

ECGMBA BAPTIST INSPIRER

THE MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR

"Answering God's Call For Courageous Living And Faithful Service In Uncertain Times" (Joshua 1: 1-9)

HOW IS YOUR VISION?

By Reverend Dr. George Crews III, MDiv, Moderator ECGMBA
Pastor Lattisville Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Hurdle Mills, NC

"Grace and Peace to all of you of the East Cedar Grove Missionary Baptist Association"



The Lord has showered us with His love, and mercy through giving us a vision that we've been in need of for a long time. This vision that the Lord has given us has and will give our association new life, and direction that will be beneficial to our association and the community at large. For so long many have asked the question what is the purpose of the association and what do we do other than fellowship? Well the Lord has provided the answer to that question with a "Vision". In Proverbs 29:18 the ESV translation states *"Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law."*¹

Before we get into the text it is important for us to understand what a *Vision* is. Webster defines Vision as something seen in a dream, trance, or ecstasy especially: a supernatural appearance that conveys a revelation. So a vision is something that is supernatural that comes from the Lord that gives a person or a group of people special revelation.² The King James version says that where there is no vision that the people perish. Does this mean that the people will die? Even though we may experience low activity, lack of interest, and stagnation due to the lack of a vision, this is not what the writer is saying. The Living translation of the Bible helps us to understand this text a little better, it says that "the people run wild". So the reality is that a vision is essential to the well-being of a person or a community.

I would submit to you today that maybe we are suffering from a lack of vision in our communities, churches, and families. This may be why our world seems to be out of control. Statistics show that in the city of Durham alone over a period of three years that 621 people were shot and of that number 85 of those shootings were fatal.³ This statistic goes on to reveal that over 70% of the shootings and fatalities were from the Black community.⁴ Our generation is reminiscent of the generation that Judges 21:25 speaks of, where there was King in Israel and the people did what was right in their own eyes. The absence of a king equated to the absence of direction and the absence of a vision for the people therefore the people cast off their restraints and ran wild because they didn't know God. If this doesn't wake us up and let us know that we need from The Lord, then I don't know what will. We need a VISION!

We need a vision for our families, our communities, our churches, and we need a vision for our country. I believe that this begins and ends with The Lord and the believer. The Lord and the church has always been the epicenter of the black community, and it appears to me that we have moved from this reality and replaced God with other things like money, celebrities, social media, and materialism. None of these things can offer us what The Lord can, and always leaves us unfulfilled.

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So the first thing we must do is to place God back in the center of our lives, where he belongs. In doing this we must repent for drifting away from His original plan that He has for us. This plan goes back to Exodus 26 when God instructs Moses and the Israelites to build Him a Tabernacle so that He could live in the midst of them. **You see, God wants to live in the midst of His people and that’s the first step in receiving a Divine Vision from Him.**

Secondly, we should follow God’s lead; before the Lord gives us a vision we must learn how to follow Him in everyday life. We should also teach our children how to follow God as well. When I was a child the elders of my family taught us about God and the importance of following Him, and it wasn’t a choice of whether or not we were going to follow Him and go to church or even pray to Him .It was the expectation. Now children are doing their own thing and parents are at their wits end wondering what they are going to do, - the bible instructs us to train up a child in the way that they should go. We must follow God in everything.

Third, we must pray and fast for the vision. Prayer and fasting are essential when it comes to receiving a vision. It is the quintessential piece of the puzzle. Jesus said in Mark 9:29 that prayer and fasting are essential for some things to take place. Although He was speaking about casting out demons, I believe that there was a broader lesson to be learned. Whatever we need from The Lord that we are not able to do for ourselves, it is incumbent that we pray and fast about it and wait on The Lord and He will bring it to pass. Last, but not least we need to understand that a vision is not our vision but it is the vision that God has for us. In other words, the vision may not be what we personally wanted but it is what The Lord wants for us, just as Jeremiah 29:11 says, *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”* It is our job, once The Lord gives us His Vision, to accept the vision and run with it.

In Summary, with the state of affairs of our world today we need a vision, one that will revive us and give us new life that is God centered and not dreamed up from our own imagination. Our churches families and communities need a vision, families, and it starts with THE LORD.

¹The Bible ESV

²<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vision>

³<https://www.durhamnc.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/5675>

⁴<https://www.durhamnc.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/5675>

⁵<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah%2029%3A11&version=NIV>

ECGMBA VISION & MISSION: THE JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI WATER PROJECT



We Can Depend On The Lord

By Reverend Dr. Alvin Downing, Sr.

Pastor Pettiford Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Kittrell, NC & First Vice President, ECGMBA



In II Samuel 5, we find an excellent example of what it means to depend on the Lord as we travel on this journey called life. David has already been anointed as king over Judah and with the help of the Lord. He has been successful in battle over his enemies. And now at age 30 he is anointed king over all Israel and Judah. David will reign as king for 40 years but during his early kingship he demonstrated what it means to depend on the Lord. The enemies were making insulting remarks about David's soldiers, calling them blind and lame or in our language today saying, *his men couldn't walk and chew gum at the same time*. In other words, they were suggesting that David's soldiers were nothing compared with them if it came time for battle. Their insults were intense with the aim of putting fear in David and his soldiers; but David shows us how to be successful over our obstacles and circumstances of life. David consulted with the Lord before addressing or attempting to prepare for battle.

David inquired of the Lord in II Samuel 5:19, asking what shall I do? David inquired of the Lord for instructions of what his stance should be in relation to how the Philistines had deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. The Lord invites us to be like David who included God in his decision-making. As we confront crisis situations- before we do this or that seek the Lord to see if we are making the right decision. Seek the Lord first in our situations- in our concerns, in our struggles and in every area of our lives. If we do, we will find out what David found by consulting and including the directions that the Lord gave him in the time of battle. After consulting with the Lord, David found out that he would be victorious over his enemies, and the Lord said "Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hand." When we consult the Lord and listen to His response, we too will be given directions showing that we too; can depend on the Lord.

We further learn from David's demonstration of depending on the Lord because when the same enemy came against them again; David consults the Lord again. David did not go out on a limb thinking he could handle it on his own. He included the Lord in his situation. That is good news for us, to be wise and always allow the Lord to be active in our life circumstances because He has excellent strategies for our enemies and situations. The Lord gave David a different strategy in being triumphant when the Philistines came up against them again, as found in II Samuel 5:23-25, "Therefore David inquired of the LORD, and He said, *"You shall not go up; circle around behind them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees. 24 And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall advance quickly. For then the LORD will go out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines."* 25 *And David did so, as the LORD commanded him; and he drove back the Philistines from Geba [f] as far as Gezer."*

We learn from David that our successes in life come when we learn to depend on the Lord in our circumstances. He will speak to us and He will intervene on our behalf. David teaches us that the Lord wants us to be in listening mode; to hear our marching orders from Him, and in listening mode by reading his word and meditating on what we read about "The Lord Almighty" that we can depend on.

A CALL TO YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

East Cedar Grove wants to hear from you! We need to hear your views, positions on issues, and your experiences pertaining to the church and society. Please consider writing essays and poetry for submission to the East Cedar Grove newsletter, *The Inspirer*. Appropriate sketches and drawings are also welcome. Submit your works to: Joyce D. Clayton via email at joycedc@aol.com or by

Are You On God's Special Guest List?

By Reverend Dr. Kenneth M. Williams

Pastor Hawkins Chapel Missionary Baptist Church & Second Vice Moderator ECGMBA



Have you ever been invited to a special event, you got all dressed and on your way to the gathering, you get to the door and realize you cannot get in because you left your ticket? Or have you ever received an invitation in the mail to attend a grand occasion, and if you like me you stuck your invitation on the 'Frig as a reminder, but you never texted, email, or RSVP back to the sender? So when you came to the celebration, you were not allowed to enter because you did not have your ticket invitation. Even though you knew the host who sponsored the event, you consequently got denied entry and barred from coming in to this celebration because you had failed to respond to the Invitation.

In the book of **St. Luke 14:15-24**, Jesus gives the reader a clear picture of God's Great Supper Celebration, but the Pharisee's saw themselves as the only ones who would get the invitation. They thought they were privileged to be able to sit at God's Supper Table, and no outsiders would have this special opportunity to sit and dine with the Lord but them. But, Jesus knew their thoughts and He decided to set the record straight! He conveys to them that the message and the invitation is for everybody and whosoever ever will! That if you respond to God's Invitation, you can be saved and come to the celebration. But, the Invitation has gone out and everybody has gotten the Invitation but I believe some Invitations are hanging on the refrigerator because many people are not responding to the invitation and have not RSVP back to God through Jesus Christ.

Since Jesus came-died-and rose again- It's a New Day! All things are made ready and the Invitation has been extended to all who will hear the gospel. Notice, the servant was sent first to the VIP's, the church ecclesia, who are the saved professors and followers of Christ, but they had not prepared themselves nor made themselves ready to attend the celebration. They only *professed* they were coming. They were not washing and cleaning themselves up for such a grand occasion. Doesn't this sound like our modern day church? Sounds like us. It can be me, it can be you!

After the profession there must be the response. Truth be told, there are very little response in the house of the Lord. Why? It could be because of Pride, could be because some don't want to respond, some are procrastinating, or some in the pew but just don't believe what God has said at all.

But, notice the response from the Lord when the Invitation went out. All these invited guest that made all kinds of excuses about why they could not attend: One said that he was too personally involved in his own business interest to come. But our personal affairs should not consume our whole life! According to **Matthew 16:26** "**What will you profit if you gain the whole world and lose your sole....**" Another excuse was being too wrapped up in material gains, cows, car, houses etc. so they took a 'rain check' on the invitation all together.

It's clear in the text that the Lord was *angry* with His guest who were not concerned about the cost and price God paid for them to be able to come to the celebration. Angry with those who heard the gospel and accepted the invitation but never responded and activated their Guest Ticket.

Here is the message: We are saved by responding to God's invitation, and we are lost by making excuses. In verse 24, the Lord says not a single rejecter (excuses) "shall taste of my supper." There is no second chance!

"and the Spirit and the bride say, come, and let him that heareth say come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17

AMEN!

The Importance of Lamenting

By Reverend Dorothy Evans
 Pastor Pine Gove Missionary Baptist Church
 President Ministers, Deacons and Deaconess Union



The act of lamenting is rapidly dissipating in our society. One of the reasons is because of the explosion of information that is being forced into the atmosphere. There is information coming from TV, Internet, Social Media, other people, and it has caused us to rush the act of lamenting. It is even heard in sermons that weeping endures for a night but joy comes in the morning, and it seems to be taken literally. People have been programmed to let it go and keep it moving. They have been made to feel that it is a sin if one grieves or laments for an extended period of time. As a result of this, it seems that people have become somewhat numb to grief, sorrow, and tragedies.

However, there are those who believe that the church desperately needs to reclaim the importance of lamentation. The fact that there can be uncensored communication with God is mind blowing when one really thinks about it. However, this is what occurs when it is done through lamenting.

This is the time that God wants His people to be transparent and real. It is unnecessary to prove how strong and brute one may be. It is the time that one should allow the act of lamenting to God who has all power to mend brokenness, pain, and the world situations.

In my humble opinion, the fast paced world causes one to “hurry up” and lament. It reminds me of the 911 tragedy. The period of lamenting after the travesty was very brief for those who did not lose close loved ones and friends. Once the dust had settled, it was back to life as usual. Each year the participation for commemorating that time gets less and less recognition. I would like to share three steps that may help one while going through lamenting.

Step 1: REMEMBER

Find ways to help you to remember. It may entail writing the event on the calendar or setting an alarm to bring it back to the forefront of your mind.

Step 2: REFLECT

Once one starts to remember, it enables them to reflect. Reflecting causes one to relive the entire event. Reliving the event will cause the hurt, anger, and sorrow to arise which gives opportunity to confess the pain and disappointment.

Step 3: REPENT

Upon remembering, reflecting, then it is time to repent. Repentance frees one from any feelings of guilt for thinking they are wrong for lamenting. Repent and be free!

Because there seems to be a loss of lamentation, there is also a loss of memory. The hymnologist sings, “Lest I forget Gethsemane, lest I forget thine agony, lest I forget thine love for me, lead me to Calvary. When one is led to Calvary, they will remember the cross and they will remember the unconditional love God has for us at all times! Allow yourself proper lamenting and do it simply by: Remembering, Reflecting, and Repenting.



Giving God Thanks

By Sister Queen Earle, President, Woman's Auxiliary, ECGMBA
New Hope Granville Missionary Baptist Church, Oxford, NC



This is the time of the Autumn season when many of us are focusing on the Thanksgiving holiday, the day when families gather to have dinner and give thanks to God for what He has done in their lives. But the scripture reminds us that we should give thanks every day. We should give thanks for all the great things He has done, including sending His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross so that we can have eternal life. Time should be spent daily in prayer giving Him thanks for who He is and for what He has given us. The scripture 1 Chronicles 16:34 lets us know that He is good. It states: "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, His love endures forever."

God is also faithful and just. According to 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." God has given us:

1. His unfailing love – Psalm 1
2. His creation – Psalm 136:3-9
3. His word – Colossians 3:16
4. His plan for us – 1 Corinthians 15:57

When we give thanks, we are reminded of how much we have, and we focus on the blessings rather than the wants. God's word says in everything, give thanks, even when our circumstances are difficult (sickness, loss of loved ones, financial problems, etc.) We are not thankful for the difficult circumstances, but thankful for God's presence in the midst of them and for what He promises to do when we go through these difficult circumstances.

When giving thanks, we are responding to the goodness and mercy of God. We are demonstrating obedience. This is the will of God. Thessalonians 5: 16-18 says, "Be joyful always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." So let us continue to give thanks to God because He is most deserving of it. Giving thanks is also good for our relationship with Him and gives us joy and peace.

Saluting Women in Leadership: The Guiding Lights

Thank you !



President & Former Presidents of the Woman's Auxiliary and Past Moderator of ECGMBA, Sister Queen Earle, Sister Emma Daniels, Sister Glennie Carver, Sister Sarah Johnson, Sister Rosa Hester, Reverend Annie Gibson, Sister Magdalene Ragland and Former Moderator of ECGMBA, Rev. Mildred Chambers

"Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." - Matthew 5:16

Qualities of Good Administrative Leadership

By Reverend Dr. James Smith
Pastor Mount Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, Bahama, NC
Parliamentarian, ECGMBA



I am excited to write my last article for the ECGMBA INSPIRER as I will be retiring from Pastoring but not the ministry as of December, 2022. Portions of this article is taken from a pamphlet I wrote, "Can The Blind Lead The Blind." In the pamphlet I stated nine qualities but for the purpose of brevity, I will list them but only write about three of them.

1. A good leader leads by example. 2. A good leader feels unworthy of the task. 3. A good leader is a good follower. 4. A good leader delegates with trust. 5. A good leader recognizes his/her limitation. 6. A good leader listens and accepts constructive criticism. 7. A good leader is trustworthy. 8. A good leader has a positive attitude. 9. A good leader recognizes where his/her help come from.

A GOOD FOLLOWER: The fallacy of many is to believe they can be a good leader and not be a good follower. It is not true. The best leaders are those who have demonstrated that they can be good followers. The best example is for the Pastor to be a good follower of Christ and His teaching. The philosophy or statement, "Do as I say and not as I do" is not worthy of good administrative leadership. The office of "Pastor" for many give a false impression of who the Pastor should and ought to be. The position of a leader is directly tied to how well he/she can follow.

A POSITIVE ATTITUDE: A positive attitude is a must. If anyone is to exhibit a positive attitude, it ought to be the leader. One cannot expect the follower to have a positive attitude if the leader does not possess one. Never ask others to follow you if you don't feel good about where you are going. That is a true sign of the blind leading the blind. A good leader counts up the cost. Never ask anyone to take on a project if you do not have the slightest idea of the cost. "For which of you intending to build a tower, sitters not down first, and counters the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" Luke 14:28. Positive attitudes help to convince followers that the goal is possible.

RECOGNIZE WHERE YOUR HELP COME FROM: "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." Philippians 4:13. "My help cometh from the Lord, who made heave and earth." Psalm 121:2. These scriptures and many more attest to the fact that we can not be effective administrators or leaders by our own power or strength. The Lord is the source of our help and strength. Many times we fail in our administrative leadership because we attempt to rely on self. The Lord does not want us to be blind. You see, it is He who gives sight to the blind. We are only blind because we want to be blind. My mom, who was a committed Christian said to me once, "I cannot understand why someone would stay in a dark room when all they need to do is flip the switch." The point is, many of us choose to stay in our positions. Good administrators or leaders know who gives them sight and the ability to administer and lead in a Godly manner.

Disclaimer

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Is My TAG Showing

By Reverend J. Eric Morgan, III

Pastor Mount Vernon Missionary Baptist Church , Creedmoor, NC & Former Moderator, ECGMBA

One day last summer I had to run to the grocery store to get something that I really needed. Because I had been working in the yard that day and was dirty, I decided to just throw on a cheap T-shirt. I didn't realize that I was wearing my T-shirt on the wrong side. When I was standing in line to pay for my grocery, a lady behind me read aloud the tag on my T-shirt. It looked like she wanted everyone to know the name brand and size of shirt I was wearing. At that point, I immediately realized that I was wearing my T-shirt on the wrong side. What an embarrassment that was?



When I thought about this later, it taught me a spiritual lesson. The lesson I learned is this. When you begin to live inside out spiritually, others can pick up some of the same indicators about your life. This makes me think about this. When other people look at a believer, the first thing they might see is that believer's TAG (Talents – Actions – Gifts).

It is important to note that when your life is submitted to the Lord, He will secure a place for your talents. Your talents are the things you've learned and know. After He secures your talents, He will let your actions dictate your ability, but out of all that, He Himself will expose your gifts. Your gifts are the reward He gives to you for submitting to Him. The reason He gave you those gifts is to reflect His glory.

Living inside out is to reveal publicly what you have inside of you. You had it all these years, you're convicted of it, now you're willing to let others see it. Jesus puts it this way in Matthew chapter 5 and verse 16; ***“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”*** (KJV). Living inside out will expose your TAG, and when your TAG has been exposed, you will begin to walk in the destiny the Lord has for you to fulfil.

You need to be aware that when your TAG is showing, the brand name you're wearing will show as well. Your shirt might be made by “Fruit Of the Loom”, “Old Navy”, “Tommy Hilfiger”, “Armani” or some off brand, but you were made by the best designer of all, Jesus our Lord. He made you in His image and formed you in His likeness. There is nothing in this world that can measure up to that.

Talking about the showing of your TAG, what about the size and content? Are you aware that is on your TAG too? Let me ask you this question. *“What is your size?”* Some Christians wear small size. Some others wear medium size. Yet some others wear a large size. Like your TAG, what you wear will determine your faith level. Personally, I want to wear an extra-large size. I want others to see what my faith is expanding to.

Yes! The size on your TAG will also expose your aspiration. There are great desires in you, but no one knows them because you're keeping them to yourself. Expose them! Let others see what you've been dreaming and hoping for. Show others your TAG. Is it small, medium, large, or extra-large? It's important that someone knows. Jesus says it best when He spoke this in Matthew chapter 5 and verse 14. ***“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden”*** (NKJV).

In the Old Testament, David wanted a revival. He wanted to wear a larger size of faith than He was wearing. He realized he could afford to add on a few more sizes. Therefore, he prayed this prayer unto the Lord. “Search me O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalms 139: 23, 24, KJV).

In this text, David invites the Lord to continue searching his heart, to root out any unrighteousness that was inside of him. He also expresses to the Lord his desire to experience eternal life with Him. David was tired of pretending to be what he was not. He wanted righteousness inside of him so he could show it through his TAG.

Make every effort this week to show your TAG to someone who doesn't know what you have inside of you. Can you bring the inside out this week?

Team Leadership Training

By Deacon Ronnie G. Robinson, Usher Union President
St. Johns Missionary Baptist Church, Durham, NC



While having served in various positions and organizations as it relates to ushering, I strongly believe that our usher teams are a source of both great strengths and challenges within our churches. As a leader, you have a responsibility to balance people issues with service requirements as you serve your Pastor. Also, there are a wide variety of other concerns that you must address such as:

- i. How to continually develop and “grow” your team.
- ii. Instilling and maintaining trust within your team.
- iii. Improving team and individual communication.
- iv. Managing the differences between your team members.
- v. Defining your mission, vision, goals and ministry standards.
- vi. Eliminating roadblocks to team and ministry development.
- vii. Effectively using ministry resources and energy.

With so many hoops to jump through, you must serve diligently to keep your team focused on its mission. Just as it takes more than one usher to support your Pastor, it takes more than one person to be a team.

Ever since Pastor James Richmond and the late “Mother” Mary Vanhook formed this usher’s union in the late 1990’s, it has served to assist all usher ministries with leadership and ministry training. This is done through customized workshops that are tailored to help all teams become “**High-Performing Teams**”.

Leading a team is not easy. As a leader, you must continue to improve your team-building skills so that you can move your team from being “an average team” into a “**High-Performance Team**”.

As one of the modules for our union’s 2023 Strategic Plan, I am making team and ministry leader training an even higher priority. I want to inspire all ushers to serve with greater team energy. I also want to adjust my focus on ways to gain greater team commitment when the need for ushers arises at the Smith Thomas Convention Center and all other association functions.

Because every usher’s ministry within our association is slightly different, my goal is to provide **leadership development workshop and other training plans** that are personalized to meet the exclusive needs of each leader, team, or ministry. My ushering experiences gives me the background necessary to design a customized training experience that best serves your team’s needs.

In order to make each training experience a reality, I need your help. Reach out to me for any type of ushering training support that you may need. Our leadership training can be presented in any number of ways:

- i. Personalized session for your usher’s ministry at **your** church.
- ii. An instructor-led quarterly session at the Smith-Thomas Center.
- iii. Live Zoom webinars.
- iv. Pre-recorded messages.
- v. E-mail.

Being able to lead a “**High Performing Team**” is key to influencing the strengths of all team members. Becoming a “**High Performing Team**” means addressing all challenges head-on. It is my prayer that you will support me as I support Our Moderator (Pastor Crews) as we serve to take the Association to the next level.

The Second Annual Triangle Youth Leadership Institute

By Dr. Warren L. Herndon, Visiting Minister, Mt. Zoar Missionary Baptist Church, Durham, NC; Founder/President of The Triangle Youth Leadership Institute; Past President DCIA & The Durham MLK Steering Committee and Special Events Committee Chair

“Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it” - Proverbs 22:6



For the last five to ten years, several industry journals have been reporting in the triangle that companies are having challenges with attracting qualified candidate who meet their technology requirements for filling vacancies. These employers are seeking a higher skilled and technically trained applicant pool. The state of North Carolina is going through shifts in economics, education, technology, healthcare, digital divide and other equitable challenges to become prepared to meet the future. Our top performing students will remain competitive and job ready on day one for these corporate needs. Additionally, these high performing positions require young adults that have the ability to perform in collaborative work teams and other innovative assignments. However, our “Middle Tier” and first-generation students, by no fault of their own, will have difficulties performing in these highly skilled corporate environments. Now, the challenge becomes; how will our educational institutions provide the necessary educational, technical and soft skills to close the gap with those students needing remediation and/or additional skills training to meet the needs in our Triangle region for the next three to five

years.

In 2017, our planning team assembled several leaders across the Triangle to discuss and implement a strategy to address our students, parents, tutors and mentors; all working together to seek a way forward to assist our students in choosing careers and early college planning. Consequently, our planning teams across six counties created, planned, and implemented two college tours for our participants. Our first tour was held at Shaw University in June 2017. Our next tour was held in July of 2018 at Saint Augustine’s University, where we were hosted by the president’s office, the mission directors, professors, and students. These career opportunities and early college admission sessions were greatly beneficial to our “Middle Tier” students in the Triangle counties.

Over the last five years, with collaborating partners and strategic planning sessions, we have assembled a cadre of students, parents, teachers, administrators, and clergy leaders, working in unity to wrap our arms around our students as they choose careers and seek early college and university admission. Additionally, this initiative has created job shadowing opportunities, internships, quarterly Zoom training sessions and other mentoring relationships to prepare our students as they seek to become life-long learners.

Our “Leadership Institute has continued to meet the vision, goals and objectives for students, ages 14-29 to assist these students in their career interest and early college application process. Additionally, during our planning sessions, we recognized that there are several different learning styles when working with today’s students. Many students today grew up with technology and several different platforms in their educational stages. Therefore, over the last several years our planning team have embraced several components in teaching, instructing and preparing our students for future trends. We have introduced job shadowing teams, mentor/mentee relationships and summer job experiences.

At these sessions, we have had several highly trained professionals working in the field and skilled presenters working with our students. Now, for our 2022 institute, we are adding not only panelists but several resource tables with information, resources, and other college-bound financial support. Over the last several years, the President has been addressing the skyrocketing cost of a college education and putting measures in place to resolve college debt.

As our “Planning Teams continue to build on this Comprehensive Framework for our Middle Tier Students in the Triangle,” **we are seeking to increase more caring mentors and professionals.** Additionally, next summer, our goal is to provide several opportunities for our students to choose job shadowing, internships, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and other mastery of trades. This will assist them in connecting the dots in their future educational endeavors to become life-long learners. In order to accomplish these goals, we need the support of pastors and youth to become involved in our team efforts to prepare our students.



What the World Needs Now is Love, Sweet Love

By Rev. Joyce Daye Clayton, Assistant Pastor New Red Mountain Missionary Baptist Church, Rougemont, NC & 2nd Vice President, Woman's Auxiliary

In our world today, we find that change, “the act of making or becoming different,” keeps on invading our daily living. For example, it is said that our climate is changing— more floods, forest fires and deadly storms that are destroying property and human life in shocking numbers. There is division, hatred, increasing violence, economic inequality, decreasing affordable housing and the threat of global war that abides with us as an infectious disease. Change— wouldn't you agree with me that the current changes that we are experiencing are harmful and destructive to God's children? Wouldn't you agree that it is time for change in the opposite direction; it is time for the pendulum to swing back into the direction of decent order and behavior that is pleasing to Almighty God! The “good news” is that we don't have to wait for an answer, an antidote for our worsening conditions. Our Lord, “The Good News”, has already prepared a remedy for what ails his people, and it is **“love.”** Jesus said to his disciples, **“This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you.”** (John 15:12) Additionally, there is a popular song that reminds us of *Jesus' kind of love*, entitled, “What the World Needs Now”, written by Brut Bacharach and Hal David and performed by Diane Warwick with the following lyrics: “What the world needs now is love, sweet love; It's the only thing that there's just too little of; No not just for some, but for everyone.” It is without a doubt, that there is too little of it; **“the world does needs love sweet love” – Jesus' kind of love as described in 1 Corinthians 13 4-8.**

“First, “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant.” (1 Cor. 13:4) Love allows people time to grow, make mistakes and use them as instructive fertilizer for righteous growth, correction and godly wisdom. Love believes that all of God's children are made in His image and worthy of the love that He gives to each of us. Love does not lust after what others have, “keeping up with the Jones” bragging and seething with resentment over what others have. Love does not allow titles or positions to discriminate against God's children. Love resembles these words, *“May the work I've done speak for me.”*

Second, “Love is not “rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; (1 Cor. 13:5) Love is not ill-mannered; it is gracious. If a person does not speak to you, speak anyway; be concerned. If you continue to recognize the person with compassion, sometimes that person may changes his behavior and begins to imitate the behavior expressed to him. Love does not need to be in the limelight and always right; loves listens. Love does not say, *don't call me before I get my first cup of coffee because I am irritable and I won't be responsible for my less than pleasant attitude.* Just *“let your light so shine before men that they will see your good works that glorify your Heavenly Father.”* (Matthew 5:14)

Third, Love-“It does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.” (1 Cor. 13:6) Love does not celebrate *“the ends justify the means.”* Love does not applaud misconduct and ignore its consequences. Love does not make excuses for friend's transgressions but hold other accountable. Love does not attempt to redefine God's definition of love; it embraces truth and righteousness based on the model and teachings of Jesus Christ. Love has no delight in the pain of others; it seeks relief.

Fourth, “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” 1 Cor. 13:7) Love is not a type of *disappearing ink* or sinking sand. Love sticks like glue. Love is with you when you are up and when you are down. Love is forgiving and not judgmental yet discerning. Love gives second chances just as Our Lord does for us when we mess up! He plainly says, *“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”* (Matt. 11:28-29) Love is the answer!

Fifth, “And love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.” (1 Cor.13:8) Love lingers like a fine perfume or a honeysuckle when the sun goes down in the evening with light breezes in the air. Love has a legacy. When the love of Jesus is shared with others it is stored up in the minds and hearts of the recipients for use over and over again, especially in times of greatest need. Jesus said it best, *“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”* (John 15:13) Remembering that someone cares can be a healing antidote. Love does not die; it continues to nurture, mentor and bless those it encounters.

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Unquestionably, love is the answer for our nation and the world's problems. Singer Tina Turner asks this question in one of her award winning songs, "What's Love Got to do with it?" **Love has everything to do with it!** Gospel singer and song writer Hezekiah Walker says it this way in his lyrics, "I Need You, You need me; We're all a part of God's body; You are important to me, I need you to survive. And, 1 John 4:20 sums it up with these words, "If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see?" **Wouldn't you agree that *love and more love in action is the cure for the spiritual pandemic that we are experiencing!*** Why not inject more of Jesus's love into our hearts, minds, souls and bodies and spread it far and near! Jesus is love- the medicine for our restoration, revitalization, salvation and our spiritual growth. **"Yes, what the world needs now is more love- love, sweet love- the love of Jesus!"**

My Personal Testimony of How Great God Is

By Sister Diane Thompson, Lee's Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, Cedar Grove, NC

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." - 2 Timothy 1:7



The interviewer then took me on a quick tour of one of the building and I know that she noticed that I was terrified. She said, I probably should have taken you on the tour first. She explained to me that after the interview process, I would receive a letter that said that I either had a positive or negative interview. If it was positive they would submit my name to all cottages that had openings. About a week later, I received a positive interview while my sister received a negative interview. Eventually, I started getting a lot of calls to come in for an interview. After I turned down so many, I decided to take an interview. In fact, I scheduled more than one interview for that day with the intentions of turning down any offer that I received.

My first interview was in a cottage where everyone was paralyzed so you would have to do a lot of lifting. I turned that one down. I am not sure why I was afraid of those people, but I was terrified.

During my next interview, I met people that had all types of disabilities but they seemed happy to see me. During my last interview, I was told that it was a part time job. I thought to myself, Thank you Lord. This was my way out. I told them that right now I was working a full time job and I could not afford to work part time. The interviewer asked me to hold on for a few minutes. She left the room and came back all smiles and proudly announced that they told her to offer me the full time position. I thought that I had escaped but God must have said hold on, these are my people too and you have a job to fulfill. I accepted the position and all the way home I was a wreck. I was thinking Lord what have I gotten myself into.

During my very first day, a client slapped me probably harder than I had ever been slapped in my life. I was determined to hang on. I saw a lot of staff get hit, kicked, or spit on, but I held on. Soon I really began to feel compassion for the clients and once I started showing them compassion they reciprocated. I soon learned how to handle the most aggressive clients and made friends with them while a lot of my coworkers who were mostly there for the paycheck suffered a lot of abuse. I was the voice for the ones that couldn't speak or communicate their needs. At one point, I saved a client's life by repeatedly telling the nurse on staff that he was having some stomach issues. Even though, she did not believe me, she got tired of me bugging her so she had him admitted to the infirmary where he was later transferred to the hospital and remained there for several weeks. He eventually got better and was returned to the cottage. That nurse thanked me for the longest time. When we think that we can't do something God says hold on you can do this. These are my people and I love them. I loved working on that job. Eventually, I took other jobs but they all were working with people with disabilities. There was one particular part time job I would go to when I got off work and it was at a respite house where children and some young adults came to give their care givers a break or they had no place to go. On this particular job there was a baby that I thought was about a year old only to find out that he was more than two years old. His body was just like jelly and he would never be able to stand up. He was a product of shaken baby syndrome. He was the happiest baby you ever wanted to meet, always smiling. I fell in love with him ,but it always bothered me that no one would ever comb his hair. While I was on duty, I would wash and condition his hair and I always massaged his scalp. He seemed to really enjoy this. One day when I got to work, I had a letter from the head supervisor and she wanted me to comb his hair because some people were coming from South Carolina to look at him. I said that I would; but I asked the staff why no one other than me combs that baby's hair. Someone said, I thought that you knew. He will not let anyone touch his hair and they were all shocked that I could wash and braid his hair. That sent chills up my spine because I had no idea. Throughout the 35 plus years I worked with people with disabilities, I enjoyed them. No matter what condition that they were in, I always saw them as people first.

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I felt that I got my compassion from my mother. She was always trying to fix people's problems. One of the many life's lesson I learned from her was when we were growing up. There was a man who lived in a shack that most adults called a bum. Sometimes in the dead of winter he would come to our house late at night and ask my mom to throw some quilts on the floor for him. My mother always ushered him to guess bedroom which was the nicest room that we had in the house. He would put up a fight but would finally give up. He often said that room was too nice for him. He spent many nights and some time days with us. He often came by for a meal. My mother taught us that no one was better than the next person and that has been instilled in my soul.

Jesus Loves Me! **[How Do I Know?]** **By Messiah Wyatt**

New Red Mountain Missionary Baptist Church, Rougemont, NC, 7th Grade Lucus Middle School



Jesus loves me, this I know. Why? Because ...

The Bible tells me so.

He gave His life for me.

My parents speak and teach me of his Love.

He provides for me daily all that I need.

He protects me from danger and keeps me safe.

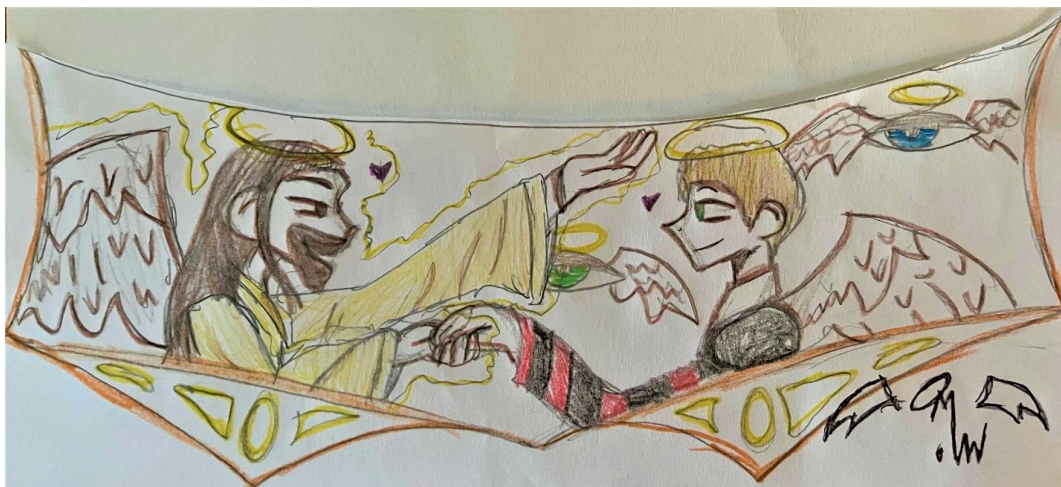
He heals me when I'm sick.

He guides me and keep me focused on doing the right thing.

He picks me up when I fall.

When I'm sad, He shows me signs that makes me glad.

No matter how many times I mess up, He gives me another chance.



**EAST CEDAR GROVE MISSIONARY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH CAROLINA, INC., est. 1895**
The One Hundredth and Twenty Eighth Year Annual Session
Orange Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Durham, NC, July 20 –21, 2022
Moderator, Reverend Dr. George Crews, III, DMin, MDiv



EAST CEDAR GROVE MISSIONARY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION MEMBER CHURCHES

Member Churches	Pastors	Est. Date & Site
Antioch Baptist Church	Rev. Dr. Michael D. Page	1993, Durham, NC
Cameron Grove Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Jessie L. Alston	1901, Durham, NC
Cedar Grove Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Marvin Jones	1865, Roxboro, NC
First Calvary Baptist Church	Rev. Dr. Frederick A. Davis	1884, Durham, NC
First Chronicles Community Church	Rev. William V. Lucas, Senior Pastor	1999, Durham, NC
First Community Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Dr. William Richardson	1986, Hillsborough, NC
First Ledge Rock Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Reginald McClenton	1975, Durham, NC
Greater Cleggs Chapel Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Louis Cash	1892, Timberlake, NC
Hawkins Chapel Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Dr. Dr. Kenneth M. Williams	1875, Franklinton, NC
Greenfield Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. A. J. Bell	1887, Creedmoor, NC
Henderson Grove Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Johnnie Bethea	1915, Morrisville, NC
Jones Chapel Baptist Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Ronald K. Booker	1881, Roxboro, NC
Lattisville Grove Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Dr. George Crews, III	1879, Hurdle Mills, NC
Lawson Chapel Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Dr. Langston Logan, Sr.	1871, Roxboro, NC
Ledge Rock Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Marcellus Tyrone Moore	1863, Raleigh, NC
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New Light Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Dr. Cicero Williams	1907, Wake Forest, NC
New Red Mountain Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Dr. Larry G. Wilson	1874, Rougemont, NC
New St. James Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Arthur Haskins, Interim	1870, Timberlake, NC
Oak Grove Missionary Baptist Church	Dr. Charles Bullock	1865, Oxford, NC
Olive Grove Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Johnny White	1865, Oxford, NC
Orange Grove Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Dr. Herbert L. Dickerson	1880, Durham, NC
Pettiford Grove Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Dr. Alvin B. Downing, Sr.	1887, Kittrell, NC
Pine Grove Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Dorothy Evans	1870, Creedmoor, NC
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Shady Hill Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Eddie A Fuller, Sr.	1867, Roxboro, NC
Siloam Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Willie Wayne Johnson	1880, Rougemont, NC
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Synama Grove Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Randolph Morton	1861, Oxford, NC
Tally Ho Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Moses Fletcher	1863, Stem, NC
Union Baptist Church	Rev. Dr. Prince Rainey Rivers	1897, Durham, NC
Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church	Vacant	1864, Butner, NC
Union Grove Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Rufus Johnson, Sr.	1888, Hurdle Mills, NC
United Christian Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Eddie Harper	2002, Creedmoor, NC
West Durham Missionary Baptist Church	Rev. Dr. LaMont Johnson	1892, Durham, NC





And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. “ (Phil. 4:19)

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**From
Rev. Joyce Daye Clayton, Editor
ECGMBA BAPTIST INSPIRER**

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