

The BLACK C o M M e n t a t o r

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dedicated to the movement for economic justice,
social justice and peace - Providing commentary,
analysis and investigations on issues affecting
African Americans and the African world.

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[Contents of Issue](#)

[Click here](#)

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[Home](#)

Will the Church Say "Amen"?

Black Married Momma

The Anti-Statistic

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As truth-seeking and spiritually minded as my husband and I are, we neither regularly attend any church nor acknowledge membership to any particular denomination or building where church services are held.

We're not non-believers. We're not heathens. We're not agnostics, atheists or apologists for either.

Instead, we see ourselves as being super-sensitive to truths, believing that they do really set us free – so much so that we'd rather discover and uncover it for ourselves and present it to our children rather than surround them by outright lies and deception by omission.

According to [Religious Tolerance](#), U.S. church attendance has been on a downward slope for a while. From 1992-2003, average attendance at a church service declined by 13 percent, even though the American population grew by nine percent during that time period. Many black folks love being affiliated with megachurches, but they are being called to the carpet as ruthless corporations operating under benevolent pretenses more often. T.D. Jakes, Creflo Dollar and Eddie Long are being eyed more critically. Take a look at [this](#).

We're not quacks. We're not alternative hacks. I'm not even jaded by the abhorrent acts of those who have self-righteously waved the banner of Christianity when convenient, from the "pastor" who tried to engage in sexual acts with me in his car to

relatives who turned toward materialism instead of what mattered when opportunities presented themselves.

We love the Almighty, pray each day, recognize the Sabbath, read the Bible, study the Apocrypha, cross-reference with other historical, anthropological, geographical and other sources, and try to live according to the commandments and many other dictates and expectations expressed in the Word.

Our children may not attend Sunday school, but they are schooled regularly. Little Lady #1 can tell you that people call Christ by the title of Jesus but his real name is said to have been Yeshua. She can tell you that God is good, but His name is Yahweh and that he is also known as Adonai, Elohim and el Shaddai, depending on your point of reference. She can tell you that most of the stories of the Bible take place in Africa, even though much of the area is now known as the Middle East.

When she sees me reading the Word, she can flip through the pages of the version of the Bible I read and see pictorial representations of the people so described and detailed, looking much like us, with their African features – skin, hair and all. She even has her own children's Bible with illustrations of Moses, Adam, Eve and others who look like we do – and like they probably did.

She's still memorizing the commandments, but can tell you five or six off the top of her head at any given moment. She understands not only that idol worship is a no-no, but can explain what it means to invest supreme belief and power in an object or other external representation rather than God.

She knows that married mommas and daddies aren't supposed to have boyfriends and girlfriends, not because it makes folks jealous, but because the Almighty says so.

She knows lying is wrong, stealing is bad and lying on other people is bearing false witness. She realizes coveting is being envious and jealous of others' possessions. She understands that God is the maker of all and He provided a roadmap for human beings to be the designers and doers of their own fates, to a large degree.

People may look at me crazy when I talk about not attending church and not feeling too conflicted about it. I am inclined to go sometimes and, when the feeling strikes, we may visit. But I usually leave feeling like I have yet to encounter a congregation that is laying it down like we are at home. (If I ever stumble upon that place, I'll go.)

I've noticed that preachers tend to talk about what feels good, is the easiest to candy-coat and is straightforward in accepted interpretation. Church membership has morphed into a status symbol, like belonging to a Greek-letter organization or being invited to an exclusive black organization, like The Links or Jack & Jill, Inc.

The community and camaraderie church attendance may create is no cure-all for concealing truths. But in recognizing the power of like minds, my husband and I have decided to begin having Bible-based discussions at our home for anyone who wants to come. We won't act like we're experts or purport to know it all. We are on a path toward increasing knowledge and growth just like many others in the human family.

We'll talk about the virtuous woman, the type of love spelled out in Song of Solomon, the commandments, the Exodus and the example set forth by Yeshua. But we'll also delve into the giants (Emims, Zanzummims and Anakims), leprosy, the identity of the historical Israelites and Hebrews, the iconography of Christ and much more. We'll read

"banned books," like the Book of Enoch and the Gospel of Thomas.

Such issues are not ancillary add-ons to salvation. Instead, they are vital to our esteem, worldview, knowledge base and spiritual security. This is our great awakening.

"Jesus said, 'If your leaders say to you, 'Look, the (Father's) kingdom is in the sky,' then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, 'It is in the sea,' then the fish will precede you. Rather, the kingdom is within you and it is outside you.'" – Gospel of Thomas, Verse 3

What is your religious affiliation? Do you attend church or other worship services regularly? Is it real and resonant for you and your family? Is the church becoming irrelevant? Does it represent what God had in mind? What's the difference between spirituality and religiousness?

BLACK MARRIED MOMMA are musings from **BlackCommentator.com** Columnist K. Danielle Edwards - a Black full-time working mother and wife, with a penchant for prose, a heart for poetry, a love of books and culture, a liking of fashion and style, a knack for news and an obsession with facts - beating the odds, defying the statistics. Sister Edwards is a Nashville-based writer, poet and communications professional, seeking to make the world a better place, one decision and one action at a time. To her, parenting is a protest against the odds, and marriage is a living mantra for forward movement. Her work has appeared in [BLACK MARRIED MOMMA](#), MotherVerse Literary Journal, ParentingExpress, Mamazine, The Black World Today, [Africana.com](#), The Tennessean and other publications. She is the author of [Stacey Jones: Memoirs of Girl & Woman, Body & Spirit, Life & Death](#) (2005) and is the founder and creative director of [The Pen: An Exercise in the Cathartic Potential of the Creative Act](#), a nonprofit creative writing project designed for incarcerated and disadvantaged populations. [Click here](#) to contact Ms. Edwards.



[Contents of Issue](#)

[Click here](#)

[Home](#)

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