

Mount Calvary In Bahama Begins Second Century

By Ray Trent

In April 1892, a Sunday School was organized in a log cabin on the Norfolk and Western Railroad, one mile south of Bahama. Edward J. Harris presided. The school closed in the late Fall, but reopened in the Spring of 1893. Later in 1893, the Sunday School led to the development of Mount Calvary Church. The church was organized on November 11, 1893 with Rev. C.H. Mayse presiding.

A log cabin schoolhouse near the present site was the place of worship. The first pastor was Rev. J.M. Taylor, who was followed by Rev. S.W. Ray, who encouraged building a house of worship. A site for the church was purchased from John Parker, patriarch of many of present day Mount Calvary members.

Records are on file at the church, beginning with the minutes of a church conference dated January 13, 1912. Written records prior to 1912 were not preserved. Edward J. Harris, one of the organizers of the church, contributed material from memory in an early history. He reportedly was given the name — Mount Calvary — in a vision. This favorably impressed the small membership and Mount Calvary became the name.

The growth and development of Mount Calvary can be attributed to its ministers, all outstanding. To mention a few:

Rev. C.J. Lyons; Rev. W.D. Smith, under whose leadership the church was completed; Rev. J.W. Street; Rev. W.T. Grady; Rev. J.H. Caldwell; Rev. J.E. Thorpe, 1926; Rev. E.B. Thompson, Rev. H.D. Easton, 1931; Rev. Thomas Carr Graham, who introduced the Lord's Acre Plan of giving. Using this plan, a member or family group of members would plant an acre plot of any size "unto the Lord." It would be prayerfully cultivated and kept separate at harvest time and the proceeds would be used to supplement regular contributions.

Under Rev. Graham in 1938,

plans for a new edifice were presented. It was decided by vote that the new building stand in practically the same place as the old. On January 9, 1939, the first worship service was held in the new building.

The first Lord's Acre Day was observed December 10, 1939. The total collected was far more than had ever been given. The mortgage was burned in December, 1941.

In 1949, an education building was erected and named in honor of the late Deacon John B. Jones.

Durham Rev. Graham's tenure of 25 years, the Senior Choir, Senior and Junior Usher boards and a Boy Scout troop were organized.

In 1962, Rev. Dr. J. Neal Hughley, campus minister at North Carolina College (now NCCU) became pastor. Under his leadership, building improvements were made including addition of a basement with a kitchen and dining area. Aluminum siding was installed, stained glass windows were donated, an organ was installed, the cemetery was enlarged and more land was purchased. On his death in 1974, Rev. Hughley's body was interred in Mt. Calvary Cemetery.

Rev. Dr. Herbert O. Edwards served from 1975 to 1977, followed by Rev. O.L. Sherrill, Rev. Vernon Rose, a native of Capetown, South Africa, served in 1988.

Rev. Rufus Johnson, another NCCU graduate, was accepted as pastor in 1988. Under his leadership the Sunday School program was rebuilt, a young adult group and gospel choir were established, along with a Children's Hour during regular worship services. An indoor baptismal, a new roof and plans for handicap access ramp were also undertaken.

Rev. Johnson departed in 1990. The present pastor, Rev. James W. Smith of Louisburg, came to Mt. Calvary as pastor on March 3, 1991. Rev. Smith is a graduate of NCCU and also received a juris doctor degree from the NCCU

School of Law.

His pastoral efforts including leading Bible study every Wednesday evening, physical improvements - carpeting and painting of the sanctuary, installation of a new roof on the education building and the installation of new tables in the dining area.

Rev. Smith follows in the footsteps of his predecessors by providing enlightened and progressive leadership for Mt. Calvary.

From grandchildren of first converts serving on various board to the descendants of family that made possible the sanctuary site by selling their family land to the pioneers of Mt. Calvary, family runs true and family continues to be her cornerstone as Mt. Calvary embarks upon her next hundred years.

The start of the second hundred years and the end of the first hundred was celebrated with an anniversary banquet held November 27 at the North Carolina Mutual Banquet Hall. Hundreds gathered in spite of the rain. This was not an ending to the first hundred years, but a transition from that first log cabin Sunday School into the 21st Century.

Those who served were recognized and many certificates were given to those over eighty years of age. Former pastor, Rev. Herbert O. Edwards congratulated the congregation and charged them in their journey into the second hundred years.

The program was truly inspired with the singing of Ms. Mackerlean Morris.

Many individuals were honored, but the greatest honor was given when Rev. Smith asked everyone present to stand, because everyone has a part in making Mt. Calvary a success.



PASTOR J.W. SMITH AND ASSISTANT PASTOR W.S. EVANS launched Mount Calvary's second hundred years.

Minority Farmers Provide Fresh Produce For Needs

Doing their part to feed the hungry this Thanksgiving, a group of African American and other small farmers delivered freshly grown produce to soup kitchens, homeless shelters and churches that prepared meals for the hungry. There were fresh collards, mustard and turnip greens, turnip roots and sweet potatoes — a part of the Harvest For The Hungry Project.

This project was sponsored by the Durham-based N.C. Coalition of Farm and Rural Families. Executive director James P. Green, Jr., said, "despite having suffered through a severe drought this summer, these farmers are expressing their thanks by helping to feed the needy."

Recipients of the food met with the participating farmers Wednesday, November 24, at the

Durham Urban Ministries office on Queen St. to receive over 200 crates of produce to help feed the hungry at several locations in Durham, Raleigh and the Triangle area.

Because the need for food extends past the holidays, Green said "It doesn't make sense that millions of people in this country go hungry, while farmers are losing their land because they are unable to sell their crops. ... Under this program, farmers are at least partially paid for their crops. This is made possible by a grant from the Presbyterian Hunger Fund and the support of area churches." Green said a donation to the project will feed the needy and support area farmers at the same time.

U.S. Census data indicate that over 66% of all black farmers and

over 50% of all farmers in North Carolina gross less than \$10,000 in farm income. As a result, small farms are disappearing at an alarming rate. From 1978 to 1987, the number of black owned farms in North Carolina fell from 4413 to 2640. Nationwide, minority farmers are losing their land at the rate of more than 1000 acres per day. It is widely predicted that there will be virtually no black farms left in the United States by the year 2000.

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