

August 1, 2014

To: President Simeon Rhoden, Officers and Members of the 5th District Lay Organization,
Members of the Clergy, Visitors and Friends

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for electing me as one of your delegates to the 33rd Biennial Session of the Connectional Lay Organization held in Atlanta, GA July 28 thru August 1, 2013.

I would like to report that as a delegate I attended each business session, the workshops I was assigned to attend, the worship services and other designated session events.

The opening Worship Service and The Sacrament of Holy Communion were held on Sunday evening July 28th. The Sixth Episcopal District Choir provided the music and the sacred word was delivered by Bishop John Richard Bryant, Presiding Prelate of the Fourth Episcopal District and Senior Bishop of the Church.

A morning Worship Service began the Sessions for each day and the theme was "Catch the Fire", and each of the speakers added fuel to the fire in their own special way. The speakers were: Monday – Rev. Marcia Burns, Pastor at St. Andrews A.M.E. Church in Pine Bluff, AK; Tuesday – Rev. Paul J. Thomas, Pastor at A.M.E. Union Church in Philadelphia, PA; Wednesday – Rev. Tameaka (Reid) Sims, Executive Pastor at Lee Memorial A.M.E. Church in Cleveland, OH; and Thursday – Rev. Dr. Patrick Clayborn, Pastor at St. John A.M.E. Church in Huntsville, AL.

Included in the first day's business was the Presidential Address from President Dr. Willie C. Glover. He reviewed his accomplishments for the year, the future for the Connectional Lay Organization and his major goals which includes:

- Having greater dialogue with the leadership of the Church;
- Increase involvement in Ecumenical Outreach;
- Increase involvement in Social Action and political issues having implications for the faith based community;
- Convene the Third African Summit;
- Increase efforts to be more "Green";
- Seek having "We Speak" magazine listed as an official publication of the Church;
- Establish a "Living Legends" Hall of Fame at the CLO level;
- Promote blending emphasis of an intergenerational organization;
- Increasing membership to 1,000,000 authenticated.

The keynote address was delivered by The Honorable Georganna Sinkfield, a member of the Georgia House of Representatives. She is the longest serving woman in the history of the Georgia General Assembly, being elected 15 consecutive terms with more than 80% of the votes cast each time.

After the lunch break, the election of Biennial Officers was held. Our own Honorable Patricia Mayberry was Chair of the Election Commission. Those elected:

President	Dr. Willie C. Glover (3 rd District)
1st Vice President	Gloria Byrd (6th District)
2nd Vice President	Matikane Abednego Makiti (19th District)
3rd Vice President	Mrs. Eileen S. Warner (11th District) [Now Deceased]
Recording Secretary	Gloria DeVeaux-Cobb (7th District)
Asst. Rec. Secretary	Doris M. Bell (13th District)
Corresponding Secretary	Ada L. Groff (5th District)
Financial Secretary	Richard L. Bowden (9th District)
Treasurer	Darwin K. Eldridge (13th District)
Chaplain	Alice W. Belden (4th District)
Parliamentarian	Virginia Henderson Harris, RP (6th District)
Director of Lay Activities	Edith Bartley Cartledge (1st District)
Director of Public Relations	Walter C. Jeffers (1st District)
Historiographer	Pamela F. Tilley (10th District)
Young Adult Representative	Felecia Commodore (1st District)

After the election, we heard reports from the financial team.

An elaborate Welcome and Reception was hosted by the Sixth Episcopal District.

Tuesday July 30th we heard reports and attended Training Institutes. I attended one whose Presenter was the Honorable Patricia M. Mayberry, Esq. and President of the Judicial Council. Her theme was "Christian Lay Leaders". Some of the pointers I picked up: Great leaders can be made and must have a vision, hopefully God given. Leaders take people where they want to go. Great leaders take people where they don't want to go, but where they ought to go. Great leaders take people out of their comfort zones. Great Leaders or the primary leadership in the Church must be spiritual and we must remember that God is the ultimate leader in the Church. Great leaders can be trusted, have high degrees of integrity, listen; communicate and have visions and goals. Great leaders also do not use "I" and "Me", but use "We"; they do not think themselves better than everyone else; and they care about the people who work in their organization. We must grow the Church and we must promote the Church as a spiritual organism rather than an organization. We cannot confuse spiritual leadership that the church organism needs with the administrative skills that organizations want. People will be attracted to the Church when they see in the Church the authentic operations of God's supernatural power. Clergy and Laity must be partners, i.e. leaders and managers and must work peaceable as equals, understanding each other's roles. Clergy/Ministers cannot be both leaders and managers. Leaders (clergy) get the vision, inspire and motivate. Managers (laity) plan, organize and coordinate. Leaders have the visions and managers take you to them.

I also attended an Institute whose presenter was Rev. Dr. William D. Watley. His presentation was "Handling God's Money, God's Way - Live within your Means". Scripture reference - Luke 12:13-21. Rev. Dr. Watley said there are eight (8) principles for living within means:

Make a decision to begin living within Means;
Give tithes as the foundation and cornerstone for financial management and fiscal Integrity; [**TITHE: T**otally **I** Trust **H**im **E**ternally]
Keep Goals before You;
What is Need and what is Want, even among necessities;
How can you enjoy life less expensively;
Develop a Plan;
Learn to say “NO”;
Develop Self-Confidence.

According to Rev. Dr. Watley, these eight steps will give us a new beginning in handling God’s money, God’s way.

Tuesday evening was the Jessie L. Burns Black Tie Soiree, a benefit for Wilberforce University.

Wednesday morning after the Worship Service John Thomas III Connectional Lay Organization Young Adult Representative gave the Young Adult Address. The young people handled the Hour of Power Worship Service and the speaker was the Rev. Susan Hillary Buckson Green, Pastor at Bellevue A.M.E. Church in Aragon, GA.

The Awards Banquet was held Wednesday evening and the Speaker was Journalist Roland S. Martin. Mr. Martin is a nationally syndicated columnist and is Senior Analyst for the Tom Joyner Morning Show.

After the Thursday morning worship service, the business session continued with various reports.

The 33rd Session concluded with the Installation Service for the newly elected officers, the Love Circle, and the singing of the Lay Benediction.

Dianna Maddix
District Delegate to the 33rd Biennial Session
of the Connectional Lay Organization