

May 6, 2020

Dear Second Episcopal District Family:



It is with a heavy heart that I write these words of sympathy to the Second Episcopal District African Methodist Episcopal Church Family on the sudden death of Reverend Dr. Henry Y. White. Dr. White was a central figure in the church and the entire community, and he was loved and respected by so many across the spectrum of the Second Episcopal District.

It is hard to wrap our minds around the fact that this vibrant, energetic, exciting personality, in the twinkling of an eye, and unexpectedly, made his transition from labor to reward. Dr. White's sudden death was a great shock to all of us and tears are unavoidable. He will be sorely missed.

Arelis and I express our heartfelt sympathy to the Second Episcopal District Family and to Dr. White's beloved wife, Rev. Rowena Webster White, daughter; Angela Christina; son, Henry Christopher, and Campbell AME Church Family. Please know that earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal.

As we take a brief walk down memory lane; and on a more personal note, this ball of energy and an abundance of enthusiasm engaged me in long and deep conversations on not being ready to retire. I looked forward to sparring with him regarding the retirement law. Dr. White would say, "I never voted for it". And I was waiting with anticipation for him to present his objections to it on the floor of the Washington Annual Conference. Dr. White would candidly say to me, but always respectful to leadership, "I am not retiring. They are putting me out, but I have my own plans. They didn't call me to preach!" And I would reply, "I didn't make the law. But it is my responsibility to uphold the mandates of the church." And if I could have gotten around it, "I would not have done that to my father."

We all know that Dr. White was not ashamed to give praise to God. Just as the Psalmist David, he loved to dance to the glory of the Lord. And he could choreograph some smooth moves. He was also witty, outgoing, and genuinely interested in what others were doing; and just a pleasure to be around.

He was resilient. No matter the situation or circumstance. He always managed to land on his feet. He respected leadership at all levels. He had an unshakable allegiance to God, to the systems, and the AME denomination. Even when this gentle giant disagreed with what was being proposed, he always sought to be involved and on the cutting edge of whatever was decided upon.

He had an immense capacity for work and thought. And I've never met anyone who could focus as he did. He was dedicated to building a community. As pastor of Campbell AME Church in Anacostia's Ward 8, Washington, DC, he showed up for every DC meeting and would voice his concern for ensuring that decisions made were inclusive and represented the best interest of people in this often forgotten population. In every instance, he had an enormous ability to remember names. Always, he respected leadership by acknowledging names and positions with humility, a trait that at all times, characterized his words and deeds

The Second Episcopal District has lost a giant and his kind is not easily found in today's knowledge economy. We must raise the question. Who possesses the admirable qualities and can carry forth the tenacity that he exhibited as a member of the SED Board of Examiners? His kind is not easily found. As a

Board member, he touched many lives and testimonies from those who were in training for ministry, reflect his impact.

The challenges of the Coronavirus and the shock of what has happened are still fresh with us. It is times like this that put our faith to the test. I feel that is why we have to use our faith to see us through the grief and despair that comes with tragedy. I know that our deep faith will help us cope at these incredibly sad and difficult times.

I know that it is sometimes difficult for us as finite beings to understand circumstances like this, but we can call on our faith to help us deal with them. We take solace in the words of the Bible that tell us that those who mourn will be blessed.

We thank God for giving Dr. White the opportunity to use and share his creative mind, incredible skills, and Holy-Spirit given gifts and talents in helping to advance God's Kingdom, everywhere he had the good fortune to serve. His love for the community was evident in every aspect of his life. And he wanted others to experience the infinite God and His Great grace as he did.

As Rev. Dr. Henry Y. White takes his well-deserved rest in the Lord, may you find comfort from his life-well lived as a husband, pastor, community builder, and friend to all. We can learn from his examples that hope has a face; and when troubles come, they can be redeemed into opportunities for our spirits to be lifted and faith to be renewed and for thankfulness to take root, even during grief and pain. We praise God for his life and extraordinary witness for Christ and the community.

He has passed a magnificent legacy. And Dr. Henry Y. White's legacy of service will live on and generations yet unborn can profit from his wisdom. We can rest in the assurance that another servant has made it home. Well done, good and faithful servant. Rest in peace, my brother!

In Faith and Sympathy, we remain,

*James Levert Davis & Arelis Beavers Davis*

Servant Leaders