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Focus On Religion

The Lord has been good to her

By AUDREY L. WILLIAMS
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There's one house on Kentucky Avenue that looks as if it comes right out of the storybook pages.

The immaculately kept lawn resembles wall-to-wall carpeting. The flower bed of tulips and the two azalea trees are the Rev. Mamie Rennick's pride and joy.

Like her lawn and her neatly kept home, Rennick likes to boast about her congregation at Ishi Pentecostal Holiness Church on Excelsior Street where she's been pastor for eight years.

Her husband, the late Rev. R.S. Rennick, led the church for 27 years, and for two years she served as his assistant pastor.

"I kept my calling for a whole year before I told my husband," Rennick says, and then bursts into laughter when she remembers the day she told him she wanted to become a minister.

"My nickname to him was May," she says, "and he looked at me and said, 'May, I'm not going to have you running all over the United States of America.'"

But she won her way and after his death eight years ago, she became the leader of the 100-member church.

"The Holiness Church is used to a woman leading them," Rennick says. "I know there are a lot of people who don't prefer lady ministers, but as long as I'm doing God's work it doesn't affect me."

"I think I get the message across," she says. "They're (the congregation) obedient and they take care of me."

Because Rennick can rarely be caught at home, the members of her church recently presented her with an answering machine to answer her many calls when she's away.

She likes spending time with children and entertaining in her dining room with her home-cooked food.

"I love people," she says, "and I like making them

happy. One of my other hobbies is sending flowers and cards to the sick. That's why I have a charge account with the florist."

Rennick is also careful about her appearance and opens her hall closet to prove it.

"We can go to an extreme with anything," she says, "but just because I've received the Holy Ghost doesn't mean I'm supposed to let myself go."

"I go all out to let people know that it's all right to keep themselves up," says Rennick. "Jesus put these things here for us to look nice and he's expecting us to look nice."

Lined along the wall in the living room are pictures, mostly of children. Rennick, who has one daughter, points each one out and tells his or her relationship to

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-- the Rev. Mamie Rennick

her. "She's sweet. That's my church secretary," she says. "And this one, I raised her. I would love to raise that baby of hers."

For most of her life, the Pittsburgh, Pa., native, reared mostly in and around Durham, was a nurse maid. But until her husband died, she had never shopped for groceries and had to ask for directions to the phone and utility companies to pay her bills.

"Like the Bible says, my husband protected and took care of me," says Rennick.

In the middle of the interview, she eases up from her seat and starts playing and singing on the piano.

"I play 'til I feel the spirit," she says. "I'm no professional, but if I feel the spirit I'll start playing and I get louder."



The Rev. Mamie Rennick on the criticism of women ministers: "... as long as I'm doing God's work, it doesn't affect me" (photo by James Parker).

It's not uncommon to hear her call out to the Lord and thank Him because "He's been good to me," she says.

Not only is Rennick active in organizing church activities in the community and in her church's conference, she is president of the Missionary Department of North and South Carolina, serves as supervisor of the Carolinas Home Mission Society and sings in the Missionary Choir of the State Council.

She looks out the window and notices a drizzle coming

down. Her almost permanent smile turns downward when she realizes she's just washed her car. The smile comes back when she thinks about where it came from.

Patting her hair back in place and smoothing over her skirt, Rennick says, "I like things in order. That's my joy."

"My whole life is centered around Jesus and He wants us to look nice, neat and clean. How can I tell you about Jesus when I'm not presentable?"

Church Notes

Missionary Society meets

The Local Missionary Society of New Faith Chapel Holiness Church will convene April 25-29. Speakers will be featured each night during the services, which will begin at 7:30 p.m.

On Sunday, the services will begin at 3 p.m.

Speakers for the week will include Elder Darryl McConnell, Ruling Elder Ronald L. Brown, vice president of the National Missionary Society; Evangelist Barbara Jenkins and Minister Syretha Robinson, president of the National Missionary Society.

Ms. Thelma Grant is the local president, and Bishop Lawrence S. Tate is the host pastor.

The church is located at 1419 Waughtown St.

Special day observed

WINSTON-SALEM -- May Fellowship Day is special celebration sponsored and observed across the country by Church Women United on the first Friday in May. Prepared by a group of Spanish-speaking women in Church Women United, the May Fellowship Day service for 1984 reflects the culture from which they come.

Using the theme "The Family, A Portrait of Change," the celebration focuses on the family.

May Fellowship Day activities scheduled in Winston-Salem will be held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church at Broad and Summit streets. On Friday at 10:30 a.m. until noon, a Bible study will be held, followed by "The Family, A Portrait of Change: A Message From Hispanic Women." A luncheon will follow the service. The cost per person is \$3.

Reservations can be made by calling Peggy Bowman at 725-5904 or Marian Butler at 722-6478 by April 28.

J. Ray Butler anniversary

The 14th anniversary of Dr. J. Ray Butler, pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church, will be held Saturday, April 28, from 4-6 p.m.

Butler is a native of Sampson County, a graduate of Charles E. Perry High School in Roseboro. He earned both his undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from Shaw University and Shaw Divinity School in Raleigh.



Lillie Mae Butler

Butler to preach Sunday

Mrs. Lillie Mae Butler will preach her trial sermon at Wayside C.M.E. Church Sunday, April 29, at 5 p.m. She is a native of Winston-Salem and a charter member of Wayside.

Butler, a graduate of Paisley High School, is enrolled at Hood Theological Seminary in Salisbury. She serves as the recording steward at Wayside and is superintendent of the Sunday School. She is well-known throughout the Winston-Salem/Greenville district of the Carolina Conference.

Wayside is located at 3780 Carver Road. The Rev. Emma T. Duren is the pastor.



Dr. Braxton Cooley

Pastor candidate to speak

Dr. Braxton Cooley's 11 a.m. worship service will conclude the first series of hearing candidates for the pulpit vacancy at First Baptist Church at 700 North Highland Avenue.

Cooley is the pastor of First Baptist Church in Harrisburg, Pa. He is a native of Raleigh and received his doctor of ministry degree in theology and psychology from Drew University in Madison, N.J.



Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis

Chavis to speak Sunday

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr., a native of Oxford, will be the special guest speaker for the missionaries at the 11 a.m. worship service at Emmanuel Baptist Church on Sunday, April 29.

Chavis is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ and earned his bachelor's of arts degree in chemistry from the University of North Carolina, master of divinity degree from the Divinity School of Duke University, doctor of ministry degree from Howard University Divinity School, and is a candidate for the doctor of philosophy degree at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He is currently deputy director for the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice and is active in the Rev. Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign.

A former school teacher, Chavis worked with the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the civil rights movement and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He has received numerous public, national and international awards.

Chavis is also an author and wrote volumes of poetry while imprisoned for four and a half years as one of the Wilmington Ten, nine black men and a white woman accused and convicted of bombing a store in Wilmington in the 1970s.

Emmanuel is located at 1075 Shalimar Drive. The Rev. John Mendez is the pastor.

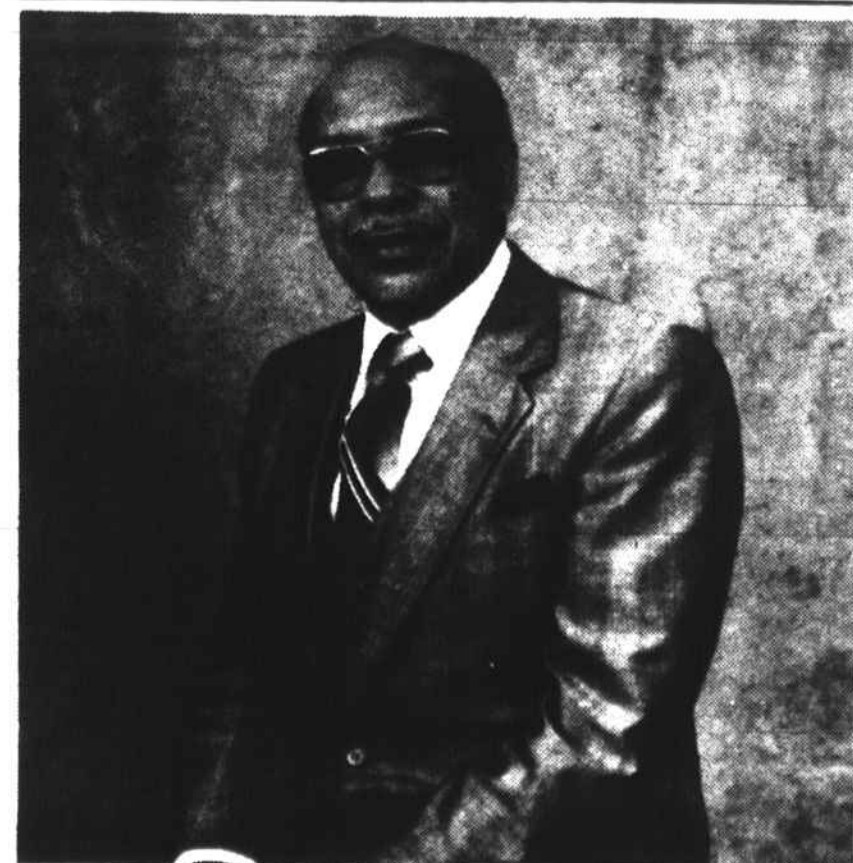
Bishop Bowers will be guest speaker Saturday

Bishop Paul A. Bowers of Cincinnati, Ohio, will be the guest speaker at a service at Ishi Pentecostal Temple on Saturday, April 28.

Bowers is the diocesan bishop of the Carolina State Council of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World Inc. As such, he is in the Carolinas every four months to preside over council meetings and periodically visits the 48 churches which make up the council.

Bowers will also conduct a closed pastor's seminar April 28 and a public worship service will be held the same day at 7:30 p.m.

The Rev. Mrs. Mamie C. Rennick is the host pastor. The church is located at 1319 Excelsior St.



Bishop Paul A. Bowers