



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Founder's Day Celebrating the "A" in AME-A Litany By Bishop Adam J. Richardson, Jr. (115)

- Leader** Do I despise my heritage, my unique physique, my looks, my locks, my manner of speech?
- People** **These, too, are among my treasures from God; I am determined to be "True to our God" – in thanksgiving – for the precise humanity given to me and the person God made me to be.**
- Leader** I affirm with glad heart that God is Creator, and the Creator included Africa in the geographical crucible from which *Salvation History*¹ would be launched. *The biblical narratives of creation, the Exodus, the law and the prophets, generals and warriors, vigorous and expressive worship, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit would be very much incomplete without Africa. Why would I despise what God has esteemed?*
- People** **These, too, are my renewing treasures from God; I am determined to be "True to our God" – in grateful praise – for the precise humanity given to me and the person God made me to be.**
- Leader** Give a thought to Africa – the birth of civilization. The progenitors of the nations have their genesis in Africa. The Nile, famous in every worthwhile book of geography, makes its majestic northerly 4,000 mile run through Africa, wending its way into the pages of the sacred writ. Moses was born in Egypt; married Zipporah, a beautiful Nubian woman. The biblical narrative could not be fully told without the honorable and numerous references to Ethiopia. The star-gazing Magi, "westward leading, still proceeding"² in the direction of Africa; bringing with them prophetic gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to offer at the feet of Jesus, Incarnate God. Jesus spent his earliest years in Africa. Why would I despise what God has esteemed?
- People** **These, too, are my self-affirming treasures from God; I am determined to be "True to our God" – in stewardship, like the 'wise men' of old – for the precise humanity given to me and the person God made me to be.**

Leader People of African heritage, many who looked like me, in a variety of shades of blackness, were among the first to acknowledge the Christ of God: helping “Jesus Bear the Cross” to the place called Calvary, standing in the crowd listening to Peter preach the first Christian sermon after Pentecost; among the first to ask “how is it that we hear in our own language”; to be among the first to “wade in the water” at the baptism of the 3,000; inviting Deacon Philip into my ancestor’s chariot to help him sort through the scriptures, in search of the Christ of history; the Christ of faith – and to take that ‘Good News’ home to Ethiopia. Why would I despise what God has esteemed?

People **These, too, are among my inherited treasures from God; I am determined to be “True to our God” – in study that leads to worship – knowing that I was not a divine afterthought; I was on God’s salvation and liberation agenda “in the beginning.”**

Leader Some have spoken disparagingly of Africa, labeling their prejudice as science, their bigotry as biblical truth, and their veiled racism as “scholarship” to justify the subjugation of blacks and the institution of black slavery, pronouncing, “That’s just the way it is and as it was meant to be.” Richard Allen, Morris Brown, Paul Quinn, Daniel Alexander Payne, Henry McNeal Turner and a multitude of others proclaimed, “The great omnipotent, merciful God could not be an accomplice to such cultural bias and still be God, the loving, just, and merciful God we have known God to be.” We stand as their theological heirs, “Celebrating the ‘A’ in AME: Community, Connection, and Commitment.” Why would I despise what God has esteemed?

People **These, too, are among my spiritual treasures. I was born in _____, but (and) my roots run deep to (in) Africa. I am determined to be, “True to our God, true to our native land.”**

¹*Salvation History* is a concept in Christian theology derived from the German word *Heilsgeschichte*. It is about the history of God’s saving work in the world. A fair reading of the Bible seems to affirm that God takes the initiative to act in history, and that Christ is the center of this divine initiative on a range between creation and consummation.

²From the 1857 Christmas carol, “We Three Kings of Orient Are...”. New York by the Rev. John Henry Hopkins, Jr. “Orient” generally means “East.” Cited from online sources, January 18, 2012.

This litany appears in *The Anvil, Sankofa: Worshipping God Yesterday, Today, and Forever, Annual Resource Guide, 2019-2020*, (pp 216-218) by the Council of Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. To access other litanies and worship resources, copies of *The Anvil* can be purchased through the AMEC Publishing House.