



## **Google Search:**

### **“Men in CME Church: How to Involve, Invigorate, Inspire”**

On a Friday evening, right at 50 CME Lay Men gathered in the Library at Warner Robins CME Church during the 6<sup>th</sup> District 2007 Bishop’s Council. Led by Steward Jim Turner, 6th District Director Ministry to Men, we searched within our collective opinions what it means to be a man relative to involving, invigorating, and inspiring other men. Steward Turner opened by asking each man to remember at least five (5) men who made the difference in their lives. This was easy given the caliber of persons represented across our district. The dialogue began with a personal testimony to Mr. Issac Duke, father of Mrs. Yvonne Dukes-Gilmore and wife of former Senior Bishop Marshall Gilmore. He was a “man’s man” who went to Sunday School and sent his daughters to encourage Jim to go to Sunday School. The challenge is one of personal involvement and increasing self-worth beyond complacency. We need to find the way to inspire men and boys whether they want to be inspired or not. Tactics such as dinner and discussions can be used to take the message to those who are not present. We must pass the message on and set an example so that one day they, too, can be inspired. Further, we can

concentrate on skills and hobbies to get them involved in projects—finding out what they like to do and giving them the opportunity to serve. As men, we must be an example inside and outside the church. From board room to barber shop, from sanctuary to schoolhouse, from pulpit to pool hall, from belfry to the tree. We should be mentors, be real, and stand firm ALL the time. We must be the same MAN on Monday as we are on Sunday—that's a REAL man...not perfect, but striving towards perfection; admitting our faults to each other, so that we are REALLY REAL! We must address the reality within the church of the same people doing the same thing as Bishop Lakey says, "position ownership." We can invite new men (whether experienced or inexperienced) to participate in the work of the church and support them as REAL men do naturally in other venues. The Class Leader system offers an excellent existing structure to maximize outreach and accountability. It should be enhanced to meet the contemporary needs of today's society—not just visiting to collect money, but rather asking the question, "how is your soul?" To invigorate, we suggest physical contact. An example would be shaking a man's hand and holding it until he looks you in the eye. THAT'S MAKING CONTACT!!! We will no longer walk past our youthful brothers because they do not look nor dress like us; we shall make the first step and ask them, "How are you doing?"; "How's it going in school?"

Although simple questions, they can be powerful in breaking down the walls of unfamiliarity and letting the young men know, we genially care. We need to find a way to be less rigid, but still be men... We can make the difference! In the vernacular, we say, "He's not heavy, for he's my brother." We shall invite them, welcome them, worship with them, embrace them, and leave with them. Sometimes people are just waiting to be asked. We are seeking not ABILITY, but rather AVAILABILITY! We believe that if we prove our DEPENDABILITY, He will improve our CAPABILITY! We came together at the Bishop's request, but we will stay together because we desire to address this expressed need. Our commitment is evidenced in the upcoming 6<sup>th</sup> District "Ministry to Men Retreat" being held April 24-27, 2008 in Savannah, Georgia. We leave this place aspiring to involve our local congregations, invigorated by the moment at hand, and inspired to continue the mission of increasing the number of MEN dedicated to the CME church and making the positive difference in our communities.

*As presented by Mr. Jim Turner, 6th Episcopal District Director  
& Charles L. Coney, Holsey Chapel CME Church*