

Easter Meditation: What is Easter? (John 20:1-18)



Formation

+ Nurture

+ Leadership

= Mission

Former President Jimmy Carter tells a story about a true incident that happened in the Georgia Senate in 1964. He says that Senator Bobby Rowan made a motion to amend the Georgia election code as follows: "No person may vote who has been deceased for more than three years." On first reading this made no sense to me, but I discovered that it was an item of serious debate. The bottom line of the issue was that they were trying to assess how long the spirit and political orientation of dead citizens might still be remembered and have influence on how one voted.

When the first Easter Sunday rolled around, the disciples who had scattered probably wondered if Jesus' influence would continue to have life. The disciples had dedicated the better part of three years to following Jesus. They had left their jobs and some had left their families. Just before Jesus had died the disciples were asking themselves if they had made a mistake. Although Jesus had told them he was going to die, they never imagined he would die on a cross as a criminal. It

seemed that the Jesus movement would die. The disciples, that strong band of followers, were now in hiding and had great fear for their lives.

One of the women who had followed Jesus was Mary Magdalene. She had been a first hand witness of his death and was there when they took the dead Jesus down from the cross and put him in a tomb. Mary knew he was dead and all her dreams died also. What is Easter? It is a time when we are confronted with the reality of death. Some people live as though they think they will live forever, never facing the reality of death and the necessity to prepare for the inevitable event. Death is not a very happy thought and we do not like talking about dying.

That first Easter morning, while it was dark, Mary made her way to Jesus' tomb. She noticed that the stone covering the tomb had been rolled away. We see the emotions of Mary. She is disturbed as she thinks someone has stolen Jesus. She is excited as she runs to tell Peter. She cries. Then through her tears she recognizes Jesus as he calls her by name.

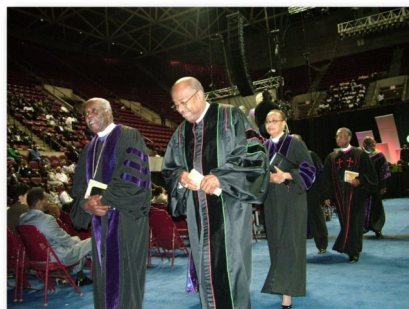
Jesus tells Mary, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father." Maybe Jesus was telling Mary that her life would never return to the way it was. She had let go of the mortal Jesus if she wanted to claim the immortal Christ.

Are you clinging to some things that are preventing you from experiencing the new life in Jesus Christ? It could be bad habits or traditions. It could be attitudes and not facing the reality of a need for improvement and change. Easter calls us out of the graveyards of life and into the light of God's light.

With tears of joy streaming down Mary's cheeks, Jesus tells her, "Go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary left the graveyard to return with the good news: "I have seen the Lord!" What is Easter? It is the time to go and tell our brothers and sisters on the streets and everywhere the good news: "I have seen the Lord this day." He is alive!!!



Call to Arms: Three Denominations Gather *(Cont'd)*



centers or in juvenile camp. So we see this, and it challenges us in so many ways."

Studies show less than 50 percent of black male teenagers graduate from high school. Nearly 60 percent of young offenders in adult prisons are African American. And homicide is the leading cause of death for 15 to 34-year-old black men.

Dr. Cornel West, himself a Harvard graduate and a professor at Princeton, jumpstarted the gathering with a tough message for pastors. "We have got to remind our young brothers that they come from a great people who have forged a great struggle with great style for a great cause and it has much to do with that blood at the cross," West told the crowd of men and women.

"Too much of what we see in the practice of black churches has been a form of sleep walking when it comes to not just black men, but poor people in general," he added.

Still, West called the meeting a black church "renaissance." This rebirth was kindled with prayer, praise, and strategy to tackle the tough issues.

The U.S. government also delivered a strong show of support for "The Great Gathering." President Obama addressed the crowd in a video message, saying, "You know these struggles. You see them every day. You know that through unwavering determination and steadfast faith, each of us can rise above it."

Joshua DuBois, who directs of the White House Faith Office, followed the president's address with a personal message for his fellow black Methodists.

"The president has not taken his eye off how we can work to strengthen families," DuBois said. "He has proposed a new father and marriage innovation fund that would support local efforts around these issues. And we will continue to work with these organizations to have an impact."

The end result of the gathering produced a "Male Investment Plan." The plan includes a mentoring program, Saturday acad-

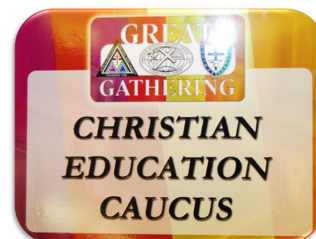
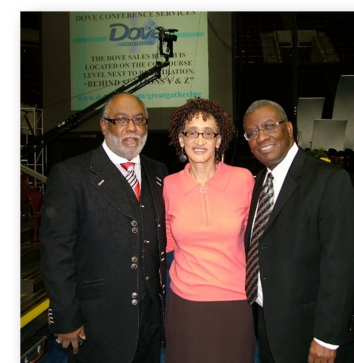
emies for young men at black Methodist churches in nearly 50 cities, and a plan to pay for it all.

"We are going to be asking one million of our members to give at least \$10 annually, so we can start a \$10 million fund and then hire professional African American leaders and other staff persons who may be of other races who can work on significant African American problems and address it," Bishop Henry Williamson of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church explained to CBN News.

The plan excites conference members, like Clementa Pinckney, a South Carolina state senator who was first elected to the State House when he was just 22-years-old. Pinckney did not have a personal relationship with his own father until he graduated from high school.

Pinckney said. "I think there are always father figures, man figures around -- even if it means ministers and uncles and cousins and a community of people playing a part."

This community of black churches is also armed with the power of the Holy Spirit.



Christian Education Musing

In the 1963 edition of the Westminster Dictionary of Christian Education the entry for Christian Methodist Episcopal Church is provided by the then General Secretary of the Board of Christian Education C.D. Coleman (later Sr. Bishop). He writes, "From its inception this denomination placed education among its highest aspirations. Organized during the dark reconstruction period in the Deep South, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church has always sought to promote a vigorous program of education. The founders held in common a burning passion for the enlightenment of all people. Accordingly, the church was founded on the assumption that religion and education belong together, each being essentially a complement to the other. The church has a plan outlined in the Book of Discipline, by which the entire church organizes itself to administer Christian education. The responsibility for the general program of Christian nurture rests with the General Board of Christian Education. This board plans the program of Christian education

for the entire connection." (Board was changed to Department in 1986.)



When I was an undergraduate at University Tennessee Martin my Consolidations Accounting Teacher would often say, "This is what the book says, and this is the way it is done in the real world." I am afraid we can say this is true for the church as well. Every year the Department of Christian education develops curriculum to be used by local churches, however, there seems to no sense of an imperative for the local church to use this curriculum.

Additionally, district and annual conferences are very slow overall to even inquire about the direction of Christian education as planned by the Gen-

eral Department of Christian education. An example is the book the Department recommends for study with youth groups. We have had minimal response, yet people complain we don't have resources for youth.

I know much of our focus is on the election of Bishops and General Officers in 2010, however, I am also keenly aware we need to give attention to how we are organized and our focus. I raise this fundamental question. Does the Christian Methodist Episcopal today promote a vigorous program of Christian education?

Formation

+ Nurture

+ Leadership

= Mission



Young Adult Retreat—New Orleans (May 27-30, 2010)

Get ready for the 2010 FOCUS Retreat scheduled to be held May 27– 30, 2010 in New Orleans, Louisiana as we ‘Serve the Present Age through Service and Christian Nurture!’ Come and be a part of this spiritual breakthrough. We will be offering Sprit-filled and informative workshops, with topics ranging from ‘Love and Relationships’ to ‘Engaging Young Adults in your Local Church.’ There will be awesome

Praise and Worship, as well as nightly Worship Service led by renowned Preachers of the Gospel. There will also be opportunities to fellowship with other CMEs across our great Zion and participate in a service project destined to bless the community of New Orleans! Our goals for the Retreat are simple but bold: to raise awareness of the diverse national interests of young adults, to promote greater young adult

involvement within the community and church, and to enhance the spiritual enlightenment of all in attendance. We are offering an all inclusive registration of \$100 if post-marked before March 1st, \$125 postmarked by May 1st, and \$150 on-site. Registration includes a daily breakfast (based on double occupancy in the Westin), participation in the Day of Service project, Cook-out, Reception and much more!

Hotel accommodations will be furnished by The Westin New Orleans Canal Place located at 100 Rue Iberville, New Orleans, Louisiana 70130, at a rate of \$94 nightly, plus tax. You may contact (504) 566-7006 or visit www.starwoodhotels.com to reserve a room at this special rate.

Young Adult FOCUS Retreat—Tentative Agenda & Speakers

THURSDAY - May 27, 2010

Registration 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Praise & Worship 7:00 p.m. – 7:15 p.m.
Opening Service 7:15 p.m.

FRIDAY - May 28, 2010

Bible Study & Breakfast 7:45 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.
Praise & Worship 9:15 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
Plenary Session 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Presidential Address
Luncheon 12:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Breakout Session #1 2:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Breakout Session #2 3:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Dinner (on your own) 5:00 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.
Evening Worship Service 7:00 p.m.
Poolside Reception/White Party 9:00 p.m. – Until

SATURDAY - May 29, 2010

Service/Outreach Project 9:00 a.m. – Noon
Park Cookout/Fellowship 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Evening Bible Study 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

SUNDAY - May 30, 2010

Closing Worship Service 8:00 a.m.



Min. Cyreeta Collins
Interim Conn. Youth Director
Immediate Past CYAM President



Dr. Willie Champion
General Secretary of the
Department of Evangelism



Rev. William Smith
Pastor, Trinity CME Church
Toccoa, Georgia



Dr. Carmichael Crutchfield
General Secretary of the
Department of Christian Education

Formation

+ Nurture

+ Leadership

= Mission





An Open Letter of Appreciation & Gratitude

*Bishop Kenneth Carter, Presiding Prelate Tenth Episcopal District
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church*



TENTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
CHRISTIAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
BISHOP KENNETH W. CARTER, PRESIDING PRELATE
P.O. BOX 15641
FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76119



Email: BishopKWCarter@CMETenth.org

Website: www.CMETenth.org

*Board of Trustees
Texas College*

*Commission on Life and Witness
Chair*



Formation

+ Nurture

+ Leadership

= Mission

To the Youth of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

Greetings in the name of our Resurrected Lord!

This letter comes to express my heartfelt gratitude for the \$5,000 plus youth across the Christian Methodist Episcopal Connectional Church raised in generous support of our Haitian brothers and sisters through the Souper Bowl of Caring Project during Connectional Youth & Young Adult Week. Indeed, my heart like John Wesley, was warmed by your benevolent kindness.

Your purity of heart and spirit is a vivid example of why Christ dearly loved children and youth and welcomed them to “come unto Him.” Additionally, you have answered the call to serve this present age.

Thank you so much for your generosity of spirit. Thank you for sharing your substance with those whom Christ once described as “the least of these among us.” As specified, your contribution will be used to support our Haitian Relief Efforts. On behalf of all who will benefit from your generosity, I say Thank You!

The challenge that confronts us in Haiti is enormous. However, it is through the generosity of young people like yourselves that we can bring comfort, healing and aid to our brothers and sisters in Haiti.

As you continue to increase your faith, I pray that you abound in divine grace, favor, wisdom, understanding and peace.

Your Servant,

+ Kenneth W. Carter



Cultivating the Strength...Hidden in the Tenth

Brundi; Dr Congo (Bukavu South/ Kivu, Masisi Kitshanga, Rutshuru/Bwito Nyanzale, Goma; Rwanda); Ghana; Ghana/Togo; Lagos; Nigeria (Western, Southern, Eastern, Northern, East Mainland);; South Africa; Sudan/Egypt; Uganda; and Zambia



Graduation Season Right Around the Corner

It is graduation season. Do we prefer the term “graduation” or the term “commencement” to mark this occasion? Which is correct? In fact, it is both. Graduation is the occasion for the conferral of academic degrees or diplomas. High school graduates have completed a set of requirements demonstrating competency in meeting general education and specific requirements, have completed tests to establish their knowledge, and have usually competed with others for grade point average and class standing. Graduation is the celebration of that achievement – and an achievement it is. But graduation is also com-

mencement, which is defined as beginning; a start; the act or process of being or being brought into existence. Some graduates will leave home for college later this summer. Some will not leave home right away. Some will not further their formal education right away. But when the next academic year starts, none of those who are graduating this year will be in a seat in a local high school. And so for all of you; this is a beginning of something new and different. There are moments throughout life when we stand at the intersection between the ending of what has been and the beginning of what will yet be-

come. High School graduation is one of those moments – and perhaps one of the most significant in life.

Our connectional church celebrates the graduation of many young people each year. Most of them have grown up in our midst; some of them were baptized right in our churches, and vows were taken before our congregations. We promised to nurture them in the faith, and to be an example of a community that practiced forgiving and forgiveness. We promised to teach them the faith. CED has several examples of worship services to honor graduates; please feel free to contact us for assistance.



Class of 2010

Formation

+ Nurture

+ Leadership

= Mission

Christian Educator’s Book Club: Basics of Christian Education

A new feature of the newsletter is a recommended book for the month. This month, we recommend Basics of Christian Education by Karen B. Tye. This book addresses the what, why, where, whom, and how questions of Christian education.

This book is a good study for boards of Christian education seeking to become more effective in its influence on congregations. It highlights the need for congregations to know that Christian education is the in-

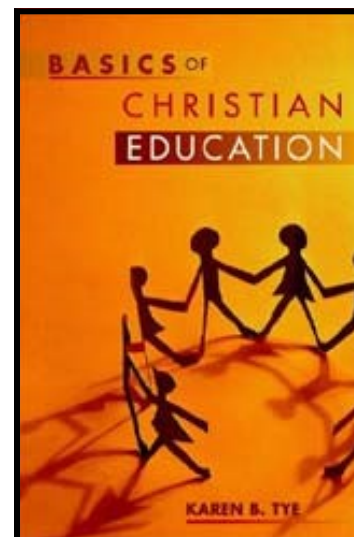
strument that deepens faith, commitment and loyalty.

As the General Secretary, I am convinced that the major reason we are losing members to nondenominational churches is that we have not provided a strong program of Christian education in our local churches.

Karen Tye’s book is a must read for those who are members of boards of Christian education. It will help give a stronger understanding of the basics of

Christian education, thus, will enhance the participation and role of Christian educators in the local church.

Finally, as we have written in our resource Doing A New Thing In Christian Education Christian education is something that must be done with intentionality. Tye reminds us of the importance of knowing it will not take place by accident.





The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church - Department of Christian Education

Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Department of Christian Education
P. O. Box 16507
Memphis, TN 38186-6507

Telephone: (901) 345-4109
Fax: (901) 261-3289
E-mail: news@thecmechurchced.org

**Make disciples through
"events that form and transform"**

We are of the belief that the ultimate essence of "Doing A New Thing" in Christian Education is discipleship. We strongly believe that an emphasis on discipleship will lead to formation, nurture, leadership, and mission taking place in our local, district, regional, national, and world wide communities. We believe that the witness of the love of Jesus Christ will be spread in such a way that lives will be saved, educated, and liberated. There are four aspects of understanding of what is involved in "Doing A New Thing" in Christian Education. Namely, they are formation, nurture, leadership, and mission. When the first three aspects are attended to, mission will be the result.

**Dr. Carmichael Crutchfield, General Secretary
Dr. Willa Ross, Executive Assistant
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Department of Christian Education**

We're on the Web!

www.thecmechurchced.org

Start Planning NOW for Vacation Bible School

CEd recommends the Abingdon Press Theme Kit: Praise Party (<http://www.thecmechurchced.org/VacationBibleSchool.aspx>). Praise Party is a heritage-based Christian education curriculum that will have your community celebrating the saving grace of Jesus Christ with head, heart, hands, feet, and SOUL!! Through Bible study, crafts, skits, movement, contemporary music, and well-loved hymns and songs of the Black Church, Praise Party will create passionate worship that truly makes disciples for Jesus Christ. More information is available on their website <http://www.abingdonpressvbs.com>.



**The 36th Quadrennial Session and
The 37th General Conference
of the
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
June 26 – July 4, 2010
Mobile, Alabama**

