

Religion

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Bishop Charles Hash leads 'Children's Church' to maturity

By ROBIN BARKSDALE
Community News Editor

The Jonesville community used to refer to it as "The Children's Church." It happened upon that nickname because its pastor and his wife were spotted each Sunday driving a bus around the community transporting children to and from church services. That was back in 1975, and many of those young children who traveled to church with Bishop Charles Hash and his wife, Nancy, have grown into adulthood. But the church's pastor said that his church, Refuge Temple Church of God Apostolic, has maintained its focus on young peo-

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"At first, we had no adults. We've always had children," said Bishop Hash. "We used to drive a bus around the town and pick up every child we could pick up and take them to church and bring them back. We tried to have activities for them and a good, clean wholesome environment. The children loved it. They looked forward to it every week. Now they're adults and they're members of the church. Our church is growing now because of our ministry to young people. When they got to be adults, they remembered our ministering to them as children and they joined our church as adults."

Bishop Hash, part of a family heavily entrenched in the ministry, said it took him a while to fully realize that he was being called to the ministry. His father, Bishop R. K. Hash, is general overseer of the Church of God Apostolic and retired pastor of St. Peter's World Outreach Center. His brother, Elder J. C. Hash, is St. Peter's current pastor.

"As a child coming up, one thing I can remember is always being proud of my mother and father and

their work with their ministry. I never realized my calling until the year I got out of school," said Bishop Hash, who attended Shenandoah Bible School in Virginia. "Even then I didn't know if I was going to be a minister. Later on, I realized that it had always been in me somewhere deep inside. I have always loved the church. I haven't always done everything I should have done, especially as a teenager."

Bishop Hash considers himself fortunate to have recognized his calling and pursued his ministry. But he said, too, that there are many young people who are not as fortunate. Many young people, he said, are so wrapped up in material interests that they are ignoring their spiritual well-being. He said that too few churches are focusing on the problem with young people and helping them build spiritual roots.

"We're going through a period of time when so much emphasis is on the material," he said. "Churches need to help young people go back and find their spiritual roots."

Bishop Hash said that as he has traveled around the country, he has noticed that churches are beginning to again be concerned with their congregations' spiritual health as well as their physical well-being. But he said he hopes that more and more churches will follow suit.

"Good churches minister to the spirit, the soul and the body. A good church ministers to the total person. The first part is the spirit. If a church is a good church, it deals not only with the spirit but with the whole man. We're living in a time when there's so much rejection that it's got to be dealt with on a spiritual basis," he said. "In times past, people dealt with it on a social basis. The church is at that place now when it is realizing that there are things that only can be addressed from a spiritual standpoint. People are looking for that which can satisfy them from within."

Bishop Hash has seen a gradual return among ministers to more spiritual ministries. He said that during the 1960s, ministers tended to be "social preachers," oftentimes at the expense their flocks.

"Fifteen years ago, there was a lot of pressure to be a 'social preacher.' But that left people so empty," said Bishop Hash. "Now we're coming back to the spiritual. The church has always been a source of strength for the black man especially. In times past, however, the church has let the black man down. I'm seeing that



photo by Mike Cunningham

Bishop Charles Hash, pastor of Refuge Temple in Jonesville, says he has learned to deal with the challenges of pastoring a small, rural church.

change more and more among the churches across the country."

Bishop Hash said that he faces special challenges as pastor of a small, rural church. Because his congregation is small and working-class, its coffers are not overflowing as they are at some of the churches in the larger cities. That limits the types and quantity of outreach programs that his church can offer, he said. He said, too, that the charismatic nature of his church is not familiar to a lot of people, and, therefore, there is some skepticism about the ministry in the community.

"There is an old saying that if you don't understand it, reject it," he said. "We're charismatic and some people don't understand what that is. But more and more people are understanding it. And as they understand it, they are becoming more and more accepting."

His congregation is not drawn exclusively from among the residents of Jonesville. Bishop Hash himself lives in Winston-Salem, and several members of his congregation commute weekly from the Twin City to attend his church. Other members, he said, live in Wilkesboro and in other places surrounding Jonesville.

"We're a rural church so we basically have people who don't have high-paying jobs. You know you need to get a certain quantity of people to make your financial budget. That's not always true in a city church. Sometimes rural churches have to be limited," he said. "But we have people who love their church and they love this ministry and they support it. It feels more like a family. You know everyone and they care about you."

Bishop Hash said he has had offers to preach in foreign countries, and he spends much time serving as an evangelist at other churches. He feels that his personality and interests lend themselves to evangelism, but he said that, for now, his place is with his church and that's where he'll be until he's called elsewhere.

"I've been invited to foreign countries to minister," he said. "Sometimes, I think I'm a better evangelist than pastor. But now I put my church first. That's my first priority. When I go out of town to speak, I'm always back at my own church on Sunday. I think I'm more of an evangelist than a pastor, but I have to be a pastor until the Lord says, 'Okay, I'm going to let someone else take your place.'"

CHURCH CALENDAR

THURSDAY, NOV. 16

• The congregation of Reynolds Temple CME Church will celebrate its 72nd church anniversary through Nov. 19. The Rev. Ronald P. Davis and St. John CME will render service at 7 p.m. Thursday. The Rev. Earl C. Carroll and Hanes Memorial CME Church will render the service Friday evening at 7 and the celebration will conclude Nov. 19 during morning worship. Dinner will be served at Holiday Inn North. Pastor Simmons is the host minister.

• The Forsyth Ministers' Fellowship will meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Crisis Control Building. A representative of Hospice will be the speaker.

SATURDAY, NOV. 18

• Emmanuel Baptist Church will hold a fall bazaar from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., 1075 Shalimar Drive. To display your craft or other items, table rentals are available for \$20. During the bazaar, fish and chicken dinners will be sold. You may eat in or take out. Every order of four to six dinners will be delivered free. For more information and details concerning the bazaar, call Clarice Rhyne at 788-7023.

• St. John CME Church Missionaries will hold a workshop from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dr. Thelma Dudley of Orlando, Fla., president emerita of the Missionary Council, will convene the activities. The theme is "Bridge Builders for Today and Tomorrow." Missionaries from across the Carolina Conference will be in attendance. Dr. Dudley will be the speaker for the Sunday morning worship service. Fostina West is president. The Rev. Ronald P. Davis is host pastor.

SUNDAY, NOV. 19

• The Nurses Board of St. Mark Baptist Church, 1100 Manley St., will celebrate its anniversary at 4 p.m. The Rev. James Fulwood is host pastor.

• Wayside CME Church's Laymen's Council will present the Christian Men's Chorus of Hanes Memorial CME Church in concert at 4 p.m. Randy Butler is Lay Council leader. Others involved with the program are Jubar Garcia and Edward Duren Sr. Mr. Butler will preside and is program committee chair.

• The Senior Choir of Zion Memorial Baptist Church will celebrate its anniversary at 4 p.m. The guests will be the Friendly Five of Walkertown and the Inspirational Gospel Choir of Morning Star Baptist Church. The Rev. Joseph Jones is host pastor.

• St. Paul United Methodist Church in Kernersville will celebrate the

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CHURCH NOTES

New Bethel Baptist takes closer look at race progress

From Chronicle Staff Reports

There can be no discussion of race progress as long as the Afro-American male continues to face a dismal future, said the keynote speaker at last weekend's Race Progress Day at New Bethel Baptist Church.

Nick Jeralds, a member of the North Carolina General Assembly, said that Afro-Americans have advanced but that those gains appear small when placed along side the problems that are devastating Afro-American males.

"We have a problem in trying to save the black male. Unless we address that problem the race will not progress," said Mr. Jeralds, vice chair of the Committee on Families, Children and Youth. "We have to teach them to love themselves. We must constantly re-enforce their successes to make them feel good about themselves."

Mr. Jeralds said that lifting the black male from his plight will require a collective effort within the Afro-American community and it will require some candid discussions with young Afro-American males about their responsibilities as men.

"We need to make them aware that the ability to make a baby does not make a man," he said. "He

needs to know that commitment to something and someone makes a man."

Mr. Jeralds issued a challenge to the black church and to successful Afro-Americans to give young black men the attention and encouragement they need to survive.

"There are our young black men. They are calling from the wilderness for a helping hand," said Mr. Jeralds. "The call of young black men beckons on the other side of the stained glass windows. Until we answer them, Race Progress Day will have little meaning."

Mr. Jeralds said that, placed in a very general perspective, Afro-Americans have made much progress in the past 25 years. But he said that when certain areas of life are examined on a more specific level, the true picture shows that there have been setbacks within the minority population.

"What progress have we as a race truly made? And progress compared to what?" Mr. Jeralds said. "We can look at the 1964 Civil Rights Act and say, 'Thank God, we have come a long way.' Should we look at race progress in the long-term we can find reasons to rejoice. And certainly if we look at the events of last week, with the election of (David) Dinkins and (Doug)



photo by Mike Cunningham

Rep. Nick Jeralds was the keynote speaker at last Sunday's Race Progress Day at New Bethel Baptist Church.

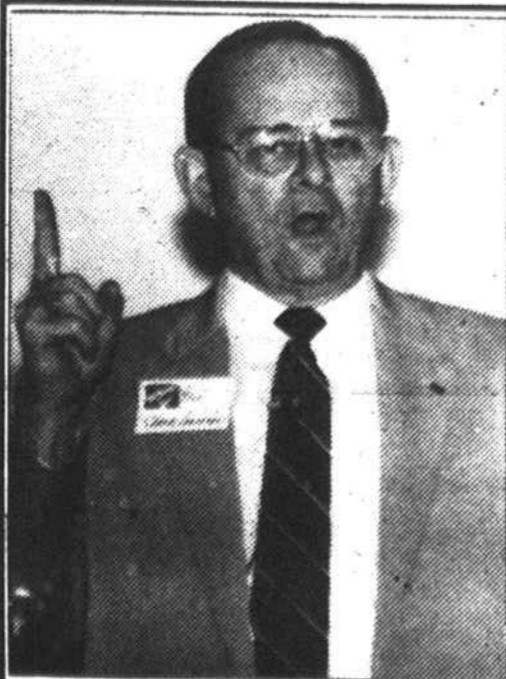
Wilder, we should be shouting in the streets. But that would serve to obscure the true progress we have made as a race. Though we are making major strides and making big salaries, we still have a long way to go. We must continue to redig the wells or we shall perish at the hands of our society."

Race Progress Day also marked

the 65th anniversary celebration of New Bethel's Effort Club, whose purpose is to support each of the church's major endeavors. It is the 38th year that the club has sponsored the race progress program.

Ann Hanes is the club's president. Dr. Jerry Drayton is pastor of the church.

To The Point



Dr. Charles R. Solomon, founder and president of Grace Fellowship International in Denver, was the special guest speaker for the Southeastern District Conference of the Church of God Apostolic held last week at St. Peter's World Outreach Center. Other speakers included Bishop C.O. Reid, Bishop George Morgan, Elder Barbara Reid, Dr. Ronald Hash, Bishop Charles Hash and Bishop R.K. Hash.

Sweet Honey in the Rock concert set

Sweet Honey in the Rock, a quintet of Afro-American female singers, will appear in concert at Winston-Salem State University's K.R. Williams Auditorium Sunday, Nov. 19, at 8 p.m.

The original group was part of the vocal workshop of the D.C. Black Repertory Theatre Company. Its sound is rooted in the tradition of Afro-American unaccompanied choral singing.

The group sings of being fighters, taking their audiences through the historic struggle of the Afro-

American experience. Bernice Johnson Reagon founded the group in 1973 and is the group's leader.

Currently the group includes Ms. Reagon, Yameen Bheti Graham, Nitanju Bolade, Aisha Kahill and Ysaye Maria Barnwell.

The group's name is taken from an old spiritual that tells of a land so rich that honey pours from stone.

"Our sound is the black congregational sound...There is no holding back. It's a very open, upfront kind of sound," said Ms. Reagon.