



# News From The Street

Butler Street C.M.E. Church  
23 Jesse Hill, Jr., Drive SE  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
Phone 404.659.8745 / Fax 404.581.0145  
Pastor Anthony M. Alford, Sr.

“... Write the vision, make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. For there is still a vision for the appointed time...”

—Habakkuk 2:2-3

News from Butler Street CME Church Vol. VIII No. VIII  
OCTOBER 2007

## ISSUE



## THE WORD OF GOD FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD

By Pastor Alford

### “The word of God for the people of God. Thanks be unto God!”

I have been thinking about this expression of late and how we use it with such regularity and in such casual manner that perhaps it has become idle and empty to us. It is an affirmation of sorts that is repeated by many of our congregations following the reading of Scripture. For years now we have all been accustomed to hearing the expression “may the Lord add a blessing to the reading and the hearing of His Holy word.” In more recent times, however churches have moved away from this expression to that of the caption. We lift this expression from Sunday to Sunday but I wonder how many of us really ever stop to think about the words we are saying: “The word of God for the people of God!” Some questions have been prompted in my mind by this expression and the way we are or are not receiving it. Obviously the first question is what is the word of God? How or in what way is the word of God for the people of God? What is it that the people of God are to do with the word of God once they realize that it is for them? How do the people of God express their understanding of the word of God? This article seeks to answer these questions and in so doing give us some further understanding of the power of the word of God in our lives while at the same time adding meaning to what we say.



People have been talking about the word of God for as long as God’s word has been around. Early theologians and Church Leaders argued, debated and discussed just what the word of God was. Leaders like Irenaeus, Tertullian and Origen all sought to come up with what the

response of the believer should be to the word of God. There were all kinds of theories about this word of God. Some believed it to be divinely inspired and thus heeded, while others believed that it was no more than humans groping at trying to find the creator. Still others argued that the word of God was proclamation about a creator who was not perfect or good and they supposed that Jesus Christ came to proclaim a more perfect god who needed to be explained and clarified. As time has evolved the understanding of the word of God

has become exacting in its expressions and instruction. Today most people believe the word of God is scripture and everything that the Bible says. A more enlightened and appropriate understanding is that the Word of God is Jesus Christ and that the Bible or Scripture instead gives us the words that *speak* about God through Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the agents through which God acted in the world. Our evidence for this understanding of the Word of God is borne out by what we have in John’s gospel.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and without Him not one thing came into being.

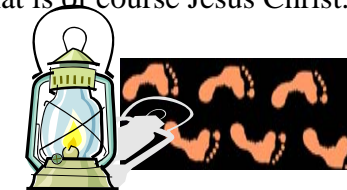
What has come into being in Him was life, and the life was the light of all people. . . . And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen His glory, the glory as of a father’s only son full of grace and truth.” John 1:1-4; 14

NRSV

Since we accept the word of God as God manifested in Jesus Christ then we can begin to consider the questions asked at the beginning of this article. For our purposes the questions and answers are designed to cause us all to think and more sincerely consider the expression we make as response to scripture and its movement in our lives.

The Word of God is multi faceted in its application for the people of God. Throughout the biblical script we have references to the word of God. The “word” is described as the action or promise or thing or saying of God. Example of this is found in Genesis 15:1. “After these things the ‘word’ of God came unto Abram in a vision. . . . Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.” In this instance the word of God refers to the actions, the promise or the thing(s) that are of God used in our lives. Psalms 33:4 says “For the ‘word’ of the Lord is right; and all His works are done in truth.” Here we have the word lifted as truth. So when we say the word of God for the people of God we are talking about God’s

word being right for our lives and the works that proceed out of that ‘word’ are truth. God’s word is further the means for testing or trying or even purifying or refining us as found in Psalms 105:19; “Until the time that his word came, the ‘word’ of the Lord tried him.” All of us know that the ‘word’ and its significance to our lives is a real treasure. It is something that we hide or place under safe keeping or guard with jealous care so that it will never be lost. Psalms 119:11 says it this way, “Thy word have I hid in my heart so that I might not sin against thee.” Finally, in this regard, the Psalmist in 119:105 gives further understanding that “The ‘word’ of God is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.” This of course means that the ‘word’ of God brings both light and guidance to our lives. So then the ‘word’ or words about God point us to the source of life and all that is necessary to sustain life. That object of our forward look is the Word which became flesh and that is of course Jesus Christ.



Now if the ‘word’ of God avails us of this much opportunity and advantage what are we to do with the word of God? Plainly understood the ‘word’ of God is to be appropriated in our relationship with God and with others. This ‘word’ of God for the people of God is to be understood as the handbook or the playbook for executing the walk of life as children of God. In other words

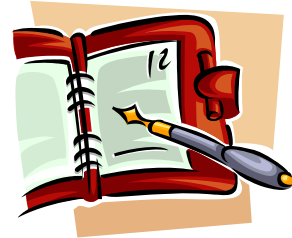
the ‘word’ of God teaches us how to live *as the people of God* and thereby identifies or hallmarks us as an exclusive people who have peculiar relationship with other believers and the creator of the universe and thus the one who has all power. Because of this peculiar relationship we have an empowered sense of living with abundant hope, always knowing that ours is the source of all beginnings and consummation. I Peter 2:9 puts it in these words: “You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

Secondly, the ‘word’ of God for the people of God should cause growth in us in such magnificent manner that we would always express praise for God calling or rescuing us from darkness or ignorance into awareness or marvelous light. Perhaps this calling out of darkness is what prompted the writer in Psalm 71:6 to proclaim “. . . My praise shall be continually of thee.” Ultimately then, this word of God for the people of God should cause us to live under constant reframing. We ought to always have ourselves under examination as to worth in the sight of God; thus confession and pardon. The ‘word’ of God for the people of God in its daily application should, like a laser, beam attention on us and our living in such a way to point us to exactly where the blot is. One of the popular laundry detergent commercials says their product knows exactly where the stain is

and their active ingredients rush power to the stain and get it out. Now of course we know that this is an exaggeration but none the less it makes a point. The power of the 'word' of God as the daily examining agent in our lives should then lead us to conclude, as the Apostle Paul did, "I die daily!" In other words he was acknowledging that every day he let go of another flaw and took upon him a new awareness of the power of Jesus Christ in his life. Thus he could declare that "to live is Christ and to die is gain." There was a sense on his part that in Christ, everyday was a new beginning thanks to what the 'word' of God allowed.

Finally, the 'word' of God is expressed by our living in what I like to call "triumphant expectancy." That is to say that we are always living on the edge of triumph and thus defeat, disappointment and dismay have no place of permanence in our lives. Something born out of divine favor is always happening or about to happen in our life. Hope is always springing forth in abundance and life and light are always shining through for the believer. Thus we have access by faith into the grace of God wherein we stand rejoicing and hoping always in the glory of God. So we recognize that even in suffering and disappointment we can still glory as Paul says to the Romans "knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character and character produces hope and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us." This

says to us that no matter what we are experiencing in our lives the 'word' of God at work for the 'people' of God gives us a lively hope that ever keeps us reframing our experiences in light of what we know God can and will do in our lives. After all we are serving that one who is the architect of the impossible being made possible. This **IS** the word of God for the people of God. Thanks be unto to God!



### CHRISTIAN YOUTH FELLOWSHIP KICKS OFF 2007-2008 CONFERENCE YEAR

By Janett M. Murray

The first Christian Youth Fellowship (CYF) meeting of the new conference year was held Saturday, September 8, 2007 at the Atlanta-Fulton County Library - Washington Park/Annie L. McPheeters Branch. The meeting was lively, fun filled and productive. Counselor Janett Murray welcomed everyone and expressed her delight in seeing them.

Counselor Forrest Stovall called the meeting to order and Lamar Richardson, II led the group in devotion. Counselor Tracie Murray conducted an amusing ice-breaker which generated lots of laughs and allowed CYF members, counselors and parents to respond to questions based on the color of Skittles candies they

selected from a bowl. The questions were: Red- What do you like to do for fun? Yellow- What is your favorite Bible verse or who is your favorite person from the Bible? Green- If you won one million dollars, what would you do with it? Purple- What two words best describe you? Orange- What is your favorite food? Jordan Maben won a large box of Skittles for giving the most enthusiastic answers to the questions.

Counselor, George Solomon recognized the youth who had come to join the CYF and allowed them to introduce themselves. Taylor Terrell, Jeanelle Seals and Garrison Webb became CYF members and were warmly welcomed by the group. Earl von Corbin, who expressed a desire to become a CYF counselor, was also warmly welcomed. We are hopeful that other youth, ages 12 and above, who are not CYF members will come to our next meeting and join.

The next order of business was election of 2007/2008 Conference Year CYF Officers.

Ms. Murray conducted the election, assisted by Serena Sims, Forrest Stovall and George Solomon. Election results were as follows: Sherrod Sims- President, Lamar Richardson, II- Vice President, Taylor Terrell- Secretary, Jordan Maben- Assistant Secretary, Brianna Thomas- Treasurer, Jeanelle Seals- Assistant to the Treasurer, Garrison Webb- Chaplain, Isaac Seals, IV- Assistant to the Chaplain and Arianna Thomas- Sergeant-at-Arms. Mr. Stovall

talked to the elected officers regarding the responsibilities

of holding an office and assured them that all CYF members and counselors will be supportive of them. He emphasized that we would all be counting on them to be good dependable officers.

Ms. Murray offered information regarding the National Youth & Young Adult Conference, which will be held in Orlando, Florida on July 7-11, 2008. The group was excited about going to Orlando. This conference year the CYF will participate in educational, social and outreach activities. Several fund raising activities are planned, including participation in the Atlanta Hawks Basketball Game Fellowship Nights.

Ms. Sims led a discussion on CYF Outreach Projects for Thanksgiving and Christmas. She solicited ideas on ways the CYF can share with others during these special seasons. Everyone expressed a desire to participate in bringing joy and showing love to others.

We will again join with the Acolytes for a joint fall outing to the Georgia National Fair in Perry, Georgia and for the Annual Christmas Fellowship.

Counselor Lamar Richardson is coordinator of our monthly outreach initiative to sick and shut in members. He shared comments on our usual practice of sending "Thinking of You", "Get Well", and other cards (at times, love tokens are included) and making visits to sick and shut in members. Everyone agreed that we should continue sending cards and visiting. Lamar distributed six cards and each person wrote a personal message and signed the cards.

Counselor Sonya Stovall is responsible for scheduling parents and counselors to serve at each CYF meeting. We enjoyed Pizza, etc. following our September meeting.

We are very grateful to Dr. Corrie Alford for graciously offering her home for our October 13<sup>th</sup> CYF meeting, where we look forward to moving forward with the plans made so far.

Current CYF members are Justin Clark, Lazaria Fillmore, Aaron Golson, Brian Golson, Alexandria Hill, Tiera Johnson, Cameron Johnson, Carroll M. Johnson, III, Calvin Kimpson, Jordan Maben, Jessica L. Pickens, Lamar Richardson, II, Isaac Seals, Jeanelle Seals, Lynwood Sherrod Sims, Arianna Thomas, Brianna Thomas, and Garrison Webb.



CYF Counselors are Tony Coates, Earlvon Corbin, Leola L. Hatcher, Janett M. Murray, Tracie L. Murray, Lamar Richardson, Courtney Serena Sims, George Solomon, Forrest Stovall and Sonya Stovall.

## BUBBA AT THE REVIVAL

Bubba goes to the revival and listens to the preacher. After a while, the preacher asks anyone with needs to come forward and be prayed over.

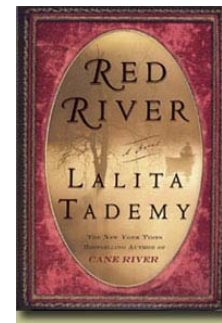
Bubba gets in line and when it's his turn the preacher says, 'Bubba, what do you want me to pray about?'

Bubba says, 'Preacher, I need you to pray for my hearing.'

So the preacher puts one finger in Bubba's ear and the other hand on top of his head and prays a while.

After a few minutes, he removes his hands and says, 'Bubba, how's your hearing now?'

Bubba says, 'I don't know preacher, it's not until next Wednesday.'



**RED RIVER**  
**LALITA TADEMY**  
By Dorcas A. Parham

Red River is a book based on true events of the ancestor's of the author Lalita Tademy. This is not an easy story to go down. It is a story of inequality, of racially motivated violence and inequity. However, it is also a story of faith, of courage, of resilience and of hope for a better life.

Red River continues the story of the Tandems, who were introduced in a previous book, Cane River, and provides more detailed information about the family's struggle to survive after slavery, through Reconstruction and beyond.

Red River shows the atrocities that happened April 13, 1873 in Colfax, Louisiana. Those affected were ex-slaves who were in an area among former plantations and rich farmland. After a life time of servitude, these ex-slaves exercised their right to vote and ousted the county sheriff and judge. They elected people who either were sympathetic to their plight (scalawags) or those who had recently moved into this area from the North (carpetbaggers) after the Civil War. The election caused the white supremacists who did not recognize the newly elected officials to become angry. The two sides; the white Democrats of Montgomery and the Colored and white Republicans of Colifax meet to discuss their differences. Federal troops are supposed to arrive to protect the rights of Colored People. The confrontation that followed resulted in these men being shot down at the courthouse where a mass murder of over a hundred African Americans occurred. Most of these men were lynched after they had surrendered. No one has ever been held accountable for these deaths. The events of Easter Sunday, April 13, 1873, in Colfax, Louisiana, identified by some as "the bloodiest single act of carnage in

all of Reconstruction" saw 153 people lose their lives.

The author tells the story of her family, Sam Tademy, Israel Smith and their families as they fight their way back from the massacre. As the family struggles against poverty, buys land and pursues their dream of starting a school for African American children, their progress is challenged by floods, hunting accidents and the Ku Klux Klan. It is a story of racial uplift. The family feels that it is up to them to move the race forward. Through her characters Ms. Tademy weaves a portrait of rural life under segregation, centered in farm labor and family ties that bind. They get a foothold in Colfax, start a school, own land and business and become full-fledged citizens as they were meant to be.

I enjoyed Red River, it was well written. It is a moving tale that ends hopefully. I had the pleasure of meeting Ms. Tademy in Ft. Worth Texas at the Black Caucus of the American Library Association. I informed her that The Turning Leaf Book Club was reading her book, she encouraged me to share with the Book Club the importance of telling the stories of our families.



The book club is now reading New England White by Stephen Carter. Join us!!

## OPENED AND CLOSED DOORS

We need to learn to thank the Lord for closed doors just as much as we do for open doors. The reason God closes doors is because He has not prepared anything over there for us.

If He didn't close the wrong door we would never find our way to the right door. Even when we don't realize it, God directs our paths through the closing and opening of doors. When one door closes, it forces us to change our course. Another door closes; it forces us to change our course yet again.

Then finally, we find the open door and walk right into our blessing. But instead of praising God for the closed door (which kept us out of trouble), we get upset because we "judge by the appearances." And in our own arrogance, or ignorance, we insist that we know what is right.

We have a very present help in the time of need who is always standing guard. Because He walks ahead of us, He can see trouble down the road and HE sets up road blocks and detours accordingly. But through our lack of wisdom we try to tear down the roadblocks or push aside the detour signs. Then the minute we get into trouble, we start crying "Lord how could this happen to me?"

We have got to realize that the closed door was a blessing. Didn't He say that "No good thing will He withhold from them that love Him?"

If you get terminated from your job - don't be down, instead thank God for the new opportunities that will manifest themselves - it might be a better job, or an opportunity to go to school. If that man or woman won't return your call - it might not be them, it might be the Lord setting up a roadblock (just let it go).

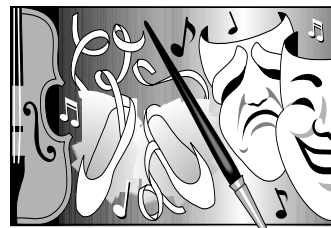
I'm so grateful, for the many times God has closed doors to me, just to open them in the most unexpected places. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way." (Psalms 37:23) The Mountain top is glorious, but it is in the Valley that I will grow!

Always Remember God gives you...

Enough Happiness to keep you Going  
 Enough Trials to keep you Strong  
 Enough Sorrows to keep you Human  
 Enough Hope to keep you Happy  
 Enough Failure to keep you Humble  
 Enough Success to keep you Eager  
 Enough Friends to give you Comfort  
 Enough Wealth to meet your Needs  
 Enough Enthusiasm to make you look forward  
 Enough Faith to banish depression  
 Enough Determination to make each day a better day than the last.  
 And Enough Honey to keep you Sweet .

Life must be lived forward but it

can only be understood backwards. Commit to the Lord in whatever you do and your plans will succeed. (Proverbs 16:3)



## The Arts

### IT HAPPENED ON JESSE HILL JR. DRIVE

By Wanda L. Crenshaw

This play has been a labor of love and much frustration. The idea of a dying church is not altogether an original one. Pundits for years have been postulating about the death of the church and offering various and sundry reasons for its demise.

Being raised as the daughter of a minister, I have grown up in the church and have had the opportunity to view its operations from the vantage point of a child of minister, an active member of the congregation and an officer in the church.

It happened on Jesse Hill Jr. Drive, is based on my experiences and observations. The play is based on the premise that the church has been murdered. The phrase dying church denotes death by natural causes. Who would do such a thing? The murderer must be caught and brought to justice. This play depicts what one

anonymous church does to catch the criminals responsible for the death of their church.

The play begins as the church is performing the last rites at the morning service and the Associate Pastor asks the congregation to remain for a few minutes for some urgent business. The business is that of hiring experienced crime fighters to help unravel this mystery.

Four well known detectives are brought before the congregation and interviewed for the job, John Shaft, Kojak, Mrs. Fletcher and Foxy Lady. As the play unfolds, John Shaft is only interested in his fee of \$600.00 a day plus expenses and how it is to be paid, Kojak blames the death of the church on George W. Bush. Mrs. Fletcher contends that global warming is responsible for this heinous crime.

Foxy Lady provided the most plausible methodology for solving the crime. She indicated in her interview that because the murder happened at 11 a.m. Sunday morning, it is an inside job. Her modus operandi is to interview key members in the congregation and establish a profile. From that profile she vowed to determine the murderer. She interviews the pastor, Rev. Leroy, President of Steward Board, Mr. Pompous, member of the Stewardess Board, Mrs. Filmdom, Chairman of Board of Trustees, Mrs. Tightwad, Choir Director and members of the Usher Board. Judge Mabeline presided over the proceedings and Aunt Esther made a surprise visit.

Foxy Lady in her interviews basically asks them all the same set of questions, what do you contribute to the spiritual growth of the church, do you tithe, what is your role in promoting and supporting outreach programs of the church? The answers all varied, but by and large, everyone placed the spiritual growth of the church with the pastor, tithing was not important to any of them and all of them were more concerned with how they looked on Sunday morning as opposed to why they were there in the first place.

The play ends with the audience viewing the last remains of the church. As each parishioner looked down into the casket to see the dead body of the church, what they saw was their own reflection in a mirror.

Who murders the church on a daily basis? In other words we are all guilty of murdering the church with our insincerity, our greed, and lack of respect for one another as we continue to live our lives not following in the footsteps of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

John Donne put it another way, "For whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee." The cast did an excellent job. Not only did they perform their lines and get into their characters, but they bought into the idea of the play and were more than believable in their roles. Words are inadequate for me to express my gratitude to each and everyone of you for your support, your commitment and your prayers.

Stay tuned for the next project of the Butler Street Drama Guild. If you are interested in joining us, please see me or Leola Hatcher.

## Happy Birthday October Birth Month Class



| DATE | NAME  |
|------|---|
| 1    | Sis. Toyin Sule<br>Sis. Vernee Smith            |
| 2    | Sis. Patricia Clark-Evans<br>Sis. Nancy Fowler  |
| 3    | Eric B. Lee, Jr.                                |
| 5    | Bro. Jesse Gaines                               |
| 6    | Bro. Edward Wright, Sr.                         |
| 7    | Sis. Sylvia Roberts                             |
| 8    | Sis. Judy Delaney<br>Sis. Chelesa Larkins       |
| 13   | Sis. Lillian Wright                             |
| 14   | Sis. Bennie G. Barnes                           |
| 15   | Sis. Carmen Adams<br>Sis. Connie Adams          |
| 16   | Raymond P. Carpenter, Jr.                       |
| 17   | Sis. Algernon E. Wright                         |
| 18   | Krystal Paige                                   |
| 20   | Alexandrea Hill                                 |
| 22   | Sis. Aniya Antenor                              |
| 24   | Atty. Debra G. Alford<br>Min. Brian T. Lightner |
| 26   | Sis. Alesia J. Turner                           |
| 27   | Sis. Cheryl Thompson                            |
| 28   | Sis. Jean Webster                               |
| 29   | Carroll Johnson<br>Sis. Cari Smith              |
| 30   | Sis. Celeste Cooper                             |

## Children's Corner

What does a tree do when he is ready to go home?  
He leaves.

What did the cowboy say when his dog left?  
Doggone

What did one ear say to the other ear?  
Between us we have brains!

What do you call two people who embarrass you in front of your friends?  
Mum and Dad!

Why did the one-handed man cross the road?  
To get to the second-hand shop!

How do you make a band stand?  
Hide all their chairs!

Why do golfers take an extra pair of socks?  
In case they get a hole in one!

What do you call a man with a spade on his head?  
Doug

What did one tooth say to the other tooth?  
The dentist is taking me out today!

Why did the chocolate chip cookie visit the doctor?  
He was feeling crumby.

How did the farmer fix his jeans?  
With a cabbage patch!

Why was the broom late?  
It over-swept!

What did the mother broom say to the baby broom?  
Go to sweep, dear.

What do you call a boy mermaid?  
A merdude!

What did one magnet say to the other magnet?  
I find you very attractive!

What's red and flies and wobbles at the same time?  
A jelly copter!

What did the policeman say to his stomach?  
You're under a VEST!

Why did the police wake the child?  
Because they'd heard there'd been a kid napping!

Why was the police officer under the blanket?  
Because he was an under cover cop!

### *Butler Street C.M.E. Church*

23 Jesse Hill, Jr., Drive, S.E.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
Pastor Anthony M. Alford, Sr.  
[www.butlerstreetcmechurch.org](http://www.butlerstreetcmechurch.org)



*A Friendly Church with A Personal Touch*



**OCTOBER — BREAST CANCER  
AWARENESS MONTH**

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
ATLANTA, GA  
Permit No. 7456