

# It's a Different World: Shaping the Young Adult Experience

9<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Connectional Lay Council Convention  
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church  
July 25, 2009

But let a man examine  
himself...

I Corinthians 11:28a

# Objectives

- Highlight major themes or headlines from the Young Adult Survey
- Get your best thinking about how we can create meaningful opportunities for young adults to share in the leadership—especially the laity—in our Zion

# Respondents

- 272 total
- 76% female/23% male
- 71% laity/29% clergy
- 62% members in Zion for more than 20 years
- 18% members in Zion for less than 5 years
- 78% born in/8% married in
- 83% report being active or very active

# Headlines

- Deep **commitment** to Christ—looking for meaningful, relevant ministry
- Strong **interest** in and willingness to serve where young adults are genuinely welcome
- Deep **concern** about the limited number of young adults in our local churches, district, conference and connectional leadership positions
- Deep **confusion** regarding future of Zion without stronger focus on children, youth and young adults

# Headlines

- Deep **conflict** between church's operations and life (work, family)
- Deep **challenge** with apparent "wait your turn" or "this is the church—who cares about your education or skills" attitude
- Deep **commitment** to recognize and honor tradition of the church

# Headlines

- Deep and abiding desire to help facilitate **changes** in how we operate and conduct ministry

# Headlines

- Zion's **strengths** noted as 1) Rich History 2) Organizational Structure 3) Connectionalism
- Zion's **challenges** noted as 1) Apathy—slow or unwilling to change 2) Inclusiveness in Leadership 3) Accountability and Transparency

# Headlines

- **Nearly half (49%)** report having considered leaving Zion
- Key factors in that consideration include 1) too much focus on money 2) lack of relevant ministry for young adults 3) limited opportunity for young adults
- More than half of respondents did not know what we meant by connectional church

# Headlines

- More than half (59%) report being concerned or seriously concerned about the **future of their local church**--#1 reason is the lack of children, youth and young adults
- 68% expressed concern or serious concern about the **future of the denomination** 1) growth 2) relevance in the world

# Headlines

- **Keep** Episcopal form of government, focus on education , missions and evangelism and lay ministry
- **Improve** leadership development, use of technology, time management, preaching/teaching

# Headlines

- To **attract** and **keep** young adults:
  - Modernize our ministries
  - Adapt the message—Preach and teach what is relevant
  - Engage young adults using their gifts and graces
  - Ask young adults to help shape ministries, programs, etc. FOR young adults!

*YOUNG ADULTS IN ZION ARE **BUSY**  
**BUT STRONG BELIEVERS**  
**PREPARED AND PURPOSE-DRIVEN**  
**FAITHFUL AND FOCUSED ON**  
**MINISTRY AND RESULTS**  
**INTERESTED IN LEADERSHIP AND**  
**SERVICE **INSPIRED BY****  
**OPPORTUNITY***