

The Virginia An-  
nual Conference  
Holds 159th Session

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BACK TO SCHOOL  
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# THE STAR OF ZION

SEPTEMBER 2025 | VOL 149 NO. 9 | STAROFZION.ORG | THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

## SCHOOL

## SEASON



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

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

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## OPINION

# Forward Thinking: A Pastoral Approach to Organizational Management in The A.M.E. Zion Church

By Rev. Kelcy G.L. Steele, Ph.D.

In The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, leadership is not simply about preserving the legacy we have inherited. It is about ensuring that legacy remains living, relevant, and future-focused. Too often, our structures are consumed with maintenance instead of mission (Barna, 2020). God is calling us toward Forward Thinking, a pastoral leadership approach that honors the past while building for the future.

What is Forward Thinking?

Forward Thinking is more than planning ahead. It is leading with vision while staying anchored in gratitude (Kotter, 2012). It celebrates yesterday's faithfulness, leverages today's opportunities, and prepares



for tomorrow's challenges. For pastors, this means managing budgets, buildings, and most importantly expectations, culture, and mission with the next generation in mind.

**Sidebar:**

- Forward Thinking Mindset
- Celebrate the past (Deut. 8:2)
- Embrace the present (Phil. 3:13-14)
- Prepare for the future (Prov. 29:18)

**Biblical Examples**

Scripture gives us leaders who embodied Forward Thinking:

- Nehemiah rebuilt Jerusalem's walls with one hand on the present and one on the future (Neh. 4:17 NRSV).
- Joshua led the people into the land promised to their

*Continued on page 5*



Mrs. Debra Chappelle-Polk  
Zion Spotlight Editor  
ZionSpotlight@StarOfZion.org

# MONROE WINDSOR TERRY, EAGLE SCOUT #20

By Georgette Williams

Photos By Georgette Williams

St. Louis, MO., September 2025..., Pack and Troop 147 out of Washington Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church in St. Louis, Missouri, is proud to introduce Eagle Scout #20, Monroe Windsor Terry.

Our Boy Scout troop has a long history of producing Eagle Scouts dating back to 1999.

The road to Eagle Scout began in 1912. Since that time, over two million Scouts have earned this honor. It carries a sense of pride and accomplishment that will remain with a Scout throughout their lifetime.

The Eagle Scout Court of Honor was held Saturday, August 9, 2025, at Washington Metropolitan.

Mr. Charles White, Cubmaster, explained how ten years ago, a motivated, positive young man with a bright smile joined Pack and Troop 147 as a Cub Scout. He was and is always willing to help other kids.

Boy Scout leader, Ms. Erika "Niki" Carmichael, described Monroe as a young man with a positive attitude. She wrote him an encouraging letter and gave an overview of his Eagle Scout Project. Monroe created a community garden in one of the lots across the street from the church.



harvested the garden.

Scoutmaster Fred Lee spoke about the beginning of Pack and Troop 147 and how the first Eagle Scout was Rev. Edwin Ferguson in 1999. He is proud of the young men who have come through this troop and admires Monroe for the effort he put into bringing this project to fruition.

Monroe's brother (Kajinaki Bujaga) and mother (Delores Gunn) also spoke on his behalf. They both encouraged Monroe to stick with the Boy Scout program. They believe his self-confidence and leadership come from his experience with the troop, even when he was tired of meeting every week. They encouraged him "to stick with it," knowing there would eventually be a benefit.

His mom said that while attending St. Louis University High School, Monroe received the "Father Hagan Award" for leadership and graduated with honors. When they were on vacation in Washington D.C., Monroe asked her to take a picture of him in front of the Department of Agriculture because one day he would be the head of it. Monroe is off to Florida A&M University the week of August 19<sup>th</sup> and will major in science and agriculture.

Monroe spoke about his journey through the Scouting program. He said that once he transferred to Pack and Troop 147, he realized how important Scouting was to his development. He also kept coming to the meetings for the brotherhood. His future goal is to end food insecurity and make sure that all people have access to fresh fruit and vegetables.



Peas, cabbage, lettuce, onions, potatoes, broccoli, tomatoes, jalapenos, bell peppers, rosemary, and squash were some of the things that were harvested out of his garden. He brought the whole community together, including the Girl Scouts of Washington Metropolitan, members of Pack and Troop 147, and other kids in the neighborhood, as he planted and

The pastor of Washington Metropolitan, Rev. Dr. William L. Johnson, III, thanked the leaders of the Scouting programs at the church and stressed how important it is to have programs that support our young Black males.

# Our Mission: Church School Spiritually Alive

By Gloria Miller

What made a workshop worth attending in July, one of the hottest months of the year? While summer activities are enjoyable, boosting attendance and making Church School Spiritually Alive remain vital church objectives.

Sandra Williams, the Charlotte District Christian Education director, planned a July 12 workshop: "Our Mission: Church School Spiritually Alive." Held at Walls Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, where Rev. Raymondo Brady is the pastor, the atmosphere buzzed with infectious energy from not only teachers and Christian



educators, but also Presiding Elder Dr. Andrew B. Smoke.

Using 16-inch-wide sunglasses, Gloria Miller, the facilitator, introduced the workshop by asking attendees to look at the presentation through different lenses and to consider diversifying skills and teaching methods. Miller also pointed out how children's books such as Who Moved My Cheese by Spencer Johnson, M.D., and Cleo Wade's book, What the Road Said, carry poignant messages about change and can be enjoyed – even by adults.

A PowerPoint slide show effectively addressed the need to incorporate bookmarks, puzzles, and word clouds into teaching practices.

The workshop focused on SMART. In other words, set an objective

that is specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound to achieve a better outcome.

Lesson planning using the SOAP acronym was another topic of the two-hour presentation by Miller, whereby the "S" represents Scripture, and "O" stands for observation. Application is represented by "A," and the "P" fittingly stands for Prayer or Prodding.

A bookmark is not merely a page saver; a bookmark can be used as a teaching tool to capture information on any biblical topic. Each attendee received a camera-ready copy of 12 bookmarks ranging from 12 Days of Christmas, Fruits of the Spirit, Get Out the Vote to The Black Panther, Church Folk, Hope, and Loyalty.

It is normal for parts of our brain to shrink as we get older; our brains, however, need to be kept active by learning new skills and using problem-solving activities to maintain cognitive function. Hence, participants were given rebus puzzles specifically on books in the Bible and milestones in the life of Christ.

Miller gave examples of word clouds – also known as weighted lists, word collages, or phrase clouds – and demonstrated how they can be used to highlight key concepts, spark discussions, and aid in vocabulary development; the visually, engaging tool can be used to introduce or summarize a lesson.

According to Miller, the Church School Herald-Journal includes hymn recommendations for each lesson, a feature also found in the Adult Quarterly Literature. Miller demonstrated how to seamlessly integrate hymnology and Black history into weekly lessons, e.g., providing the history of a hymn before it is sung and sharing "Little-Known Black History Facts." Incidentally, the two combined activities would take no more than three or four minutes out of the instructional time. If Christian educators do not raise awareness, who will shoulder that burden?

Building on her groundwork for change during the first half of the workshop, Miller demonstrated everything that she taught using the next Church School lesson: singing Blessed Assurance after briefly describing the relationship between the writer, Fanny Crosby, and Phoebe Knapp, composer; a local Little-Known Black History Fact featured Harry Boyd, a local Black man who designed the logo on the Mecklenburg County Courthouse at the intersection of Fourth and McDowell streets; setting a SMART objective; reviewing the prior lesson; introducing a rebus puzzle to reveal that the scripture for the lesson came from the book of Matthew; using a word cloud to introduce vocabulary as students showed what they knew about each word; providing tidbits from other sources; summarizing the main points of the lesson; showing a preview or teaser for the next lesson in the Young People Adult; and ending the lesson with the Church School benediction.

Finally, Miller distributed a Feedback Loop that included: (1) I Liked (2) I Did Not Like (3) I Need More Information On (4) Facilitator Could Have Done More (5) If I Were the Facilitator, I would (6) My Most Valuable Takeaway Was (7) Future Workshops Should Include (8) Any Other Comments Or Suggestions.

Based on a quote from the Black Panther bookmark, "Just because something works does not mean that it cannot be improved." The quote simply means there is always room for improvement. Miller encouraged teachers to evaluate each lesson, not to fault-find, but rather to gain wisdom for future lessons by pausing or making changes, running where it is working, and/or improving weaknesses. She further reminded participants that an evaluation happens whenever they teach, just as each of them was actively or intentionally evaluating her.

# Continued from page 2.....



ancestors (Josh. 1:6 NRSV).

•Jesus prepared the disciples for ministry beyond His earthly presence (John 14:12–17 NRSV).

In each case, gratitude for God’s past work fueled bold steps toward His next move (Brueggemann, 1997).

## Putting Forward Thinking into Practice

### 1. Preserve the Legacy, but Don’t Freeze It

Our history is rich with liberation and prophetic witness, but we must avoid “museum church syndrome” — where the only thing we showcase is what used to be (Allen, 2007). Archive the stories, but also create new ones. Keep traditions, but adapt methods.

### 2. Structure for Agility, Not Just Stability



Committees and ministries must be designed for creativity, not just control. Empower younger leaders now. Streamline bureaucracy so the mission moves at the speed of the Spirit (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017).

### 3. Build Financial Capacity with Mission in Mind

Shift from crisis giving to vision investing. Establish endowments. Teach stewardship as a spiritual discipline that funds ministry beyond our lifetimes (Hill, 2019).

### 4. Prepare for Leadership Succession

Identify and mentor emerging leaders before they are urgently needed. A smooth transition ensures the mission continues without stumbling (Steele, 2021).

## Why It Matters Now

We are living in a post-pandemic, digitally accelerated, socially polarized world (Pew Research, 2023). The church cannot lag behind cultural change while clinging to outdated playbooks. As pastors, we must be prophetic architects — designing ministries that can stand in the storms to come and planting seeds for a harvest we may never see.

Forward Thinking in Zion means:

- Honoring the past by addressing the justice challenges of the present (Mic. 6:8)
- Equipping congregations to thrive through transitions (Eph. 4:11–13)
- Creating worship spaces where every generation feels rooted and released into God’s future

## The Pastoral Charge

Don’t just thank God for what He has done — ask Him what He is about to do and lead your church accordingly. Forward Thinking is faithful stewardship (Luke 19:11–27). It ensures that when the next generation takes their place in pulpits, choirs, mission fields, and pews, they inherit a church that is alive, agile, and aligned with the move of God.

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# Presiding Elder Kenneth Crowder Among Top Honorees at 2025 HBCU Living Legends Scholarship Gala

By Star of Zion News

Winston-Salem, NC

The Benton Convention Center was alive with excitement and celebration on Saturday, August 16, as the HBCU Living Legends Scholarship Gala honored 33 exceptional individuals while raising funds for future generations of leaders. Three distinguished alumni from each of North Carolina's current Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were celebrated for their outstanding contributions and unwavering dedication.

Among them was Rev. Kenneth Crowder, Presiding Elder of the Norfolk District, Virginia Conference of The A.M.E. Zion Church, who truly exemplifies the spirit of an HBCU Living Legend. A proud alumnus of Barber-Scotia College, Rev. Crowder's impressive resume boasts a wealth of leadership and entrepreneurial endeavors. He served as a member of the Norfolk State University Board of Visitors and is a retired Trustee member of Livingstone College. Moreover, Crowder has achieved remarkable entrepreneurial success, including a 36-year tenure with the Kenneth W. Crowder State Farm Agency and founding Sole Right Men's Fine Footwear, where Crowder is noted as the largest independent Mezlan dealer in the United States. A testament to his lifelong commitment to service is his over 40 years of ministry in the Hampton Roads, Virginia area, and his 50-year membership in Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated. His dedication to community is mirrored by his wife, Sandra B. Crowder, who holds the prestigious position of eighteenth International President of the Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society.

Along with Rev. Crowder, three Livingstone College alumni were also recognized. Thomas Rudy Abrams, the college's former CIAA Football title coach, April Davis Hamilton, a former track and field athlete who is a distinguished accountant and non-profit treasurer, and Olympic Gold Medalist



Quanera Hayes, were acknowledged for their exceptional accomplishments.

The HBCU Living Legends Scholarship Gala, serves a dual mission to increase awareness of the excellence within these institutions by celebrating the achievements

of their alumni and to provide scholarships to deserving students currently enrolled in North Carolina's HBCUs. The gala acknowledged and supported the next wave of talented students by awarding scholarships to 18 undergraduates, and three are Livingstone College Presidential Scholars. Sophomores Muhammad Ibrahim, Madalyn Jones, and Emmanuella Nyarko were among the talented students who were awarded \$1,000 scholarships.



This year's gala, under the leadership of honorary co-chairs Chief William Penn Jr. of the Winston Salem Police Department, Dr. Terra Phelps Jones, United States Inspector General, and Coach George Williams, Olympic track coach and former track coach, was a resounding success. The event showcased the profound impact of HBCUs on individuals and communities alike, demonstrating how the legacy of these institutions continues to shape future generations of leaders and change-makers.

# RENEWAL, REFLECTION, RECONCILIATION, RETRIBUTION

By Debra Chappelle-Polk, Zion Spotlight Editor

September 2025, New York, NY

**September, the season of Renewal and Reflection:** September is an awesome time of the year. The summer season is ending, and the autumn season is beginning. The temperatures are cooler and comfortable. We can turn off the ACs, open the windows, and enjoy the crisp, refreshing autumn air. September is also the time to prepare for new challenges. Just as students prepare for a new school year, and farmers prepare their fields for planting, we too should prepare to open our hearts and minds. We often say, "God has a plan for me." It's a wake-up call and a good time to declutter. A time to listen to God's voice and listen for God's plan for the upcoming season.

September is also a time to reflect upon and reevaluate our spiritual journey. It reminds us to reflect on our relationship with God and renew our commitment to His teachings.

**A Season of Reconciliation:**  
Reconciliation is about transformation. Moving from a place of separation, hurt, and brokenness to a place of healing, wholeness, forgiveness, and reunion.



The Greek word for reconciliation is "katallage," which translates to "adjustment of a difference" or "restoration to favor," while the Hebrew word is "kapar" or "kaphar," which translates to "cover over" or "atone." It's taking the wrong and covering it with the cleansing power of God, restoring it to a new state of transformative unity with the Lord and all creation. Reconciliation is merging two separate, closed-off pieces into one unit. It's bringing that lost sheep back into the proverbial fold.

**A Season of Retribution - The Balance of Justice and Mercy:**  
While retribution is a key theme, the Bible also emphasizes mercy and forgiveness. Matthew 6:14-15 teaches that forgiveness is essential for receiving God's mercy. Translation: justice is important, but grace

and compassion are equally vital. The biblical concept of retribution encourages personal growth and moral decision-making. It encourages individuals to reflect on their actions and the potential consequences, fostering a sense of accountability while promoting forgiveness and reconciliation in relationships.



Biblical retribution emphasizes that actions/reactions have consequences. This concept is rooted in the belief that God is just and that He will hold individuals accountable for their actions.

**Man's Season of Retribution** - "I am your retribution," was not only a 2024 presidential election campaign promise, it is now policy.

The latest tactic used against dissenting voices is the threat of being investigated, and/or imprisoned, and/or deportation. Some congressional representatives are calling for committees to investigate past and present political adversaries. Former presidents and other elected officials, as well as civil rights activists and entertainers, have been threatened with being investigated because their political views differ with those of the present administration. Taxpayer dollars will be spent to investigate the investigators without any substantive evidence of wrongdoing.

Retribution is a two-way street. This season it's red retribution; the next season it's blue retribution. It can become a never-ending season of retribution.

In these turbulent and trying times, it's reassuring to remember that God's justice is perfect and He will repay individuals according to their deeds. Romans 12:19 states, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," meaning that ultimate judgment belongs to God. Galatians 6:7 emphasizes that individuals will reap what they sow, highlighting the importance of personal responsibility and accountability in the context of retribution.

Man plans. God decides. Proverbs 16:9

**Sources:** [TheEternalBible.com](http://TheEternalBible.com), [JohnBaptistChurch.com](http://JohnBaptistChurch.com) [OpenBible.info](http://OpenBible.info); [christianitypath.com](http://christianitypath.com)



# The Virginia Annual Conference Holds 159th Session

By Angel Eason, Lifestyle Editor

Photos By Sis. Regina Rivera and Rachel Means

**The Quadrennial Theme: “The A.M.E. Zion Church-- Serving This Present Age: Committing to Our Mission, Being Creative in Our Methods, Concentrating on Our Ministries, and Connecting Through Our Membership”**

Location: Richmond, VA.

The 159th Session of the Virginia Annual Conference was held June 26 - 28, 2025, at the Hilton Richmond Short Pump Spa and Conference Center in Richmond, Virginia. Bishop Brian R. Thompson Sr. serves as the Presiding Prelate, and Rev. Felicia R. Thompson serves as the Missionary Supervisor. There are three districts under the Virginia Conference: The Newport News District, led by Host Presiding Elder Rev. Dr. Vincent Jones; The Norfolk District, led by Presiding Elder Rev. Kenneth Crowder; and the Petersburg District, led by Presiding Elder Rev. T. Kenneth Venable.

The conference began with a powerful Communion Service that ushered in a special anointing. Bishop Eric L. Leake, Presiding Prelate, South Atlantic Episcopal District, delivered the communion meditation, “Enough to Go Around” (John 6:1-12).

The Lay Council Luncheon was held in the afternoon hour and Mr. William English, the Virginia Conference Lay Council President, led the Stoling Ceremony. Three members of the conference were honored as Laity Legend:

- Meta Miller (Gabriel Chapel, Norfolk District)
- Regina Rivera (Hood Temple, Petersburg District)
- Carolyn Wrenn (Zion Southampton, Newport News District)

The Virginia Conference Lay Council 2025 Scholarship recipients were also celebrated for their academic achievements:

- Mya B. Hayes (New Life, Newport News District)
- Triniti Blissett (Greater Metropolitan, Norfolk District)
- Tyler C. Johnson (Zion Chester, Petersburg District)

During the Episcopal address, Bishop Brian R. Thompson shared Romans 12:1-2, and reminded us that we have the same God who raised Harriett, spoke to Frederick, and walked with Sojourner Truth and



the hall of faith filled with many of them who were a part of The A.M.E. Zion Church who refused to bow down, break, and be silent.

The Christian Education Service was held on Thursday evening. Bishop Rudolph W. McKissick, Jr., Senior Pastor of The Bethel Church, delivered the sermon - “When the Fire Falls Right.” (Acts 2:1-16). The stoling ceremony was held for Christian Educators led by Rev. Dr. Sandi B. Hutchinson.

The conference and the Petersburg District honored the retirement of Presiding Elder T. Kenneth Venable. A heartfelt video tribute featured remarks from family members and a special presentation by the broth-





ers of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated. The emotional celebration reflected his faithful years of service to the Petersburg District.

The Missionary Convocation led by Missionary Supervisor, Rev. Felicia



R. Thompson, was held on Friday morning. She shared John 12:24; “Leadership and Legacy, Sowing for the Future.” She invited us to reflect on this truth: Kingdom legacy is not built on platforms, but it’s built on planted seeds.

Mrs. Sandra B. Crowder, the International President of the Women’s Home and Overseas Missionary Society, shared a powerful message during the Missionary Luncheon focused on Legacy Walk. She reminded us of the greats who came before us and the legacy that is still with

us today.

The Missionary Candlelight Service was held on Friday evening. Rev. Dr. Vanessa Hicks delivered a powerful message. She shared Mark 14:3-9; “Pour It All Out.” She asked, “Have you ever given from a deep place, when you didn’t have much but you gave it anyway?” She reminded us that this is what missionaries do.

Saturday morning, the Christian Educators hosted the Christian Education Convocation led by Rev. Dr. Sandi B. Hutchinson, Mid-Atlantic Co-Episcopal Director and Virginia Conference Director. Each district came together to welcome the Bishop and Missionary Supervisor and the 2025 graduates.

Bishop Thompson shared a powerful message during the Sunday worship service. “Access Granted,” (John 9:1-9). He shared that once you find out you have access to God, can’t nobody pull your joy from you, can’t nobody take your peace from you. He reminded us that you can’t curse what God has blessed. The whole church shouted, “I’m blessed.” The 159th Session closed with the reading of pastoral appointments, sending forth leaders equipped and renewed to serve this present age.



# The One Hundred and Thirty-Sixth Session of the Missouri Conference

By Georgette Williams

Photos By Larentz Boyd and Richie Williams

September 2025 - The 136<sup>th</sup> session of the Missouri Conference was held from Wednesday, July 9, through Saturday, July 12, 2025, in Raytown, Missouri, at the St. Peter A.M.E. Zion Church. Rev. Dr. Lelar Williams was the host pastor. Rev. Dr. Daran H. Mitchell was the Presiding Prelate and Rev. L. Lynn Mitchell, the Missionary Supervisor. Presiding Elder Seth Martin Moulton (Kansas City District) was the host Presiding Elder. Presiding Elder Carroll A. Johnson (St. Louis District) was also present.

The 136<sup>th</sup> session was the first Missouri Annual Conference for Bishop Daran H. Mitchell, who was appointed the Presiding Prelate of the Midwest District at the 2024 General Conference in Greensboro, North Carolina.

The conference opened with the Communion Worship Service.

The worship leader was Rev. Dr. Lelar Williams. Music was provided by Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church of Kansas City, MO. The message was given by The Rev. Marcell Brown, pastor of St. Matthew A.M.E. Zion Church. The title was "Where's Your Offering?" We must tell Him yes, have an altar, and bring Him a burnt offering.

Bishop Daran Mitchell led the conference in Holy Communion with assistance from the pulpit participants. After brief announcements, the conference was dismissed for a break before the business session began.

The business session of the conference opened with Roll Call and the reports from the Credentials Committee and the Committee on Rules. Other reports were heard, and the dates for the upcoming Check-up Meetings and 2026 conference were announced.

The Episcopal Address was given by Bishop Daran Mitchell and was entitled "Serving This Present Age – Committed to Our Mission." We have to mend, bend, and blend. He also made seven recommendations to help us accomplish the tasks.

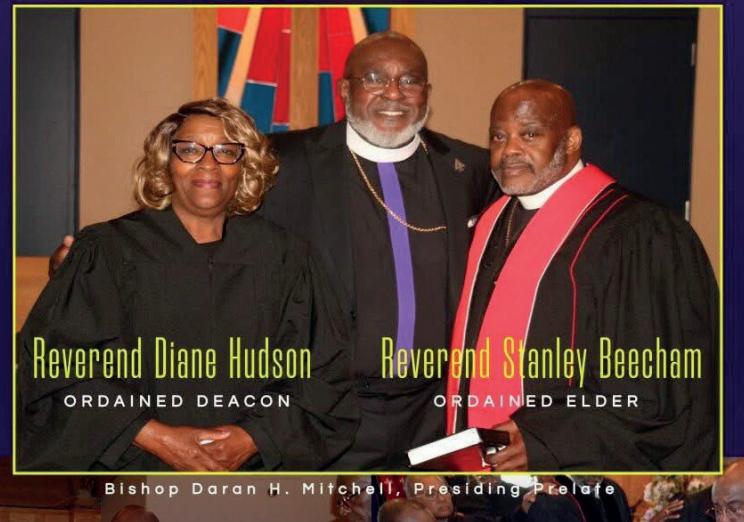
The Welcome Program was held on Wednesday evening. Rev. Shannon Hancock presided. After an awesome presentation by the children of St. Peter, Rev. Dr. Williams welcomed the conference and gave a brief history of the church. Several invited guests brought greetings to the Conference, and we were blessed with music by Kim Davis. A delicious meal was served by the culinary committee, and they would continue this same excellence throughout the week.

On Thursday, July 10, 2025, we heard reports from Presiding Elders Seth Moulton and Carroll A. Johnson, the pastors, and delegates. "The School of the Prophets" was presented by Bishop Daran H. Mitchell. The lesson was entitled "Re-Imagining and Re-imagining the Once and Future Church." The Sexual Misconduct Prevention & Reporting Training was presented by Rev. Dr. Anthony Gibson (Presiding Elder of the Indianapolis District of the Indiana Conference). The Lay Hour and Stoling Ceremony was led by Debra Payne. Conference business continued with reports from the Admissions Committee, Conference Studies, and Holy Orders.

On Thursday evening, the Christian Education Worship Service was led by Mrs. Ruby Rideout. The service included a C.E.D. Stoling Cere-



*Congratulations on your Ordination!*



mony. Music was provided by the Mount Zion A.M.E. Zion Church Choir. Rev. Shannon Hancock shared the message, "Mastering a Group Project."

The Missionary Convocation was held on Friday morning. Joyce Boyd presided. Rev. L. Lynn Mitchell shared the message, "Leadership is Legacy". A joint report was given by the District Missionary presidents and officers.

Rev. Kenneth Pegue and the Necrology Committee held a "Memorial Moment". Selections were rendered by Kim Davis and Cynthia Davis.

After lunch, the service of Ordination was held. It was led by Bishop Mitchell. He was assisted by Presiding Elders Moulton and Johnson. Sis. Diane Hudson was ordained a Deacon, and Rev. Stanley Beechum was ordained an Elder. Afterwards, reports from the State of the Country, the Specialized Ministry, and the Audit Committee were read. Rev. Diane Patterson read the disciplinary questions, and the character of the clergy was passed.



The Candlelight Service was held on Friday evening. Rev. L. Lynn Mitchell presided. There was a stoling service. Music was provided by the Washington Metropolitan Voices of Zion. Rev. Carroll A. Johnson gave the message, entitled "If you Choose."

On Saturday morning, there were C.E.D. workshops for all ages, followed by a worship service led by Rhonda Buford. Bishop Mitchell installed the VICYC Officers. Rev. Tanya B'yote' delivered the message, "Choose to do the Right Thing."

After lunch, the closing worship service was held. Rev. Dr. Lelar Williams was the Worship leader. Music was provided by the Missouri Conference Mass Choir. Bishop Daran Mitchell gave the final message, "Move with Jesus". Appointments were made, and the conference was adjourned.

It was a Spirit-filled conference with a Word from the Lord every day, wonderful music, good food, and fellowship. We look forward to the next 3 years of leadership from Bishop and Rev. Mitchell. To God be the glory!

**(Photos include:** Rev. L. Mitchell, Rev. Dr. Lelar Williams, Presiding Elders Carroll Johnson and Seth Martin Moulton, Bishop Daran Mitchell, Diane Hudson, and Stanley Beechum)



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**GOOD HEALTH WIN**



Rev. Roderick J. Josey  
Education Editor  
education@starofzion.org

# BACK TO SCHOOL WEEKEND AT THE MET

By Georgette Williams

Photos By Georgette Williams

St. Louis, MO., September 2025..., On Saturday, August 9, 2025, the Lay Council at Washington Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church in St. Louis, Missouri, sponsored "Backpacks & Barbers." Backpacks and school supplies were given to children in the community. There was also a barber trailer with a full barbershop where haircuts were provided free of charge for anyone who needed one.

At the same time, the church participated in the weekly "Grill to Glory," sponsored by the Urban League of St. Louis, Missouri. "Grill to Glory" is a neighborhood engagement model designed to make the neighborhood church a focal point for individuals and families. Their motto is "Every church, every Saturday." Each Saturday, meals are available to the community. As of October 2024, over three hundred churches are participating in this effort. The Lay Council leads this effort at least six months out of the year, weather permitting.

While those activities were happening outside, the members of the Feeding Ministry served hot meals in the church's parking lot. Families came for backpacks and haircuts and had hot dogs and snacks for lunch and a



giving scholarships to the high school graduates and the continuing undergraduates since the organization was formed under Bishop Arthur Marshall Jr. This year, we have three students continuing their education. Jasmine Hughes is a junior majoring in biology and neuroscience at Regis University in Denver, CO. She aspires to be an anesthesiologist. Taylor Boaz, a senior biology major at the University of Missouri-St. Louis aspires to be a pediatrician. Demoria Roberson is a senior at Tennessee State University majoring in family consumer science. She aspires to be a teacher and open her own Day Care Center. Each received a scholarship and an offering.

The Directors of Children and Youth recognized the children and youth for their accomplishments as well. Several of them were present at church and were asked to stand as their many accomplishments were read. Jasmine Hughes, Demoria Roberson, and Krista Holmes performed a praise dance to "The Hill" by Travis Greene, choreographed by Demoria Roberson. Krista Holmes asked the church to continue to uplift and encourage our youth as they return to school.

The message for everyone was "Stand Still". Rev. Dr. William L. Johnson, pastor, reminded everyone to stand still when they feel like they have given their all. "Don't be moved by your anger, your agenda, or your anxiety." The scripture reference was II Chronicles 20:15-17.

As the new school year begins, we must keep our children and youth uplifted in prayer. Though the enemy is alive and well, God will fight our battles.

**Picture #1 – Jasmine Hughes, Taylor Boaz, Demoria Roberson and Rev. Dr. William Johnson (back row)**

**Picture #2 – Jayden McKnight, Jacob McKnight, Taylor Boaz, Legend Williams, Ashton McKnight, Andre Washington and Rev. Dr. William L. Johnson (2<sup>nd</sup> row).**

hot meal for dinner.

On Sunday morning, the children and youth were recognized for their accomplishments. The Livingstone College Alumni Associates has been



# BACK TO SCHOOL WITH THE 2025 MARGARET S. WILLIE SCHOLARSHIP FUND RECIPIENTS

By Joy Williamson-Foster, Connectional Chairman, Life Members Council & Scholarship Committee Chairman

The Margaret S. Willie Scholarship Fund, originally known as the Life Members Council Scholarship Fund, originated in 1985. Mrs. Margaret Sutton Willie and her husband, Mr. Earl Willie of Kannapolis, NC, provided the funds, subsequently establishing the Willie Fam-

ily Endowment Fund. Forty years later, The Margaret S. Willie Scholarship Fund of the Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society proudly announces the 2025 "Great 8" Scholarship Recipients. The "Great 8" Scholars are stellar students at Zion's finest institutions, Livingstone College, Clinton College, and Hood Theological Seminary. Please join us in celebrating these well-deserving students, their Episcopal areas, and the Colleges /Seminaries they represent.

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**CONGRATULATIONS!**

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LIVINGSTONE COLLEGE

**Brianna Pierce**  
LIVINGSTONE COLLEGE

**Aijaleel Eaddy**  
HOOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

**William L. Johnson IV**  
HOOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

**Tamica Robinson**  
HOOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

**Desmond Williams**  
CLINTON COLLEGE

**Cassandra Moore**  
HOOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

**Tiesha Cuthbertson**  
HOOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

SANDRA CROWDER, INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT  
JOY WILLIAMSON FOSTER, CONNECTIONAL LIFE MEMBERS CHAIRMAN

Hood Theological Seminary,  
Salisbury, NC

William Johnson IV - Mid-West  
Episcopal District, Missouri Conference

Tiesha Cuthbertson - Piedmont  
Episcopal District, Western North  
Carolina Conference

Al Jaleel Eaddy - South Atlantic  
Episcopal District, Palmetto Conference

Cassandra Moore - Piedmont  
Episcopal District, Western North  
Carolina Conference

Tamica Robinson - Piedmont  
Episcopal District, Western North  
Carolina Conference

Livingstone College, Salisbury,  
NC

Jahson Legrand - North Eastern  
Episcopal District, New Jersey  
Conference

Brianna Pierce - Piedmont Episcopal  
District, Western North Carolina  
Conference

Clinton College, Rock Hill, SC

Desmond Williams - Mid-West  
Episcopal District, Missouri Annual  
Conference

The Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society Executive Board, Mrs. Sandra B. Crowder, International President, wishes each of you a wonderful academic year.

# Dollars and Scholars: Livingstone College announces another \$10M gift from Community philanthropist ahead of start of academic year

***Latest gift is third from anonymous donor; campus improvements include renovated cafeteria***

By Mai Li Munoz, Chief Communications Officer

Photos By Da'Tarvia Parrish

SALISBURY, N.C. – What started as a proposal on paper has turned into a multimillion-dollar reality at Livingstone College.

Dr. Anthony Davis, president of Livingstone College, announced on Tuesday to a crowd gathered at Aggrey Student Union that an anonymous donor made another \$10 million gift.

“Investments like this are why Livingstone will move into the ranks of the top 20 HBCUs in the nation,” Davis said. “Transformational gifts are just one way that our supporters demonstrate their belief in our future. Our college is poised to impact our region, our country, and our nation in an unbelievable way.”

Davis has secured more than \$56 million since being installed as the college’s president in 2022. His \$30 million capital improvement plan – which he calls the “Miracle on Monroe Street” – is designed to rehabilitate student housing, the dining hall, administration buildings, and other “crumbling infrastructure” on campus.

The announcement comes at a time when federal funding for higher education is being impacted – both at the institutional and individual levels – but charitable giving to education saw an increase of 13.2% according to the 2024 Giving USA Annual Report on Philanthropy.

Davis’s announcement marks the third gift of its size to Livingstone, a rare occurrence at Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

In 2020, Filmore Thomas, the former editor-in-chief of online publication We Are HBCUs, wrote a piece exploring the rare philanthropic “megagift” – a donation of \$10 million or more – that HBCUs receive from private donors: “HBCUs have a rich history that spans almost two centuries but of the 107 HBCUs, only twelve schools, or 11% of HBCUs, have ever received a donation of \$10 million or more,” Thomas wrote. “That number dwindles to 10, or 9% of HBCUs if we exclude a \$30 million debt cancellation to Cheyney University and a \$20.5 million building donation to Jackson State University.”

Thomas went on to write that the “only HBCUs to receive multiple \$10 million+ gifts are Morehouse



and Spelman College”. That was five years ago before Livingstone began receiving eight-figure private gifts from the donor: the first \$10 million donation arrived in July 2024 and the second in February of 2025.



Davis announced the latest gift on the same day that he cut the ribbon on a redesigned campus dining hall, part of a new food service contract with Thompson Hospitality Services, the largest minority owned food and facilities management services company in the country, a renovation funded by some of the anonymous donor’s prior giving.



Last academic year, the college experienced transformations in student recruitment and retention, along with student academic achievement. “No other HBCU has doubled freshman enrollment, from 200 to 441,” Davis said. “It wasn’t too long ago when we had a freshman retention rate between 47% and 53%; right now, we have a 75% retention rate. And when you look at upperclassmen, 92% of those who are eligible return to the college. Students want to be at Livingstone. And we have changed the academic profile of Livingstone College. We went from a freshman average GPA of 2.4 to 3.26. We made a jump from 14 presidential scholars to 108 to this year, 131. All of this is happening in less than three years.”



“If we’re going to sustain our wins, we can’t stop working,” Davis said. “When you’re in a race, you can’t slow down...We have to keep moving.”





Mr. Thomas Umstead  
Entertainment & The Arts Editor  
Entertainment\_Arts@StarofZion.org

# Bible-Themed TV Projects Finding Home on Streaming Services



By R. Thomas Umstead, Entertainment and Arts Editor

Faith-inspired narratives are at the center of numerous TV shows and movies now airing or in production.

In September, Netflix – in partnership with prolific producer/writer Tyler Perry – will debut “Ruth and Boaz,” a reimagining of the iconic Biblical love story. The film—produced through Perry and “Miracles From Heaven” producer DeVon Franklin’s partnership with the streaming service—stars Serayah McNeill as Ruth, an emerging talent in Atlanta’s music scene who steps away from her rising career to care for an elderly widow (Phylicia Rashad), while finding unexpected romance with Boaz (Tyler Lepley), a local business owner.

“I think in this polarizing world, and at a time when the world seems to be growing colder every day, we both share the common goal of wanting to spread some good,” Perry told Netflix regarding the film, which debuts on Netflix September 26. (<https://www.netflix.com/tudum/articles/r-and-b-tyler-perry-release-date-photos-news>)

In an interview with Collider publication, Franklin said the film retells an epic Bible story that he has been familiar with for a long time, and that it feels “contemporary and fresh and relevant to the culture in a way that also celebrates and showcases love.” (<https://collider.com/ruth-and-boaz-image-devon-franklin-tyler-perry-update-netflix/>)

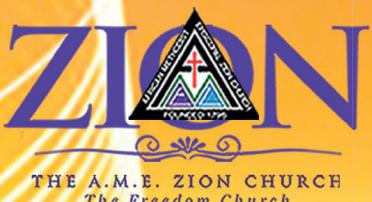
Other Biblical-themed projects in development include Prime Video’s “Joseph of Egypt,” which will retell the Old Testament story of the son of Jacob and Rachel who, as told in the Book of Genesis, was sold into slavery by his jealous brothers but eventually rose to incredible power in Egypt.

The series follows the February launch of the streaming service’s drama series “House of David,” which retells the Old Testament Story of King David. The series has already been greenlit for a second season. Earlier this year, Prime Video secured the exclusive streaming rights to the long-running series “The Chosen,” which focuses on the life of Jesus Christ.

On the comedic front, BET Plus last month (August) debuted the second season of its series “Churchy,” which follows the exploits of a pastor who inherits leadership of a fictional Bethlehem Temple and must navigate through the daily headaches of ministry life, according to the streaming service.

Linear cable channel Impact has developed its first comedy series, “Highly Favored,” which stars Michael Colyar as a charismatic yet old-fashioned preacher navigating modern challenges in his church while balancing family, faith, and community, according to the network.

# "NEED FINANCIAL HELP?"



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Mr. Daman De Leon  
Health and Wellness Editor  
Health\_Wellness@StarOfZion.org

# Men and Prostate Cancer: The importance of timely screening

By Daman De Leon, Health and Wellness Editor

One of the health themes for September is National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, all men are at risk for prostate cancer, but older men, African American men, and those with a family history of prostate cancer have a greater risk.

The most common risk factor is age. The older a man is, the greater the chance of getting prostate cancer. According to the American Cancer Society, about one in eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during their lifetime. But each man's risk of prostate cancer varies based on age, race or ethnicity, and other factors.

African American men are more likely to get prostate cancer than other races and ethnicities, and are more than twice as likely to die from it than other men. In 2020, out of every 100,000 white men, 95 were diagnosed with a new case of prostate cancer, while out of 100,000 Black (non-Hispanic) men, 154 were diagnosed, according to the U.S. Cancer Statistics Working Group.

For Dr. John Stewart, chief of surgery for Morehouse School of Medicine at Grady Health System, raising awareness about prostate cancer is paramount to improving outcomes.

"We've got to make sure to get the word out about prostate cancer screenings," Stewart said. "As Black men, we aren't exactly fond of interactions with the medical system. We see it in prostate cancer, we see it in colonoscopy screenings. We have to create a better agenda for men's health in our community."

It's not clear what makes Black men more likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer, but they also account for a high proportion of advanced cases of the disease, regardless of age, Stewart said. Dr. Wayne Harris, an associate professor in Emory School of Medicine's department of hematology and medical oncology, said that prostate cancer tends to be a disease of older men, but this isn't always true for Black men.

"In the African American community, it [prostate cancer] is known to have an earlier onset and have a more aggressive profile for reasons that are not fully clear," Harris said. "There's this broad spectrum of contributing factors, but not one specific thing that says this is why there are disparities."

For detecting prostate cancer, the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test is used, but the ACS notes it's not a perfect test for finding prostate cancer early. It misses some cancers, and sometimes it finds cancers that are so slow-growing they would probably never need to be treated.

*The American Cancer Society* recommends Black men ask about PSA screenings at 45. This recommendation is five years earlier than other groups.

Harris noted contrasting recommendations by different organizations regarding the PSA screening, stating, "The consensus is that there



should be an individualized discussion with the patient's physician," for every case to ensure age-appropriate health screenings are conducted. Along with PSA screenings, digital rectal exams can detect prostate cancer, rectal cancer, and other abnormalities.

While some risk factors for the cancer can't be controlled, Harris said that avoiding smoking, using alcohol in excess, a high-fat diet, and other lifestyle factors are beneficial for not only prostate, but many different types of cancer.

## Risk Factors for Prostate Cancer

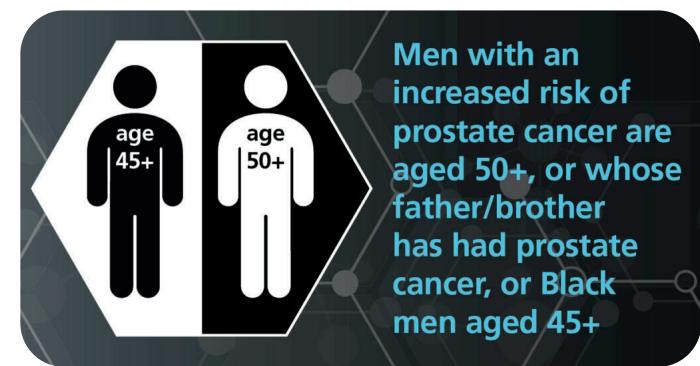
According to the American Cancer Society, about one in eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during their lifetime. But each man's risk of prostate cancer varies based on age, race or ethnicity, and other factors.

**Age:** About six in 10 prostate cancers are diagnosed in men who are 65 or older, and it is rare in men under 40. The average age of men when they are first diagnosed is about 67.

**Race:** Prostate cancer develops more often in African American men and in Caribbean men of African ancestry than in men of other races. And when it does develop in these men, they tend to be younger.

### Heredity:

The ACS reports prostate cancer seems to run in some families, which suggests that, in some cases, there may be an inherited



or genetic factor. Having a father or brother with prostate cancer more than doubles a man's risk of developing this disease. (The risk is higher for men who have a brother with the disease than for those who have a father with it.) The risk is much higher for men with several affected relatives, particularly if their relatives were young when the cancer was found.

It is important to continue to educate ourselves as a community as well as be proactive, raising awareness, and countermeasures to ensure healthy, productive lives to champion prevention.

## References

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# Gearing up for the Fall/Winter Season

By Dr. Yabo Beysolow, MD, MPH  
Director, Health Ministry A.M.E. Zion Church

We are preparing once again for the Fall 2025 Respiratory Season, which includes Cold, Flu, and COVID-19 viruses, RSV, and other germs. Kids across the country are either heading back to school. As you prepare your home for colder weather and gather your warmer clothes, this is an ideal time to get ready for the upcoming Cold/Flu/COVID-19 season.

## Make sure your vaccines are up to date!

New flu and COVID-19 vaccines for the Fall/Winter 2025-26 season are expected to be available at your doctor's offices within the next month. The flu and COVID-19 vaccines you received in 2024 will not provide protection this Fall and Winter.

**Why get vaccinated?** Vaccines save millions of lives each year. Diseases like measles, hepatitis B, the flu, COVID-19, and whooping cough still exist. They have NOT disappeared. Don't be among the people who get severely ill or die from the flu, COVID, or RSV every year in the United States. Last year was one of the most severe flu seasons in the US in over ten years.

**What vaccines should I get?** Your doctor, pharmacist, and healthcare team recommend that you, your children, and your grandchildren stay up to date with vaccinations.

We should continue to get our vaccines—both kids and adults—based on recommended immunization schedules from trusted sources such as:

- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). AAP Vaccine Schedules for children from birth to 18 years old
- American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG). ACOG Vaccine Schedules for women and pregnant women.
- American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP). AAFP Vaccine Schedules for all adults, including younger and older adults.
- American College of Physicians (ACP). ACP Vaccine Schedules for all adults.



Following these recommended schedules provides the best protection against diseases for children and adults. Do not fall for misinformation you might hear about vaccines. Do not delay your vaccines or avoid getting vaccinated altogether because you have concerns or questions. Remember to contact your trusted sources for answers or information about vaccines.

## 1. Your trusted pediatrician

2. Your trusted family doctor
- Your trusted pharmacist
- Your local health department.

## Where can I get a vaccine? Start with your doctor's office.

- If you don't have a doctor or healthcare provider, try your local pharmacy or health department.
- If you do not have health insurance or if your health insurance doesn't cover vaccines, reach out to the following clinics in your area:
  - o Community Health Centers/Federally Qualified Health Centers, <https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/>
  - o National Association of Free and Charitable Clinics, <https://nafclinics.org/find-clinic/>

## Practice good hygiene!

- Cover your coughs and sneezes to prevent the spread of germs and protect others.
- Wash and sanitize your hands regularly. Handwashing with soap removes germs from your hands, reducing the risk of infecting your respiratory system when you touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. If soap and water aren't available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol to kill these germs.
- Keep frequently touched surfaces clean! Use household cleaners that contain soap or detergent to remove germs and dirt.

August is National Immunization Awareness Month in the U.S.

# Highlights from the Health Ministry A.M.E. Zion Church Summer 2025

By Dr. Yabo Beysolow, MD, MPH  
Director of Health Ministry A.M.E. Zion

**The Health Ministry of The A.M.E. Zion Church is here to serve you!** We are honored to be led by Bishop George D. Crenshaw, Presiding Bishop of the Northeastern Episcopal District and Chairman of the Health Committee, Board of Bishops of The A.M.E. Zion Church. We thank the entire Board of Bishops of the A.M.E. Zion Denomination for their unwavering support.

A few highlights from Summer 2025:

We were delighted to serve during the July 2025 Connectional Council of the A.M.E. Zion Church and at the 13<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Connectional Lay Council Convention (CLC) in Winston-Salem, N.C.

**Health Suite Services at CC and CLC July 2025:** A dedicated team of certified, licensed healthcare professionals and a wonderful volunteer administrative team provided health care services—such as blood pressure and blood sugar checks—attended to emergencies, and offered health coaching. The team was available to the hundreds in attendance over the eight days.

## Free Exercise and Health Sessions

In collaboration with our partner, Temple Builders Fitness Ministry, owned by Minister Cliff Barnett, Jr., we offered free chair exercise classes during CLC. Attendees also had the chance to experience chair yoga and stretching sessions aimed at invigorating their minds, bodies,

and spirits. The Young Adults of the CLC also led a mindfulness session on one of the days.

#### Health Ambassadors' Luncheon during CLC

The Health Ministry of The A.M.E. Zion Church sponsored a Health Ambassadors' Luncheon for over 85 attendees, including Bishop George D. Crenshaw, Bishop and Missionary Supervisor Daran Mitchell, Bishop and Missionary Supervisor Michael A. Frencher, Dr. Joseph K. Davis, President of the Connectional Lay Council, and lay leaders from across the country. During the luncheon, the Health Ministry, led by Dr. Beyelow, provided valuable information on "Starting/Enhancing a Health Ministry in Your Congregation – the nuts and bolts." We were blessed to have Mrs. Felicia Foye, representing one of our national partners, the American Diabetes Association (ADA), share helpful resources and tips on diabetes prevention and management, including the 60-second Diabetes Risk Test.

Two of our Episcopal Area Health Coordinators from the South-Atlantic Episcopal District (Reverend Andrea Afolabi-Jallah, RN, BSN) and the Piedmont District (Joyce Floyd, RN, BSN) served as speakers. Rev. Afolabi-Jallah shared the tools needed to create an impactful health ministry and how to adopt a service ministry mindset. Nurse Floyd also demonstrated how she shared information on prostate cancer at her church. Another national partner, the Prostate Health Education



Network (PHEN), provided vital resources for our congregations on diagnosing and managing prostate cancer, along with an AME Zion link with resources designed for church leadership to share information with their congregations. Temple Builders Fitness Ministry offered life-saving information through a Christ-centered approach on healthy eating and exercise for longevity.

Find out more about the Health Ministry of The A.M.E. Zion Church

- Spring 2025 Newsletter
- Fall 2024 Newsletter

Watch prior episodes of the Prescribing Positivity series on AMEZTV, your go-to channel for holistic health and wellness, hosted by the Health Ministry of

The A.M.E. Zion Church. Here, we aim to uplift and empower individuals towards optimal well-being. Through insightful discussions with medical and public health specialists, we provide expert advice, practical tips, and information tailored to nourish the mind, body, and spirit.

Prior articles written by the Office of Health Ministry of the A.M.E. Zion Church may be found in the Health and Wellness Section in the Star of Zion.

Contact us via email at [healthministry@amezion.org](mailto:healthministry@amezion.org)

## Sounding the alarm: Rising Suicide rates in the Black Church and Community

By Daman De Leon, Health & Wellness Editor

Self-directed violence, which includes suicidal behavior, can be defined as threatened or actual use of physical force against oneself, which results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury or death (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002). Suicide or completed suicide is defined as a "death from injury, poisoning, or suffocation where it is explicitly or implicitly evident that the injury was self-inflicted and intended to be fatal. Suicidal ideation refers to self-reported thoughts of engaging in suicidal-related behavior" (O'Carroll et al., 1996, pp. 247-248). Injury from suicidal behavior is a major public health problem in the United States (Goldsmith, Pellmar, Kleinman, & Bunney, 2002).

Despite the widespread impact of self-directed violence in the United States, the problem has frequently been viewed as one solely affecting Euro-American males (Davis, 1979) and the affluent (Earls, Escobar, & Manson, 1990). Among non-European Americans, only the incidence of suicide among Native Americans has been widely noted (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 1986). There are several reasons for studying suicidal behavior among a variety of minority populations in the United States. It is a leading cause of premature death and injury within these populations. Also, because European American suicide deaths represent more than 90% of the U.S. national total (Kachur, Potter, James, & Powell, 1995), the national rates and many of the risk and protective factors studied reflect patterns among that population and not necessarily those of African Americans.



Suicide was the 16th-leading cause of death overall in 2023 for African Americans. On an average day in the United States, 1 African American dies by suicide every 4.5 hours. There were 28,177 suicides recorded among African Americans from 1990 to 2003. The yearly number of suicides among African Americans (unless otherwise noted, figures cited for African Americans represent those for non-Hispanic African Americans) in the United States increased slightly by 2.1% from 1,879 in 1990 to 1,918 in 2003 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2005). However, the age-adjusted suicide rate for this population declined 25% during the same period. The age-adjusted suicide rate was 7.15 deaths per 100,000 population in 1990 (all rates are per 100,000 population), which fluctuated in the early 1990s, but it has been declining since 1993 to 5.36 in 2003. Another measure of the scope of the suicide prob-

lem is by the years of potential life lost (YPLL) because of premature death. In 2003, suicide was the 10th-leading cause of YPLL before age 75 for African Americans, responsible for 73,065 YPLL (CDC, 2005). The overall statistics on suicide among African Americans obscure the disproportionate impact of this health problem on specific subgroups within the population, especially males and females in the adolescent and young-adult age groups (Reese, Crosby, Hasbrouck, & Willis, 2004).

African American adolescents and young adults have the highest number and the highest rate of suicide of any age group of African Americans. Suicide was the third-leading cause of death among African American people aged 15 to 19 years, fourth among those aged 20 to 29 years, and eighth among those aged 30 to 39. Among African American adolescents and young adults, it is particularly the males who have the highest rates. During the early 1990s, the suicide rates among African American males aged 15 to 24 years were rising. The rates peaked in 1993 at 20.2, then

began a steady decline to 11.6 (42.6% decrease) in 2002.

The number of completed suicides reflects only a small portion of the impact of suicidal behavior. Many more people are hospitalized because of nonfatal suicide attempts than are fatally injured, and an even greater

number are treated in ambulatory settings or are not treated at all for injuries because of suicidal acts than those who are hospitalized (Rosenberg et al., 1987). The comparative descriptions of suicidal ideation and behavior show some important differences; for example, the rate of suicide in males is higher than that in females, but studies of suicidal thoughts and nonfatal suicidal behavior (suicide attempts) routinely show females with higher rates (U.S. Public Health Service, 2001). During 2004, the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System—All Injury Program estimated that 49,119 African Americans were treated in U.S. hospital emergency departments for nonfatal self-inflicted injuries. Among African American females, 23,821 were seen for these injuries; for males, 22,298 were seen (CDC, 2005). The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System is a school-based survey of health risk behaviors (including suicidal thoughts and behavior) among high school students. In 2003, African American high school students reported the following during the 12 months preceding the survey: For those who seriously considered suicide, the gender breakdown was: males 10.3%, females 14.7%; and for those who attempted suicide, it was: males 7.7%, females 9.0% (Grunbaum et al., 2004).

This special edition of the *Journal of Black Psychology* brought together a group of suicidologists—scientists who study suicide—to begin to look at the scope of the problem of suicidal thoughts and behaviors in the African American community. Historically, suicidal behaviors among African Americans received scant attention because of the belief that very few African Americans completed suicide; it was also assumed that they did not experience depression. Blacks were historically viewed as a psychologically unsophisticated race that were naturally high-spirited and unburdened with a sense of responsibility (Prudhomme, 1938; Prange & Vitols, 1962). For example, in the first edition of the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Bevis (1921) wrote that “most of the race are carefree, live in the here and now with limited capacity to recall or profit by experiences of the past. Sadness and depression have little part of his psychological makeup” (p. 11).

Some African American scholars also believed that suicide was not a problem in the African American community. Early and Akers (1993) did a qualitative study of African American ministers who felt that suicide was a “White thing” that was an anathema to a culture that was noted for its resiliency in the face of racial discrimination and oppression. Wright (1985) wrote a provocative essay entitled “Black Suicide: Lynching by Any Other Name,” in which he interpreted Black suicide as a method of genocide that was perpetuated and controlled by Whites and thus argued that there was no such thing as “Black suicide.”

Yet an examination of slave narratives and ship logs from the antebellum period quickly dispels the notion that Blacks rarely completed suicide or were too “happy” in their state of oppression to contemplate suicide. Lester (1998) noted that suicide was very common among slaves when they were captured in Africa, when they were being transported to the Americas, and immediately after their arrival. Many African tribes believed that their souls would return to Africa after death, so suicide was viewed as an attractive alternative. Lester speculated that slave owners often mutilated the bodies of those who committed suicide because the slaveholders knew that the slaves believed their dismembered bodies could not return home.

Another factor that contributed to the dearth of research in this area is the assumption of universal expression of behaviors across cultures, what Nobles (1989) referred to as “transubstantiation error.” Hence, until 1979, ethnic differences in suicide rates were depicted as “White” and “non-White.” It was common practice to make no mention of the



racial composition of the sample or to use White, middle-class control groups as though African Americans and Whites experience the same cultural and social reality. The assumption of universality makes it difficult to explore cultural differences in suicidal behaviors.

Interestingly, there is some limited evidence that there may be cultural differences in suicidality. Politano, Nelson, Evans, Sorenson, and Zeman (1986) found the behavioral component of depression, especially as it pertains to oppositionality, to be more prominently expressed in African American children. Delinquency has also been associated with suicide attempts among African American adolescent females (King, Raskin, Gdowski, Butkus, & Opipari, 1989; Summerville, Abbate, Siegel, Serravezza, & Kaslow, 1992). Molock, Kimbrough, Blanton-Lacy, McClure, and Williams (1994) found African American college students to be less likely to report suicide ideation and to report using alcohol or illicit drugs during a suicide attempt, and they also found a weaker relationship between suicide ideation and hopelessness when compared to White college students from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. Others have noted that African American adolescents, when compared to other ethnic groups, may be less apt to report depressive symptoms or suicidal ideation (Forbes et al., 1999; Morrison & Downey, 2000) even in the midst of a suicide crisis (Summerville et al., 1992).

What has compounded the difficulty of studying suicides in African Americans is that their suicides are more likely to be misclassified



than any other ethnic group (Phillips & Ruth, 1993; Warhauser & Monk, 1978). Others have wondered whether African American suicides may be “disguised” in the form of “victim-precipitated homicides” (Garrison, Addy, Jackson, McKeown, & Waller, 1991). Victim-precipitated homicide is viewed essentially as an act of suicide because the victim intentionally engages in behavior in a life-threatening context that almost guarantees that another person (e.g., police officer) will kill the victim (Parent, 1999; Wolfgang, 1958). Although it has been estimated that nearly 30% of urban homicides are victim-precipitated (Van Zandt, 1993), it is not formally recognized as a form of suicide.

Spiritually-based initiatives and counseling measures continue to be the foundational method of therapy and prevention that I personally am an advocate of. Support and seed-planting begin in the developmental stages of childhood for each of us, and the sooner certain key factors are recognized, the higher the chances of suicide prevention.

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# Statement from the Board of Bishops Regarding Trump's Federal Takeover in D.C.

By The Board of Bishops, The A.M.E. Zion Church

*"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."*

— Proverbs 31 : 8 – 9 (NIV)

Beloved,

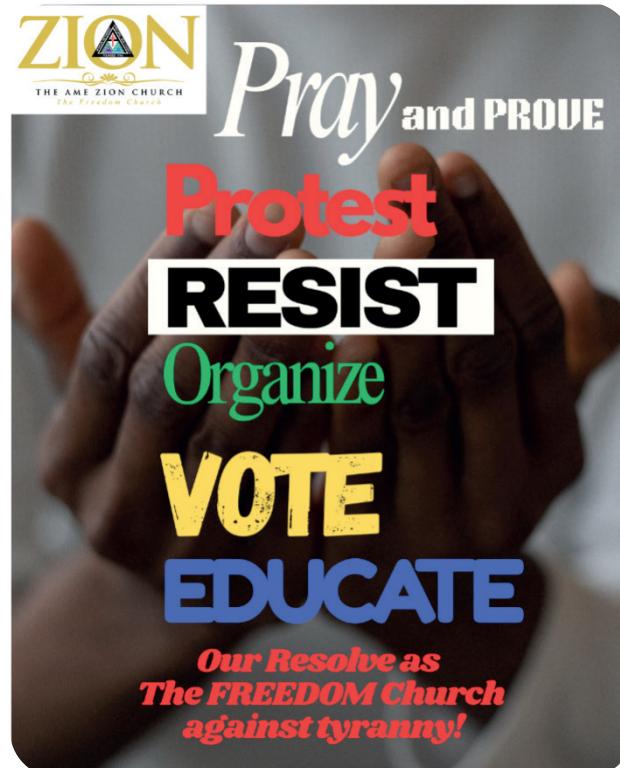
We write with grief and righteous indignation in response to the August 11th announcement by the President of the United States that the administration will assume control of the Metropolitan Police Department, deploy hundreds of National Guard troops into Washington, D.C., and forcibly remove unhoused residents from the city's streets.

This decision comes despite the undeniable truth that violent crime in D.C. has fallen to a 30-year low—down more than 26% from last year. It is not about protecting public safety; it is a display of power unlike any other in modern times—a heavy-handed show of federal force aimed at a city that, while no longer majority-Black, still stands as one of the most important centers of Black political, cultural, and civic life in America.

Even D.C.'s duly elected mayor, Muriel Bowser, called this takeover “an outrageous affront to the people of the District of Columbia and the democratic principles we hold dear,” further describing it as “unsettling and unprecedented.” She emphasized that it “deeply undermines local self-governance and disrespects the will of D.C. residents.”

This action is not an isolated event—it reflects a broader pattern: militarized force after the murder of George Floyd in 2020, failure to protect the U.S. Capitol on January 6, disregard for immigrants, and the targeting of cities with large Black populations and Black mayors—Baltimore, New York, Chicago, Atlanta—using rhetoric and policy to stigmatize rather than support them. Now, unhoused residents are treated as if they were trash to be removed, rather than neighbors to be served—contrary to Christ's teaching.

Our faith compels us to stand against such misuse of authority: “He has



shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? *To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*” — Micah 6:8 (NIV)

From our birth in 1796, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church—The Freedom Church—has stood as a refuge and a prophetic voice against forces that deny dignity, liberty, and self-determination to God's people. We were founded by women and men who refused to be silenced in the face of oppression, and we have carried that mantle through every generation.

This moment demands that same resolve.

To our pastors: Preach prophetically and teach with clarity and courage. Help our people understand the spiritual, moral, and civic stakes of this moment and how to stand strong for the cause of Christ in this moment and those to come.

To our congregations: Register and encourage others to register to vote—an act of stewardship over the freedom our ancestors fought to secure. Monitor legislation and speak against any action designed to silence our voices. Support Black-owned businesses, especially Black media outlets who are charged with truthfully telling our stories. Stay engaged in the process—refusing a “woe is us” mentality and taking hold of the power God has given us to shape the future.

To all people of faith: Understand that what happens in Washington, D.C., matters far beyond its borders. When the rights and dignity of one community can be overridden without cause, the rights and dignity of all communities are at risk.

We will not be silent in the face of policies that devalue human life and dignity. We will stand as The Freedom Church has always stood—in the gap, on the wall, and in the streets—declaring that justice is not for sale, and human dignity is not negotiable.

*“But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!”*

— Amos 5:24 (NIV)

In Christ's service,

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*This 15th Day of August, in the Year of Our Lord 2025*



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

## 1. Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr.

### PIEDMONT EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Office Address: West Sugar Creek Road, Charlotte, NC 28269  
Office Ph: (919) 554-8994; Fax: (919) 556-6049  
Email: BishopDBStarnes@amezion.org  
District includes: Blue Ridge, West Central North Carolina, Western North Carolina, Jamaica (all divisions)

*Mrs. Camille C. Starnes, Missionary Supervisor*

## 2. Bishop W. Darin Moore

### EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Office Address: P.O. Box 97395, Raleigh, NC 27624  
Office Ph: (910) 773-6491; Fax: (919) 556-6049  
Email: BishopWDarinMoore@amezion.org  
District includes: Albemarle, Cape Fear, Central North Carolina, North Carolina, Virgin Islands

*Mrs. Devieta C. Moore, Missionary Supervisor*

## 3. Bishop George Dwayne Crenshaw

### NORTH EASTERN EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Office Address: 3605 Sandy Planes Rd. 240-238 Marietta, GA 30066  
Office Ph: TBA  
Email: BishopGDCrenshaw@amezion.org  
District includes: New England, New Jersey, New York, Western New York, Bahamas and London-Midland

*Mrs. Laurenn H. Crenshaw, Missionary Supervisor*

## 4. Bishop Hilliard K. Dogbe

### WESTERN WEST AFRICA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Office Address: A.M.E. Zion Church Episcopal Residence/Office; P.O. Box GP 22220, Accra, Ghana  
Office Ph: 233-30-703-0241  
Email: BishopHKDogbe@amezion.org  
District includes: North Ghana, West Ghana, Mid-Ghana, Liberia, East Ghana, Cote D'Ivoire, Togo, Rwanda, Burundi, North Kivu, and South Kivu

*Mrs. Cynthia Dogbe, Missionary Supervisor*

## 5. Bishop U. U. Effiong

### EASTERN WEST AFRICA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Office Address: Anderson Memorial A.M.E Zion Church, Diamond Hill, Calabar Annex/Postal: 57 School Road, Satellite Town, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria  
Office Ph: +234 803 6765 479 Email: BishopUUEffiong@amezion.org  
District includes: Nigeria, Central Nigeria, Rivers Nigeria, Lagos-West Nigeria, Mainland Nigeria, Northern Nigeria, Cross River Nigeria, South-Eastern Nigeria, Southern and Akwa Nigeria, Port Harcourt, Uganda, Kenya\*, and Tanzania\*

*Mrs. Promise Effiong, Missionary Supervisor*

## 6. Bishop Brian R. Thompson, Sr.

### MID-ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Office Address: 9701 Apollo Drive - Suite 245, Largo, MD 20774  
Office Ph: (301) 322-3866; Fax: (301) 322-3862  
Email: BishopThompson106@amezion.org  
District includes: Allegheny, East Tennessee-Virginia, Ohio, Philadelphia-Baltimore, Virginia, Barbados, Guyana-Suriname, St. Vincent  
Rev. Felicia Thompson, Missionary Supervisor

## 7. Bishop Eric L. Leake

### SOUTH ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Office Address: 745 Saluda Street, Rock Hill, SC 29730  
Office Ph: (803) 980-2462  
Email: BishopEricLeake@amezion.org  
District includes: Georgia, India, Palmetto, Pee Dee, South Carolina  
*Mrs. H. Jean McMurray-Leake, Missionary Supervisor*

## 8. Bishop Daran H. Mitchell

### MIDWEST EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Office Address: 101 South Elm Street, Suite 4, Greensboro, NC 27406  
Office Ph: (336) 285 6232  
Email: BishopDMitchell108@amezion.org  
District includes: Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Tennessee, Trinidad-Tobago  
*Rev. L. Lynn Mitchell, Missionary Supervisor*

## 9. Bishop Anthony Witherspoon

### SOUTHWESTERN DELTA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Office Address: 3225W. Sugar Creek Rd. Charlotte, NC 28269  
Office Ph: (704) 900-3607  
Email: BishopWitherspoon109@amezion.org  
District includes: Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, South Mississippi, Texas, and West Tennessee-Mississippi  
*Rev. Dr. Kay M. Gabriel, Missionary Supervisor*

## 10. Bishop Melanie Rogers-Miller

### WESTERN EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Office Address: P.O. Box 218, Stockbridge, GA 30281  
Office Ph: (347) 729-9139 Fax: (215)-689-0865  
Email: BishopMelanieMiller110@amezion.org  
District includes: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Oregon-Washington, and Southwest Rocky Mountains  
*Mr. Jimmie Lewis Miller Sr. & Mrs. Rosalyn "Terry" Holland*

## 11. Bishop Dwayne A. Walker

### ALABAMA-FLORIDA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Office Address: 808 South Lawrence, Montgomery AL, 36104-5055  
Office Ph: (334) 269-6365; Fax: (334)-269-6369  
Email: BishopDwayneAWalker111@amezion.org  
District includes: Alabama, North Alabama, South Alabama, Central Alabama, West Alabama, Cahaba, Florida, S. Florida, and South Korea  
*Mrs. Donna Smith-Walker, Missionary Supervisor*

## 12. Bishop Bernardo J. Ngunza

### CENTRAL SOUTHERN AFRICA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Office Address: Morro Bento II, Zona 3, Rua da Gameck  
Office Ph 1: +244 933 894 506 Office Ph 2: +244 993 922 263  
Email: BishopBNgunza112@amezion.org  
District Includes: East Angola, West Angola, North Angola, South Angola, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, and Zambia\*  
*Ms. Isabel António Ngunza, Missionary Supervisor*

## 13. Bishop Seth O. Lartey

### LOCATED

Office Address: 2361 Olivet Church Rd, Winston-Salem, NC 27106  
Office Ph: (336) 529-8496

### Bishop George W. Walker Sr. (Retired)

Ph: (708) 799-5599 Fax: (708) 799-5584  
Email: BishopGeorgeWWalkerSr@amezion.org

### Bishop S. Chuka Ekemam Sr. (Retired)

Tel: +234-803-213-3767(Nigeria) or  
+19802426935 (US)  
Email: BishopSChukaEkemamSr@amezion.org

### Bishop George E. Battle Jr. (Deceased)

Ph: (704)-895-2236 (H) (704)-332-7600  
Email: BishopGeorgeEBattleJr@amezion.org

### Bishop Joseph Johnson (Retired)

Ph: (704) 877-9646  
Email: BishopJJJohnson@amezion.org

### Bishop Marshall H. Strickland (Retired)

Ph: (410) 744-7330 Fax: (410) 788-5510  
Email: BishopMHStrickland@amezion.org

### Bishop Nathaniel Jarrett (Retired)

Ph: (708) 802-9873  
Email: BishopNJarrett@amezion.org

### Bishop Warren M. Brown (Retired)

Ph: (678) 574-2725  
Email: BishopWMBrown@amezion.org

### Bishop Kenneth Monroe (Retired)

Ph: (910) 843-8274  
Email: BishopKMonroe@amezion.org

### Bishop Dennis V. Proctor (Retired)

Ph: (410)-215-8741  
Email: BishopProctor@amezion.org

### Bishop Michael A. French Sr. (Retired)

Ph: (336)-312-8245  
Email: BishopMAFrencher@amezion.org

\*Provisional Annual Conferences

**GENERAL OFFICERS**

**Rev. Dr. J. Elvin Sadler, General Secretary-Auditor**  
P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770  
Ph: (704) 599-4630; Fax: (704) 688-2549; Email: jesadler@amezion.org

**Rev. Al Hamilton, Chief Financial Officer, Department of Finance**  
P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770  
Ph: (704) 599-4630; Fax: (704) 919-5580; Email: alchamilton@amezion.org

**Rev. Julius Walls, Chief Operating Officer / Business Manager**  
P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770  
Ph: (704) 599-4630; Fax: (704) 688-2541; Email: jwalls@amezion.org

**Mr. Darin Kent, Chief Communications Officer**  
*Editor, The Star of Zion*  
P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770  
Ph: (704) 599-4630, ext. 2577; Email: cco@amezion.org

**Rev. Dr. D.B. Cannon,**  
*Dept. of Global Missions Office & Missionary Seer Editor*  
P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770 Ph: (704) 599-4630;  
Email: dbcannon@amezion.org For articles/info: missionaryseergm@gmail.com

**Rev. Patrick Barrett, Secretary-Treasurer,**  
*Christian Education Department*  
P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-677  
Ph: (704) 599-4630 Fax: (704) 688-2550; Email: pbbarrett@amezion.org

**Dr. Eleazar Merriweather, Director**  
*Dept. of Church Growth & Development*  
3225 West Sugar Creek Road, Charlotte, NC 28269  
Ph: (704) 631-2172;  
Email: emerriw721@amezion.org

**Rev. Dr. Darrell Williams, Executive Director, Zion's Benefit Services**  
P.O. Box 217114, Charlotte, NC 28221; Ph: (704) 714-1505;  
Email: dwilliams@amezion.org

**FORMER GENERAL OFFICERS**

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**Dr. Kermit DeGraffenreidt**  
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**Dr. Otis McMillian**  
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Email: mariley310@yahoo.com

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2940 42nd Street, Sacramento, CA 95817

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Post Office Box 2541, Wilmington, NC 28402-2541

**Dr. Yvonne A. Tracey, Asst. Clerk**  
502 Ferndale Drive, Salisbury, NC 28147

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88 Roberts Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

**Rev. Dr. Reid R. White, Jr., Esq.**  
6608 Cartwright Drive, Columbia, SC 29223

**Dr. William Stokes**  
5821 West Tree Drive, Anchorage, AK 99507

**Rev. Dr. Joseph A. Tolbert, Sr., Esq.**  
104 Black Avenue, Bessemer, Alabama 35020

**CONNECTIONAL LAY COUNCIL**

**Mr. Joseph King Davis, 2nd International President, 11th President**  
1018 Southpoint Crossing Durham, NC 27713  
Ph: (919) 238-3749; Email: jkdjr1911@frontier.com

**Dr. Mary J. Mathews, 1st Vice President**  
Post Office Box 3155, Sanford, NC 27331  
Ph: (910) 775-2056; Cell: (910) 624-3684; Email: clcpresident10@aol.com

**Ms. Rachel Highsmith, 2nd Vice President**  
7696 Proud St, Pfafftown, NC 27040  
Ph: (336) 473-0060; Email: rdhighsmith@gmail.com

**Dr. Ian Bell-Jefferson, Recording Secretary**  
744 Oak Street, Apt 5, San Francisco, CA 94117  
Ph: (916) 284-4444; Email: meijoi2002@yahoo.com

**Mr. William Manning, Sr., Financial Secretary**  
620 Holiday Road, Gastonia, NC 28054;  
Ph: (704) 747-0873; Email: wfm258@msn.com

**Ms. Anita Scofield, Treasurer**  
207 Plaza Drive, Middleton, CT 06457  
Ph: (203) 982-3036; Email: ascofield@yahoo.com

**Mr. Jerry McCombs, Chaplain**

P. O Box 1444 Newton, NC 28658  
Home: (828) 310-6918; Cell: (828) 464-9609; Email: clchaplain21@charter.net

**Mrs. Lula K. Howard, President Emeritus**  
4009 Landside Dr., Louisville, KY 40220  
Cell: (502) 494-9527; Email: LmkHoward330@gmail.com

**WOMEN'S HOME & OVERSEAS MISSIONARY SOCIETY**

**Mrs. Sandra B. Crowder, International President**  
100 East Ocean View, Suite 1110, Norfolk, VA 23503  
Ph: 757-761-6280 Email: sandrabcrowder@yahoo.com

**Dr. Peggy Lindsey-Owens, First Vice President**  
503 McLean Street, Raeford, NC 28376  
Ph: 910-875-5803; Email: mspeggys@earthlink.net

**Rev. Patricia "Patty" Surratt-Smith, Second Vice President**  
PO Box 1424, Shelby, NC 28151 Ph: 704-281-1544;  
Email: ladypattysmith@gmail.com

**Mrs. Rosetta J. Dunham, Executive Director**  
P.O. Box 26846, Charlotte, NC 28221-6846  
Email: rodunham@amezion.org

**Mrs. Effie B. Woodard, Recording Secretary**  
108 Effie Lane/PO Box 662, Broadway, NC 27505 Cell: 919-356-6608;  
Email: effiebwoodard@gmail.com

**Ms. Verdelle Cunningham, Treasurer**  
P.O. Box 142, Lugoff, SC 29078  
Ph: (917) 742-5565; Email: oliver1447@att.net

**Ms. Karlease M. Smalls, Connectional Coordinator of YAMS**  
1436 McBeth Drive, Kannapolis, NC 28083  
Ph: (H) 704-298-0487; (C) 917-371-3464 Email: karleasesmalls@yahoo.com

**Ms. Melva Polk Wright, Connectional Secretary, Youth Missionary Society**  
438 Parkview Court, Unit C, Salisbury, MD 21804  
Ph: (443) 880-5728; Email: principalmelva1960@gmail.com

**Mrs. April C. Davis, Connectional Superintendent, Buds of Promise**  
9233 Mountain Aire Circle, Charlotte, NC 28214; Home: 704-394-0577; Cell: 980-298-0298; Email: aprildavisforbuds@yahoo.com

**Mrs. Jo-Ann Monroe, Connectional Secretary, Bureau of Supply**  
40 East Sidney Ave., #12B, Mt. Vernon, NY 10550  
Ph: 914-224-7621; Email: jom4supply@gmail.com

**Mrs. Joy Williamson Foster, Connectional Chairman, Life Members Council**  
229 Academy Lane, Middletown, DE 19709  
Ph: 302-563-0222; Email: mailto:Joy2023LM@gmail.com

**Ms. Camryn Ivey, Director of Communications**  
1610 Cox Road, Matthews, NC 28104  
Ph: 704-907-0208; Email: camrynyivey@gmail.com

**INTERNATIONAL MINISTERS & LAY ASSOCIATION**

**Rev. Dr. David T. Miller, President**  
P.O. Box 6753, Harrisburg, PA 17112  
Ph: (717) 712-4709; Email: revdmillersigma@icloud.com

**Rev. J. Martin Bouler, Sr., First Vice President**  
114 Pelham Lane, Fort Mill, SC 29715  
Ph: (803) 448-7100; Email: jmbouler@comporium.net

**Ms. Connie Bell-Wright, Second Vice President**  
822 Polk Street, Charlotte, NC 28206-2930  
Ph: 704-724-2759; Email: cbellwill1351@gmail.com

**Rev. Dorothy Patterson, Executive Director**  
48 West 17th Street, Bayonne, NJ 07002  
Ph: (551) 206-1499 Email: Kleinz1@aol.com

**Rev. Dr. Edwin Ferguson, Treasurer**  
3320 Whitlock Dr. N, Wilson, NC 27896  
Ph: (910) 876-4727; Email: pastorferguson14@gmail.com

**Rev. Dr. Kelcy G. L. Steele, Financial Secretary**  
242 Dixwell Ave, New Haven, CT, 06511  
Ph: 704-430-7826; Email: Drkgsteele@gmail.com

**Mrs. Carlous Elaine Tyrance, Secretary**  
Ph: 704-591-0702; Email: ctyrnc@bellsouth.net

**Ms. Marie D. Niles, Assistant Secretary**  
718 Decatur Street, Brooklyn, NY 11233  
Ph: (917) 373-5237 ; Email: mdn929@gmail.com

**Mr. Willie Landrum, Chaplain**  
Ph: (205) 515-5353 Alt: (678) 809-5253; Email: landrumwil@gmail.com

**DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

**Rev. Johngerlyn "Jone" Young, President, President, Assembly of Christian Educators (ACE)**

Ph: (616) 581-5358; Email: jyoungace@gmail.com

**Bro. Dion Harris, Chairperson**

**Young Adults in Christian Ministries (YACM)**

Email: Djharris2012@gmail.com

**Mr. Ezekiel A. Perez, President**

**Varick International Christian Youth Council (VICYC)**

Ph: (408) 757-9249 Email: ezekiel1132@gmail.com

**Mr. Andre Griffin, Parliamentarian (VICYC)**

Phone Number: (336) 660-8745 Email: griffinatf@gmail.com

**COLLEGES**

**Rev. Dr. Anthony Davis, President, Livingstone College**

701 W. Monroe Street, Salisbury, NC 28144;

Ph: (704) 216-6151 Fax: (704) 216-6217; Internet: www.livingstone.edu

**Ms. Archinya Ingram, Interim President, Clinton College**

1029 Crawford Road, Rock Hill, SC 29730

Ph: (803) 327-7402; Fax: (803) 327-3261; Internet: www.clintoncollege.edu

**Dr. Vergel Lattimore, President, Hood Theological Seminary**

1810 Lutheran Synod Drive, Salisbury, NC 28144

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Alexxis Hutchinson  
Sports Editor  
Sports@StarofZion.org

# Blue Bears Locked In: Ready to Defend the Den in 2025

By Alexxis D. Hutchinson, Sports Editor

With training camp officially underway, the Livingstone College Blue Bears are hitting the field with one mission: Get Better Every Single Week. Fueled by grit, growth, and a hunger to win, this squad is laser-focused on the season ahead. The energy is high, and the goal is clear: Defend the Den.

This summer, the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) hosted its annual Football Media Day on July 16 in Durham, North Carolina. The event brought together all the CIAA football programs, showcasing head coaches and returning key players as they shared insights, expectations, and excitement for the new season. Representing the Blue Bears were Head Coach Sean Gilbert, Associate Head Coach Mark Williams, and standout student-athletes David Jones and Calvin Scott.

CIAA Commissioner Jacqie McWilliams Parker captured the spirit of the day best: "It's a time to spotlight our talented student-athletes and coaches, and this year, it's also an exciting opportunity to celebrate Durham as the new home of our football championship and a vital partner in our continued growth." The CIAA Football Championship will make its return to Durham, setting the stage for what promises to be a thrilling end to the season.

The day before Media Day, all participating coaches and players took time to invest in the next generation during a free youth football clinic for students in grades 3 through 8. It was a powerful moment that allowed the CIAA and Livingstone to connect with the Durham community and inspire future athletes.

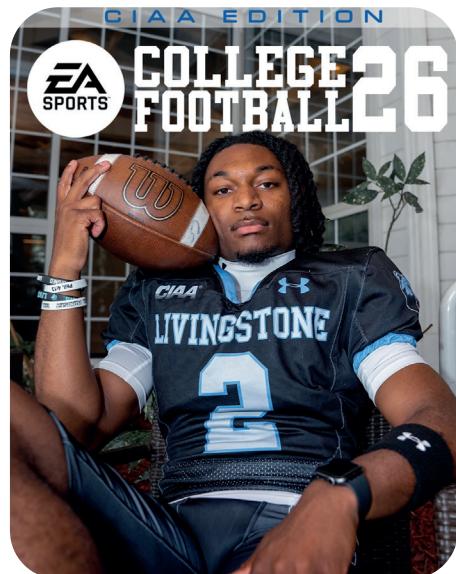
At Media Day, the CIAA announced the 2025 All-CIAA Preseason Team and the Predicted Order of Finish. Defensive lineman Davion Watkins earned a spot on the All-CIAA Preseason squad, shining a light on the talent within the Blue Bear lineup. Livingstone was ranked seventh in the preseason poll, but Coach Gilbert isn't fazed.

"Rankings are just numbers on paper," said Gilbert. "What matters is how we show up every day on the field, in the film room, and in the weight room. This team is hungry, focused, and ready to prove that

we're more than a seventh-place prediction. We're building something special at Livingstone, and we're coming to compete."

And compete they will. The Blue Bears open the season on August 28 at the University of Charleston. CIAA play kicks off at home on September 20 as they take on Bowie State University in what promises to be an electric opener in front of a fired-up crowd.

Mark your calendars for November 1 as the Blue Bears host Shaw University for Homecoming, a day that brings the campus and community together in celebration and pride.



President and First Lady Davis will welcome all alumni, fans, and supporters to Alumni Memorial Stadium for the Homecoming game.

The regular season wraps on November 8 with the Commemorative Classic against rival Johnson C. Smith University, a battle that never disappoints. Every snap, every tackle, every touchdown this season is part of something bigger. It's not just about football, it's about pride, purpose, and defending the Den.

The 2025 CIAA Football Championship will be held Saturday, November 15 at Durham County Stadium. If the Blue Bears have their way, they'll be there making noise and making history.

Be sure to follow the full schedule and the latest updates at [www.livingstone.edu](http://www.livingstone.edu). The road is mapped. The Den is ready. Let the season begin.



# TRIBUTE TO REV. JAMES COLEMAN TUTT, MY FRIEND, PRESIDING ELDER EMERITUS, KENTUCKY CONFERENCE

STONER MEMORIAL AME ZION CHURCH

LOUISVILLE, KY

TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2025

On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025, one of the icons in the annals of the Kentucky Annual Conference went to be with the Lord in the person of **THE REVEREND JAMES COLEMAN TUTT, Presiding Elder Emeritus.**

Rev. Tutt pastored over 50 years in the Kentucky Conference and was the founding Presiding Elder of the Bardstown District, consisting of the 5 churches in the outlying area of Louisville, Kentucky.

He began his ministry in 1964 and retired in June 2016 as Presiding Elder.

People came from far and wide to pay tribute to this man of God, including Rev. Mwana Strickland, President of the Presiding Elders Council and former pastor of Stoner Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church; Rev. Dr. Dwayne Tutt, his nephew, who now pastors in North Carolina; Ezra Tutt, who rendered a beautiful saxophone solo, and Rev. Dr. Staccato Powell. The eulogy was delivered by our own newly appointed Bishop, Rev. Dr. Darren Mitchell. I was privileged to give a tribute, and following is an excerpt about my friend, Rev. James C. Tutt:

It's been said that the longer you know a person, and they become endeared to you, they take on different names. You may have called him Daddy, James, Uncle James, Reverend Tutt, King Tutt, Presiding Elder Tutt, or just plain Sugar Bear, he was a friend to many people, and because I was blessed to be one of them, I called him J.C.

I come today as a friend of the Tutt Family and a special friend of Rev. James Coleman Tutt.

To know James C. Tutt is to love him. You can't be indifferent to him; you can't be oblivious to him; you can't dislike him; you can't ignore him. If you do – then you're the one with the problem. Rev. Tutt was a very special friend.

It's been said that some people come into your life for a season; others come into your life for a reason. But I believe J.C. Tutt came into the life of his family, into the life of the church, and into my life for a reason. And what was that reason? To show us what love really is. To borrow some words from his niece, **J.C. Tutt was "Love Walking".**

So what does it mean to be "Love Walking"? We need to look to Scripture for the answer. We find these words in 1 Corinthians 13:

"Love is kind and patient, never jealous or boastful;

Never proud or rude, not selfish or quick-tempered;

Doesn't keep a record of wrongs.

Love rejoices in truth – not evil,

Always supportive,

Loyal, hopeful and trusting.

Love never fails.



Those words fit my friend, J.C. Tutt to a "T". If you knew J. C. Tutt, you would know that his kindness was as big as him (or how big he used to be). If you needed something, he would give it to you without hesitation – whether it be a ride somewhere (and not just the Kentuckiana area), help with fixing something around the house or around the church; if you needed a place to stay, or some money for a meal, J.C. Tutt was kindness overload. I'm sure his children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews can attest to that.

Long suffering and patience go hand in hand because it doesn't demand an immediate response. It endures difficulties and gives others time to grow. J.C.'s patience was unnerving sometimes. I would get mad at him sometimes because of something he didn't do that I felt he should have done, and he would tell me, "It's all in God's hands. You just have to wait on Him and pray about it."

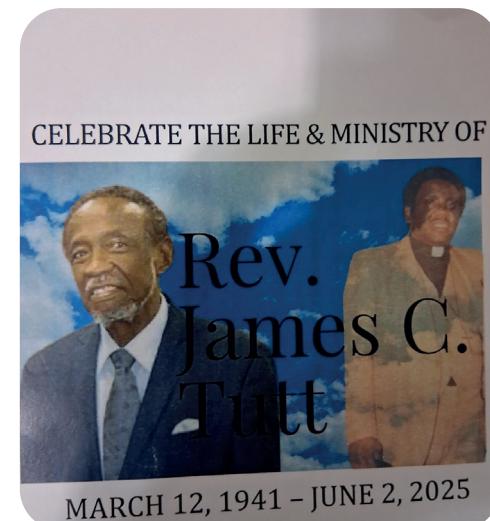
J.C. didn't have a jealous or selfish bone in his body. He was an humble man who didn't put himself above others. He was a simple man – not caught up with fine jewelry

and tailored suits. The only thing I ever heard J.C. boast about (outside of his relationship with the Lord) was the vehicles he bought – the PT Cruiser, his truck, his RV, and that little 3-wheeler he purchased and would ride on around the neighborhood. He always said that God gave him everything that he needed and some of the things he desired. I believe it was his reward for his faithfulness. He loved to hear Sis. Lula Howard sing "Great is Thy Faithfulness". His eyes would tear up when she sang, "All I have needed Thy hand has provided; Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me." J.C. knew where all his blessings came from.

He treated people with respect and dignity. I never heard him raise his voice with anyone (maybe just once) and I never heard him utter a bad word. He was a perfect gentleman at all times and would hold his temper in check.

Love does not keep a record of wrongs." Sometimes I thought J.C. was a little too kind; a little too even-tempered; others said he wasn't wasn't articulate enough; they said he needed to go back to school, but J.C. never confronted the issue. He just went on preaching and teaching the gospel as led by the Lord.

"Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth". If you knew J.C. Tutt, you knew that he'll tell you the truth, whether you liked it or not. But he'll tell it in a manner that is not derogatory or threatening. One of JC's favorite sayings was "O-O-O" – things are out of order – things in the world, things in the community, things in the family, and things in the church. And the analogies he gave would line up with the Bible.



If you were lucky enough to be called his friend, he would support you in whatever you did. Even if you didn't count yourself as one of his friends, he would be loyal and supportive if you were doing the right thing for the right reason.

Was he perfect? No! Did we agree on everything? Certainly not! In fact, when I would get upset and tell him what I didn't like or what I wasn't going to do (this was before my calling to the ministry), he

*Continued on Next Page*

would just wait a couple of days until I calmed down and come talk to me. You see – a friend is someone who knows you – the good, the bad, and the ugly – and loves you anyway.

There are so many things I could say about this friend of mine because he had a good heart and because he loved everybody – even if you didn't love him back.

So no matter what you called him – JC, Rev. Tutt, King Tutt, Presiding Elder Tutt, or Sugar Bear, we have seen what it means to be "Love Walking" – not only walking but talking, riding, eating, teaching, and preaching.

One of his favorite songs when he became Presiding Elder of the Bardstown District was "I Need You, You Need Me; We're all a part of God's body" and my friend, J. C. Tutt believed that with all his being.

JC loved everybody.

JC loved his wife, Ms. Ella.

JC loved his family.

JC loved helping others.

JC loved talking about the goodness of the Lord.

JC loved the words of scripture.

JC loved the church.

JC loved his God.

So goodnight, my friend, James Coleman Tutt. I'm going to miss you. I pray I've been as good of a friend to you as you have been to me.

Lovingly submitted,

Rev. Harriet McElvaney,

Kentucky Conference



Rev. Ronald Nathan  
World Politics Editor  
WorldPolitics@StarOfZion.org

## WORLD POLITICS

# The Dark Side of Africa's Economic Boom

By Ronald A. Nathan, World Politics Editor

Photo By © LSE

In recent years, many African countries have reported steady annual economic growth rates of 3–5%. Yet, this growth has not consistently translated into meaningful poverty reduction. This disconnect reveals a critical truth: economic growth alone is insufficient to lift people out of poverty without inclusive and equitable development strategies. The idea of "trickle-down economics" remains largely illusory in the African context.

A major factor behind this gap is the nature of the growth itself. Much of Africa's economic expansion is driven by capital-intensive sectors such as oil, mining, and telecommunications. While these industries generate significant wealth, they create relatively few jobs and often have limited linkages to the broader economy. As a result, the benefits are frequently concentrated among a small elite, with minimal impact on the daily lives of the majority.

Job creation remains a persistent challenge. Despite increasing GDP figures, many African economies fail to produce enough decent jobs, particularly in the formal sector. A large portion of the population remains trapped in low-productivity, informal, or subsistence-level work. Youth unemployment is especially concerning, with millions of young people entering the labor force each year but facing limited prospects.

Governance and public service delivery further complicate the picture. In many countries, corruption and weak institutions prevent government revenues from being effectively reinvested in critical areas like education, healthcare, and infrastructure. Social safety nets are often underdeveloped or absent, leaving the most vulnerable populations without support.

Rapid population growth also dilutes economic gains. A 5% growth rate may sound impressive, but when paired with a 3% population in-



crease, the actual improvement in per capita income is modest at best.

The rural-urban divide adds another layer of inequality. Economic growth tends to be concentrated in urban areas, while rural regions—home to the majority of the poor—remain underdeveloped and underfunded. Inadequate infrastructure and limited access to services further isolate these communities from the benefits of national growth.

To convert economic growth into real poverty reduction, African governments must prioritize inclusive and sustainable policies. This includes investing in human capital, promoting labor-intensive industries, strengthening governance, and ensuring that essential public services reach the most disadvantaged. Without structural reform, economic growth will continue to enrich the few while leaving the many behind.

*Ronald A. Nathan is the Star's World Politics Editor and an elder of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church based in the United Kingdom.*

# sankofa

Looking Back to Move Forward

## Fulfilling The Need To Know

By Dr. Anthony T. Browder  
Submitted by Rev. Dr. Sarah Fleming

I've often marveled at the inquisitive nature of a child. I have a young daughter, and every other word from her mouth is centered around a question. Why? How come? Where? When?

Children are born into this world with a natural desire to know. They are bright and observant; nothing escapes their gaze. They take in information and formulate questions based on what they've been exposed to.

Children are natural scientists. The word **scientist** is derived from the Latin word **scri**--which means to *know*. Somewhere between grades 4 and 8, many of our children lose this natural "God-given" talent. Their minds become stifled, and the door to the path of knowledge is shut.

Since we are all born with a natural desire "to know," if we lose this desire somewhere along the road, we have to find out where we lost it in order to get back on the path. Many people feel that the educational system is at fault. Oftentimes, when we're seeking the answer as to who is at fault, if we look within ourselves, we'll find that the answer was right under our noses all the time.

We'll find the key to developing effective educational systems by understanding the meaning of the word **education**. The term is derived from the Latin **educere**, meaning to bring out. The process of education is, therefore, the process of bringing out knowledge which is already inside you. This age-old methodology was first developed and cultivated by our African fore-parents in ancient Egypt.

The institutions for learning, called the *Mystery Schools*, gradually introduced education, progressing through varying levels of instruction. Students in educational environments that are conducive to learning will naturally learn more.

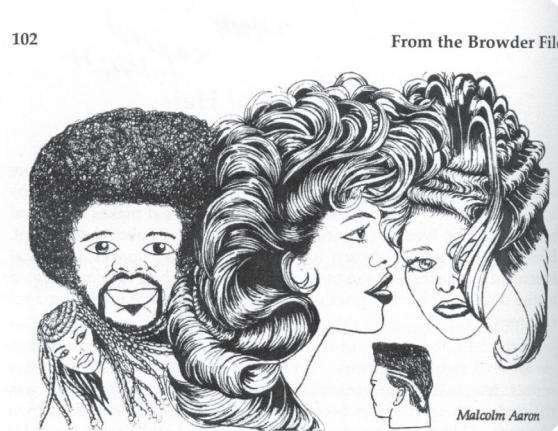
Contrast this situation to modern times. Today, people are force-fed information that often contradicts what they instinctively know to be true. Imagine being taught that in 1492, Columbus discovered America, when **instinctively** you know that there were people already living here who were fully aware of where they were. It's no wonder people don't learn!

The mind is like a computer. If you put nonsense in, you'll get nonsense out. Consistently feeding misinformation into a fertile mind causes it to stagnate. This process is referred to as **atrophy**. This is the failure of an organ to grow because of insufficient nourishment.

As a parent, I made a pledge to myself to keep my mind as fertile as possible so that I could provide positive and meaningful information for my child. In order to fulfill her need to know, I must fulfill mine.

Education is a continuous, ongoing process. It doesn't stop with elementary or high school, college, or graduate school. It continues until you die. A mind is truly a terrible thing to waste.

In the summer of '74, my first year out of college. I began to realize how much I didn't know. That year, I began my enrollment in a lifelong educational program, which has allowed me to view my existence from a totally new perspective.



For many years, I have devoted my time to the study of Egypt and its impact on world civilizations. I have experienced a profound reawakening and appreciation of knowledge and history. As I share this information with children and adults in my lectures and seminars, I see in their eyes, and feel from their hearts, a deep sense of gratitude.

There's more to it than that; however, the knowledge of prior accomplishments establishes a link with the past, which lays a foundation for the future. Everything is rooted in the past. Knowledge is the common pathway between the two. Knowledge can be obtained at any time.

If I were to suggest a daily regimen for African Americans, it would be that we rededicate ourselves to fulfilling the need to know. It is our birthright and our obligation to our children.

### Commentary

When this article was first written, my daughter Atlantis was 5 years old and just beginning kindergarten. As a single parent, my responsibilities extended beyond overseeing her physical, spiritual, and mental well-being; I assumed responsibility for teaching her African history and culture.

My daughter attended most of my lectures. She operated the slide projector and took on other responsibilities as she grew older. Atlantis met all the scholars who participated in the seminars that I sponsored, and she attended numerous other forums. When she was seven, I felt she was ready to travel with me on one of my study tours to Egypt.

The following year, we co-authored her first book, which was appropriately titled *My First Trip to Africa*. She began doing her own lectures when she was eight, and we published her second book when she was 13. This second book detailed her trip to West Africa when she was ten.

Through her books and lectures, Atlantis has been teaching youth and adults the history, culture, and people of Africa. I've gotten many wonderful testimonials from people who gained favorable impressions of Africa as a result of hearing about it through the eyes of a child, instead of a biased media.

My daughter is now 17 years old, and she will be attending college in the fall. We are currently working on her next two books. One will be on her trip to South Africa, and the other will discuss her trip to Mexico and Brazil. It has been our intention, from the very beginning of our writing projects, that her book sales would help pay for her college education.

I present this story to you as an example of the benefits and power of pursuing an education, fulfilling the need to know, and then sharing your knowledge with others. This desire was planted in me as a youth, and I passed it on to my daughter. Together we're passing it on to others. It is my hope that we have modeled a tradition that will be passed on down through the generations for centuries to come.

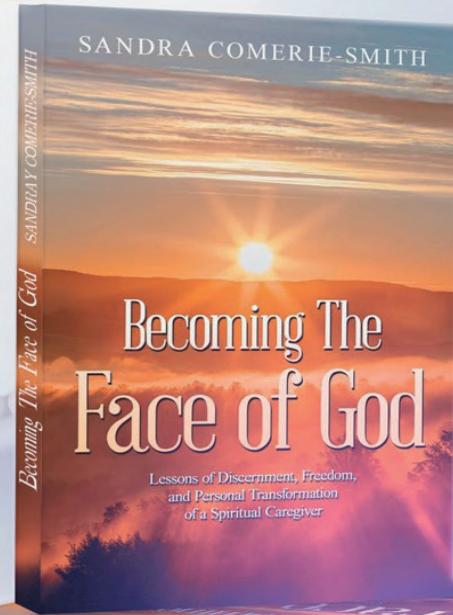
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