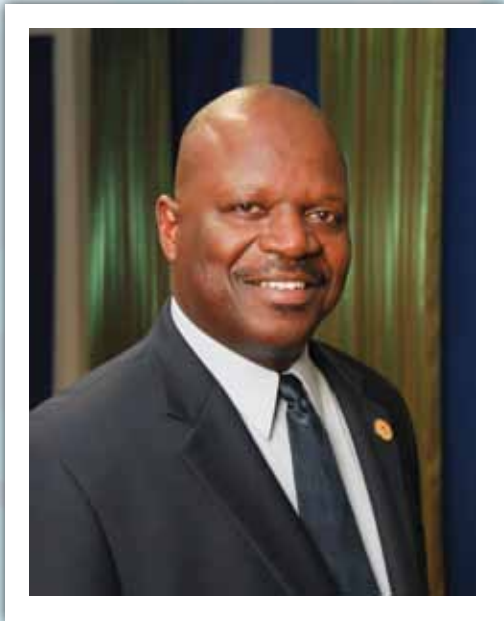


SELAH



THE STORY OF THE BLACK NATIONAL ANTHEM, "LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING" *Written by James Weldon Johnson*



From the desk of the Administrative Secretary
The Rev. Dr. Timothy James

Some stories have a way of getting better and better every time they are told. As we celebrate African American History Month, I thought it would be appropriate to share the story of our Black National Anthem. It was on February 12, 1900, at the segregated Edwin M. Stanton School in Jacksonville, Florida, that preparations were made to commemorate the birthday of President Abraham Lincoln and for a visit from the well-known Negro leader, Booker T. Washington. The principal for the 500-student school was James Weldon Johnson. Sensing the significance of the day and the guest speaker, Principal Johnson put his poetic skills to work and crafted a poem fitting the occasion. The lyrics to the first stanza are:

*Lift every voice and sing,
till earth and heaven ring.
Ring with the harmonies of liberty.
Let our rejoicing rise high as the listening skies.
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.*

*Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us.
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us.
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.*

The poem which was entitled, "Lift Every Voice and Sing" became a song nearly five years later when John Rosamond Johnson, brother to James Weldon Johnson, put the words to music. There was evidently much inspiration in formulating the words in the poem and the scoring of the words to music. In 1919, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) adopted and labeled the song, "Lift Every Voice and Sing" as The Negro National Anthem. This song has served as a cry for liberation and affirmation for all African Americans, especially those who have been misused and abused. The last stanza lifts up the role our faith in God has played in the struggle of our journey:

*God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way.
Thou who has by thy might led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met thee.
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget thee.
Shadowed beneath thy hand, may we forever stand
True to our God, True to our native land!*

May we always find motivation in this song! Be strong in the Lord, my brothers and my sisters, in the power of His might and please celebrate this month with purpose.

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HOW WELL DO WE KNOW?"

Rev. Patricia B. Maples, President



Some have asked the question "What is the National Convocation and how does it benefit the total Church?"

Glad they asked ... because as we move forward, **KNOW** that our focus of the National Convocation is on seeking the relevance of our being as we continue "to provide an instrumentality within the structure of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as a forum for the discussion of pertinent issues related to Black church life in the context of total church life, for fellowship, program promotion, leadership training, and such other general purpose as shall support and strengthen the congregations involved in the total mission of the church" in this 21st Century.

Many think they **KNOW**, but when asked, few actually **KNOW** how and why the National Convocation exists. Therefore, one of our goals is to share information that will maintain and increase your knowledge about our heritage, as we journey toward our **23rd Biennial Session, July 24-27, 2014 in Columbus, Ohio**. In the expression of "Sankofa" we will

continue to reach back to our heritage so that we can move forward to our future.

How blessed the National Convocation is to have such leaders of our church as Trustees for the Board of the National Convocation. We are prayerfully assisting, sharing, directing and walking the talk. We have started our term by addressing the questions, concerns and recommendations from delegates who attended the 22nd Biennial in Houston, Texas. We are implementing inter-generational action plans as we strive to serve "**One God, in One Church with One Mission.**"

You are asked to join in this journey with us by "**Praying every Tuesday and Fasting the 1st Tuesday**" for National Convocation and its Leadership. We **KNOW** God answers Prayers and we need YOUR Prayers.

Over the next quarter, you will notice an upgraded and more interactive Website. You also will find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instant Messaging. Convocation members between the ages of 19 – 35 will be invited to participate in quarterly Free Conference Call Sessions with the Executive Board. The purpose of the call is to **LISTEN**, as they share how The National Convocation can address their ideas and concerns.

Additionally, we will share our presence at the **Biennial General Assembly in Orlando, FL**. You are Cordially Invited to attend the Convocation Dinner now **KNOWN** as our **General Assembly National Convocation Heritage Banquet -- on Sunday, July 14th, 5:00 PM**. We will acknowledge our heritage, inspirational music and songs while listening to the Word of God shared by the Reverend Doctor Bill Edwards.

As we move through this journey, we seek your support in *acknowledging that our God is supreme over nations and supreme over the world ... All we are asked to do is "Be Still and KNOW."*

Most grateful to serve,

Patricia

BE STILL!!!

Rev. Jesse Jackson, Vice President



A great paradox of our modern world is that we have more devices to connect faster and at greater distances than any generation in the history of humankind and yet, although we talk, text and type, we rarely communicate. Our days are so filled with busyness and a constant bombardment of images that we and our children often find stillness and silence strange and uncomfortable.

At the end of Spike Lee's film *School Daze*, the character "Dap," played by Lawrence Fishburne, ends the film running across the campus of mythical Mission College ringing the school bell and yelling **WAKE UP!** In a sense, the Psalmist has done that in Psalm 46:10, which we have chosen as our theme for the 23rd Biennial Session to be held July 24 – 27, 2014 in Columbus, Ohio. The New Jerusalem Bible translates that passage, "**Be still and acknowledge that I am God, supreme over nations, supreme over the world.**"

Riding the wave of momentum from the 21st and 22nd Biennial Sessions, we want to be blessed and to be a blessing to others by demonstrating innovative, yet practical parish worship and ministry. We want to inform participants through workshops, and then demonstrate those things learned there, through our worship.

This Biennial Session will be about "**Showing, Knowing and Going**". In *showing*, we will make worship multisensory, reaching those who learn not only in an auditory fashion, but visually and tactile as well; incorporating periods of "stillness" (in accord with our theme) and silence, also, contrasting light and darkness with dance, spoken word and drama.

In *knowing*, we will acknowledge who we are, by celebrating our root, while embracing our fruit. There is a West African philosophy called **Sankofa** which means "we must go back and reclaim our past so we can move forward." The fact is, we must understand why and how we came to be who we are today. In *going*, we will continue our practice of working with the Local Arrangements Committee to have the greatest impact locally. When we leave, Columbus will know that we have been there!

We are intentionally aggressive in our pursuit and planning **WITH** Young Adults. There is a great gulf between the ages 19 and 35, so we recognize and are addressing the nuances of the Young Adult Ministry. We also acknowledge that the childcare ministry and youth programs must be substantial so that parents will be able to attend worship and workshops. Technology will play a big role at this Biennial Session. There will be "real time" social media updates for those not in attendance and possibly streaming live the opening worship service, so people can "see" what they are missing.

I am extremely excited about what awaits us in Columbus. Please begin to plan now to attend. Talk it up, make plans, put in for vacation days, save up, raise funds and arrange your transportation. As we move toward the next Biennial Session, in the midst of the hustle and bustle of your world, I encourage you to heed the words of Psalms 46:10 which begin "**Be still and know...**"

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BLACK MINISTERS RETREAT 2013



The Black Ministers Retreat 2013 will take place on **March 4-7, 2013** in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The Retreat will be held at Wildewood Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), hosted by the Rev. Dr. William Simms, as well as co-hosted by East Sixth Street Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), pastored by the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Jr.

Electronic registration is now open! Printed promotional material has been mailed as well. Hotel information is posted on the Disciples Home Missions Black Ministers Retreat web page. Do not wait, register today!! (use "register" to link to: www.discipleshomeissions.org/dhm/clergy/black-ministries/black-ministers-retreat/).

This event is directed by the Rev. R. Wayne Calhoun, Sr., Director of the Office of Black Ministries and the Black Ministers Retreat. Please contact Kelly Harris, toll free (888) 346-2631, directly (317) 713-2666, or by e-mail kharris@dhm.disciples.org for questions.

JOIN US FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY NATIONAL CONVOCAION HERITAGE BANQUET

REV DR. WILLIAM EDWARDS WILL BE OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKER!



The General Assembly National Convocation Heritage Banquet during the 2013 General Assembly will take place on Sunday, July 14. We will gather at 5:00 p.m. in the Convention Center for a pleasant evening of fine food, fellowship and inspiration. Our guest singers will be the Praise Team from Arise Christian Church of Orlando, Florida, where the Rev. Sammie Robles is the Pastor. Our keynote speaker will be Rev. Dr. William Edwards, Regional Minister of the Christian Church in Ohio and President of the College of Regional Ministers of the Christian Church. We are in for a spiritual treat. Dr. Edwards will celebrate 30 years of ordained ministry February 10, 2013 at Fifth Christian Church in Cleveland, Ohio.

Arise Christian Church is a growing new church start and has a most enthusiastic and spirit-filled pastor in Sammie Robles. Rev. Dr. William Edwards is well respected across the life of the church and is anticipating on hosting the 23rd Biennial Session of the National Convocation and the 2015 General Assembly in Columbus, Ohio in respective summers. Come and get a foretaste of greater things to come.

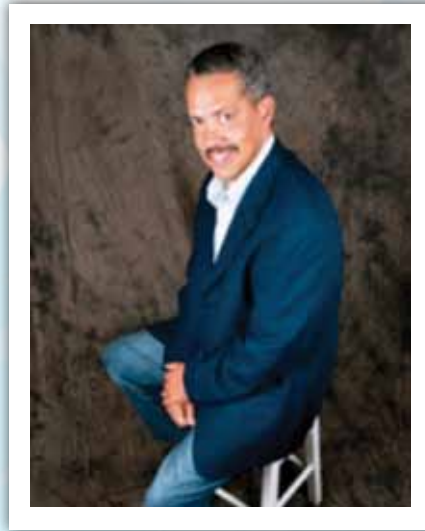
TICKETS ARE \$35.00 and available online! / Date: Sunday, July 14, 2013 Time: 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

The link is: www.disciples.org/GeneralAssembly/Schedule/TicketedMealsandEvents/tabid/506/Default.aspx

A BALANCED BUDGET "ALWAYS BET ON BLACK"

By: Dr. Matt Harris - Treasurer, National Convocation

In the movie "Passenger 57" Wesley Snipes said it best, "Always bet on black." Well that applies to our finances as well. Recessionary woes have many of us swimming in red ink. I am happy to say that the Convocation not only passed a balanced budget but we are in the black. There are a few lessons that I think can be helpful as it relates to "balance" in our budget. There's an old saying, "Necessity is the mother of invention." The financial challenges of the church have forced us into rethinking our ways of doing budgets. For one, it has us going back to basics.



Charlie Mae Knight) who witnessed both my passion for outreach and my *failed attempt to raise funds*. She said in so many words, "Matt, you're fishing in the wrong place!" She taught me how to go fishing for resources "outside" the church by writing grants and by working with youth from surrounding schools and law enforcement agencies who needed help. Not long after that talk, I wrote my first Community Development Block Grant and received \$40,000 – *can I get an Amen from somebody?!* Did you **KNOW** that billions of dollars of scholarship and grant funds go "unclaimed" each year because folk do not **KNOW**

When the Disciples were faced with a budget problem, they went fishing (Matthew 17:24-27). In the mouth of the fish were enough resources not only to pay what Jesus owed but enough to pay what Peter owed. This passage strikes at the heart of the church's purpose ... Jesus said, "Come, Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Inherent within this directive are the resources to do ministry. Some common sense follows ... if a fella keeps fishing where there's no fish, guess what, he's not going to catch anything! For one, you need some fishing skills and two, you need to find where the fish are. I remember when I first started Project IMPACT as an outreach of our church to youth and families in crisis, we did not have the resources to pay the bills. I needed \$40,000 dollars to launch the ministry. I did my best to raise the funds in a special offering and raised a whopping \$92 bucks ... **THAT WAS NOT THE VISION!** There listening to me pour out my heart was the Superintendent of Lynwood Schools (Dr.

how to "access" or "ask" for those resources? (The Grantsmanship Center www.tgci.com).

When Pastor Dr. John Tunstall, my pastor started Abundant Life Christian Church in Los Angeles, Lord knows *the church did not have the money to buy the building we "now own"*. However led by vision and by tapping into resources and opportunities "outside" the church, we now possess a multi-million dollar property that "facilitates" our vision for winning souls, community outreach and making disciples – **God is Able!**

LESSON: KNOW ... *You go fishing for souls, you'll discover the resources to do ministry.*

"Be still and acknowledge that I am God, supreme over nations, supreme over the world" NJB Version

Taken from the Psalms, "Selah" is a Hebrew word used in music to show where the cymbals should be played. Our Christian journey can be compared to a Psalm. Sometimes smooth and melodious, sometimes not so smooth. SELAH is intended to be an interruption to that journey's flow forming our issues of concern or celebration that will enhance our journey. We are going green with SELAH and need your help. Each edition will be posted on the Convocation web site www.nationalconvocation.org. Please contact us at dspeaks@disciples.org if we can remove your name from receiving a printed copy of our newsletter.

E-mail addresses: You may now reach us at: tjames@disciples.org and dspeaks@disciples.org.

NATIONAL CONVOCATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) GHANA, WEST AFRICA 2014 BOARD MISSION/SERVICE MINISTRY

How do we recycle those purchases we've made that we never had the opportunity to use? What can be done with those new pillow cases that we just didn't use? Where do we get water if there is no water system available and we cannot just turn on the plumbing? What about not having access to the most basic toiletries and medical supplies? What would we do without our electronic devices that we and our children use in our activities daily without even a second thought? What? WOW! We can look back at our past, count our blessings, and move out toward the future of our brothers and sisters and how we can be a blessing as we are blessed.

On March 14 through 24 our National Convocation Executive Board, Trustees and a delegation of volunteers will embark upon a ten-day mission/service project and meetings throughout Ghana, West Africa led by Rev. Patricia B. Maples, NCCC President.

This delegation will finance the installation and commission of a water well in a Ghana village where residents will have access to a clean water supply; thereby, reducing hazardous medical conditions.

You can assist with these projects by donating any of the following: funds, constructing pillow case dresses, donating basic toiletries, medical supplies, toys, clothes, laptop computers and printers for teachers in Ghana villages. There will be participants in the delegation who will provide information and demonstrate breast self-exams and perform blood pressure testing.

Why not make this the mission project of your local church or civic group with collections and donations.



Funds for Water Well: Donations from your fellowship group or individuals are all welcomed. The names of the church, the group and/or individual donor will be on an imprinted plaque attached to the Water Well. The total cost of the water well is **\$4500** and must be raised by **December 01, 2013**. (Notify Dr. Harris, Treasurer, of your commitment by **March 15th**)

Pillow Case Dresses (200): 1-Pillow Case or 1 ½ yards fabric, 2-Yards of Coordinating Ribbon and Thread

(You can construct these dresses or send the necessary supplies to the Mission Project Coordinator).

Toiletries/Medical Supplies: Basic Medical Supplies to include "new" medicine bottles, children soft tooth brushes/paste, reader eye glasses, soap, lotion, body wash, shampoo, etc.

Other Supplies: Children's slightly used & new clothes, non-battery operated toys, Black dolls & books (with black faces), new samples of make-up, shoes, school supplies and back packs/tote bags, and rope for jumping, etc.

Finally, a written and pictorial journal will be published following the mission trip with written journal entries and pictures from you/your congregation or group, journaling and pictures from the mission trip, which will be available for purchase to offset publication and net income will go to Global Ministries. This project is coordinated by team member Dr. Yowanda Bowens, NCCC Clergy Women Representative.

We are excited about this "**Sankofa**" opportunity (to reach back in our past and bring forth the future) of our National Convocation in this Global Mission/Services trip in our Mother Land. Contacts for the designated persons for this mission/service project are listed below.

The Ghana, West Africa – 2014 Service Mission/Service Team Members:

Sheryl Hayes Nelson, Project Coordinator
NCCC Trustee
(334) 590-1356 *Shn1952@att.net*

Dr. Yowanda Bowens, NCCC
Clergy Women Representative
(317) 414-3043 *Tulsad1@aol.com*

Dr. Matt Harris, NCCC Treasurer
Grants/Scholarships/Donations
(310) 631-9763 *Mharris160@aol.com*

NATIONAL CONVOCATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES THE STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

During our December 2012 Board meeting, the Strategic Planning Team reviewed the questions below, but decided the answers would not come easily in a day of planning.

1. What is our strategic plan for “African American” clergy and lay leadership in the Black Church?
2. We have not been able to place a Disciple in many of our pulpits, especially our more prominent Disciples churches. are we planning to strategically grow churches, build leaders, and advance the kingdom?

Therefore, the strategic plan for the National Convocation is underway. The Strategic Planning Committee/Team will intentionally covenant over the next six to twelve months to create at least three objectives to put into place. These objectives will serve to create a realistic strategic plan for the National Convocation for the next five to seven years. The first meeting took place in January. We will proceed in the “**Sankofa**” process of “reaching back in our past to move forward to the future” as we develop a *realistic* plan that addresses the above questions with the following Scripture from Psalm 46:10 in the NJB Version:
We will “Be still and acknowledge that He is God, supreme over nations, supreme over the world.”

Karen Barrett, Secretary, NCCC
Chair, Strategic Planning Team



Visit us on the web at
www.nationalconvocation.org

SELAH

The Office of National Convocation

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

PO Box 1986

Indianapolis, IN 46206-1986

NEW MAUSOLEUM DEDICATED AT GREENWOOD CEMETERY

On Sunday, December 9, 2012, the Board of Trustees of Greenwood Cemetery of Nashville, Tennessee dedicated the new mausoleum. The ribbon cutting ceremony was led by the outgoing manager, Dr. Norman Reed and incoming manager, Bro. Dwayne Bell. Regional Minister, Dr. Glenn Stewart and Trustees participated. The legacy of Rev. Preston Taylor has moved to a new level of service and opportunity. This is major for the enterprise entrusted to the National Christian Missionary Convention. We truly believe the best is yet to come.



Ribbon Cutting Ceremony



New Mausoleum