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## MESSAGE TO COUNTRY BY BISHOPS OF A. M. E. Z. CURCH.

ISSUED FROM THEIR MEETING AT CHARLOTTE, N. C., JANUARY 13-17.

The Bishops of the A. M. E. Zion Church herein, with affectionate greetings, issue a statement of observations on the State of the Church and our public interests.

Having faith in God, confidence in our machinery and confident reliance upon the loyalty and zeal of our ministry, we entertain high hopes for the future usefulness of our religious organization in making contributions of value to the redemptive influences now at work to save mankind. Long experience presents high signs of the fulfillment of divine promises concerning the flourishing destiny of the Church and assures us that the services we are rendering in applying our solutions to the problems of a torn and aggrieved world will meet with a great measure of success. We believe in Jesus Christ as the final source from which all ills of nations, individuals and social institutions will receive relief.

We are thankful to Almighty God for the strength and stability of our institutions and the loyalty and devotion of our growing membership. These have never and will never fail to answer the required needs of the Cause.

### Our Home Missionary Endeavor.

Conferences that were losing ground and influence have been rehabilitated by strong, energetic pastors who can now be assured under our revised financial plan, of support from our Home Mission Department; and churches that were strained heavily because of large obligations are now looking with much brighter prospects into the future because of the readiness of the Church Extension Board to give to their cause. Never before in the history of the Church has such a serious effort been made to give systematic help to the struggling pastors and churches. It has created a new spirit of enthusiasm and earnestness that will carry the Church on through more difficult tasks to tangible achievements.

We are pleased to report that in our general survey of the Church, revivals are being attended with remarkable success and the spirit of evangelism, is not only adding to our numbers daily, but is awakening within us renewed efforts to reach the very highest possible Christian life. With us, Christianity is a life and as we approach in practice to the excellencies of that life, we draw nearer to God. Your Chief Pastors hope that every charge whether in city, town or hamlet, will conduct evangelistic services and lay special emphasis upon the saving of souls.

### Child Labor Law and Compulsory Education.

We are pleased over the glowing reports brought to us of the superior work our secondary schools are doing, and that they are registering the largest body of students in the history of our department of Education. Our standards are higher, our equipment much improved, our teaching force more competent, so that our schools of this class meet with the requirements of the general Educational Board. We lay this special stress upon our schools of this grade because of the splendid results they are having in preparing our young men and women for higher education and professional training. We request our ministers to take advantage of Institutes and Schools of Theology that they might be the better prepared to meet the requirements levied upon our pupils in this growing age. We urge that parents send their children to school and implore them not to permit their children to stop school and enter life ill-prepared to meet its demands. Education has one of the chief means of making individuals fit

for society and the tasks of civilization, we should favor a Federal law on child labor and compulsory education.

### Negro Business Co-operation Urged.

We further urge our membership everywhere to encourage and support Negro business enterprises, commercial, insurance and co-operative organizations and to repose confidence in the ability of members of the race to manage and control big business. While we learn our most profitable lessons through our failures the A. M. E. Zion Church has gathered complimentary statistics of Negro businesses which records but few failures and many successes. We urge therefore, that wherever substantial effort is being made to conduct legitimate and honest business

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## TOO MUCH JAZZ IN THE CHURCH.

By Bishop James E. Freeman, President of National Cathedral Foundation.

The age is calling for a crusade and the crusader's spirit. It is calling for a church for religion only. It has its other needs met by the multifarious and ever-increasing agencies. It seeks its spiritual house of worship for spiritual refreshment and renewal and that alone. The multitude is at our gates saying, "Sirs, we would see Jesus!"

When a man comes to me in trouble over his own missteps or sorrow over the loss of a loved one, when the crisis is at hand he wants reassurance, not an entertainment or a dissertation on doctrinal beliefs. Then the unimportant takes its proper place and true values assert themselves.

There is today as great, if not a greater, yearning for the principles of life given to the world by Jesus Christ more than ever before. Nothing is more evident than the sovereign and supreme place He occupies in the actions of men.

That the world has turned its vision to Him who 'spake as never man spake' is demonstrably true. In spite of all discussions and controversies the regnancy of Christ stands unchallenged. We are not called upon to consider His place as the "holiest among the holy," nor the incomparable character of His teaching. He needs no apologist today. What we are called upon to seriously consider is our own relation to Him as His teachers and exemplars, and the adaptability of our methods to make Him sovereign in the hearts of men.

In fine we are compelled to appraise anew the methods and mechanism we have called into being and their fitness to serve the high purpose of His kingdom.

The most cursory study discloses a condition within the Church's life that should give us pause. Our boasted statistics which disclose growth along certain lines, lines that do not accurately measure spiritual development, furnish no adequate or fair indication as to the vitality and efficiency of the Church as an institution. Neither growth in material things, nor ever proportionate increase in numbers may be taken as an evidence of the Church's spiritual vitality.

A reappraisal of values, a thorough inventory of assets and liabilities, this alone will serve the purpose of a situation as critical as the present. With unbiased frankness then, cost what it may let us, even though we may do it hastily, survey our situation.

I think it will be readily admitted that during the period of the last 40 years sweeping changes have come over the life of the Church, and while its forms of worship and sacramental system have remained intact, newer and later agencies have attached themselves to the Church as an institution, their avowed purpose being to stimulate and promote a declining interest, especially on the part of our youth.

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## CRUSADING FOR AFRICAN REDEMPTION.

By Bishop C. C. Alleyne.

Embarkation at New York and a heart-warming send-off. The walk to Emmaus produced no more profound heart-burning than the kindness and hospitality of the saints provoked in us as we turned our faces toward the so-called dark continent. If ever our assignments seemed ominous we now have ample compensation. The heart of the Church pulsates with interest in our mission. Africa is in Zion as well as Zion is in Africa.

Hand-shakes, embraces and tears, that will one day sparkle as pearls in the gates of the New Jerusalem, and we are off to take the West Coast for Jesus, and as much of it as possible for Zion.

Six days of life on the "Paris." one day in Paris, then Bordeaux, where we embark on the S. S. Europe for Africa.

Paul knew something of European traveling, when he exhorted us to lay aside all impediments in order to "so run that ye may obtain." If we could have laid aside the weights we had in the form of luggage while travelling through France, we would have saved many francs. They certainly penalize one for carrying luggage. You seem to be carried cheaper than your effects. Now we can the more appreciate Borcham's "Luggage of Life."

And we certainly had to "move on," and keep our baggage moving with us, in order to travel from Havre to Bordeaux in a little over twenty-four hours to catch our steamer. But at last we arrive on Thursday, December 18, 1924. On taking stock we are "all here," minus a suit case and a perfectly good United States bill of three figures.

In America we heard much of English fogs, and we had mapped out a fogless route. But shadows afloat we are surrounded by a French fog which delays the sailing of our boat for twelve hours; all around us foggy French and French foginess.

At last the engines revolve and the good ship but slow—glides down the river. What hustle and bustle have we seen on the dock! France going to Africa, and Africa touching civilization with French civilization. Frenchmen in ebony living on terms of fraternity and equality with Frenchmen in ivory. For here "all of God's chillun" have rights which all of the children of France are free to respect.

Since we left New York we have not met Mr. James Crow or Miss Discrimination, and all because we forsook the beaten path of vaunted Anglo-Saxon superiority. Bobbie Burns' philosophy "a man's a man for a that" is tabooed everywhere, save only in France. England has capitulated to American prejudice until even a British Negro who proudly sings, "Britons never, never shall be slaves," is a pariah in the British Isles. Yankee snobishness is camping in Paris. O France! France! black humanity is hanging on thy love for justice and fair play. In the day of thine extremity thy black sons came, fought, bled and died for thee, "land of the free and home of the brave."

France, France, God shed his grace on thee,  
And crown thy good with brotherhood

From sea to shifting sea.

One day just as the splendor of the setting sun was lighting up the waters of the Atlantic, we sighted a three masted schooner. She had been buffeted about by the angry waves for many days. They asked for food, their supplies having given out. They asked for bread and were not given a stone. I thought of the "other little ships" that were out on the Lake at the time of the disciples' adventure. Also of the command of the Master "give ye them to eat," when the multitude had no bread.

The faces of another multitude, hungering for the bread of life, are

and visions by night. They are like sheep without a shepherd. And the Master commands us "give ye them to eat." They are sitting in darkness and dwelling in the shadow of death.

Shall we whose souls are lighted with wisdom from on high,  
Shall we to men benighted the lamp of life deny?

O Zion haste, for we must work the work of Him who sent us while it is day.

Give of thy sons to bear the message glorious

Give of thy wealth to speed them on their way

Pour out thy soul for them in prayer victorious

And all thou spendest Jesus will repay.

The sea has been rough and the wind boisterous. But since we have gotten off the coasts of Morocco, we are minded to sing "O what a change!" Calm seas, gentle breezes and a semi-tropical sun greeted us today, December 23rd.

Thoughts of Christmas force their way against the will and demand reflection. For the first time in our lives we are beyond the reach of Santa Claus. The thrill of his prancing reindeers and tinkling bells will be absent. But the Christ will be with us. He said to us "go;" and He also said, "Lo I am with thee always, even unto the end of the world."

God grant that soon in every hamlet, back in the remotest corners of the land of Ethiopia, men may know that "unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." His name is Jesus; His mission to save to the uttermost, all who come unto God through Him.

But how can they believe on Him of whom they have not heard; and how can they hear without a preacher? And so we are Africa bound to preach glad tidings and open the prison house to those that are bound. We shall hold the Fort feeling that to our help "a troop cometh." More anon!

Mid ocean  
S. S. Europe  
December, 23, 1924.

## SCIENTISTS STUDY ECLIPSE FROM EARTH, SEA AND AIR.

(By Associated Press.)

Sol and Luna held their long anticipated rendezvous yesterday.

Their trysting place was a heaven curtained with dusk and fringed with rosy clouds. The occasion was a total solar eclipse of such magnificence as humans seldom have seen.

Chaperons were Venus, Jupiter and Mercury, and the time was 8 a. m., Eastern standard, as astronomical rumor had whispered it would be.

Ecstatic scientists on earth reported it the most perfectly executed eclipse the heavens have portrayed since man began studying and recording such events, instead of hiding from them, in terror-stricken prayers. Gleefully they peered through cavernous telescopes and cranked huge cameras, while millions of other earth-beings stared through smoked glass, awed and silent.

One of the trysters—some said he and some said she—was five seconds late, reckoning by the astral calendar of scientists. But the meeting lost none of its glamour thereby, for it was the first tryst of sun and moon in this segment of the heavens for 119 years, and it will be more than two centuries before they meet there again.

Weather conditions for observation were described as almost generally perfect throughout the East, where most of the fixed observatories and laboratories were located.

Hundreds of telescopic records were made and as many photographs taken from land, sea and air. Scientists felt justified in declaring that a

## LEADING THE NEGROES ASTRAY.

The Negro has made his greatest progress in sobriety, in industry and in home-owning within the past eight years. In other words, his general advancement began when he was divorced from politics and his mind diverted to better things of life. The truth of all this is manifested nowhere better than in Charlotte, where the Negro population has developed along all lines of welfare. The Negro is no longer a political chattel. Finding freedom from political exploitation, he has found himself within the space of a comparatively few years safely classified in the better citizenship list. He has become a patron of the building and loan, instead of the saloon; he has become owner of a home and is proud in happy domesticity. It was a decided mislick on part of the visiting Negro bishops, the past week, to once more undertake planting the seed of politics in the minds of the Negroes of the South. It is to be said, in mitigation, that the majority of these bishops came from north of the Mason and Dixon line and were unfamiliar with the excellently-established state of Negro society in this part of the country and altogether unaware of the great advancement made by the race in both the spiritual and material direction. It was an entirely wrong note they struck in their "message to the country," in which they insisted that one of the objectives to be sought by the Negroes during 1925, is "more political power and independence." The best thing that was ever done for the Negroes in this part of the South was in rescuing them from exploitation by the politicians. The Negro, himself, does not want to be returned to his former political thralldom. He wants, along with the white people, to get as far away as possible from recollections, of past political history, for the Negro has a good memory, and contrasting his condition now with what it was in times past—in the days of Reconstruction and the days immediately following—he may prove stubborn to the advice of the Northern bishops. He has learned that the industrial leader is his friend, as the political boss had been his enemy.

A little bit of Southern history might be recalled to emphasize to the bishops how far they have departed from this course of true leadership for the Southern Negroes. On page 352 of Hill's "Young People's History of North Carolina," one may read: "During Reconstruction in this State three ex-Governors, a former Justice of the Supreme Court, several ex-Congressmen and a number of other distinguished men were at a dinner together. The only person present who could vote or hold office was the Negro who waited on the table."

Although the State, like the whole South, was practically bankrupt at the close of the war, the unholy regime in North Carolina in 1868 voted bonds to the amount of \$20,000,000!

The same condition prevailed in every other Southern State. The Legislature in South Carolina in 1868, 1869 and the first half of 1870 was composed of 78 Negroes and 46 white men. The total amount of taxes paid by all legislators was the magnificent sum of \$635,231. During the two and one-half years, the Radical Legislature, in its riot of graft and debauchery, increased the State's public debt from \$5,467,306.27 to \$14,833,349.17. The total cost of operating the State Government before the war was approximately a half million dollars a year. Many of these high financiers, who were then shaping the destiny of the State, were alleged to have been unable to read and write.

The bishops were again wrong in their explanation of the prevalence of bootlegging. Violation of the prohibition amendment, they contend, had its inception in the failure to enforce the amendments to the same Constitution clothing the Negro with citizenship and political rights.