

# The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church— Department of Christian Education

 Making disciples through "events that form and transform"

## “Why Do I ‘Still’ Go To Sunday School?”

**Carmichael Crutchfield, Ph.D. General Secretary, Department of Christian Education Christian Methodist Episcopal Church**

(June 2014 - [www.thecmechurchced.org](http://www.thecmechurchced.org))



## Sunday School

9518. There shall be in **every** church an **organized** Sunday Church School.

Sl. The purpose of the Sunday Church School is to provide **training for members of the church in the love and knowledge of God** as revealed in Jesus Christ, in the meaning and understanding of the Bible as God's word, and to **help them grow in their Christian faith.**

**S2. The teaching ministry of the Sunday School shall be divided into the age categories of children, youth, young adults, and adults as designated by the General Department of Christian Education.**

**The Book of Discipline of the  
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church  
2010**



All of my siblings tell the story of our growing up at Barrs Chapel CME Church in Como, Tennessee where all seven of us were lined up on a pew each Sunday morning for Sunday school and worship. For as long as we can remember, our daddy, the deceased Mr. W.T. Crutchfield (much later became Rev.), who was the adult teacher and our momma Mrs. Zora Crutchfield faithfully took us to Sunday school.

After college, as a young adult, I still went to Sunday school and often taught. After I got married, I still went to Sunday school. When I accepted the call to preach I still went to Sunday school. When I became a pastor I still went to Sunday school.

Now as the managing editor for Sunday school and a General Officer, **I still go to Sunday school.** Why? This question came to me while sitting in an adult class recently as I listened to the teacher and class members talk about the lesson.

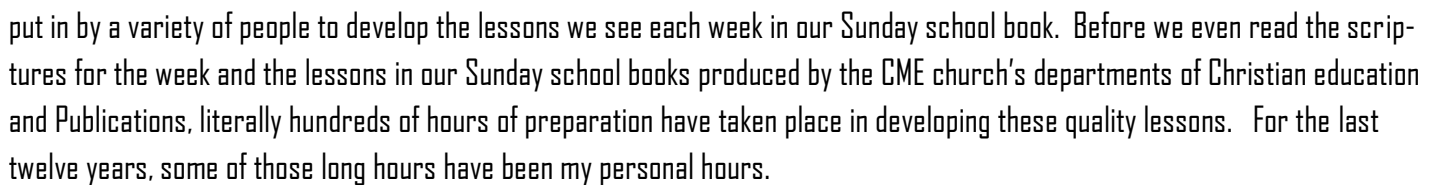
I often say during classes and workshops that I lead that “all I know about the Bible I learned in Sunday school.” Although this is not completely true, it is the basis for one of the reasons I still attend Sunday school and why I see it as important. I go because I want to know more about the Bible. There is no place available inside or outside the church for a systematic bible study except in Sunday school.

This has become clearer to me over the last 20 plus years as I have been involved in the developing of the Sunday school lesson outlines through the Committee on Uniform Series of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Hours upon hours are





**"Why Do I 'Still' Go To Sunday School?"** Carmichael Crutchfield, Ph.D. General Secretary, Department of CME Church (June 2010)



**TRANSFORMING**  
the **CHURCH**

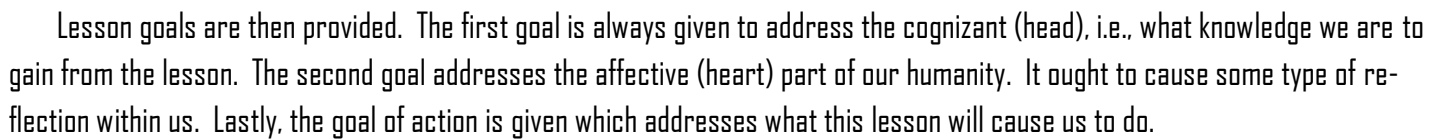
A second reason **I still go to Sunday school** is to participate and take advantage of the work of the Holy Spirit. It is because of the activity of the Holy Spirit that transformation takes place. This is one of my latest reasons for going to Sunday school. Around 2003 or 2004, I developed a workshop entitled "Transforming the Church Through Sunday School." Sunday school is a place we can change the church through teaching the need to move outside the box of traditionalism as we refer to it.

I argue that traditionalism is not as much our issue as lack of knowledge about learning and learners. In that workshop, I argue that teaching should be transformational. It is my belief that all of education forms and transforms. Over a lifetime, Sunday school has formed a love of God in me. Teachers who prepare themselves help Sunday school to continue to be transformational for me.

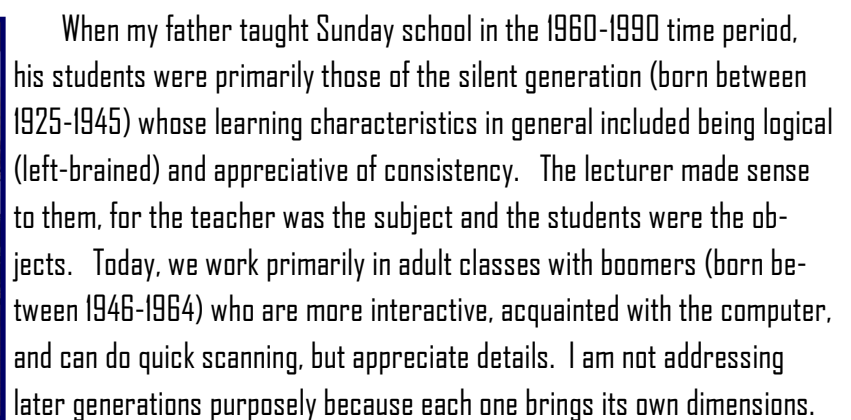
Transformation takes place in the lives of students and teachers who take the Bible seriously and see it as the living Word of God. For the last four years I have provided an online Sunday school outline for the church. There is a life statement followed by a life question that is answered by the scripture for the lesson. Life statements and questions are generated based on what happens in many adults life. This is the focus of the lesson.



**"Why Do I 'Still' Go To Sunday School?"** Carmichael Crutchfield, Ph.D. General Secretary, Department of CME Church (June 2010)



Also provided in our online Sunday school outlines are lesson challenges that call for us to take the lesson seriously as we apply it to our lives. In my teaching at the Seminary, I always want students to know something, be something, and then do something. These are the goals of Sunday school each week that are part of formational and transformational teaching and learning.



The church can be transformed as we transform the Sunday school. This requires that we turn our Sunday school conventions into learning labs on best practices and techniques. I love children, youth, and young adults, but not at the expense of neglecting and ignoring middle age and senior adults.

Page 3



# The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church— Department of Christian Education

» » » » » » » » » » Making disciples through "events that form and transform"

**"Why Do I 'Still' Go To Sunday School?"** Carmichael Crutchfield, Ph.D. General Secretary, Department of CME Church (June 2010)



ness encompasses God's goodness, whereas, God's goodness sometimes is self-serving and limiting. I will illustrate. In a recent workshop, I asked those participants why is God good. Most of the answers I received were based on what God had done for the individual, e.g., woke us up or gave us limbs to use or got us here safely. So, I ask for the people who didn't wake up or don't have use of their limbs or didn't get here safely, is the God they serve good? This came very real to me in 2011 when my wife died. I was not able to say "God is good," but I could say, "God is great."

To say God is great places no conditions. Good means something I approve of or welcome. I don't approve of death or welcome it, especially to a young wife. Great on the other hand means something that to the extent or intensely considerably above the normal. I love the song "How Great Is Our God." And I love the song "How Great Thou Art." I love these songs because they speak of a God who I love despite the vicissitudes of life, such as, sudden death.

The final reason I state at this time why **I still go to Sunday school** is the challenge and the opportunities it offers to grow as an individual, Christian, and as a member of the world that I live. Each week the lesson gives students an opportunity to gain greater knowledge of the Bible and other aspects of being a follower of Jesus Christ. The lesson also challenges my heart and finally it causes me to take action. Sunday school presents to us each Sunday the challenge to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8 NRSV).

This writing comes as a challenge. Join me Sunday morning at 8:00 a.m. on June 29, 2014 for Sunday school during the 37th Quadrennial Session and 38th General Conference of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church convening at the Baltimore, Maryland Convention Center. Let me personally show you why, **I still go to Sunday school**.

