



"From Where I Sit ..."
**"A Letter from A Widow" ...
In the CME Gift Fund Plan**

About six years ago when I was offering myself for the episcopacy, I met a very special woman in Tulsa, Oklahoma who made my stop along the way even more meaningful. As a candidate for Bishop my primary focus was on encouraging support for my hopeful election and seeking to become more recognized, however my chance encounter with this woman made my day-to-day work as a General Officer more significant. Her name is Mrs. Cecelia Mae Malone and she is one of the many ministers' widows whose husband had formerly been included in the discontinued Superannuated Preachers, Widows and Orphans program of the CME Church or SPW&O. The program is now known as the CME Gift Fund Plan.

What made my meeting Mrs. Malone so significant was the recognition that I was meeting one of the widows who had so often written me lovely thank you letters of appreciation for the small gifts she had received from my department at different times during each year since I had become a General Officer, approximately seven years earlier.

Last April I received another letter from Mrs. Malone and it was such a sweet letter, I thought it not robbery to take a moment to call and chat awhile and to ask her if she would permit me to reprint her kind letter. I found her number with an address that matched our records in the online white pages for Tulsa which led me to believe that she was still living at home. In her letter she spoke of being 89 years of age and as we talked it was clear she was looking forward to her 90th birthday on January 30, 2016. She told me of her husband, Reverend Claude W. Malone, who had been about 12 years older and had died in January of 2002 at the age of 87. I was especially moved as she spoke of their having met in Baltimore, Maryland and their 56 years of marriage and service in God's Church. Mrs. Malone has been a member of the Christ Temple CME Church in Tulsa since her late husband retired from the active ministry and Christ Temple is a large part of her life. Perhaps, if you have a moment, you might wish to give her a call at (918) 430-0969. I know that it would make her day. And yes, she did give me permission to print her letter which follows:

*Tulsa, Oklahoma
April 17, 2015*

Dear Dr. Davis and Staff Members,

This note comes to say a "Sincere Thank You" for the gift check I received. As usual the check came just when I needed it the most, and to that I say, "Praise God from whom All Blessings flow."

I was released from the hospital on March 30th. I am doing well, Thanks be to God. Being 89 years old is not easy, but it is a Blessing.

I must say that I enjoy reading your articles in the Christian Index. Again I say Thank You.

Cecelia M. Malone

In truth, her touching letter embarrasses me since all I did was to periodically forward a gift to a woman who with her late husband for many years, "went where they were sent, and stayed where they

went.” Certainly I am not the one to be thanked ... she and the many, many others of her era, both ministers and spouses, whose faithful service to a church still quite young in its formation labored diligently to help create the opportunities for service we now experience.

In the October 2014 issue of the Christian Index, I submitted an article in this series entitled “The Gift Fund ... Why We Still Have It!” and in that article I noted the technical ins and outs of the origin and operation of the Gift Fund Plan. I also mentioned two other widows in the Plan, Mrs. Annie Pugh and Mrs. Lulu James whom I remembered from the early days of my ministry some 50 years ago. Well in addition to the technical explanations that I gave in my earlier article, it is extremely clear to me that the most significant reason why we still have the CME Gift Fund is because of our Church’s appreciation of the sacrifices of these three widows and the many others like them whose efforts blazed a path for us today. Or at least that’s the way it looks to me ...

“From Where I Sit”

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(Copies of earlier articles may be found on the
Personnel Services Webpage of the CME Website at www.thecmechurch.org)