

# Religion

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## Focus On Religion

### Gospel group enlightens students

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Chronicle Staff Writer

Black people can claim gospel, jazz and reggae music as their own, but if you ask the Mighty Wonders, they'll say gospel is the front-runner in terms of popularity.

The Mighty Wonders, a local all-male gospel singing group of nine members, realize the need to let the young, black and white, know just how gospel music evolved, how it survived and where it's going through a historical sketch they've been presenting to Winston-Salem/Forsyth County schools since last August.

The response has been overwhelming, says Dennis Williams, the group's manager and a 14-year member of the group.

"It all started with the folk arts festival last year at Northwestern Junior High School," he says. "It just went over so well that now, once a month, we're at a different school."

The brand of music that the Mighty Wonders are bringing to schools such as Wiley Junior High and Moore Intermediate is something Williams says is not only entertaining but culturally enlightening for all the students.

"The whole concept of our school tours is to let the students know that gospel music is a heritage," he says.

"We go all the way back to slavery and talk to the students about the kinds of songs that were sung and the impact that gospel music has on other kinds of music today," says Williams.

The Mighty Wonders, a group with numerous recordings to its credit, will have a 25th anniversary celebration in May at Carver High School.

"There's a real need to get the name of Jesus in the mind and hearts of young people because in my opinion

we're living in the last days," says McMillian, the only original member of the group, which formed in 1956 at Atkins High School. "They're trying to keep prayer out of the schools and it's good for us to go to these schools and not only tell them about our heritage through gospel music but tell them about Jesus because these students are our future generation."

McMillian says that because gospel music has always had an appealing tempo about it, getting the young to listen and enjoy it has yet to be a difficult task.

"We always try to coordinate our programs so that they can follow along and sing with us if they like," he says.

McMillian continues: "The kids love gospel music. It's

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— Clarence McMillian

as if it's something they've hungered for but never had the opportunity to have."

Since the gospel group has been presenting historical sketches of gospel music to the area schools, Williams says all kinds of questions have cropped up from students curious about the soul-stirring style of singing often imitated by many of today's white contemporary gospel artists.

"They ask us, 'Why do you call it black gospel?'" says Williams. "Black people are known for improvisation and there's a lot of it in gospel music."

"We tell them about the forerunners in gospel music who helped bring it where it is today," he says. "The



The Mighty Wonders are spending a lot of time in school these days, spreading the word of Jesus and teaching students about gospel music history (photo by James Parker).

forerunners were, of course, the Fisk Jubilee Singers, Mahalia Jackson and Wings Over Jordan."

Williams says that only recently have The Mighty Wonders become a gospel group of notoriety in Winston-Salem.

"We've traveled every state between New York and Florida," he says, "and even though Winston is our nucleus, we're just beginning to get a response here."

The recording the group members say has become their

calling card no matter where they go is a gospel selection they did in the early 70s called "Holy Train." The Mighty Wonders have also just completed a single they expect to release within the next four weeks. Until the school season has come to an end, however, the historical sketches of gospel music will continue.

"We'll continue at the schools as long as the students and the schools keep asking for us," says McMillian, "and as long as our music is beneficial."

## CALENDAR

Compiled by Lucille Douthit

### SATURDAY, MARCH 24

•An African Cultural Workshop will be held from 10 a.m. until noon at St. James A.M.E. Church. The subject will be a Nigerian dish and the guest will be Ms. Motialepula Chabuku of South Africa. Registration is free.

### SUNDAY, MARCH 25

•Union Baptist Chapel Baptist Church will celebrate its 55th anniversary and the 16th anniversary of the pastor, the Rev. R.L. Anderson. The Rev. E.L. Clark and members of Bethlehem Baptist Church will be the guests.

•The Pastor's Aid Club of Greater St. Matthew Baptist Church will be having a program at 3 p.m. Dr. Q.C. Caldwell and United Progressive Baptist Church will be the guests. The church is located at 149 N. Wheeler St.

•The annual spring revival of Zion Hill Baptist Church will begin at 11 a.m. and will run nightly from the 26th through 30th. The Rev. W.B. Harvey, pastor of Harrison Street Baptist Church in Paducah, Ky., will be the evangelist for the week.

•Macedonia Holiness Church of Kernersville will worship with Eternal Life Christian Church in Eden at 11 a.m.

•Saint Paul United Methodist Church in Kernersville invites all to Sunday School at 10 a.m. and worship service at 11 a.m. The Rev. Paul G. Carter is the pastor.

•The Winston-Salem District of United Methodist Women will have its Spiritual Enrichment Event at Wait Chapel on the campus of Wake Forest University at 8 p.m.

•The Helping Hands of Mt. Olive Baptist Church will observe their first anniversary at 4 p.m. The Rev. Steve Calhoun and his congregation from Lexington will be the guests.

•The Senior Choir of Antioch Christian Church at 1432 Underwood Avenue will celebrate its 52nd anniversary with a special service at 4 p.m. at the church. The speaker and guests will be the Rev. W. Hines and the congregation of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church.

•The Stewardess Board No. 1 of Reynolds Temple CME Church will bring to a close its King and Queen Contest at 5 p.m. The Rev. Jerry Quick of Goler Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church will be the guest speaker.

The Chronicle welcomes church calendar notices. Announcements should be concise and typed or neatly printed. They should also include the day, time, place and sponsors of the event, plus a number to call for additional information. Announcements should be addressed to the Winston-Salem Chronicle Church Calendar, P.O. Box 3154, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102. The deadline for announcements is Mondays at 5:30.

## Church Notes

### Parish Mission begins

Saint Benedict of the Moor Catholic Church at 12th and Hattie Streets will sponsor a three-day Parish Mission beginning March 25 and will run through March 27.

The theme for the mission will be "God Calls Whom He Will."

Services will begin each night at 7 p.m. with the Rev. Martin Carter as the guest speaker.

Carter holds a doctorate of ministry degree from McCormick Seminary in Chicago, Ill. His topics will include the mission's theme, "The Price to Be Paid," and "The Healing Power of Jesus."

The mission will be open to the public free of charge. For more information, call St. Benedict's at 725-9200 between 9 a.m. and noon Monday through Friday.



Dr. Captolia D. Newbern

### Newbern to speak Sunday

Hanes Memorial CME Church will convene a series of events in celebration of Women's Day weekend beginning March 24, followed by seminars March 26-28.

The eventful week will begin with a "Wedding Feast For An Eternal Couple," whose names will be revealed at the Saturday ceremony at 5 p.m.

The guest speaker for the Sunday morning worship service will be Dr. Captolia Dent Newbern, assistant to the pastor of Russell Tabernacle in Philadelphia, Penn.

She was the former administrative assistant to the late Bishop W.Y. Bell, who presided over the Seventh Episcopal District, which includes the Carolina Conference. Newbern, a former professor at Lane College in Jackson, Tenn., has just completed her book, "Black Methodist: The Time Is Now." An ordained minister, Newbern will conduct two seminars at the church March 28-30.

The Shanta-Malias will provide musical entertainment for the wedding feast Saturday. The Women's Chorus, the HMC Chorale and the Christian Methodist Men's Chorus will sing at the Sunday morning worship service.

Soloist for the feast will include Mrs. Barbara Speaks, Mrs. Edena Evans, Mrs. Madeline Gerald, Frank McKissick and Mrs. Janice Benjamin.

Choir directors will be Mrs. Peggy McLaughlin and James D. Smith.

Mrs. Anne Phillips is general chairperson of the Women's Day observance.



Members of the Goler Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church celebrated black history month with a drama production titled "An Interview With Harriet Tubman." Cast members were, left to right, Mrs. Edyth Roseboro, Mrs. Marie Matthews, Mrs. Dorothy McCarthy and Mrs. Dorothy B. Jones.

### New outreach program distributes booklets

The "Prepared For Today," a program of the Boy Scouts of America was unveiled recently at the Minister's Conference Association meeting at First Baptist Church on Highland Ave.

Bishop R.K. Hash of St. Peter's Church of God Apostolic received the first copy of the "Prepared For Today" booklet from Old Hickory Council's executive Donald E. Hamrick.

The book, aimed primarily at children 6-11 years old, is designed to help them be more self-reliant by teaching them how to adjust to situations that may occur around the home when the child is without adult supervision.

Churches participating in this new outreach program are St. Matthews Baptist Church, Ishi Temple, Shiloh Baptist Church, Zion Memorial Baptist Church, St. John CME Church, Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, Emmanuel Baptist Church, First Baptist of East Winston and St. Paul United Methodist Church. These churches will distribute "Prepared For Today" booklets to boys and girls in East Winston.

The Ministers Conference Association will be the first of many distributing networks for the outreach program, which is being funded by the Kate B. Reynolds Poor & Needy Trust.

### Benjamin to perform at Wayside CME Church

Christopher Benjamin, a baritone soloist, will be the featured soloist Sunday at Wayside CME Church on Carver Road.

Benjamin, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Austin Benjamin of Winston-Salem and a former music major at Winston-Salem State University, has a wide range of musical experience, including opera and recitals.

A product of Medgar Evers College in New York, Benjamin was coached by William Yearwood of New York. He is a member of the Exclusive Aristocracy Artist Management.

At present, Benjamin is a private music teacher. Accompanying Benjamin will be Miss Virnessa D. Benjamin, a music instructor for the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools.

### Brown to speak Sunday at First Baptist Church

The next pastor candidate to speak at the Sunday morning worship service of First Baptist Church at 700 N. Highland Ave. will be the Rev. Clary L. Brown, assistant pastor of Providence Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.

Brown received his bachelor of arts degree from Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn, N.Y. He later earned his master of divinity degree from the Howard University

Divinity School.

A member of the Washington Baptist Ministers Conference, the NAACP and the Redemption Lodge No. 24, Prince Hall Affiliate, Brown's religious experience includes a post as executive director of the District of Columbia Office of the World Christian Training Center, youth coordinator and associate minister of Bethania Baptist Church in Brooklyn, N.Y.