



Supporting the community
Shady Grove Missionary Baptist Church has been supporting the community for 67 years.

Shady Grove meeting the needs

By Joe Holt
"If you don't say something encouraging to a neighbor ... if you don't aid the widow and the orphan ... if you don't do something to glorify the name of the Lord during the week, then there's not much use in your coming in here on Sunday morning, because you're not going to accomplish a whole lot in this sanctuary today!"

The words are those of the Rev. Johnny W. Gorham, pastor. They are strong words. They reverberate from ceiling and walls to the ears of some 90 attentive worshippers at Shady Grove Missionary Baptist Church on an otherwise calm Sunday morning in June.

"Shady Grove is not where the work is done," he chides. "Shady Grove is not where the needs are, where the mission is, where the challenge lies. The need is out there!" He points toward Wagram and Laurinburg to the south.

"And out there!" toward Raeford, seven miles to the north. The Rev. Gorham means what he is saying. His tone of voice is not one of asking or beseeching. He is commanding.

"Go out there," he adjures his parishioners. "Help the needy! Then compel them to come in."

Gorham is preaching to a congregation that loves and respects him. In conversations with members of Shady Grove, the visitor who asks is found to hear the words of praise everyone has for the pastor. Called some 12 years ago (and educated since in the ministry), Johnny Gorham, they will tell you, is just what their church had needed. His trial sermon was all it took to convince the board of deacons that, if they wanted this dedicated, capable young man as their pastor, they'd better grab him.

Once they had him, away he went to seminary, earning his masters and doctoral degrees in ministries at Shaw University -- this on top of similar degrees in agricultural education he already had.

But while Gorham's ministry

dates back only to 1973, the church itself claims a history for older.

Shady Grove began as a humble brush arbor set up by determined worshippers somewhere just north of Wagram circa 1919.

In later years it occupied a wood frame building on the old Antioch Road, near its present location.

Today, the modern edifice, built in 1976, and spacious, well-manicured grounds project a commanding image over the surrounding countryside.

Last week's activities at Shady Grove centered around the celebration of the church's 67th anniversary: 1919 to 1985. (Mathematics be hanged -- a very senior member said the correct anniversary number is 67, so there!) Special singing by the church's five choirs was among the treats on the agenda.

At a time when some rural community churches are experiencing declining enrollment and poor attendance, how is it that Shady Grove grows and prospers? How does a country church in Southern Hoke County keep 147 faithful sheep in its flock?

Deacon Henry Edwards says it is all explained by two basic approaches: "keeping the Lord at the center of things" and "making sure everyone has something to do."

"That calls for special attention to the young folks," says Edwards. "If you don't keep the young folks, your church won't have much future" -- a strong point and a formidable challenge in today's fast-moving world.

Shady Grove meets the challenges by maintaining four choirs -- the Gospel, the Senior, the male and the junior; by supporting its own softball team; by the order of a Girl Scout chapter in

the church, and scheduling usher duty for the young men -- in short, by providing opportunity for all its members, young and old alike, to participate personally in church-related activities. With this approach, the consensus goes, the church can't fail.

"You need a good pastor, too," interjects Sunday school teacher Brenda Edwards. She says Rev. Gorham has been instrumental in organizing and structuring new activities in the church.

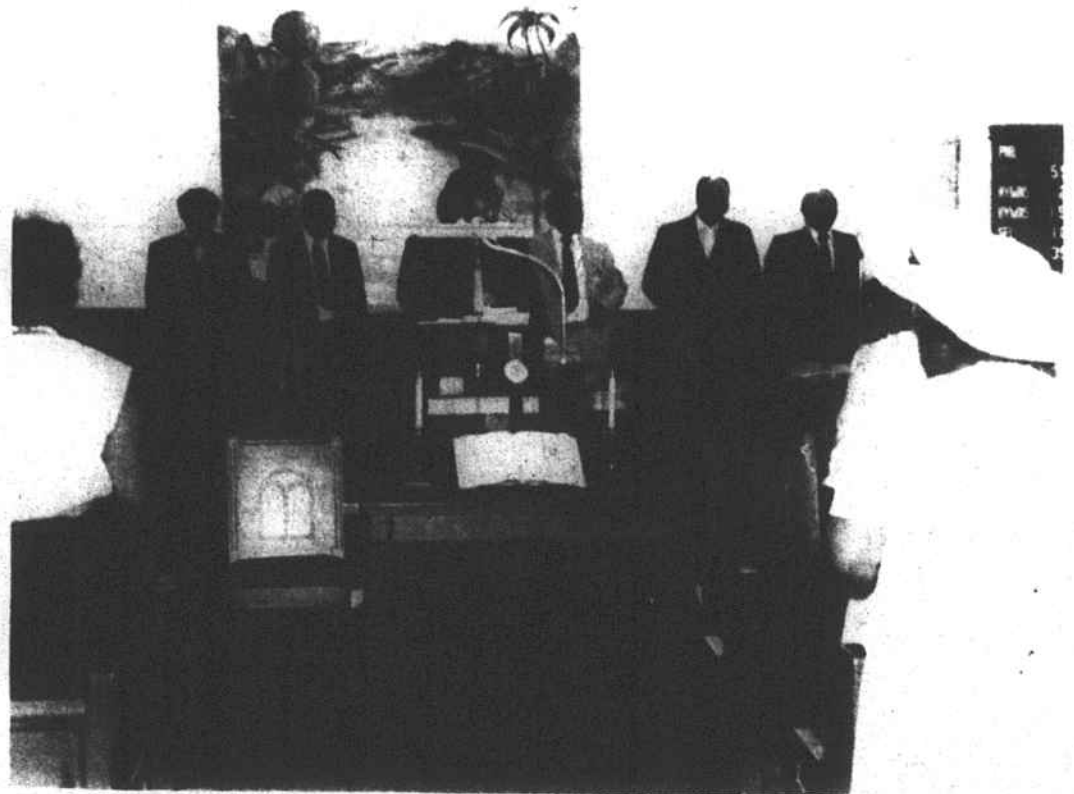
A good pastor, indeed. According to members, the Rev. Gorham is present at virtually all church functions, from choir practice to covered-dish dinner. By his interest and enthusiasm, they say, their pastor personifies his motto, as expressed from the pulpit: "We want to be the best."

"I'm not a rookie any longer," he tells his congregation, his lean face breaking into a wide, confident smile. "I am your pastor."

The minister's wife, the former Bernice McPhatter of Wagram, teaches Sunday School and is highly active in church functions. Their daughter, LaVonda, is a junior biology major at UNC-Chapel Hill.

In addition to his pastoral duties, the Rev. Gorham teaches horticulture at Scotland High School, as he has done for the past 20 years. "It's a question of time management," he says.

Whatever the plight of the average country church hereabouts, it seems likely that Shady Grove Missionary Baptist Church will continue to thrive in its Christian service. Its members, its leadership, and its emphasis on youth provide the earthly ingredients that are apparently necessary in trying to meet the Lord halfway.



Flanked by chorus
Rev. Johnny Gorham is flanked by members of the Shady Grove Male Chorus during a recent service.

LEGALS

North Carolina
County of Hoke
NOTICE OF SALE

Under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust executed by Anthony Holmes and wife, Mary L. Holmes to Bobby Burns McNeill, Trustee, dated the 8th day of November, 1976, and recorded in Book 195, Page 533 in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Hoke County, North Carolina, and default having been made in the payment of the indebtedness thereby secured and said Deed of Trust being by the terms thereof subject to foreclosure, the undersigned Trustee will offer for sale at public auction to the highest bidder for cash at the courthouse door in Raeford, North Carolina, at 12:00 o'clock noon on the 9th day of July 1985, property conveyed by said Deed of Trust, the same lying and being in the County of Hoke, State of North Carolina, Raeford Township, and more particularly described as follows:

BEGINNING at a point in the center of U.S. 401 Highway, said point being located 360 feet east along Highway 401 from point where the west line of Dunlap property intersects with the center of the Old Turnpike Road, Dunlap property, lying in an extension of center line of Fulton Street Extension and runs at the right angles with Highway 401, 225 feet; thence parallel with 401 Highway East 100 feet; thence in a southerly direction 225 feet to the center of Highway No. 401; thence with Highway 401, 100 feet to the **BEGINNING**, containing one half (1/2) acre and being the lot on which the Jesse Dunlap

LEGALS

dwelling now sits. The above description is subject to the right of way of U.S. 401 Highway.

This being the property devised to Anthony Holmes according to Item III of the Will of Jesse Dunlap.

This sale will be made subject to all outstanding taxes, if any, and prior liens of record, if any.

Cash Deposits: Ten percent (10%) on the first \$1,000.00 and five percent (5%) on any additional amount of bid will be required at the date of the sale.

Done, this the 18th day of June 1985.

Bobby Burns McNeill, Trustee
Hostetler & McNeill
Attorneys at Law
Raeford, N.C. 28376

10-11c

IN THE GENERAL
COURT OF JUSTICE
SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION
85-E-48
85-1-331
State of North Carolina
Hoke County

CREDITOR'S NOTICE
Having qualified as Executor of the estate of J.M. McGougan of

LEGALS

Hoke County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons having claims against said estate to present them to the undersigned on or before December 30, 1985 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 21st day of June 1985.
James D. McGougan
Route 1, Box 82
Lumber Bridge, N.C. 28357

10-13c

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING
GSX Services, Inc. will hold a public meeting on Thursday, July 25, 1985, at 7:00 p.m., at the Main Courtroom, Scotland County Courthouse, Biggs Street, Laurinburg, North Carolina. The purpose of the meeting is to address the concerns or problems expressed by the community at the public meeting held on May 14, 1985, and to attempt to resolve community concerns.

This notice is given pursuant to 10 NCAC 10F. 0032 (q) (7).

10C

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