

# THE LAYMEN'S VOICE

## George Jones Speaks To A.M.E. Laymen

George "Farmer" Jones is President of the Fifth District of the A.M.E. Church. Following are the main highlights of his program to be presented at the Fifth District Conference to be held in Kansas City, Mo., on May 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17th.



**Birth:**  
"Our Laymen League Child was born at St. Louis, Mo., at the St. Paul A.M.E. Church, on May 3, 1944, prior to the District Delegate Organization for general Conference. It was born amidst confusion; its birth was unsanctioned by the Bishop, fearful "Big" Pastors, and some Laymen. It was sanctioned by protesting Laymen asking for proper representation, and many silent Ministers. You elected me president and I fell heir to the care and growth of this weak and unwanted child.

**My Work:**  
I have tried to conduct the office as your President, in a way to make it secure. I have supported every office and law of the Church, although many are outdated, in which case I have spoken out against such extravagant conditions that work a hardship on Laymen as the result of these outdated laws in our discipline, and I can also add in passing, some late laws are pressing hard on Laymen Equilibrium.

I am a Layman, and a good one as you, my fellow-laymen are, and as your head I would be untrue to my trust if I failed to speak out against increased church tax, and long years of paying unnecessary over head tax. There is a demand for stream-lining our Government's working, and policies are being established to this end. Such a policy, we Laymen must hope and work for in our church. Unless Laymen, we who pay all Church operation bills, wake up, speak up, and shake up, the just cause for myself, Bishop,

Preachers and yes, Laymen, will stand stalled on the hill of exploitation.

### Recommendations:

- (1) I recommend that the Laymen League membership of the Fifth District shall consist of all A.M.E. Church members, not ordained to preach. Recognize as pay-members, with full rights and non-pay-members with limited rights.
- (2) I recommend the Officers of the Fifth District League shall be a President, Vice-President, A Vice-President from each Conference, a Financial Secretary, a Chaplain, and a Parliamentarian.
- (3) I recommend the election of officers of the Fifth District League shall be each time the District League meets in its regular session.
- (4) I recommend all laws in our constitution in conflict with these recommendations, if accepted, are automatically abolished.

## Open Letter to All Laymen of the 5th Dist.

I'm not trying to cause confusion in the Church, but if all Laymen don't wake up and take a stand, there will be no Church in which to start confusion.

My Church, which is located in a small town, is obligated to send almost a thousand dollars in Conference assessments. I'm not questioning the goodness of the cause, but how can we improve the qualities of our Church, if the most of the money is to be sent away.

I don't think it's the right of our leaders to use this money extravagantly, we need to throw out some of the old out dated laws and rules and stream-line the Church as all other organizations are doing, if we are to survive.

Since the support and upkeep of the Church depends largely upon The Laymen, then why can't they have a voice as to the policies and of what use the money is being made of and how much a Church can afford to pay.

It is impossible for a minister to serve his members efficiently and capably as he should, because his time is spent in trying to raise money to meet his assessment, thus causing unrest, lagging interest and ill feeling among his members.

I don't think this is fair to either the minister or his members. We, as Laymen, want to do our share, but we also want to do something for our home Church in the bargain. How long can our Churches stand with this type of leadership? We must make the whole organization less of a burden on all. One way of accomplishing this is to cut down on expenses wherever possible. If it means less Bishops and more work for some, then it must be done for the sake of survival.

I don't think any man should work for nothing, but in the same sense I don't think anyone should be paid for something that is not necessary. Making a job for the sake of a friend is unfair to both the Minister and the Laymen, because their efforts pay the salaries of these unnecessary employees. The Layman is an integral and fundamental part of the Church, so therefore, he should have a voice as to its policies. The day of "clicks" in the Church should have vanished long ago. But has it?

We, as Laymen, should take a firm stand in the support of our

Church so as to strengthen its bonds. How can we do this? By:

- 1—Taking an interest in the Church and making it your business to be well informed;
- 2—Support your Church fathers (Pastor and Bishop), but when they appear not to be working for the good of the Church, tell them. They will profit by it;
- 3—Help your board members and Pastor to handle all Church affairs efficiently;
- 4—Go to Church. Participate in its activities. Every member is a board member, of the Church. Air your views.
- 5—See that you have a leader, not a dictator. Let your Minister be recognized for his qualities as a Minister and not by the amount of money he can raise.

### Voice Has New Editor

The Voice is under new management. I offer my services to you, as your Lay Reporter for all the Fifth District, because I think that all Laymen and the Church should be well informed at all times.

I am willing to solicit news as well as edit it, but I do need the help of all Laymen to make this the type of paper that it should be.

If it is at all possible, I would like to devote a certain amount of space each week to this Lay Movement, because anything that

## Today's Thought

Let us be candid and clear on this point. It takes more brains, more good nature, more feminine graciousness to fulfill a woman's first duty as a homemaker than it does to hold down any public job.

And the rewards are infinitely greater. To be a good cook, a good housekeeper, a good hostess, a good mother is to fulfill woman's highest ambition. — William T. Ellis.

is a month old is not worth reading. I would like to keep the Laymen informed as to weekly happenings so as to be in constant contact with them at all times.

To print a paper like this will take much time and money, and I would have to have reporters from every organization, as it would be humanly impossible for me to cover everything. As a Layman, you owe it to yourself and your Church, to keep all members well informed.

I propose that we have some Lay news every week and a complete Lay Paper once a month. I am willing to give space each week and spend time free of charge to compile and print this news, but the monthly edition will have to be financed by you, until at such time that we have enough subscribers to pay for it.

As your new editor, I will promise nothing that I can't fulfill. I will do my part for this very worthy cause.

Robert Sawyer  
Editor-Publisher

## Laymen's Task

It's the Church's special function

To uphold the finer things  
To teach the way of living  
From which all that's noble springs.

"But the minister can't do it  
Single-handed and alone

For the laymen of the country  
Are the church's cornerstones.

"When you see a church  
that's empty  
Though its doors are open  
wide

It's not the church that's  
dying  
It's the laymen who have  
died.

"For it's not by song or sermon

That the church's work is  
done

It's the laymen of the country  
Who, for God must carry  
on."

## The Lay Movement Is Here to Stay

The Lay Movement is here to stay. Large numbers do not believe so and do not want it so, which is the way of good movements fare in the beginning.

The movement is not an isolated up shoot, but a well studied effort of loyal Laymen. These Laymen respond to all of the aims, demands and rulings of their church and because they love it, want to see it flourish and prosper.

It is not only A.M.E. Laymen, who are in the movement. There is a general move in churches of all Protestant denominations, working to the same end.

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