



THE LAY VANGUARD

Department of Lay Ministries

Christian Methodist Episcopal Church



SHANNON FAULK



2nd Qtr 2024, April, May, June



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Department of Lay Ministries;
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

NEWSLETTER

2nd Qtr 2024, April, May, June

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GET INVOLVED

Contact the General Secretary of Lay Ministries
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ultimately facilitating remarkable recoveries. One such example is the narrative of the Valley of Dry Bones.

God is the God of Comebacks!

In Ezekiel 37:1-14, the prophet Ezekiel finds himself in a vast valley filled with dry, lifeless bones, where he is commanded by God to prophesy life into them. What unfolds is a remarkable testament to the power of God's word and Spirit, offering profound lessons on restoration, Hope, and the promise of new life.

As Laity, we must remember the Lessons from the Valley of Dry Bones.

There is Hope in times of Despair: The vision of the dry bones represents a situation of utter hopelessness and despair. The bones are described as "very dry," indicating they have been dead for a long time. Yet, these bones are brought back to life through the power of God's word and Spirit. This teaches us that there is always hope with God, no matter how dire our circumstances.

God possesses the ability to Renew: The vision demonstrates God's power to renew and restore what is dead or lost. Just as the dry bones are brought back to life, God can breathe new life into dead or struggling areas of our churches, ministries, and lives, whether that be relationships, dreams, or spiritual vitality.

The vision illustrates God's profound capability to rejuvenate and replenish that which has succumbed to death or loss. Just as dry bones are brought back to life, God possesses the ability to infuse new life into dormant or struggling facets of our churches, ministries, and lives, encompassing relationships, aspirations, and spiritual fortitude.

Continuous Faith: The restoration of Israel to its land through the Lord's power is a powerful reminder of His unwavering commitment to fulfilling His unconditional promises, much like the steadfastness found within our local churches.

"God desires to uplift us so that we can be saved and join the army of the Lord. Our dry bones will unite with others, forming an army that can positively impact the world. As a believer, you have been called to join this army. God intends to transform and change you. He wants to lift us out of this valley, infuse us with His Spirit, and bring us to life so we can march forward and show believers and non-believers alike the incredible things that happen when God is involved."

Are you praying for a Comeback?

Psalm 37:23-24 "The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand."

Peace and Blessings,

Shannon Faulk
General Secretary of Lay Ministries
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

LAITY FINDING HOPE IN THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

By: Shannon Faulk
General Secretary of Lay Ministries,
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church



Ezekiel 37:9-10

9 He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath. Prophesy, son of man. Tell the breath, 'God, the Master, says, Come from the four winds. Come, breath. Breathe on these slain bodies. Breathe life!'"

10 So I prophesied, just as he commanded me. The breath entered them and they came alive! They stood up on their feet, a huge army.

This passage presents an encouraging and comforting scripture as we navigate through life in the company of the Lord. It underscores our ability to place our trust in the Lord, who sustains us all!

"The Great Comeback"

"In 2016, the world mourned the loss of one of its most iconic figures when Muhammad Ali passed away. However, we should not forget that Ali made an incredible comeback from losing his boxing license, facing financial hardship, enduring personal disgrace, and risking imprisonment for not enlisting in the military. Despite these challenges, he went on to achieve the Heavyweight Champion title in the boxing ring, solidifying his legendary status and earning acclaim and respect that defined his remarkable journey."

Muhammad Ali gained significant worldwide attention later in his career, especially for his unforgettable victories over Foreman in Zaire and Frazier in the Philippines. This impressive comeback is widely acknowledged as one of the most remarkable in sports history.

As members of the Laity in numerous churches, we are currently grappling with the sobering reality of declining and aging membership, limited resources, marginalized and unemployed/underemployed communities, and an absence of leadership necessary to propel our congregations forward. While these circumstances are discouraging and understandably daunting, as Christians, we find solace in the numerous examples in the Bible of God guiding His believers through arduous times and



Department of Lay Ministries Leadership

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| Connectional Steward President: | Mr. Freddie McKnight |
| Connectional Stewardess President: | Mrs. Jolinda Dugger |
| Connectional Trustee President: | Atty. Barbara Bouknight |
| Connectional Usher President: | Ms. Dorruth Boyd |

Past General Secretaries: Dr. Clifford Harris, and Dr. Victor Taylor.

**LINES OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION
PROCEDURE FROM THE LOCAL CHURCH ASCENDING**



CONNECTIONAL PRESIDENTS

GENERAL SECRETARY OF LAY MINISTRIES

REVERSE:
LINES OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION PROCESS FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY DOWN

Human and Social Concerns

The Joys and Challenges of Pastor's Raising Children in the Church

By Rev. Zachary E. Easterly, Pastor, Mount Zion CME Church, Fort Smith, Arkansas

There are inherent joys and challenges pastor's face while raising children as they do ministry in the church. While pastor's help promote traditional family values by safeguarding and promoting the marriage of a man and a woman, educating our communities on the importance of health and financial responsibility, involving therapy to repair at-risk relationships, preventing violence, and creating new standards for future growth, it is possible that Pastors and their families, while aiding in all these forms of ministry can become prey to the same forces and issues that are disruptive within the context of raising their own Children, especially when those children not only have to face the pressure of managing themselves in the harsh cruel world but also as they have to navigate the social constructs and systemic structures that are a part of the institutional Church which at times can be just as insensitive and malicious just because they are the "preacher's kids."

As I reflect on raising my four children, three boys and a daughter in the itinerant ministry of the Church, a multitude of scenes flashed before my eyes. I am grateful for my parents, church leaders, colleagues and laity who made the church a safe place for my children to thrive, enabling them to become independent personalities and who modeled for them faith with integrity. There were so many lay people who made it their business to be positive influencers by pouring into my children in ways that propelled them into avenues of self-discovery, career development and educational excellence. Certain members continued to follow my children long after we were no longer connected in ministry leadership to their local church. Other memories were a source of pain and anguish because those experiences affected the well-being of my children emotionally and psychologically - whether it was because of the insensitivity of church leadership, the process of adjusting to a new environment or members who could not separate the pastor's family from the business of the church and made it their personal objective to engage our children in ways that were destructive and unproductive. My children, non the less, probably would

not be who they are today without those challenges and difficulties. Though we faced challenges, the joys of raising my children in the itinerant ministry by far outweigh the bad - namely because God provided lay persons who valued and

respected the office of pastor and ensured that they provided an environment that was conducive not only for my children but all children within the Church community to thrive.

Recently, A young pastor asked for my advice on how to deal with a situation where a member's actions were harsh or what he felt were inappropriate concerning his children. I simply suggested that he and his wife should address it immediately at the sources. Meet it head on. My wife and I compromised nothing when it came to the wholeness of our kids and were prepared to address any and all situations with utmost due diligence; also, we prepared our children to be respectful to all adults and to inform us if ever, they were uncomfortable about any situation whether it was at church, home and/or school. People learned quickly that we did not expect labels nor unrealistic expectations when it came to our children. I also offered a bit of wisdom from my father who taught me after I had my first son - He said, "the most important thing you can give your Children does not cost a dime --- What is it? I asked my Dad. He said, your time! Money can be short, but your time cannot - Show up and show up often. This young pastor had children ages 12 and 8 and I felt his anguish. My children are now 35, 34, 32 and 27 and knowing the problems that pastor's and their families face, I know too many children, especially preacher's kids, are casualties in the spiritual battle.

Too many children of pastors, after seeing the inner workings of the church, many do not want anything to do with the Lord or his people. Millennials of my children's generation have walked away from the faith because of the perceived hypocrisy and disunity they experience in the Church.

In my conversation with this young pastor, I was momentarily speechless as I realized how little I had



Continued next page

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thought about this important question. Why? Because the church that I had shepherded for 40 years had done an excellent job nurturing and evangelizing me and I cherish the fond memories of the relationships formed during my adolescence. Many of those friends are pastor's and lay leaders. I am equally grateful that my children speak the same and maintain relationships with the many friends that they established while growing up in the Church. So, what can churches learn?

We learn that these children running around our church are precious to God. They are really God's gift. One day they will not be 12 and 8. They will be 35, 34, 32 and 27 like my four children. In the meantime, they are watching you and I and are listening to us. And by that observation, they are deciding if the gospel is real. Jesus said, "By this all people (including these children) will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). What will they say about your church when they are adults? How did you help or hurt

their walk with Christ?

So Influence Well

By God's grace, my children have little or no bitterness from their experiences growing up in the parsonage and my 37 years of pastoring. They are finding faith as young adults with the knowledge that there are many things about the church that are not perfect but look with admiration and affection to the leaders of the church both lay and clergy who were positive influencers on their life.

Church member, someday the young children in your church will be adults. They will be spiritual soldiers or spiritual casualties. And yes, you will have an influence on that outcome. They are watching you and listening to you. Use that influence well.

The IMPACT of the UNNAMED Usher

By Dorruth Boyd, Connectional Usher President

When I was asked to write this article for the Vanguard, I was *instantly* STRESSED and tried to get out of doing it. But, General Secretary Shannon Faulk *instantly* replied "you will do good" and gave me a DEADLINE. I missed the deadline, but I did write the article. Because I will be making some biblical references, I want to give a disclaimer and say, I am not a biblical scholar nor am I an expert on Ushering. But, I **know** that I am working in the ministry where I can help and support our church. My goal is for ushers to understand the impact of their work in the church, support the worship experience, and praise God. Doing this does not mean you need to be known by name but known simply as a Doorkeeper/ Usher.

The word "usher" or ushering" is not in the Old or New Testament. But their meaning and actions suggest service to the church (K.M. Johnson 1982). The Usher is the first representative of the church that worshippers easily recognize. Mainly because they are dressed, on the doors and hopefully welcoming attendees with a smile. The word IMPACT can be defined in several ways. But I want to define impact as the consequence of act that

leads to a large-scale achievement or result.

"For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness (Psalm 84:10 KJV)" .

The author of this statement is unknown and unnamed. We don't even know the gender. But we do know that the words were spoken, heard by an audience and were so profound that they are documented in the Bible. This scripture is the main point of reference many Ushers use as the foundation for their ministry. Yes, these words express a simple deed, but they also describe a simple action to support the church then and still today. In simple terms, ushering can also be aligned with the ministry of help. In 1 Corinthians 12:28 (NIV), it states "God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of **helping**, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues". Which makes me think that the words uttered by the unnamed



Continued next page

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usher were significant enough that additional responsibilities were added to the role of the doorkeeper.

The additional responsibilities for doorkeepers/gatekeepers are easily found when referencing Levites. The Levites were the principal gatekeepers because they were entrusted with the responsibility for the rooms and treasuries in the house of God. They would spend the night stationed around the house of God to guard it because they had charge of the key for opening it each morning. Also, the Levites ensured the proper storage of valuables collected (1 Chr 26:20-28 NIV). They controlled the order of the temple's service, were appointed as officers and judges (1 Chr 23:4 NIV), praised the lord with musical instruments (1 Chr. 23:5 NIV) and were court scribes (1 Chr 24:6). The Levites were not second in rank but could be considered equivalent to a priest. Let's compare the responsibilities of Levites then to the ushers of today. Some of the usher's responsibilities include:

- a. Welcoming worshippers upon entering the church.
- b. Assist VIPs/guests.
- c. Assist with seating.
- d. Keep order during service.
- e. Assist with offerings.
- f. Assist with cleaning of the church.
- g. Ensure messages are given to attendees/pastor when indicated.
- h. Giving directions within the building (bathrooms, offices, etc.)
- i. Safe keeping of valuables (lost and found)
- j. Attended to the comfort and care of attendees (Kleenex, peppermints, water, etc.)
- k. Assisting with emergencies/safety issues

Johnson (1982) stated *"three things can fill a church sanctuary. Good music, helpful preaching, and effective ushers"*. Just think, if all ushers are on post, supportive, inviting and ensuring a positive environment, those actions COULD help attract people to church. Our actions are our creed. To be known by name may not be important, but to be known for our work is very important

for all church operations. Maya Angelou (1969) said it best: *"People might forget your name, forget what you did, forget what you said. But they will never forget how you made them feel"*. To show our full impact, Ushers need to adhere to the CME Discipline for structure; be resourceful to the attendees, pastor, order of service and the overall church operations.

Whenever I read Psalms 84:10, the words jump off the page. They come across as well intended, purposeful, and full of joy! Which is how Ushers should work: INTENTIONAL, PURPOSEFUL, AND FULL OF JOY in our churches. Maybe the unnamed usher wanted his work to speak for him, rather than to be known by name. Maybe the unnamed usher thought his simple contribution would become beneficial to the general operations of the church for the future. Lastly, the unnamed usher's humility models the "heart" of a TRUE usher. A true usher is a person willing, able, and responsible to serve even when he is unknown by name.

In conclusion, the IMPACT of the scripture Psalms 84:10 has led to *"doorkeepers"* being accepted, needed, wanted, recognized, appreciated, and given more responsibility than what the unnamed usher suggested. Ushers need to understand that we are servants that are willing to work regardless if our name is known or not. The unnamed usher did not say "My name is John Barnes. I have been trained for the monitoring of crowds. I have attended the Apostle School of Standing". NO! Since he did not identify himself, I interpret his statement to mean **"I just want to be in the presence of God even if it's standing at the doors rather than live happily in the house of wickedness"**. Only history can tell if it is better to be known for your service rather than your name. Based on the words that were said by the unnamed usher around 1440-550 BC (NIV), we can STILL see the IMPACT of those words in the church today. Especially since Doorkeepers/Ushers are still serving, supporting, and STANDING ON THE DOORS in the CME churches.

Human and Social Concerns

"MARK OF A FAITHFUL STEWARD"

1Corinthians 4:1--2 AMP BIBLE

SO THEN, let us [apostles] be looked upon as ministering servants of Christ and stewards (trustees) of the mysteries (the secret purposes) of God.

2. Moreover, it is [required of stewards that a man should be found faithful [proving himself worthy of trust].

First and foremost, I greet each and everyone in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I hope and trust that this article will encourage each steward across the Connectional to be more understanding about the office that they represent.

Understanding Responsibilities of a Church Steward:

Church stewards play a crucial role in representing the church to the wider community and promoting its mission and values. As ambassadors for Jesus Christ and His church, they should be passionate about sharing the message of the church and building relationships with local leaders and organizations. This may involve attending community events and networking with others. Churches rely on the contributions of their membership to fulfill their mission and serve their congregations.

Among these contributors, church stewards play a critical role, ensuring that the resources of the

church are managed effectively and responsibly. Church stewards' responsibilities are to be faithful and fulfill their duties with integrity and excellence.



Taking Care Of The Finances:

Frist and foremost the responsibility of a church steward is to manage the financial resources of the church. This involves ensuring that all donations and contributions are properly recorded and deposited in a bank or financial institution. Also ensuring bills and expenses are paid on time and financial records are accurate and transparent. Church stewards should have a deep understanding of financial management principles and best(practices)to effectively manage the church's finances. They should be diligent in their management, ensuring that every penny is accounted for and used effectively to further the church's mission.

Church stewards may work with church leaders and members to develop and implement fundraising strategies and financial plans that align with the church's goals and vision.

Yours Truly,
Freddie McKnight
President-Connectional Steward Ministry

Featured Articles

HELPFUL INFORMATION

Crossway

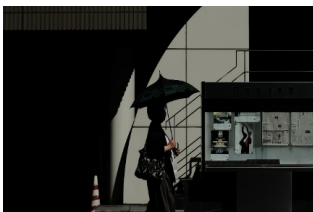
Check out the resources that are included in the ESV App Annual Subscription. Each resource gives teens, pastors, ministry leaders, and everyday Christians easy access to a robust collection of study and devotional resources. Subscribe today! [Crossway.org/esvapps/subscribe](https://www.crossway.org/esvapps/subscribe)

**Clever Ways To Crush Your Debt**

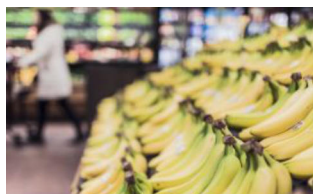
<https://financebuzz.com/clever-debt-payoff>

**Former Stanford admissions officer: 'Well-rounded is not enough'—here's how to really stand out**

<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/10/22/former-stanford-admissions-officer-well-rounded-is-not-enough.html>

**Worse Than Any Affliction:
Why I Refuse to Grumble**

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/worse-than-any-affliction>

**The Danger of "Church Shopping"**

<https://www.9marks.org/article/the-danger-of-church-shopping/>

**Some Colleges Will Soon Charge \$100,000 a Year. How Did This Happen?**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/05/your-money/paying-for-college/100k-college-cost-vanderbilt.html>



What is Lupus Nephritis and Why Is It More Common in Blacks?

<https://blackhealthmatters.com/what-is-lupus-nephritis-and-why-is-it-more-common-in-blacks>

BREAST CANCER

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women of all races, and one of the leading causes of death for women in the United States.

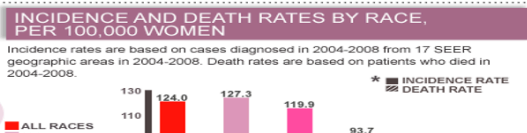


IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 230,480 WOMEN IN THE U.S. WILL BE DIAGNOSED WITH BREAST CANCER, WHILE 39,520 WOMEN WILL DIE FROM THE DISEASE IN 2011.

1 IN 8 WOMEN WILL BE DIAGNOSED WITH BREAST CANCER DURING THEIR LIFETIME.

AGE	IN SITU CASES	INVASIVE CASES	DEATHS
UNDER 40	1,780	11,330	1,160
UNDER 50	14,240	60,430	5,240
50-64	23,360	81,970	11,620
65+	20,050	98,080	22,660
ALL AGES	57,550	230,480	39,520

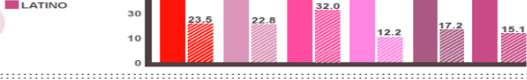
LATINO WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE DIAGNOSED WITH LARGE TUMORS AND LATE STAGE BREAST CANCER THAN WHITE WOMEN.



WHEN ASIAN WOMEN MIGRATE TO THE U.S., THEIR RISK OF DEVELOPING BREAST CANCER INCREASES UP TO SIX-FOLD.

BLACK WOMEN ARE MOST LIKELY TO DIE FROM BREAST CANCER THAN ANY OTHER GROUP OF WOMEN.

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO DIE FROM BREAST CANCER EVEN THOUGH THEY HAVE LESS DIAGNOSES THAN WHITE WOMEN. THEY ARE ALSO MORE LIKELY TO BE DIAGNOSED WITH AGGRESSIVE TUMORS ASSOCIATED WITH POORER PROGNOSIS. NEARLY 27,000 AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN WILL BE DIAGNOSED WITH BREAST CANCER THIS YEAR.



AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN UNDER AGE 45 HAVE A FIVE-YEAR SURVIVAL RATE OF 76% COMPARED TO YOUNG WHITE WOMEN WHO HAVE AN 88% SURVIVAL RATE.

LOW SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS, LACK OF MEDICAL COVERAGE, BARRIERS TO EARLY DETECTION AND SCREENING, AND UNEQUAL ACCESS TO IMPROVEMENTS IN CANCER TREATMENT ARE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DIFFERENCE IN SURVIVAL RATES.

Based on 2001-2007 data. National Cancer Institute.

RATE PER 100,000
19.9-27.5
27.6-32.3
32.4-33.9
34.0-38.1
INSUFFICIENT DATA

Sources: 1.) American Cancer Society, Cancer Facts & Figures 2011-2012. Atlanta: American Cancer Society, Inc. 2.) Howlander N, Noone AM, Krappcho M, Neyman N, Aminou R, Waldron W, Allekruse SF, Kosary CL, Ruhi J, Tatalovich Z, Cho H, Marriotto A, Eisner MP, Lewis DR, Chen HS, Feuer EJ, Cronin KA, Edwards BK (eds). SEER Cancer Statistics Review, 1975-2008. National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, MD. http://seer.cancer.gov/csr/1975_2008/, based on November 2010 SEER data submission, posted to the SEER web site, 2011.

LOW SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS, LACK OF MEDICAL COVERAGE, BARRIERS TO EARLY DETECTION AND SCREENING, AND UNEQUAL ACCESS TO IMPROVEMENTS IN CANCER TREATMENT ARE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DIFFERENCE IN SURVIVAL RATES.

BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN AND PROSTATE CANCER

ZERO PROSTATE CANCER BY THE NUMBERS

EVERY 13 minutes A BLACK MAN IS DIAGNOSED WITH PROSTATE CANCER

EVERY DAY NEARLY 17 BLACK MEN DIE OF PROSTATE CANCER

1 IN 6 BLACK MEN WILL BE DIAGNOSED WITH PROSTATE CANCER IN THEIR LIFETIME

33% OF BLACK MEN 50 OR OLDER HAD A PSA TEST IN 2018, COMPARED TO 37% OF WHITE MEN.

TODAY, THERE ARE 3.1+ MILLION PROSTATE CANCER SURVIVORS ALIVE IN THE USA

BLACK MEN ARE 1.7X MORE LIKELY TO BE DIAGNOSED WITH AND 2.1X MORE LIKELY TO DIE FROM PROSTATE CANCER THAN WHITE MEN

BLACK MEN IN THE U.S. AND CARIBBEAN HAVE THE HIGHEST DOCUMENTED PROSTATE CANCER INCIDENCE RATES IN THE WORLD.

About 41,600 Black men were expected to be diagnosed with prostate cancer

About 6,040 Black men were expected to die from prostate cancer in 2022

THE GOOD NEWS IS... 1 2 3 4 5

If caught early, more than 99% of people diagnosed with prostate cancer will be alive in five years.

WHAT CAN I DO?

KNOW YOUR RISK

- RACE
- FAMILY HISTORY
- AGING
- DIET
- GENE CHANGES
- CHEMICAL EXPOSURE

TAKE THE RISK QUIZ

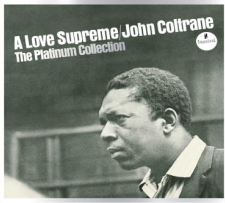
- Are you Black/African American?
- Are you a Veteran?
- Did your father or brother have prostate cancer?
- Are you over the age of 50?
- Do you consume a high-fat diet?

TALK ABOUT SCREENING

FIND A DOCTOR YOU TRUST

THE NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE CANCER NETWORK (NCCN) RECOMMENDS THAT BLACK MEN AND THOSE WITH A FAMILY HISTORY SHOULD BEGIN TALKING TO THEIR DOCTOR ABOUT SCREENING AS EARLY AS AGE 40.

Sounds for the Soul; Recommended Playlist

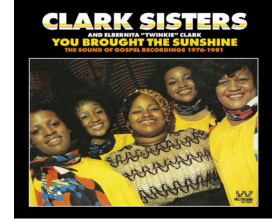


A Love Supreme is an album by the jazz saxophonist and composer John Coltrane. He recorded it in one session on December 9, 1964, at Van Gelder Studio in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, leading a quartet featuring pianist McCoy Tyner, bassist Jimmy Garrison and drummer Elvin

Jones.

A Love Supreme was released by Impulse! Records in January 1965. It ranks among Coltrane's best-selling albums and is widely considered as his masterpiece.

YOU BROUGHT THE SUNSHINE: THE SOUND OF GOSPEL RECORDINGS 1976-1981



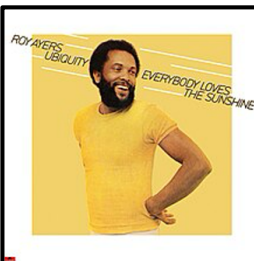
The Clark Sisters are five Detroit siblings who were a revolutionary, though somewhat controversial, force in gospel during the late 70s and early 80s, blending spiritual concerns with secular grooves. 'You Brought the Sunshine' became a huge club hit. The highest-selling female gospel unit are still a going concern today, picking up several Grammys along the way.



Jared Samuel Erskine (born October 17, 1986), known professionally as October London, is an American singer and songwriter. He was signed to Death Row Records by Snoop Dogg in 2022 and released his studio album, The Rebirth of Marvin, in 2023. Its

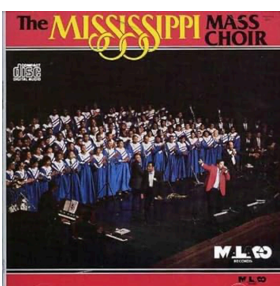
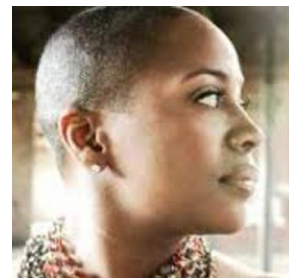
single, "Back to Your Place", topped the Billboard Adult R&B Songs chart and was nominated for three Soul Train Music Awards.

Thomas Lee Barrett, Jr. (born January 13, 1944), better known professionally as Pastor T.L. Barrett and Rev. T.L. Barrett, is an American Pentecostal preacher and gospel musician. Barrett is a preacher on Chicago's South Side who released gospel albums in the 1970s; as a musician, he was largely unknown outside of Chicago until a resurgence in interest in his music occurred in the 2010s.



Everybody Loves the Sunshine is a studio album by Roy Ayers released under the Roy Ayers Ubiquity umbrella. It was released through Polydor Records in 1976. It peaked at number 51 on the Billboard 200 chart. In 2016, Pitchfork placed the title track at number 72 on the "200 Best Songs of the 1970s" list.

2010 Album Seven years in the making, Avery Sunshine's debut album combines soul, jazz and gospel with lyrics jam packed with emotion, intelligence and humour.

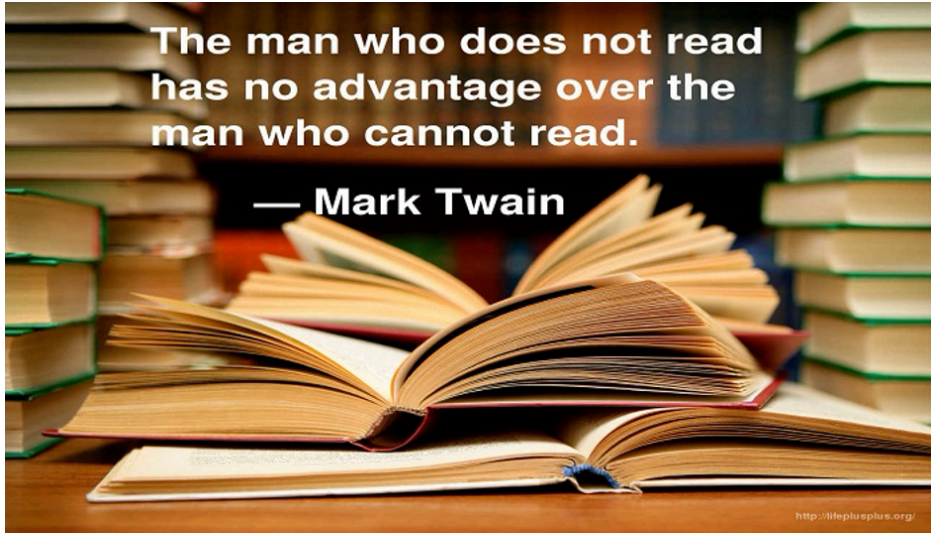


The best album the Mississippi Mass Choir ever recorded!!! If you like traditional gospel, this must be part of your gospel music library

Willie Hutch's voice is the epitome of 70's soul and "Brother's Going to Work it Out" is the epitomical song of that epitome. Willie had soul for centuries and his lyrics were perfect and always embodied with passion what he was talking about. "Brothers Going to Work it Out" is on the Soundtrack to the classic Blaxploitation movie "The Mack" which was released in 1973 along with the soundtrack.

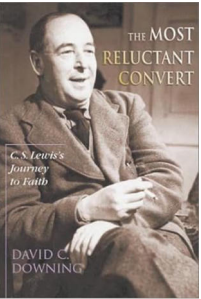


Book Recommendations



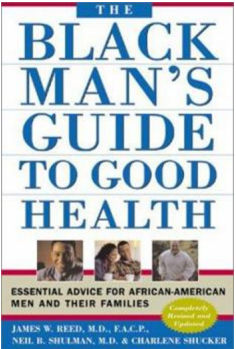
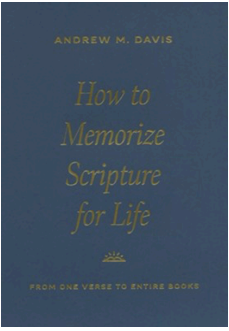
In honor of Fathers Day:
'Why Fathers Cry At Night: A Memoir In Love Poems, Letters, Recipes, And Remembrances'
 by Kwame Alexander (Little, Brown; 2023)

'I Wish My Dad: The Power of Vulnerable Conversations between Fathers and Sons'
 by Romal Tune and Jordan Tune (Broadleaf Books; 2022)



Before you read Mere Christianity, you must know C.S. Lewis's story. Helpful and encouraging, Downing writes a simple story about how C.S. Lewis went from atheism to pantheism to theism to Christ. Get an inside scoop into how the Inklings were a part of Lewis's conversion to Christ in *The Most Reluctant Convert*, and even how mythology

The Black Man's Guide to Good Health: Essential Advice for African American Men and Their Families
 by Charlene Shucker, Neil B. Shulman, James W. Reed

Through his years of experience in extended Scripture memorization, Andrew M. Davis helps readers commit to studying God's word so they may grow in holiness, resist temptation, and share the gospel with lost people. Through his years of experience in extended Scripture memorization, Andrew M. Davis helps readers commit to studying God's word so they may grow in holiness, resist temptation, and share the gospel with lost people. Through his years of experience in extended Scripture memorization, Andrew M. Davis helps readers commit to studying God's word so they may grow in holiness, resist temptation, and share the gospel with

Connected with a Purpose; International Laity

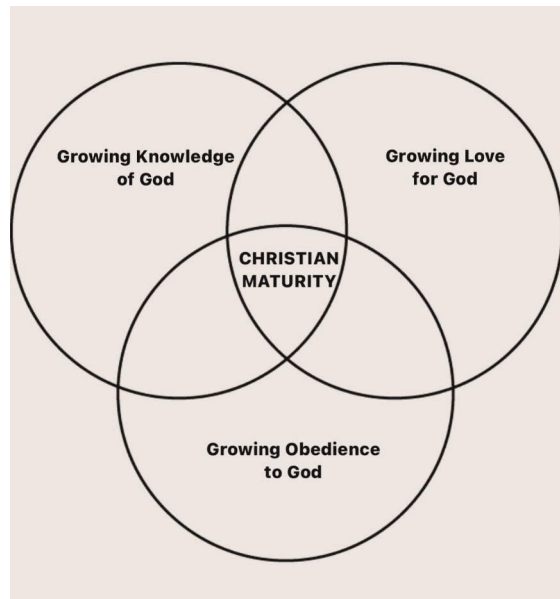
Christian teachers serve beyond the classroom in East Africa



https://www.mnnonline.org/news/christian-teachers-serve-beyond-the-classroom-in-east-africa/

Missions Beyond the U.S.A. Sunday is observed on one Sunday in May of each year. On this day each local congregation shall observe Missions Beyond the U.S.A. with the receiving of special offerings and gifts. They shall be administered by the Presiding Bishops of the Tenth and Eleventh Episcopal Districts of the CME Church.

Persons can give using the Donate button and designate Missions Beyond.



Hymn of Praise; How Firm a Foundation

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord

Author: K. (1787); Author (attributed to):
George Keith (1787); Author (attributed to):
R. Keen (c. 1787)

1 How firm a foundation, ye saints of the
Lord,
is laid for your faith in God's excellent Word!
What more can be said than to you God hath
said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

2 "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not
dismayed,
for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

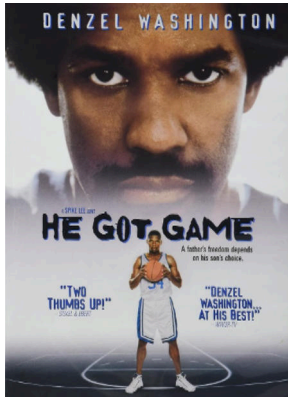
3 "When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
for I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless,
and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

4 "When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
my grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
the flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

5 "The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake."



Movie Recommendations

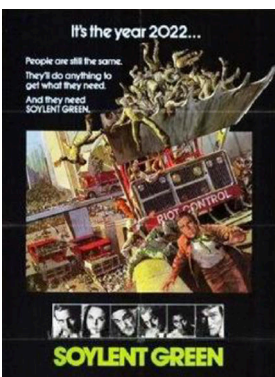


1998- HE GOT GAME: Jake Shuttleworth (Denzel Washington) may not have been the ideal role model before going to prison, but he does all he can to right his wrongs and teach his son to stay on a path to success once released in this Spike Lee joint.



1972- Sounder; The Morgans, a family of poor black sharecroppers in the Depression-plagued South, struggle to find enough to eat despite the help of their hunting dog, Sounder. When father Nathan (Paul Winfield) resorts to stealing food, he is

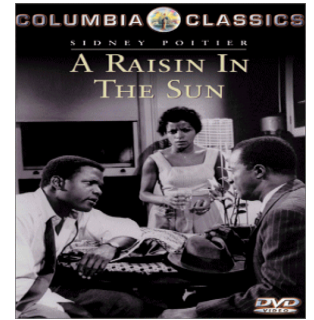
captured by police and sent to prison, and his wife, Rebecca (Cicely Tyson), is left to care for their son, David (Kevin Hooks). Though Sounder has run away, David never gives up hope that his dog will return, just as he believes that he will see his father again someday.



Soylent Green is a 1973 American ecological dystopian thriller film directed by Richard Fleischer, and starring Charlton Heston, Leigh Taylor-Young, and Edward G. Robinson in his final film role. It is loosely based on the 1966 science-fiction novel Make Room! Make Room! By Harry Harrison, with a plot that

combines elements of science fiction and a police procedural. The story follows a murder investigation in a dystopian future of dying oceans and year-round humidity caused by the greenhouse effect, with the resulting pollution, depleted resources, poverty, and overpopulation.

1961- A Raisin in the Sun, with Sidney Poitier: This lauded drama follows the Youngers, an African-American family living together in an apartment in Chicago. Following the death of their patriarch, they try to determine what to do with the substantial insurance payment they'll soon receive. Opinions on what to do with the money vary. Walter Lee (Sidney Poitier) wants to make a business investment, while his mother, Lena (Claudia McNeil), is intent on buying a house for them all to live in -- two differing views of the American Dream.



The Color Purple is a 2023 American musical period drama film directed by Blitz Bazawule. Marcus Gardley's screenplay is based on the stage musical of the same name, which in turn is based on the 1982 novel of the same name by Alice Walker. It is the second film adaptation of the novel, following the 1985 film directed by Steven Spielberg and produced by Spielberg and Quincy Jones. Spielberg and Jones return as producers for the 2023 film, along with its Broadway producers Scott Sanders and Oprah Winfrey, the latter of whom also starred in the 1985 film.





Life-Changing Privileges Of Turning 18

Upon reaching the age of 18, teenagers often perceive it as a significant milestone, while parents may find it to be a challenging transition. This period involves relinquishing control and acknowledging the maturation of their child. From a legal standpoint, attaining the age of 18 holds more significance than mere celebration.

In most states, it symbolizes the official onset of adulthood, entailing specific rights and obligations. Here is a concise overview of the privileges associated with turning 18:

1. You are legally responsible for your actions.

A minor (juvenile or child) is under the protection of parents for the necessities of food, clothing, and shelter. Also, the parents are the legal and financial guardians of the juvenile. If a minor shoplifts or breaks a window with a baseball, the parents are held legally responsible. The minor cannot be held to any contract.

2. You can move out of your parents' home.

Each state is different when it comes to a concept like being able to move out. But in the United States, the age of 18 is when you legally become an adult. Before that age, you are a minor under the guardianship of your parents.



3. You gain more driving privileges.

Under the age of 18, states can dramatically restrict your driving privileges by prohibiting any passengers or driving at certain times of the day.

4. Your juvenile record is sealed.

When you turn 18, you now have a "fresh start" as an adult, so past transgressions won't legally come back to haunt you.



5. You can enter into a contract.

You can enter into contracts because they are now legally binding. This opens up a wide range of new activities you can engage in. Whether you know it or not, a child is not responsible for gambling losses. This is a form of a contract. Juveniles cannot qualify for legally binding contracts.

6. You can get married.

Unless you are in a state that allows marriage before 18 years old or with a parent's permission, you could not get hitched until you became a legal adult. In order to be legally married, you must be an adult who can have the authority to say "I do." You can't do that until you are 18 years old.

7. You can consent to physical relationships.

At 18-years-old, you can now have "consensual sex" with a partner. The legal age of consent varies state by

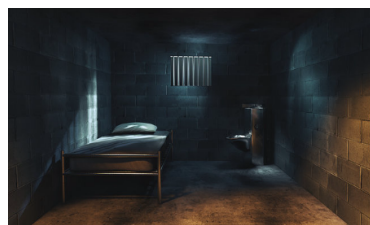
state, with some areas being as young as 16 years old.

8. You must sign tax forms for employment.

When you apply for a job, you must sign a tax form and contract. This is not legally binding until you are an adult. Thus, after 18, you can hold a job, get an apartment, buy stocks and purchase real estate.

9. You can join the military.

The government wants you to register for the Selective Service (military draft) when you turn 18. You are now legally required to serve your country. You can vote and because jury duty is based on your voting records, you also must serve in a jury of your peers.



10. You can go to jail.

No more “juvy,” as the kids call it. If you commit a crime or misdemeanor as an 18-year-old, you will be [tried as an adult](#) and may spend time in jail or prison.

11. You can rent or buy a house/apartment.

Once you are a legal adult, you can go out on your own and sign a lease to rent. Finding your first place away from home is one of the most fun (and stressful) parts of adulthood – especially if you’re paying for rent yourself.

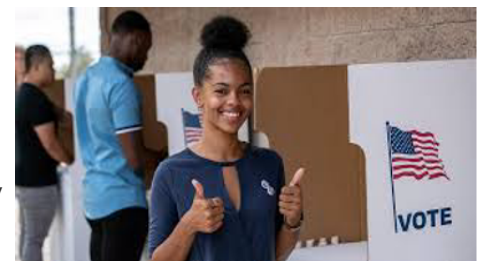
12. You can make your own medical decisions.

Don’t want to get that cavity filled? It may be a bad choice, but it’s yours to make when you turn 18. Legally, you can decide when you go to the doctor and what kind of medical treatments you receive if you ever find yourself in the hospital.

13. You can vote!

For the first time in your life, you can vote and have a say in the future of your country. Be sure to register to vote in time for the next election.

Of course, there are plenty more pros to becoming a legal adult, but these are a handful of the privileges of turning 18 that will impact your day-to-day life the most! Congrats on your newfound adulthood.



Art Work



New Jersey based artist and educator Bisa Butler creates unique quilts featuring Afrocentric images and notable figures such as Paul Laurence Dunbar, Basquiat, and Josephine Baker. Butler first became interested in quilting, after creating a quilt for her ailing grandmother. Soon after, she sharpened the sewing skills she was taught as a young girl, and utilized her fine art education to create beautiful, intricate, quilts which depicted aspects of African-American life.

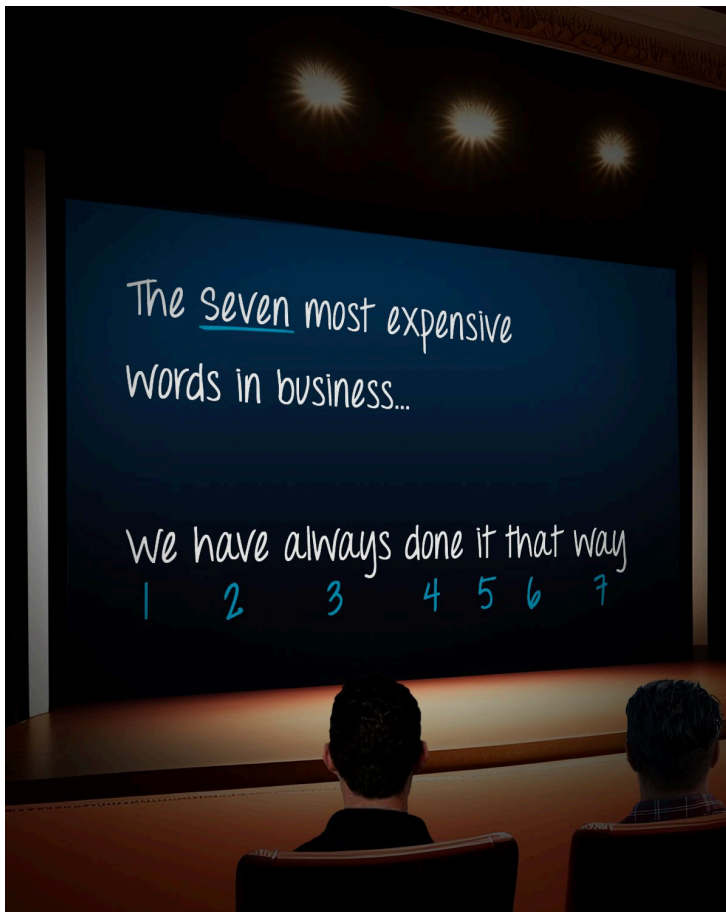
Butler's works have been featured in exhibitions all over the country, including The Smithsonian, the California African American Museum in Los Angeles, and The Studio Museum in Harlem.



Works by Bisa Butler are currently on view in New Jersey through March 15, as part of "Art in the Atrium."

<https://www.superselected.com/art-bisa-butler-depicts-beauty-history-and-culture-with-her-original-quilts/>

Quotes



Black History Focus



MLB integrates Negro Leagues stats, elevating long-overlooked stars to Major League status

For decades, Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb were celebrated as the greatest figures in baseball, with Ruth hailed as the best player and Cobb as the premier hitter. However, these narratives often excluded African American athletes whose contributions were underreported or dismissed. This exclusion persisted despite the talents that led to Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier in 1947 as the first Black player in the modern Major Leagues. (Courtesy photo/ NNPA Newswire)

<https://afro.com/negro-leagues-stats-integrated-mlb>

The Epic Journey of James 'Wink' Winkfield

African-American horsemen played a vital role in shaping early American turf history, and the Kentucky Derby is no exception. The history of the Kentucky Derby and African-American horsemen are intertwined. The Derby and Churchill Downs owe a great deal to these men who helped shape America's greatest race. Thirteen of the 15 riders in the first Derby were African-American, while African-American reinsmen won 15 of the Derby's first 28 runnings.



James Winkfield was a two-time Kentucky Derby winner. On June 25, 1980, the 11 African-American jockeys who rode a total of 15 Derby winners between 1875 and 1902, were honored by the NAACP and the Lincoln Foundation. A plaque commemorating the occasion is now in the Kentucky Derby Museum's collection.

Source: <https://www.americasbestracing.net/the-sport/2024-the-epic-journey-james-wink-winkfield>

CELEBRATING JUNETEENTH

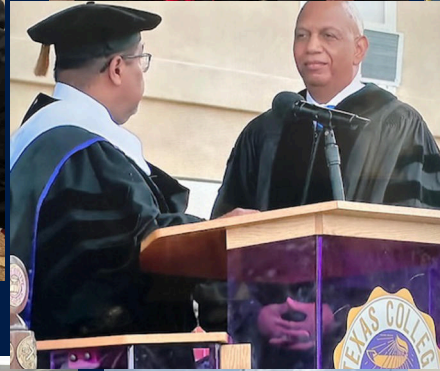
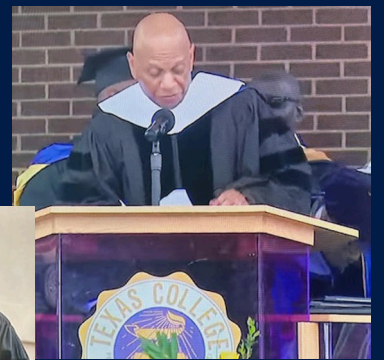


The Emancipation Day celebration, June 19, 1900 held in "East Woods" on East 24th Street in Austin. Credit: Austin History Center.

"On "Freedom's Eve," or the eve of January 1, 1863, the first Watch Night services took place. On that night, enslaved and free African Americans gathered in churches and private homes all across the country awaiting news that the Emancipation Proclamation had taken effect. At the stroke of midnight, prayers were answered as all enslaved people in the Confederate States were declared legally free. Union soldiers, many of whom were black, marched onto plantations and across cities in the South reading small copies of the Emancipation Proclamation and spreading the news of freedom in Confederate States. Only through the Thirteenth Amendment did emancipation end slavery throughout the United States.

But not everyone in Confederate territory would immediately be free. Even though the Emancipation Proclamation was made effective in 1863, it could not be implemented in places still under Confederate control. As a result, in the westernmost Confederate state of Texas, enslaved people would not be free until much later. Freedom finally came on June 19, 1865, when some 2,000 Union troops arrived in Galveston Bay, Texas. The army announced that the more than 250,000 enslaved black people in the state, were free by executive decree. This day came to be known as "Juneteenth," by the newly freed people in Texas."

Laity in Action Section





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A TIME TO:
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