

Religion

B5

Sheldon McCarter: Leading Cleveland Ave.'s quiet evolution

By ROBIN BARKSDALE
Community News Editor

There is a quiet evolution taking place on the corner of Cleveland Avenue and Ninth Street. Slowly, but surely, a church congregation is growing, pushing ahead and firmly establishing itself within its community.

The movement is being led by the 28-year-old pastor of Cleveland Avenue Christian Church, the Rev. Sheldon McCarter. A native of Rocky Mount, Rev. McCarter came to the church 14 months ago, accustomed to an entirely different church situation and unsure of what he would find at this new church. What he found was a small congregation of only 45 members, barely as large as the choir at the church where he had served as an associate pastor. But Rev. McCarter was undeterred and determined that Cleveland Avenue Christian Church could grow and prosper.

Fourteen months later, the church has increased its membership by 40 people, the young people are actively involved in the church and plans are underway for structural improvements and expansions.

Rev. McCarter comes from a family of ministers. His father, the Rev. R.L. McCarter, is the pastor of Rocky Mount's Morning Star Church of Christ. Both of his brothers are ministers. But Rev. McCarter insists that it was not the family ties that led him to the ministry but a genuine interest in helping other people.

"I felt God had a calling on my life," he said. "I didn't become a minister because of my father. That certainly had an indirect bearing but it was not the deciding factor for me. And my father never really encouraged me to be a minister. I've felt like I would be a minister since I was 17 years old. What really decided it for me was that on three different occasions three different people, who I had never met before, came up

and told me I was going to be a preacher. That was pretty unusual."

Young people are coming to Rev. McCarter's church in unusual numbers. He said that while he ministers to all people, he has a particular concern about bringing young people into the church. But he said capturing and holding their interest presents a special challenge and calls for a special approach.

"Naturally, I want to minister to the total community, but I want to be sure there is a place for young people at our church," he said. "I can relate to young people. One of the main things is to relate to young people on their level. Sometimes, we ministers can put ourselves too high. We talk, we laugh but they still respect me as a preacher. They know I am a preacher but they also know that they can come and talk to me about things because I associate with them. We take field trips and we get to know one another."

Rev. McCarter said that neither his message to young people nor his means are new. Actually, he said, they're both from the "old school." Many churches, Rev. McCarter said, lose their young people because they don't take the time to make youth feel like they are a part of the activities of the church. When youth lose interest, the congregation is baffled, he said.

"Often, young people are not given the attention in church that they need or they're not put to use," said Rev. McCarter, who has bolstered membership in his young adult and youth choirs since his arrival. "I think we should use them in any capacity that we can."

Rev. McCarter said he prefers to go quietly about his business of ministering, avoiding the limelight. But that doesn't mean that he won't encourage his church members to be active in their community.

"Any issue that affects your community is going to affect your church," he said. "Your church should be

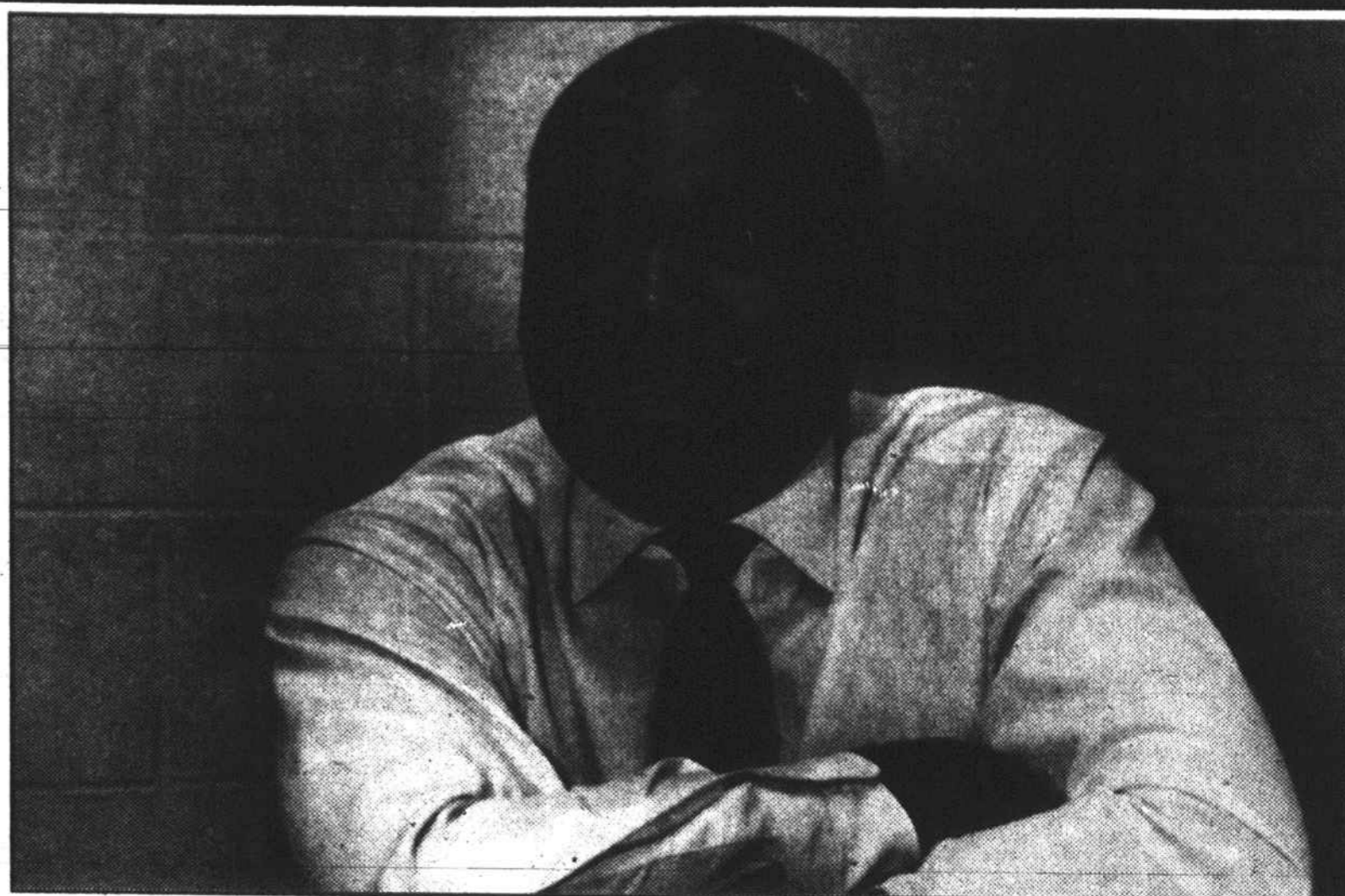


photo by Mike Cunningham

The Rev. Sheldon McCarter, pastor of Cleveland Avenue Christian Church: "I've felt like I would be a minister since I was 17 years old."

aware of what is happening whether its political or spiritual."

Rev. McCarter said that along with his ministry comes the responsibility of being a leader in the community and of being a role model to young children. He said that those factors are particularly crucial at a time when drugs are devastating the Afro-American community.

"Drugs are rapidly invading our entire community. So many young people are turning to drugs," said Rev. McCarter. "We've got to help young people know that there is a better life to lead."

The black church, he said, needs to assume more responsibility for building self-esteem among young people. Because of the church's foundation in the Afro-American community, Rev. McCarter said, ministers should take the time to make young people feel good about themselves and about what they can become.

"Too often, our black children don't have self-esteem," he said. "The church can play a part in changing that. The church can help them to realize that they can be doctors, lawyers, whatever they want to be. We must help our children realize they are somebody."

CHURCH CALENDAR

THURSDAY, OCT. 5

Elder J.C. Hash and St. Peter's Apostolic Church will worship with Pastor John McClurkin in celebration of his 14th pastoral anniversary. The church is located at 520 Glenbrook Drive.

FRIDAY, OCT. 6

Bishop J.L. Hines and Mount Sinai Glorious Church will worship with Greater Faith Chapel in celebration of the pastor's 14th anniversary. Elder John McClurkin is host pastor.

SATURDAY, OCT. 7

Christ Rescue Temple Apostolic Church, 1500 N. Dunleith Ave., will worship with Macedonia Apostolic Church in Bowden at 2 p.m. Elder Thornton Howard III, an associate minister at Christ Rescue Temple, will be the guest speaker. Music will be furnished by the CRT Mass Ensemble. Bishop S.E. Saunders Jr. is host pastor.

SUNDAY, OCT. 8

The Deaconess Board of Zion Memorial Baptist Church, 101 N. Dunleith Ave., will sponsor a membership tea at 4 p.m. Representatives of various auxiliaries, boards and teaching ministries of the church will share information regarding their functions within the church body. They will depict how the members work together to gain maximum benefit from the whole. The Rev. Joseph Jones is host pastor.

The Lay Organization of St. James CME Church, 1501 N. Patterson Ave., will hold its annual Meet the Candidates forum at 4 p.m. The program will be followed by the bond referendum forum. Candidates for the run-offs for the mayor's seat and the aldermanic candidates for the North Ward seat will be presented. A refreshment period will be held from 3:30 to 4 p.m. Speakers also will include Gertrude Judd Upperman. Ward Miller is president of the Lay Organization; Mattie S. Smith is director of lay activities; and the Rev. Sheridan Knight is host pastor.

Wayside CME Church, 3780 Carver Road, will celebrate National Laymen's Day at 4 p.m. The guest speaker will be Evangelist Charlie Clemmons. Randy Butler is lay leader and will preside at the program. The Rev. Emma Duren is host pastor.

National Laymen's Day will be observed at St. John CME during the morning worship hour. Walter E. Solomon of Columbia, S.C., will be the featured speaker. He is a former connectional lay leader of the CME Church. Nathaniel Williams Jr., is the local church lay leader. The Lay Department will be in charge of the Sunday morning service. The J.L. Picken Choir will sing. Kristina Pettigrew is the director and Donald Spencer is president. The Rev. Ronald P. Davis Sr. is host pastor.

Pernell J. McGriff and Al Martin will observe their first anniversaries of broadcasting a Saturday morning program with an open forum at 3 p.m. at the Carver High School Auditorium. Both are announcers at WSMX.

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CHURCH NOTES

Emmanuel Baptist prepares for diamond anniversary

Emmanuel Baptist Church will commemorate its 75th, diamond church anniversary Sunday, Oct. 8.

The anniversary committee, chaired by Katie Fair, has planned a number of events in observance of the special occasion. The celebration will begin with the recognition and observance of the church's pastor, the Rev. John Mendez. Rev. Mendez is marking his 25th year of preaching and his fifth year as pastor of Emmanuel Baptist.

The guest speaker for the occasion will be the Rev. Walter Fluker, assistant professor of Christian Ethics at Vanderbilt University's Graduate School of Religion and Divinity School. He also is assistant to the pastor at First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill, Nashville, Tenn.

Dr. Fluker received his bache-



Fluker

lor of arts degree in philosophy and biblical studies from Trinity College and a master's degree in divini-

ty from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. He also has attended Northwestern University and Seabury Western Episcopal Seminary. He holds a doctorate in philosophy from Boston University.

Dr. Fluker makes frequent appearances as a guest speaker at churches, colleges and universities throughout the country. He is the author of the recently published book, They Looked for a City: A Comparative Analysis of the Ideal of Community in the Thought of Howard Thurman and Martin Luther King Jr.

His current project is the coordination of a national convocation of Howard Thurman scholars, scheduled for this fall.

Dr. Fluker will preach at Emmanuel's 11 a.m. service. At 4 p.m., the pastor's anniversary

will continue with St. Stephen's Baptist Church and its pastor, the Rev. J.R. Samuels, who will preach the sermon.

Betty Brockman and Glenda Roseboro are the chairs for Sunday's portion of the anniversary observances.

Saturday, Oct. 14, the church will observe its 75th diamond banquet at the Benton Convention Center at 7 p.m.

The featured minister will be the Rev. Frederick G. Sampson of Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church in Detroit.

Dr. Sampson also will preach at the 11 a.m. worship service Sunday, Oct. 15. Later that afternoon, at 4, Macedonia TVPH Church will be the special guests. Its pastor, Bishop S.D. Johnson, will render the service.

Manderline Scales, Ben Ruffin to highlight First Calvary observance

First Calvary Baptist Church will observe Men's and Women's Day Sunday, Oct. 8, at the 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. services.

The special guests will be Dr. Manderline Scales and Ben Ruffin.

Dr. Scales is the special assistant to the vice chancellor of student affairs at Winston-Salem State University. She is a graduate of Spelman College and received her master's degree from the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Scales earned her doctorate at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She will

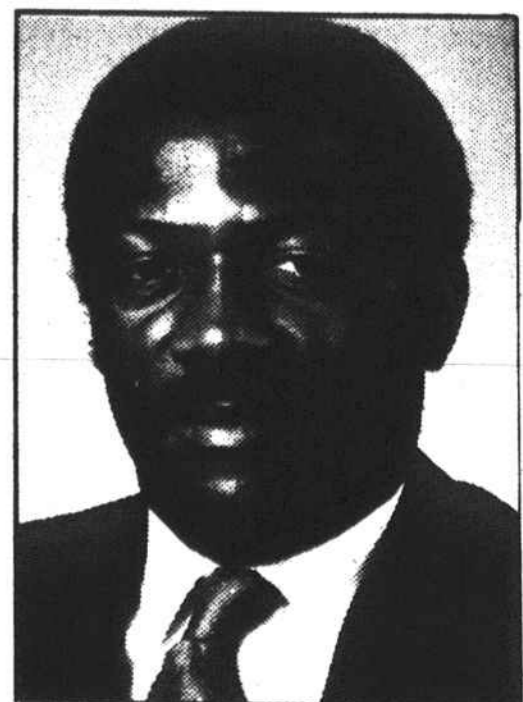
speak at the morning observance.

Mr. Ruffin is the director of corporate affairs for R.J. Reynolds. He is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and received his master's degree at North Carolina Central University. He will speak at the evening observance.

Laura Kennedy is program chair; Franklin Bennett is co-chair. Other committee members are Macie Sibert, Dorothy Draper and Willie Parker.



M. Scales



B. Ruffin

Minister Lee Faye Mack to mark BTL center's anniversary

Minister Lee Faye Mack will celebrate her 8th ministerial anniversary along with the Back to Life Center Sunday, Oct. 8, at 3 p.m.

She has been in the ministry for eight years and has operated the Back to Life Center for one year.

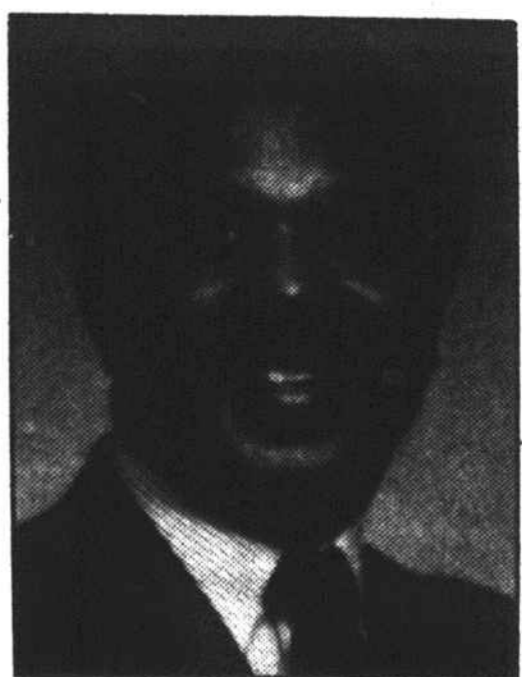
The center is located at 927 E. 21st St. in the East Winston area of the city.

The center houses a number of community-based activities which make life easier.

The center provides motiva-



Lee Faye Mack



L.S. Tate

tional seminars to instruct and to build self-esteem, an agency watch assistance program to monitor the effectiveness of other assistance programs in the area, Bible study classes and various after-school activities.

The center operates from donations and volunteer efforts.

The celebration will be held at New Faith Chapel, where Mrs. Mack is a member.

The speaker will be Bishop L.S. Tate. Other guests will include Alderman Vivian Burke.