church structure (talk to other departments within the Church) i.e., Evangelism as a fuel source to help motivate the church toward Biblical support for good health and spiritual hygiene. Christian Education, Christian Literature, Missionaries, and all departments will be asked to collaborate on making our church not only wiser, but stronger. We have a choice about becoming weaker and wiser. We will use a PDSA=Plan-Do-Study-Act model to make change.

What is your vision to address this challenge? I believe the Connectional Church must be made aware of the capacity and ability of this department to do what is mandated by the Discipline (2008). I believe Zion Methodism is an effective model of worship and practice to operate a department. I do believe that grants and other financial support sources should be vetted carefully do ensure they are in line with the philosophy of our church.

How will you inspire others with your vision and transfer it to them? I believe in a transformational leadership style. An effective transformational leader ensures that each member of the church is aware of the mission and vision of the department, each project, and thereby establishes a champion to disseminate information. The champion will help identify resources, assess

areas needing support, and report back to the department. We will include as many persons as possible in the planning and implementation of projects. The more people included the stronger the connection, the more reliable the data used to evaluate effectiveness, and to drive best practice of meeting the goal of health literacy.

David A. Aiken, Sr.
Candidate for the Secretary-Treasurer
Brotherhood Pension and
Ministerial Relief

I foresee building confidence in the various elements of Zion's benefit programs as a Paramount challenge. Concerns about the security, merits and administration of the retirement, insurance and benevolence programs will need to be addressed, alleviated and, to the greatest extent possible, eliminated.

Without exception, all audited financial statements, as well as any and all internal financial reports, will present accurately, in all material respects the financial position of the departments of Brotherhood Pension & Ministerial Relief.

Additionally, under my administration, open lines of communication will be established, maintained and encouraged in order to facilitate answers to client questions, clarity about benefit provisions, quality control and management oversight. I envision regularly utilizing print and electronic media in order to advertise and promote departmental goals, objectives and accomplishments that validate the invaluable attributes of Zion's benefits ministry.

Rev. Darrell J. Williams,
Candidate for the Secretary - Treasurer
Brotherhood Pension and
Ministerial Relief

What is the greatest challenge in the ministry of the Brotherhood Pension and Ministerial Relief Dept.?

This is a difficult question due to the reality of this department. From a challenge perspective, I see numerous ones. I think the most important hurdle is to re establish a level of trust from the Zion body that this is a vital ministry in the church. Being in the Insurance and Financial Services industry for over 30 years, I understand what it takes to rebuild trust from your customer base. Sometimes trust is lost because the Insurance Company didn't do its job, and sometimes it's the customer not paying their premiums, etc...none the less, once both parties are clear of expectations, it is incumbent that both maintain their end of the bargain.

We can begin to rebuild trust by being open and transparent with regards to the true role of the department. If we are to provide the proper property and casualty plans for our churches, then we need to do that. If we are going to offer Life Insurance death benefits to our ministers and officers, we need to do that. And if there needs to be changes made in any of our plans, they need to be agreed upon by the fiduciary board which has oversight responsibility. The quicker we begin communications with our National Church base, the easier it will be to establish trust. People just want to know the truth. The same holds true for our retired ministers and widows.

I believe that when this dept. is operating as a ministry, and trust is reestablished, and we can do what we say we can do, and deliver what we promise to deliver, everyone will be on board.

I do envision this ministry being able to get to a point where we truly offer worthwhile benefits to our Pastors and leaders. It is our role to be good stewards over what the Lord has given us to work with. When this ministry of the Brotherhood Pension and Ministerial relief does its job right, we can then answer the question Jesus posed to Peter, "if you love me feed my sheep".

THE PURPOSE

The laity of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (A.M.E. Zion) Church has provided effectual leadership for over sixty (63) years. Therefore, the Connectional Lay Council is proud to release this new publication entitled Equipping the Laity: Chronological Endeavors of the Connectional Lay Council of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church: 1948 - July 2011 to capture the essence of phenomenal leadership styles of past and present lay leaders across the breath of Zion Methodism.

This publication documents the fact that lay persons have held significant and transformative positions on the connection, conference, district and local church levels. In addition, there are many lay persons who provided leadership for community organizations and committees in areas where the local church existed. It is important that members of our church know these leaders and what they did to benefit the church as a whole and the local communities. With this publication, we pause to recognize many of those persons.

It is also important that the laity know how important it is to keep records that reflect the roles and responsibilities of the laity who have contributed so much to the on-going history of the A.M.E. Zion Church. There is and continues to be a rich history of lay activities throughout the breath of the A.M.E. Zion Church. We, the laity of the church, are obligated to protect and preserve this rich heritage and to make it known to the lay persons in the church today.

We employ you, the laity to make others aware of the many lay leadership positions and events that highlight the sacrifices and accomplishments of lay people who made our denomination what it is today. With your continued contributions, we hope to keep members of our church aware of the A.M.E. Zion Church and the role we continue to perform to equip lay persons to lead our churches and our communities.

I am thankful to God for those members of the A.M.E. Zion Church on whose shoulders we now stand and for their hard and diligent work.

Rosa J. Alexander, Historian

"EQUIPPING THE SAINTS" is a must for all Lay Council Presidents and Local Lay Councils. It can be purchased for \$15.00, plus S & H. Call Joyce Zimmerman at (704) 599-4630 today and place your order.

We heartily concur with Martin Luther who said, "Next to the Word of God Music Deserves the Highest Praise". We love the Hymns of Zion as many of them cut to the chase as to where we are or have been spiritually. The Hymns strengthen us, lay open our pages, offer testimonies we can relate, offer hope, peace and joy. To have Meditations that are wrapped around these heart-warming Hymns are a god-send. When the clouds are heavy with rain, when the sun is brighter across the street or when you just need to offer praise and thanksgiving, turn to your Bible, than pick up your Meditation/Hymnody and greet the cares of the day fortified.

In deference to the wonderful Meditation/Hymnody contributors, we conjoin with the Psalmist who penned these words . . . "My heart overflows with a pleasing theme; I address my verses to the King; my tongue is like the pen of a ready writer". Psalm 45:1 ESV

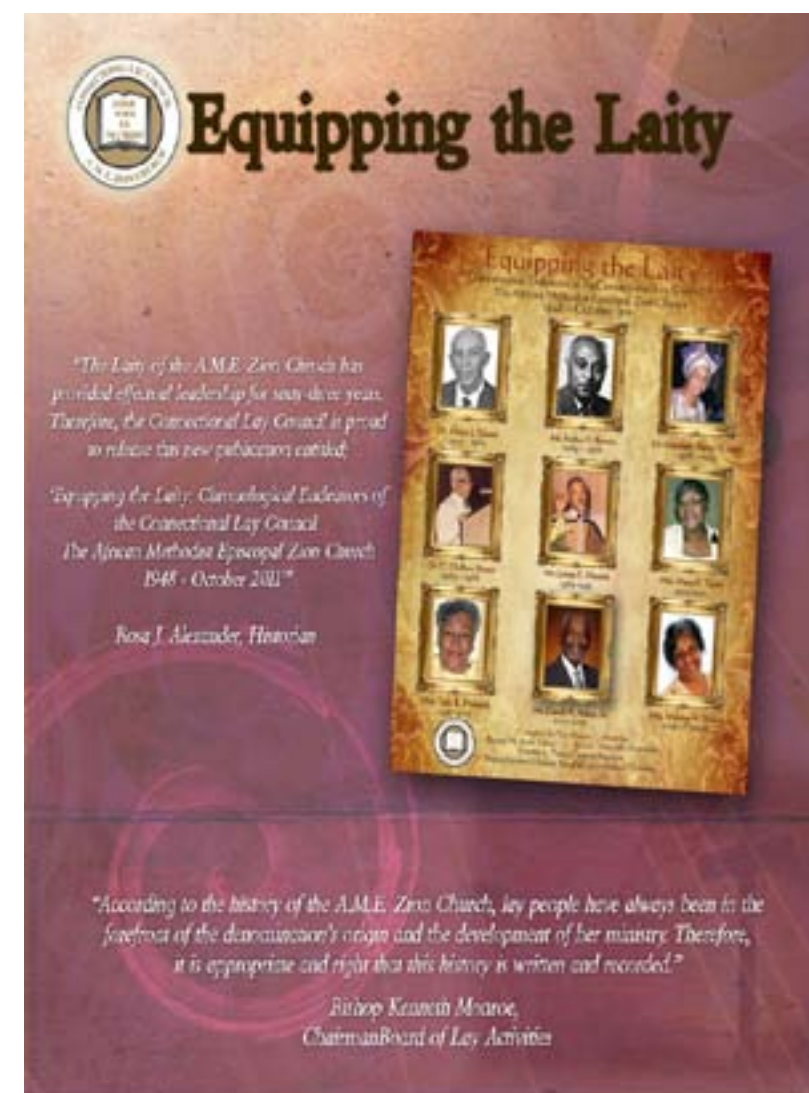
It is in this spirit and with deep appreciation that we share the names of the contributors from across Zion who shared in "ONE HUNDRED DAYS PLUS OF MEDITATION/HYMNODY".

Aaron Harris, Albert Moore, Ann Jones, Bobbie Floyd, T. Foster, Carolyn Dandridge, Dale "Skip" Van Rensalier, Darlene M. Bennett, Dema V. Napier, Dr. Charles L. Sharp, Dr. Dwayne A. Walker, Effie B. Woodard, Elaine J. Copeland, PhD., Forest Bonaparte, Fran Alexander, Gladys Felton, Hazel C. Kerr, H. Selina Nelson, J. Fairbanks Leach, Jacqueline Williams, Joan Thompson Miller, Joanne K. Harrison, Jonnie C. Johnson, Joyce Franklin, Joyce Perry Edwards, PhD., Leonard E. Wallace, Linda Cratic, Linda Henry-Johnson, Lula K. Howard, Lynda Byrd, Mack Brandon, Margaret E. Brown, Marie Baxter, Mary Marshall, Mireille Emanuel, Monica S. Reed, Mozella Ritter, Nell Lacy, O.W. Burrell, Olivia Christopher, Patricia Lewis, Rev. Barbara Rogers, Rev. Dr. Celestine T. Reid, Rev. David L. Knight, Rev. Diane Hicklin-Coleman, Rev. Dr. Denison D. Harfield, Jr., Rev. Dr. George W. Blackwell, Rev. Dr. Grant Harrison, Jr., Rev. Dr. James David Armstrong, Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Tribble, Sr., Rev. Dr. Lawton Nelson, Jr., Rev. Dr. Sondra Coleman, Rev. E.C. Dobson, Rev. Glenna G. Gunn, Rev. Harriet McElvaney, Rev. Kathryn Hughlett Wilson, Rev. Lisa T. McDow, Esq., Rev. Marilyn L. Turner, Rev. Ruby D. Miles, Ruby H. Shambay, Ruth S. Gough, Stephany C. Ricks Fields, Toni Terrell, Tracy Teagle, Vernita Perry, Virginia Douglas, Winifred K. Sharper, Yunorma Moore, Yvonne Tracey, Yvonne Baskerville.

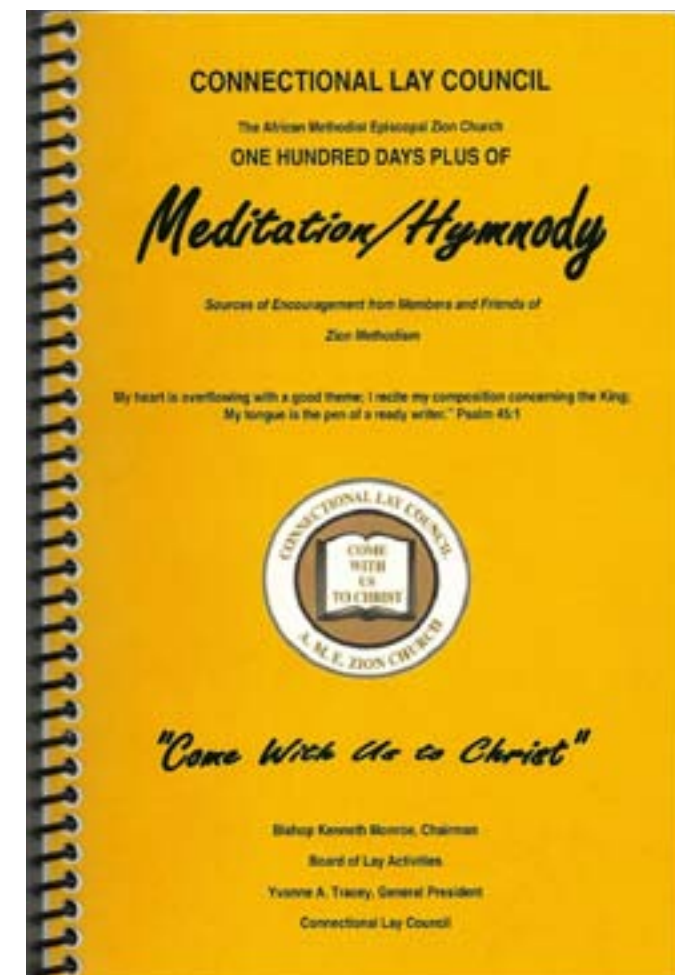
Your contributions have offered a book that will not only be a daily blessing, but will be a blessing for posterity. We will be eternally gratefully for your sharing with Zion Methodism through this medium.

Margaret E. Brown, Editor, Yunorma Moore, Assistant Editor, J. Fairbanks Leach, Editor In Chief, Yvonne A. Tracey General President.

"ONE HUNDRED DAYS Plus of MEDITATION/HYMNODY" contains contributions on Hymns such as "I Love to Tell the Story", "Amazing Grace", "O Master Let Me Walk with Thee", "A Charge to Keep I Have" and more. This publication will make a marvelous gift and can be purchased for just for \$10.00, plus S & H (this price includes a CD of 6 organ and 6 vocal treatments). Call Joyce Zimmerman at (704) 599-4630 today and place your order. Your happiness and blessing is guaranteed by the publishers.



Published by the HISTORY COMMITTEE,
Rosa J. Alexander, Historian



Published by the CLC EDUCATION COMMITTEE,
J. Fairbanks Leach, Chairperson

9TH QUADRENNIAL LAY CONVOCATION HIGHLIGHTS

CONNECTIONAL LAY COUNCIL NINTH QUADRENNIAL LAY CONVOCATION EVALUATION FORM

MARCH 28 – APRIL 1, 2012

STATEMENTS PERTAINING TO YOUR EXPERIENCE	POOR	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NOT PARTICIPATE
1. Pre-registration process		8	9	
2. On-Site Registration		7	3	7
3. Value of the registration packet		12	5	
4. Geographic Location		10	8	
5. Boof Camp		5	6	6
6. State of the A. M. E. Zion Church Panel		10	7	
7. CLC Legislation Session		5	8	2
8. Resolutions Session		10	8	
9. General Officers Candidates Forum		4	10	
10. Episcopal Candidates Forum		7	10	
11. Welcome Reception	3	7	6	2
12. Morning Empowerment Hour		3	2	9
13. Prayer Breakfast		7	8	3
14. Challenge Luncheon		3	14	
15. Life Members "Candidates" Social		3	1	12
16. R.C. Rochon Music Academy		2		11
17. Young Adult/Youth Initiative		1		13
18. Bishop George J. Leake Scholarship Benefit Concert			2	9
19. Bishop George J. Leake Scholarship Banquet			3	9
20. Organization of the Convocation		6	5	

Comments:
Realizing the vast amount of talent and vision invested in the various candidates for Bishop and/or General Officers, and knowing that only one can be elected, how can we collaborate and harness this information to the benefit of church? Perhaps the person elected would tap his/her opponent and appoint to an advisory position. This has been a very, very good convocation.

The Challenge Luncheon had some problem. But we worked them out. I served as a hostess, and we had to me one chief saying one thing and some one would come later and change the plan. The ideal with candidates mixed with voting delegates and other were great.

I filled out the form to order items on Thursday and after checking twice on Friday the order wasn't ready. On Saturday morning the book I wanted was out but I did get the other items I had on my order. If my order had been processed on the day I turned it in I would have been able to receive all of the items I ordered.

Reading of the resolutions was a good idea, but too many people wanted to debate the issues. All should have been reminded repeatedly that this session was for "informational purposes only" and they will be able to debate the issues at the General Conference.

I am extremely pleased with not only the organization of this Convocation, but how it has elevated Zion into the 21st Century. This was the best meeting (Lay or otherwise) that I have attended.

This Convocation was very beneficial to the life of our church job well done!

Another wonderful Convocation. Only minor snafoos. Well planned and organized. Continue to be a blessing.

- Welcome Program and Communion Service absolutely too long
- While agenda is excellent – too much crowded in agenda. Time or length of convocation should be revisited.
- Cost stand point everything should be considered in one location and save money as well.
- CLC officers and board appear to be a committed group and it is evident that they have put much in the success of the convocation. Wonderful job.

The CLC Convocation was very informative. This was my 1st time attending, but I really enjoyed it. I think that the hotel was a little bit high based on "group rates" however it was a very nice facility and very convenient to other areas of interest.

Overall – very good! The Communion Service was the too long although I did enjoy the Livingstone Concert Choir. The hostess to direct us to very places was very beneficial. There was no date listed for the tours. With that info had been given in advance.

Need to use one e-mail address when registering as group. Had to stand in Challenge Luncheon line too long. Enjoyed CLC Live. Hotels need to have microwave ovens if you use them or not.

Should be able to use one e-mail address when registering a group, have more info as to when the stoles are to be worn, enjoyed CLC live on Wed. night, liked being able to pick up registration pack early if you knew about it.

Should be able to use one e-mail address when registering a group, had to stand in line for the luncheon to long, I really enjoyed CLC Live, need to be informed to when we wear our Life Members Stoles

As a first time delegate to the General Conference this Convocation and the one at Dorothy Walls has prepared me for what is to come in July. Thank you so much. There are delegates in my area who were not able to come. Hopefully you will have this information on the web especially the tele-com.

The Welcome Reception was little long and too late.

SAVE THE DATE

Tenth Quadrennial Lay Convention

July 27 - August 1, 2013 ~ Montgomery, Alabama

REGIONAL NEWS

Piedmont Episcopal District Mrs. Sandra Williams, Regional Director Bishop George W.C. Walker, Sr. Presiding Prelate

North Charlotte District Lay Council Celebrates
by G. Joyner Johnson
Charlotte, NC

On May 4, 2012, the North Charlotte District Lay Council held its annual Lay Fellowship and Recognition Banquet at Varick Renaissance Center, the best kept secret in Charlotte, N.C. This venue was only matched by the over two hundred Zionites representing twenty churches in the district, pastors and laity fellowshiping together.

Great pride emanated from those assembled in knowing the celebration was held in Zion's own establishment in which a four-star chef prepared a most tasty and healthy meal which was served by professional wait staff. The physical beauty of the dining facility was only matched by the high spirit of those in fellowship.

An adult member and a youth member from each church were recognized for their contributions. Many of the adults recognized were surprised when their names were called to receive their certificates. As they received their certificates from Mrs. Joyce Zimmerman, President, the youth being recognized were asked to tell one thing of many they enjoyed working in the church. Their answers ranged from working with the children in children's church, singing in the youth choir, playing musical instruments, ushering for worship services and liturgical dancing. Each person being recognized received a handshake and congratulations from Presiding Elder James M. Sloan.

Mr. Jerrel M. Potts, of Torrence Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church was inducted into the North Charlotte District Hall of Fame.

The challenge message was given by Presiding Elder Sloan whose subject was "A Christian World of Work." Dr. Sloan stated that today's employment rate is one hundred percent as we as Christians are empowered to do the job as directed by the Great Commission. As we come together as multi-generational workers blessed with love and friendship, we should plan to work together. Keeping together is a plan for progress as both lay and clergy are to win the world for Christ. As we work together and pray together a successful outcome is imminent as we work to lift up Jesus.

Rev. Dr. Sheldon Shipman, Greenville Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church and Miss Jayla Soares, Myers Tabernacle A.M.E. Zion Church made a special appeal for the Jasmine J. House Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship is given annually to student from the North Charlotte District.

Mrs. Carolyn Hubbard, 1st Vice President

of the North Charlotte District Lay Council was recognized with a crystal award for her diligence in planning innovative services as she steps down from that position.

Mrs. Zimmerman, then presented Presiding Elder Sloan with an award of remembrance from the Lay Council with thanks for his support and encouragement.
WHAT A FELLOWSHIP!



Mid Atlantic II Episcopal District Mrs. Katharine S. Burrell, Regional Director Bishop Warren M. Brown Presiding Prelate

Philadelphia Eastern Shore held their 7th Annual Lay Recognition Banquet at the Sheraton Dover Hotel, Dover Delaware with over 200 people attending. Those recognized as the Lay Leaders in their local church were:

- Mattie Browning, Alleyne Memorial, Philadelphia, PA, Rev. Dr. Juanita Green, Pastor,
- Ida C. Hall, James Varick, Philadelphia, PA, Rev. Dr. John W. Kennedy, Pastor
- Thomas and Helen Johnson, Mt. Hope, Princess Anne, MD, Rev. Dr. Leon Copeland, Pastor
- Edna Harper, St. James, Salisbury, MD, Rev. Dr. M. Luther Hill, Pastor
- John Bailey, St John, Ross Point, Rev. Ida L. Ositelu, Pastor
- James N. Whitley, St. Mark, Newtown, PA, Rev. Sandra Reed, Pastor
- William Thadis Ryals, Sr., St. Paul, Media, PA, Rev. Damon N. Carver, Pastor
- Christina Ositelu, St. Paul, Salisbury, MD, Rev. Dr. Thomas E. Tucker, Pastor
- Margaret Miller, Scott, Wilmington, Delaware, Rev. Dr. Gloria Snipes, Pastor
- Shirley A. Onley, Trinity, Delta, PA, Rev. Samuel Means, Pastor
- Deirdre E. Payne, Union, New Castle, Delaware, Re. Leo McNeil, Pastor
- Howard A. Ackerman, Wallace Temple, Rhodsdale, MD, Rev. Michael King, Pastor
- Eunice Hopkins, Liberating Power, Bridgetown, Delaware, Rev. Reginald Chandler, Pastor

Each recipient was introduction by a video giving highlight of their work and presented with a special plaque during their recognition.

The luncheon program was chaired by Barbara Bennett, President of the Philadelphia East Shore District Lay Council. Mrs. Bennett gives exceptional leadership in her District under the guidance of her Presiding Elder, the Rev. Dr. John F. Kennedy. She has travel though out her District and has 100% of the churches with Lay Council Memberships. We congratulate both the recipients and Mrs. Bennett for a job well done.



Clinton A.M. E. Zion Church of Rockville, MD, Baltimore District recently held a Lay Academy where the pastor, the Rev. T.K. Venable presented on the Liturgical Calendar. Explanations were given on the Seasons of the Church beginning with the Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter and Easter Time and the Common Era that leads the church back to Advent. The colors used on the Altar during each season and why they change were also explained. Rev. Venable explained the use of the command lectionary and how many Christian churches use the same Bible readings on a given Sunday. The Lay Academy was well attended under the leadership of the President, Mr. Clive Alexis.



Connectional Lay Council Office Extension Changes
The main number is still 704.599.4630
Joyce Zimmerman (main) is 2566
Yvonne Tracey is 2180.

Visit the Connectional Lay Council
Official Website for the latest
news & updates:
www.connectionallaycouncil.org

9TH QUADRENNIAL LAY CONVOCATION HIGHLIGHTS

BOOT CAMP

Part One – A skit on the training of General Conference Lay Delegates in their role as delegates to the General Conference. Part Two – presentation by Rev. Dr. W. Robert Johnson, General Secretary-Auditor of the A.M.E. Zion Church, was given. Dr. Johnson's presentation was on the "Brief Look at the General Conference of the A.M.E. Zion Church. During his presentation Dr. Johnson advised those present of (1) the definition of the General Conference; (2) the composition of the General Conference; (3) the qualifications of the delegates; (4) the identification of the Business of the General Conference; (5) the legislative process of the proposed legislative and/or resolutions to be submitted and discussed at the General Conference; and (6) the role and function of the delegate to the Conference. Part Three – A Boot Camp Parliamentary Procedure Court presented by the CLC Parliamentarian, the Rev. Lisa McDow, Esq. Rev. McDow presented a skit that addressed the proper procedures to be used relative to the processing of resolutions during the business sessions of the Conference and how the use of the Robert's Rules of Order should be properly followed when discussion on resolutions are presented during the General Conference.

"STATE OF THE CHURCH" PANEL

The panelists included Mrs. Lula K. Howard, Dr. Sandra Gadson, WHOMS President; the Rev. Dr. Kevin McGill, President, International Ministers and Lay Association and the Rev. Haven O. Anderson, Pastor, Marvin A.M.E. Zion Church, Charlotte, North Carolina. The panelists presented their viewpoints of (1) Who We Are; (2) Where We Have Been; (3) Where We Are Now; and (4) Where We Are Going.

PRAYER BREAKFAST

The "Around the Clock with Prayer" Breakfast began at 7:30 a.m. The theme of the breakfast and the prayers delivered during the breakfast focused on (1) Wrenched with Wet Eyes in Dry Times at 12 Midnight; (2) Unsettled by the Three O'clock Afternoon Heat and (3) Shades of Eventide at Nine O'clock.

GENERAL CONFERENCE LEGISLATION

Resolutions presented and discussed a result of the collaborative effort between the International Ministers and Lay Association and the Connectional Lay Council. There were 6 committees who met and developed the resolution at the 2012 Legislative Summit that was held at the Dorothy Wells Conference and Retreat Center in Black Mountain, North Carolina in October 2011. The six committees were (1) Restructuring; (2) Conference Boundaries; (3) Schools and Colleges; (4) Education Requirements for Ministers; (5) Ministerial Concerns; and (6) Budget. A total of 23 resolutions were developed; however, "The Establishment of a General Council within the A.M.E. Zion Church" was not in the packet. The following resolutions were presented and discussed: Christian Education Resolution; Lay Council; Development of a Department of Information Technology; New Members/Baptized Children Unified Curriculum; Evangelism; Office of Ecumenical Affairs; Department of Church Growth and Development; Conference Boundaries; Schools and Colleges (Scholarship Aid for A.M.E. Zion Students at Hood Theological Seminary, Sacred Music AND Diversifying the Board of Trustees of Livingstone College); Requirements for Educational Requirements for Ministers (Standardizing the Course of Studies, Electronic Accessibility of Documentation for Conference Studies and/or Ordination Records, Differentiating the Office of Deacon and Local Deacon, Elder and Local Elder, Reception of Ordained Ministers from Other Denominations, and Conference Studies Under "Missionary Rule"); Ministerial Concerns (Pastors Health and Life Insurance Benefits, Assignment of Presiding Elder, Retirement Plan) and Covenant of Shared Ministry, Establishment of an Office of General Council and Connectional Budget

CHALLENGE LUNCHEON

Bishop Kenneth Monroe, Chairman of the Board of Lay Activities and Presiding Prelate of

the South Atlantic Episcopal District, was Key-note Speaker for the Challenge Luncheon. The title of Bishop Monroe's message was "Maximizing the Movement of God." Bishop advised that if we are to maximize the movement of God, we must: Fortify our faith; We must face our frustrations; It is important that we focus on the future.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES

The Rev. Lisa McDow, CLC Parliamentarian, made a detailed power point presentation on the Parliamentary Procedures. Her presentation included (1) What is Parliamentary Procedures?; (2) Why do we use Parliamentary Procedures?; (3) Guiding Principles as you use Parliamentary Procedures; (4) Who was Robert?—Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised; and (5) A Brief Overview of the Newly Revised Version of Robert's Rules of Order.

CANDIDATES' FORUMS

The following candidates introduced themselves to those attending the Convocation: Candidates for Episcopacy Rev. Dr. Derrick Anderson, Rev. Dr. David R. Baker, Rev. Dr. Dwight Cannon, Rev. Dr. George Crenshaw, Rev. Dr. Michael A. Frencher, Sr., Rev. Dr. M. Luther Hill, Rev. Dr. Kenneth Q. James, Rev. Dr. Terry L. Jones, Rev. Barbara LaToison, Rev. Dr. Douglas Maven, Rev. Sr. Eleazar Merriweather, Rev. Dr. W. Darin Moore, Rev. Dr. Felix K. Ofofu, Rev. Dr. Staccato Powell, Sr., Rev. Dr. Audie V. Simon, Rev. Dr. Seth O. Lartey and Rev. Anthony Witherspoon
Candidates for General Office General Secretary-Auditor - Rev. Robert E. Linder and Rev. Dr. Gregory R. Smith Editor, Star of Zion - Mr. Michael Lisby (Incumbent) Editor, A.M.E. Zion Quarterly Review and Secretary, A.M.E. Zion Historical Society - Rev. Malcolm J. Byrd, Rev. Dr. William Mckenith, Rev. Dr. George H. McNeely and Rev. Ray Owens Secretary, Christian Education Department - Rev. Kathryn G. Brown Director, Bureau of Evangelism - Rev. Dr. Otis T. McMillian Director of Public Affairs - Rev. George E. McKain, II (Incumbent) Director, Department of Health and Social Concerns - Rev. Esther Rose, Rev. Dr. Bernard H. Sullivan, Jr. (Incumbent) and Ms. A. Cozzie Watkins Secretary-Treasurer, Brotherhood Pension and Ministerial Relief - Mr. David Aiken and Rev. Darrell Williams

LEGISLATION - CLC BYLAWS

The CLC Bylaws Committee Members read the following resolutions approved by the CLC Executive Board. The resolutions read will be presented and discussed at the upcoming 10th Quadrennial Session of the CLC. Chapter XI, 2008 Book of Discipline, revision—Paragraphs 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656 and 657; Inquire Condition of Lay Council --- Book of Discipline 2008, paragraph 653, page 292; Lay Council Presidents Conference Reporting; Printing of the A.M.E. Zion Discipline; Honoring the Memory of Bishop Alexander Walters and Revision of The Connectional Lay Council (CLC) Constitution and Bylaws by the 9th Quadrennial Convention.

EVANGELISTIC THRUST

Rev. Dr. Frances "Toni" Draper, Pastor, Freedom Temple A.M.E. Zion Church, Brooklyn Park, Maryland, Mid-Atlantic II Episcopal District did a presentation entitled "Who Stole My Church." Dr. Draper discussed 4 generation gaps that identified the different preferences and difference generations that have occurred and are identified as Builders, Boomers, Busters and Bridges. Dr. Draper stressed the importance of getting everyone involved in change and that all people within the church should understand clearly the changed structure of the church. We have to make the most of what we have.

SOCIAL POLITICAL ACTION HOUR OF EMPOWERMENT

Rev. Dr. T. Anthony Spearman, came forth and discussed the North Carolina People 14-Point

Agenda: All Children Need High Quality, Constitutional, Well-Funded, Diverse Public Schools; Livable Wages and Support for Low Income People; Health Care for All; Redress Ugly Chapters in N.C.'s Racist History; The Overthrow of the bi-racial 1898 Wilmington Government, the sterilization of poor, mainly Black women from 1947-1977 and 1979 Greensboro Massacre; Expand and Improve Same Day Registration and Public Financing of Elections; Lift Every Historically Black Colleges and Universities; Document and Redress 200 years of State Discrimination in Hiring and Contracting; Provide affordable Housing and Stop Consumer Abuse; Abolish the Racially-Biased Penalty and Mandatory Sentencing Laws; Reform our Prisons; Promote Environmental Justice; Collective Bargaining for Public Employees and Worker Safety; Protect the Rights of Immigrants from Latin America and other Nations; Organize Strengthen and Provide Funding for Our Civil Rights Enforcement Agencies and Statutes Now and Bring Our Troops Home from Iraq Now

Rev. Dr. William Barber, II gave his presentation on the North Carolina NAACP. Dr. Barber gave a detailed overview of the controversies between the Black and White within the North Carolina Area and the Nation. Information was distributed advising those present that from April 4 to August 28th – the 43rd Anniversary of the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the 48th Anniversary of the March on Washington, DC, there is a Voter Registration Campaign to call to action members of 1000 churches within the North Carolina State religious communities. The information identified 7 important areas to accomplish this task: Mass Non-Partisan Voter Registration; Mass Non-Partisan Voter Education and Participation on May 8th and November 6th; Identify Lead Voter Registration Coordinator in Every Church, Temple and Mosque; Call to Members to Exercise Their Civic Responsibility; Early Voting Drives by Each Church, Temple and Mosque and Encourage Members to join and support the work of the NAACP

BISHOP GEORGE J. LEAKE III SCHOLARSHIP BENEFIT CONCERT AND BLACK AND GOLD BANQUET

Selections were given by: Mrs. Theresa Moore-Mitchell, Opera Instructor, Livingstone College, the North Carolina A & T University Fellowship Gospel Choir, under the direction of Mr. Ronald Jones, Rev. Dr. Grant Harrison, Pastor of Soldiers Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church sang a solo and the Livingstone College Concert Choir. Special Tribute to the Laity was given by Robin Simmons-Blount, followed by an oral presentation by the R.C. Rochon Church Music Academy. Two youth who attended the Academy gave an overview of the information and music shared during the Academy. A presentation to a representative from Hannah's Haven House from the CLC's donation brought to the convocation was made. The Bishop George J. Leake III Scholarship award recipients Rev. Essie May and Rev. Laticia Goddette were introduced. The Crystal Award Campaign was introduced. The one time contribution amounts are \$5,000, \$2,500, \$1,000, \$500, \$100 and \$50. The Commemorative award for a \$1,000 contribution as a Local, District, Conference or as an individual contributor is the Bronze Award; for \$2,500 is the Silver Award and \$5,000 is for the Gold Award. One may receive an award "In Memory Of" or "In Honor Of." The awards will be presented at the CLC Convention in 2013.

9th LAY CONVOCATION - Greensboro, NC March 29 - April 1, 2012

