



Holsey Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

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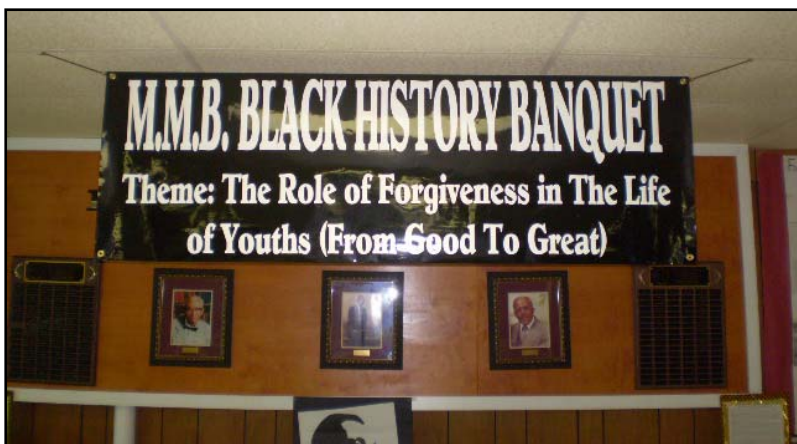
Press Release

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MMB MTM 3RD ANNUAL BLACK HISTORY BANQUET

FITZGERALD, GA, FEBRUARY 23, 2008: The day began with overcast, but by 3:30 p.m. in the afternoon the sun was glowing as members of the Moultrie-McRae-Brunswick District came



together in the Dukes-Harris-Jordan Fellowship Hall at Holsey Chapel C.M.E. Church in Fitzgerald. The Ministry to Men Department was hosting its Third Annual Black History Banquet. As guests entered, they were greeted with an audio experience of spirituals as

recorded by the Fisk Jubilee Singers and the Moses Hogan Chorale along with a visual experience of Black History Month projects compiled over the years by youth in our area. Each wall was covered with posters, research, and tributes creating a gallery and time capsule of the many contributions of African Americans.

The program began with Charles Coney as the Master of Ceremonies giving a perspective of why Black History Month is still relevant. “For years now, there has been an ongoing

discussion about whether Black History Month is still necessary. Critics of the holiday, strongly believe that Black History Month is not just unnecessary but “ridiculous.” Most historians and prominent African Americans would agree that Black history is American history, but many would not agree that it is unnecessary. For many areas, Black History Month is often the only time of year when Black history is recognized in many schools. It is argued that schools often focus on “white” history all year round and therefore, it is a necessary celebration. What would Carter G. Woodson, the historian responsible for this celebration, think about the continued observance of Black History Month? Woodson, a dedicated scholar and publisher of Black history, believed that once publishers became aware of the significant contributions of Blacks, history would be rewritten. But for Woodson the necessity of documenting Black history was more than just about the recognition of Black contributions: it was to wage a battle against racism. Woodson believed that racism was not inherent in human nature, but was a consequence of the belief that Blacks had contributed nothing to mankind; therefore, Blacks were viewed as inferior. Woodson believed that racism could effectively be attacked by educating the public about Black contributions.”

And so the program continued with celebration and education. A live reenactment of the Underground Railroad led by Conductor Harriet Tubman was the highlight. Thelma Graham did a sterling job of capturing the moment when slaves had to come to terms with the reality of “liberty or death.” The Holsey Chapel Ensemble provided music in the form of spirituals echoing the



communication method that at the time was essential to the survival of our people. It was noted that spirituals developed from the slave period as a social outcry of the Africans attempting to integrate Christianity in their already established but diminishing culture. You see, “I Been ‘Buked and I Been ‘Scorned” was real to them for they had the bruises and scars to show. The event’s theme “The Role of Forgiveness in the Life of Youth Going from Good to Great” was echoed in a personal testimony by lifelong C.M.E. member, Mr. Alfonso Owens, retired educator and administrator. He noted that on the eve of his 90th birthday, how important it was

to seek forgiveness from our brothers as we seek forgiveness from God. “In doing so, we began to exercise our faith of knowing that whatever we ask in His name, He shall grant—even forgiveness.”

The men of the district planned the event with a focus on our youth. Their participation came in the form of an Essay Competition. Youth throughout the district submitted their writings on the given theme prior to the banquet and all were reviewed by the district’s Christian Education



Department headed by Mrs. Glendora P. Ryce. Each youth was given a Certificate of Participation and Kendra A. Mullins received an Honorable Mention Award because as an eight year old third grader, she was competing against most youth who were in the ninth grade and beyond. The First Place Literary Award went to Devin Jenkins of Holsey Chapel C.M.E. Church

and the Second Place Literary Award went to Y’va Williams of Saint Andrews C.M.E. Church, Brunswick. In celebration, Devin read his essay to the audience which was so passionate that during his remarks, the District Lay Leader, Frank Cray said that he could directly be identified in the words. Following announcements by Jim Turner, Sixth Episcopal District Ministry to Men Coordinator, the pastor Rev. Leroy E. Dumas gave the benediction and God speed for safe travels home. Additional details and pictures are available at www.cmefitzgerald.org .

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