

Black ministers protest suit outcome

Black ministers from cities throughout the country have joined in an angry, massive protest against a \$30 million jury award that was recently rendered against the Church of Scientology of California.

They have been marching, singing, praying and shouting with hundreds of Scientology parishioners and ministers of different faiths from around the world.

The Rev. Charles A. Mims Jr., pastor of Tabernacle of Faith Baptist Church in the Watts area of Los Angeles, recently marched

13 miles with other ministers from Solid Rock, a coalition of some 600 churches throughout Los Angeles, to protest the \$30 million judgment.

During the march Mims explained, "We are here today supporting this crusade for religious freedom because we're outraged at the current attack on the church and other religions in America today. Churches of all faiths are being sued across this nation. The Church of Scientology is being sued for \$30 million. It is a total outrage that any church should be brought

before a court of law and its religious beliefs be put on trial."

Another participant in the protests, the Rev. Leo Champion, pastor of Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church in Milwaukee, said, "I think that what is transpiring between the state and the Scientology Church is a flagrant abuse of the First Amendment rights granted to churches to worship the way God has shown them to worship."

The judgment arose from a suit filed by a dissident church member whom Scientology officials assert is a con man.

Happy Birthday!

Dr. Quincy A. Caldwell was honored recently at a birthday banquet held by members of his congregation at Greater United Progressive Baptist Church. The program's guest speaker was Elder Joseph Lowery of St. Matthews Apostolic Church and the mistress of ceremonies was Doris Kimbrough (photo by James Parker).



Annual Sunday school retreat held at Wentz Memorial Church

Wentz Memorial United Church of Christ's annual Sunday school summer retreat was held Saturday, Aug. 23, closing after the morning worship on Sunday.

The Rev. Timothy Kato delivered the sermon during the worship hour. His topic was

"God Is Love."

Flonnie Anderson led the children in role playing on the retreat's theme, "Living in Love."

Musical presentations were given during the Saturday evening and Sunday morning services. The children sang "Completely

Yes" and "Jesus, I Love You."

Walteria Spaulding was the guest organist; Cynthia Mack was the guest directress.

Bessie Allen is superintendent of the Sunday school.

Gwendolyn Jones is the assistant superintendent.

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himself a member of a new breed of ministers.

"I don't really think there is such a thing as a new breed of ministers," he says. "I believe there are pendulum ministers. There were some like me before, then the pendulum swings a different way, over to the other side, and eventually comes back."

Fails' calling to the ministry began when he was still in high school and performing odd jobs around the church in his spare time. He progressed from cutting the church lawn to reading prayers and finally to pursuing a career as a minister.

In between, however, there was a time when he considered becoming an advocate for people who couldn't help themselves.

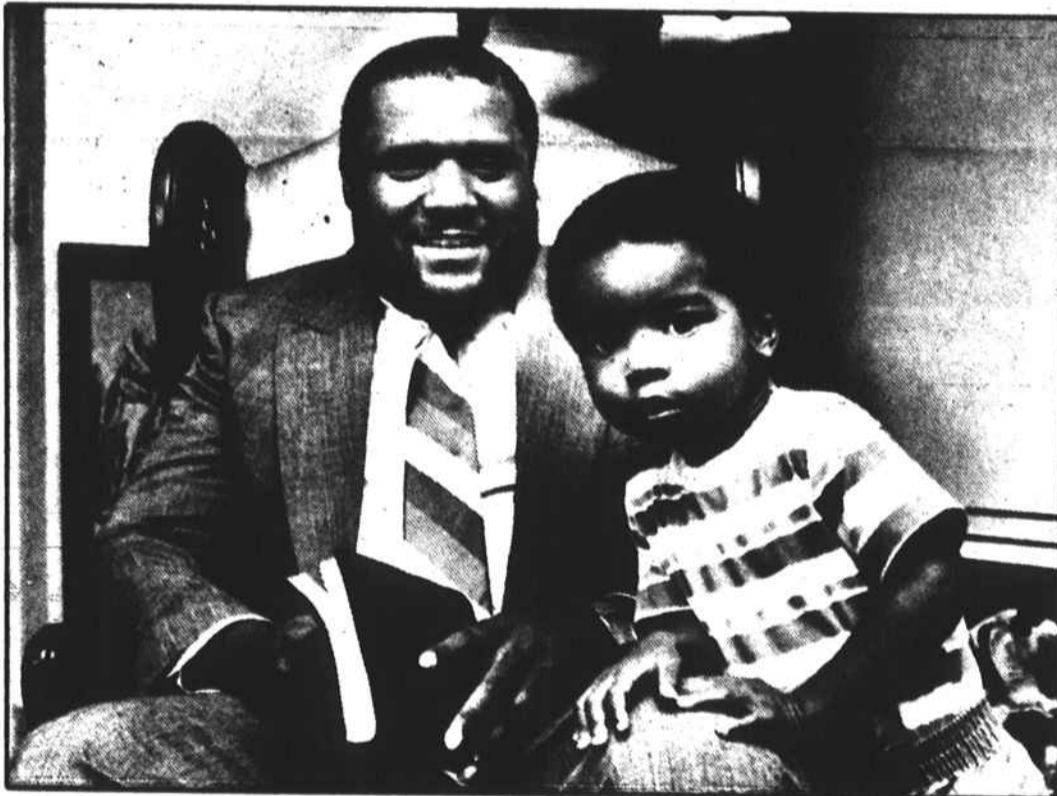
"I was brought up in the church, and I hung around the church all the time," says Fails, a former resident of Oklahoma and a graduate of Howard University's School of Divinity. "During the civil rights movement I was very interested in becoming a lawyer, and I figured if I went into law, and could stay honest, I would be an advocate for those people who couldn't talk for themselves."

"Then I realized that even above law, the minister was a powerful advocate for people. I sat around waiting for my calling, and one day I finally realized that I was being called a little every day."

Fails is optimistic about the future of the black church as a whole, and he is hopeful that young blacks who, for one reason or another, have strayed from the church will return and help undertake new programs and confront new issues.

He also encourages churches to provide for members of their congregations whose needs are not being addressed by the church.

"The church has gotten into a rut," says Fails. "In the '60s the church reached its hands out to meet the needs of young people, but with affluence, the church has backed away from reaching out to our young people, and if



Hanes Memorial CME's new pastor, the Rev. William Fails, and his son, Herston (photo by James Parker).

we don't save them, there is not going to be a tomorrow.

"It used to be that when a minister came into the neighborhood, all the bottles were hidden and people straightened up. Now nobody does that."

"With the death of the civil rights movement *per se* and oppression," he says, "we, the church, became complacent and satisfied with ourselves. But in order to survive, we have to project ourselves as one of the last viable institutions in our communities."

Fails is also concerned that the church has become more of a burden than a necessary part of the lives of many blacks. He believes the church and black families must work together to salvage both institutions.

"There was a time when everybody went to church," he says. "Now black men get up on

Sundays and go to play golf or wash the car, and the kids are off to soccer matches. We've become slaves to the tube. The church has become the heavy in our successful lives. We've taken our talents and done other things.

"Black men are gonna have to wake up and take their rightful places in the home and the community - and that's not by way of misusing drugs or women, but by way of nurturing. And the ministry itself is gonna have to become more diversified to accommodate some of the new needs of these people."

Fails plans to devote much of his time to making sure that Hanes Memorial works toward those ends - and he's planning for the long haul.

"I'm a very, very regular person," he says. "My visions are limitless, and I think we can do great kinds of things. I definitely plan to be here for a while."

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