

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

Christian Education Department

Excerpts from the

**YOUNG ADULTS IN CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES
HANDBOOK**



ORGANIZED 1990

Christian Education Department

Quadrennial Theme:

Kingdom Building: Back to Basics - Salvation,
Transformation, Sanctification and
Continuation

From The Founding Advisor. . .

Because of an experience I had today, it is perhaps good for me to keep before us our history so that it can be in the thinking of all Young Adults who receive this handbook. Of course it would not be detailed but, in some reform, in order that as the Young Adults in Christian Ministries develop, we maintain and not lose sight of how and when we got started.

The idea of a Young Adult section began to be expressed with the 1982 General Convention on Christian Education. A group of Young Adults from NCYC was appointed to form a resolution to be presented at the 1984 General Conference. The Resolution was written and adopted by NCYC at the 1982 General Convention, approved by the Home and Church Board, and presented at the 1984 General Conference. The Resolution did not get adopted at the 1984 General Conference because the Revision Committee never completed their report. Therefore, the Resolution was in "limbo". So, again, at the 1986 General Convention on Christian Education, a similar Resolution was proposed, and adopted by NCYC, approved by the Home and Church Board, and presented to the 1988 General Conference. The Resolution was adopted at the 1988 General Conference. Afterwards, the Young Adults met in forum at the December meeting in Charleston, S.C. in 1988; Portland, OR in 1989 to work out the details and make preparations to become established at the 1990 General Convention.

At Portland, OR, the forum wrote a proposed constitution, presented a proposed budget, selected an emblem and colors (Red and Gold), appointed a Nomination and Election Committee, and formulated the necessary ground work for the Young Adults in Christian Ministries division to come into being at the 1990 General Convention on Christian Education.

At the 1990 General Convention, the Constitution was adopted, the proposed budget was adopted, the Steering Committee members were elected, and the Officers of the Steering Committee were elected.

Now the challenge ahead of us is to keep: (1) Jesus as our Lord; (2) the vision of involving all Young Adults in Christian Ministries; and (3) establishing the Organization at every level of the Zion structure (i.e., Regional, Conference, District, and Local Church).

*MAY GOD GRANT US WISDOM AND COURAGE
FOR THE FACING OF THIS HOUR
FOR THE LIVING OF THESE DAYS
SERVING HIM WHOM WE ADORE*

Rev. Dr. C. R. Thompson. (Deceased)

FUNCTIONS

THE YOUNG ADULTS IN CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES SHALL:

- (A) Serve as a policymaking body for the Young Adults of the A. M. E. Zion Church
- (B) Cultivate Young Adult membership in the A. M. E. Zion Church
- (C) Promote ecumenical involvement on all levels
- (D) Make recommendations in those areas which are Young Adult concerns to the Connectional Steering Committee
- (E) Aid Local, District, Conference, and Episcopal units of the Young Adults in Christian Ministries and other Young Adult organizations
- (F) Develop workshops and / or seminars that promote the sharing of information on the problems and concerns that face Young Adults in today's society
- (G) Provide for the development of leadership skills and abilities among the Young Adults of the denomination. Also, to challenge their involvement in the total ministry of the church.

PURPOSE

The Young Adults in Christian Ministries focuses on viable ministries and assists in the inclusion of Young Adults in the mainstream of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

PRIMARY PURPOSE

To encourage and motivate Young Adults to maintain committed lives to Christ and practice Christian Principles. To provide an atmosphere in which Young Adults can develop and demonstrate their skills, talents and abilities in the furthering of Christian Education within and throughout the Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

LONG TERM GOALS

To promote Young Adult membership, participation and involvement within the Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, by establishing local Young Adult groups.

SHORT TERM GOAL

To develop workshops, seminars, task forces, revivals, retreats, panel discussions, and activities which will enrich both the social and spiritual lives of Young Adults.

ORGANIZATION

The Young Adults in Christian Ministries (YACM) was accepted as the third division of the Christian Education Department* at the 1986 Convention on Christian Education (Livingstone College, Salisbury, North Carolina), and ratified at the 1988 General Conference (Charlotte, North Carolina). In 1990, history records YACM as officially organized at the Convention on Christian Education at Livingstone College, Salisbury, North Carolina.

THE CHARTER STEERING COMMITTEE

The Charter Steering Committee of the Young Adults in Christian Ministries is the constitutional body governing implementation of the YACM Purpose and Functions for Young Adults of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. The Charter Connectional Steering Committee consisted of the following elected members:

Rev. C. R. Thompson, Advisor
Rev. W. Darin Moore, Chairperson
Nora Kathleen McNeill, Vice Chairperson
Ruth Lawrence Jenkins, Executive Secretary
Cleo Chaney, Treasurer
Rev. Marvin Lee, Chaplain

CHARTER REGIONAL CHAIRPERSONS

Rev. Dwayne R. Howard	Eastern
Rev. George E. McKain, II	Southeastern
Velina Glenn	Central
John L. Stinson	South Central
Terri Jo Lynne-Jones	Mid-Western
Cynthia M. Harris	Western
Veronica L. Byers	Member-At-Large
Denise N. Wyche	Member-At-Large
Brett Alexander Jackson	Member-At-Large

**The other divisions of the Christian Education Department are Varick's Children (VC), Varick International Christian Youth Council (VCYC), and the Assembly of Christian Educators (ACE).*

CURRENT STEERING COMMITTEE

CURRENT OFFICERS

Stephanie D. Perry, Chairperson
David A. McLean, Vice Chairperson
Fern L. Seward, Executive Secretary
Rev. Keith I. Harris, Treasurer
Michele Owens, Parliamentarian
Rev. Evalina Huggins, Chaplain

CURRENT REGIONAL CHAIRPERSONS

Rev. Reginald J. Chandler	Eastern
Rev. Henrico White	Southeastern
Jason Spigner	Central
Francilla V. Allen	South Central
Carla R. Perry-Johnson	Mid-Western
Rev. George C. Woodruff	Western
Portia Jacobs	Member-At-Large

CONNECTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Rev. Raymon E. Hunt, Secretary-Auditor, Christian Education Department
Rev. Lester Agyei McCorn, Director of Young Adult Ministries
Rev. Kathryn G. Brown, Assistant Advisor of Young Adult Ministries
Rev. W. Darin Moore, Former Director of Young Adult Ministries

COMMITTEES

BUDGET

The Budget Committee is responsible for developing and monitoring the financial concerns and responsibilities of the organization.

CONSTITUTION

The Constitution Committee is responsible for the development and revision of the organization guidelines.

MEMBERSHIP

The Membership Committee is responsible for determining the status of each member as well as ways in which to attract new members.

PROGRAM

The Program Committee is responsible for planning and scheduling events that enhance growth and development within the organization.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Public Relations Committee is responsible for communicating the policies and actions of the organization to the public at large.

MINISTRIES

MENTORS MINISTRY

"Young Adults Aiding Our Youth"

Purpose: To attempt to establish human relationships that encourage and guide personal development of our youth. To promote a greater sense of awareness through:

- (1) Spiritual Values
- (2) Career Development
- (3) Church Leadership

PRAYER CELL MINISTRY

"A New Avenue of Ministry"

Purpose: To cultivate and stimulate an effective prayer life in the individuals of our church community through an organized "Prayer Cell." This program consists of:

- (1) Prayer through:
 - (a) Verbal communication
 - (b) Meeting of the minds
- (2) Listing of Prayer Concerns:
 - (a) Intercessory Prayer
 - (b) Prayers for sick / shut-in
 - (c) Social Concerns
 - (d) Spiritual Concerns
- (3) Prayer Meetings: Quarterly meetings are called of all members in a general prayer of thanksgiving.
- (4) Offering: At each quarterly meeting, offerings are collected for (a) local support; (b) local evangelistical support, and (c) one-quarter of the offering to the general organization for the support of the national body.

MEMBERSHIP

The Young Adults in Christian Ministries shall be composed of all Young Adults between the ages of 22-40 in the denomination. However, allowances will be made on all levels for those whose life circumstances dictate a younger age that they are no longer youths.

COLORS

- RED** Symbolizes power and the redemptive work of the blood of Jesus. It is also the color used consistently by all divisions of the Christian Education Department.
- GOLD** Symbolizes ROYALTY. We are a chosen people and part of a royal priesthood.

DESCRIPTION

Diamond is a jewel symbolizing Jesus, the (priceless) jewel; who is our Savior and Lord. The diamond is "superimposed" upon the cross which is a symbol that Christ is our foundation. The Cross is a symbol of Calvary where Jesus bled and died for our salvation. The Cross bridges us to our precious jewel of salvation – Jesus – and the open cross represents the "Victory" of salvation. The colors are Red (cross), Gold (Jewel), and Black (lettering).



THEME SONG

(As Adopted at the 1992 Mid-Winter Meeting held December 27-30, 1992)

PASS IT ON

1. It only takes a spark to get a fire going,
And soon all those around can warm up in its glowing,
That's how it is with God's love;
Once you've experienced it
You spread His love to everyone;
You want to pass it on.
2. What a wondrous time is spring,
When all the trees are budding,
The birds begin to sing,
The flowers start their blooming;
That's how it is with God's love;
Once you've experienced it
You want to sing, it's fresh like spring,
You want to pass it on.
3. I wish for you, my friend,
This happiness that I've found,
You can depend on Him,
It matters not where you're bound;
I'll shout it from the mountain top,
I want my world to know:
The Lord of love has come to me,
I want to pass it on.

A YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

(A Resource Guide)

WHY WE NEED A YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Have you noticed in your congregation the presence or absence of Young Adults?

Have you noticed Young Adults present in the Sunday Morning Worship that have no involvement in other areas of the church?

Has your church made a thorough effort to provide activities for persons between ages 22 and 40?

If your answer to the 1st question was yes, and your answer to the 3rd question was no, then a Young Adult Ministry is very much needed in your church.

Statistics reveal that many congregations lose this age group because of a lack of relevant activities and the inability to reach out and understand Young Adulthood.

Young adulthood presents struggles with issues of independence and uprootedness; job related pressures; success and values; relationships and their fragilities; societal pressures; formation of families and family stability, and exercising authority and freedom along with many others.

The question is, how does the church assist persons as they wrestle with the above issues? Where can one obtain a Christian and theological / biblical perspective and environment in which to serve as a guide as one works through these concerns? Thus, the church must plan systematically to be inclusive in its dealings with Young Adults.

A wealth of talent and professional skills exist in Young Adults. It is unfortunate that much of this is not used.

What is happening in your congregation? Does your Board of Christian Education plan for Young Adult ministry as it does its children's and youth ministries? If not, does this convey a silent message to the Young Adult of a lack of concern for spiritual growth and nurturing? Is this the message you want to convey? If not, it is time to get busy to ensure that the correct message is communicated. So, you may ask, "How, When, Where Can We Start?"

The Answer is, TODAY, by:

- Coming together to explore, assess, and discuss our present situation, mutual needs and desires for such a program.
- Surveying to discover unmet needs and interests.
- Forming a Planning Committee to determine and prioritize direction.

HOW TO BEGIN A YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

STEP ONE is to develop a Ministry Team.

The obvious advantage of this method over one person trying to organize a large group is that you begin with a wider base of support. Young Adults will be making the decision and accepting the responsibility for their own ministry, and the responsibility falls on more shoulders than just the Young Adults. This latter point is particularly important since Young Adults are often very involved in a number of activities, and the time they have to give may be limited. More people involved is greater assurance that the job will get done.

STEP TWO begins with deciding who should comprise the team.

The most important members of the team will be Young Adults themselves. Perhaps 3 to 5 or more (depending on how ambitious you are at the onset) who have proven leadership ability or have demonstrated potential for leadership. The basic assumption behind an effective Young Adult Ministry is that it is for Young Adults. Thus, the team should be mostly Young Adults.

STEP THREE is to develop a ministry philosophy, or perhaps better, theology.

The team must know why they are working in Young Adult Ministry. They should understand the call and the mission of Jesus and how the Church continues His mission today. It is important that the team clarifies its understanding of the Church and its ministry with Young Adults. This step helps the team to broaden its vision of what the Church is and what it can mean for them. A strong sense of purpose is essential in order for the team to make it through the discouraging times that are inevitable in ministry. It may be helpful if this philosophy is eventually written down as some sort of "mission statement."

STEP FOUR involves identifying who are the Young Adults to whom you plan to minister.

There are various types of Young Adults and their varying needs. They are singles, married, college students, working, and divorced of all different ages. The team needs to make a decision about to whom they will direct their ministry. The decision is based on the needs of the Young Adults of that locality and the available resources in terms of time and people. This can and should be expanded to include all Young Adults as things develop. After doing this, it may be useful to develop a list of those whom you hope to reach. This list is often times difficult to assemble, but with time, patience and resourcefulness you will be surprised at how large the list will turn out in most cases.

STEP FIVE begins the process of reaching out to Young Adults.

Utilizing your list may be a good idea to survey their needs. While this could be done through a written questionnaire of some kind, personal contact is invaluable. Have people over for dinner one or two at a time, or assemble Young Adults in people's homes in small groups. Explain what you are doing and open the door for them to express their needs and concerns. The crucial thing here is simply to listen. (Remember that after being present to the life situations of Young Adults, listening is the next step.) Do not judge people or try to bring them to your point of view. Simply listen and attempt to care for the people to whom you are listening. This step is perhaps the most crucial step in the whole process. It is also, for many people, the hardest but, in the end, it can be the most rewarding of all the work.

STEP SIX IS DECISION TIME.

Now the team decides which direction they are going to take to further the work that they have begun. The team should work out short and long-term goals. It is important that some programs begin to take shape soon. Long-range plans can also be developed. The reason programs need to begin to happen soon is that once you have begun to peak the interest of the Young Adults you have contacted, they will begin to expect a response. Think small. Plan for fewer people than you may-ultimately want and then be surprised if more come. Make sure that you have the resources and necessary skills for what you plan. Do not be too extravagant at the beginning. Some have been successful by starting with a major event, but the chances of failure and the ensuing discouragement are much higher.

The team should be holistic in its planning. The programs that are planned should address the broad range of Young Adult needs. Social programs are often the most popular and while we are not attempting to form social clubs, it is important to provide for the needs of significant fellowship among Young Adults. Spiritual needs are also often apparent and some have had great success with Young Adult retreats, meetings and prayer groups. It is also important to offer opportunities for religious education, particularly in the areas of social justice and moral decision making. To implement all of this, the planning should include opportunities for the broadest possible range of choices that would address the needs of the Young Adults who have been surveyed and then let them choose what they want. While this approach has worked, it also involves a lot of trial and error before you arrive at the right combination.

Adopted from: "Young Adults: A Hidden Treasure" - 1986 Ronald Bagley, CJM Published by Center for Youth Ministry Development.

IDEAS FOR A YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

The FOLLOWING IDEAS HAVE been gathered from many resource people who are involved in Young Adult Ministry locally and throughout the country.

Basic Principles For Gathering Young Adults

More often than not, a church-wide team or area-wide team will decide to gather Young Adults into various types of groups and group activities. It is important to realize though that one-to-one ministry with Young Adults is extremely important and will be the only way many Young Adults can be touched by the Church. One of the main reasons for bringing Young Adults together in a group is to facilitate the building of one-to-one relationships as well as to build a group identity and community. These are some basic principles to keep in mind when gathering Young Adults. They hold true for many other groups as well.

Invitation – Publicity

1. A good INVITATION is the key to all Young Adult Ministries. Without it, all your planning and preparation will be for nothing. The more tools you use for publicity, the more effective will be your invitation. Be sure to publicize all activities in Church bulletins and calendars. Use radio and newspaper announcements when possible. Many good Young Adult programs have failed because the planning team did not personally invite people. Telephoning must be done for each major and most minor gatherings, no matter how established a group might be.

Although all these methods are helpful, the key to a good invitation is direct mailing followed by a personal contact such as a telephone call. Develop a mailing list of all interested and possibly interested people. Send out periodic letters telling of upcoming events. But most importantly, invite people either in person or by telephone.

Holistic – Balanced Program

2. In planning events, try to be holistic in your approach. Discover what the self-interests and needs of the Young Adults are and, try to meet as many as possible. Realize though that you will never be able to speak to all needs and interests. Other groups might be able to meet those needs. But try to have a balanced program including spiritual, social, recreational, educational and service opportunities.

We Are Addressing Adults

3. Remember Young Adults are just that – ADULTS. We are attempting to help people come together and to grow personally and spiritually. Young Adults need to feel that what is happening is relevant to their lives. Consult as many people as possible in the planning process

Enthusiasm

4. Be enthusiastic! Be excited about what you are doing before and after each gathering.

Personal Contact

5. Use the telephone – Just making sure you haven't forgotten the importance of personal contact.

Welcome and Hospitality

6. Welcome and hospitality will be the key to any event once the people have gathered. Be sure to greet each person as they arrive. Use people's names at all times. Introduce people to one another. Introduce yourself to people who seem to be having a difficult time mixing with the group. Involve as many people as possible in preparation and clean up. Follow up on people after the "get-together". Either call them or drop them a card, informing them that you enjoyed seeing them and that you hope they will come to the next event.

Responsibility and Planning

7. Visualize what will happen from the time people begin to arrive until they leave. That doesn't mean you need a real structured program but just that you know how things are going to flow. Decide who will lead the group. Decide on other responsibilities. Always have some point where the group comes together as a whole, even for just a few minutes. Have introductions at this time if it seems appropriate. Finally, have a point of closure so people feel comfortable leaving, even if others want to stay longer.

Location of Gatherings

8. Have your "get-togethers" where people will feel at ease. Just be sure that everyone has clear directions on how to get there and that someone is there in case you have early arrivals.

Evaluation

9. Evaluation should take place soon after the event. Be sure to include persons who were not on the planning team. Encourage them to help give thoughts, ideas and suggestions. They may even volunteer to spearhead the next gathering. Wouldn't that be great?

We hope these ideas spur you on to some creative ways of welcoming Young Adults to our congregation and having them become active members of your faith community. If you would like further ideas or help in getting started, feel free to contact us. (See Business Mailing Address Section).

Adopted From: "Young Adults: A Hidden Treasure" – 1986 Ronald Bagley, CJM published BY center for Youth Ministry Development.