

Focus On Religion

Wilson: Religious liberty must prevail

By ROBIN BARKSDALE
Chronicle Staff Writer

Elder Horace A. Wilson is willing to give a little to gain a lot -- especially when it comes to religious freedom.

Wilson was the keynote speaker at last weekend's religious liberty program at Ephesus Seventh-Day Adventist Church. He is a firm believer in preserving religious rights and made that point clear in his address, "O Say Can You See?"

Wilson's discussion outlined the history of religious persecution and the struggle for religious freedom which has occurred throughout history. The persecuting power, he notes, arises when there is a unity of church and state.

"The struggle for religious liberty goes all the way back to the first century and how Christ was

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-- Elder Horace A. Wilson

crucified because the church found him guilty of blasphemy," Wilson says. "The first beast was created when the Roman government and the Roman church united. It was called the papacy."

Wilson says the "beast" usually is represented by a country and that during the 1700s the only rising power was the United States.

He says the two horns which the beast has can easily represent civil liberty and religious liberty. Descriptions of the beast, Wilson says, seem innocent, but in the case of the United States, the beast was not so innocent.

"It (the United States) would appear to be innocent, but it would practice things contrary to being innocent and contrary to civil liberty and religious liberty," Wilson explains. "Civil liberty means men are created equal, but we find that that wasn't the

case because of all those years we, as a people, were in slavery."

Wilson says that religious liberty is threatened any time laws are made which are contrary to the First Amendment guarantee that the government will make no law which respects an establishment of one religion over another or shows religious preference. Wilson says recent laws have not run true to that guarantee.

"By allowing an ambassador to the Vatican, the government goes contrary to the Constitution," he says. "The Vatican is the home base of a church. That shows preference."

Though Wilson says he is "all for children praying," he maintains that prayer should not be required in the schools for the simple reason that it would require the passing of a religious law to make it possible. It is on issues such as this that he says there must be sacrifice in order to gain.

"To say, 'Yes,' to prayer in school would be passing a religious law," he says. "I'm for prayer, but whenever Congress or government passes a religious law, it opens the door to change the Constitution, which opens doors to other things.

"Once they begin to make religious laws, what's to stop them from making a law to say everyone has to go to church on Sunday or Wednesday or some other specified day? That would restrict the religious liberty of someone else."

Although tenacious about preserving the guarantee of religious liberty, Wilson freely admits that he feels the country is faithfully adhering to providing religious liberty. He does not feel that religious rights are denied at this time, and his intent, he says, is to keep it that way.

Wilson says his strong belief in religious freedom is based on the fear that, bit by bit, controlling powers may be allowed to pass laws requiring all religious denominations to worship in the same fashion or on the same day. As a member of a minority religious denomination, he says that if the government is allowed to make small changes in the



Elder Horace A. Wilson: The unity of church and state can result in religious persecution (photo by James Parker).

Constitution now, it will not be long before religious majorities will have the power to impose laws that must be adhered to by all denominations.

"I feel it is important to talk about because if our religious liberties are taken away, or can be taken away, I feel that in the near future it will open the door to changing the Constitution to make religious laws in favor of the majority or the persecuting power," Wilson says. "In the near future there will be calamities and destruction, and religious powers will say that if everyone does the will of God, all of these things will cease, but the will of God, as they see it, may mean that everyone will worship on Sunday and anyone who doesn't will be breaking the civil law."

He also points out that his concerns extend beyond his own denomination and says, "I'm not

just concerned about Seventh-Day Adventist religious liberty, but everyone's religious liberty."

Though some may scoff at Wilson's concerns, he says that, based on historical precedent, his predictions are not inconceivable.

"People say, 'How could that happen?' -- but it has already happened," says Wilson. "It happened in the past. You can't say it is above man because it has already happened."

"The church believed that the pontiff was the head of the church. John Huss and John Wyclif believed that Christ was the head of the church, and they believed that Scripture, and not tradition, is the sole authority in matters of faith. They were persecuted. It's not above the human mind to persecute someone because of what they believe to be true."

Church Notes

Distinguished minister to join Martin Luther King program

As part of Winston-Salem State University's Martin Luther King celebration, Dr. Walter V.L. Eversley will present the Joseph N. Patterson Lecture Wednesday, Jan. 21, at 10 a.m.

Eversley will give his address in the lecture room of the Hall-Patterson Communications Building.

Eversley has had careers as an educator and as a pastor. He is an ordained minister of the Moravian Church in America (Northern Province) and is presently pastor of Faith Moravian Church in the nation's capital, a new congregation chartered last May.

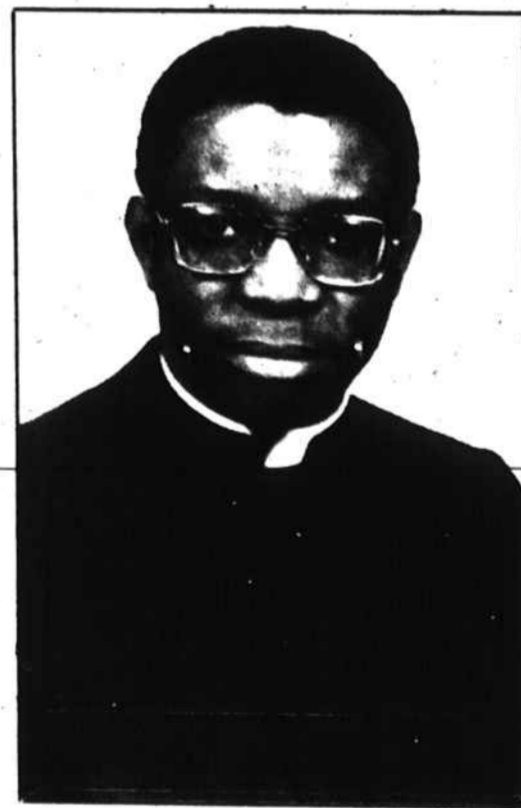
Eversley started two Moravian churches in New York while serving at a third. He has also served at churches in Guyana, South

America, Andover, Mass., and Boston.

He graduated *magna cum laude* with a bachelor's degree in music from Moravian College in Bethlehem, Pa., and earned both the master's and doctorate at Harvard University. Eversley completed his juris doctor degree at the School of Law at Columbia University in New York.

Since 1975, Eversley has been an adjunct professor at New York Theological Seminary. He has also taught subjects ranging from theology to law at Harvard Divinity School, New Rochelle College and New Brunswick Seminary.

The Joseph N. Patterson Lecture and Assembly Series is a part of the university's Lyceum Cultural Events.



Walter Eversley



Blair

Wentz member chosen as certified Christian educator by United Church of Christ

Sandra Blair, director of Christian education at Wentz Memorial United Church of Christ, has been certified as an accredited church educator for a four-year period effective in July.

The certification is the result of recent action of the Committee on Certification of Church

Educators in the United Church of Christ.

Within the church organization's structure, such a recognition has become an important and significant event in the life of both lay and ordained church educators. It results from a professional review by peers and

others in the church system.

The review includes a great amount of personal assessment and goal-setting on the part of the candidate and evaluation on the part of the committee.

The certification committee is a branch of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, a recognized instrumentality of

the United Church of Christ.

The work of the ministry includes education, publication, evangelism, local church development and prophetic service and action.

Dr. Marion R. Blair is pastor at Wentz Memorial United Church of Christ.



All Are Welcome

Bishop S.D. Johnson will be the host pastor for the Baptist Ministers Conference and Associates' annual Martin Luther King Celebration, which will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 19, at Macedonia True Vine Pentecostal Holiness Church on Kinard Drive. Dr. J.D. Ballard will be the keynote speaker (photo by James Parker).

Ministers' wives, widows hold meeting

The Interdenominational Ministers' Wives and Ministers' Widows met recently at the Delta Fine Arts House.

Eloise Smith was the hostess for the meeting.

Althea Taylor Jones, the organization's new president, introduced the new slate of programs and committees which will be implemented for the term 1987-88.

Mrs. Jones outlined the duties of each of the committees and asked that the chairman of each committee maintain contact with her during the year.

The group's programs for the next two years will stress outreach work in the community, linking forces with established service groups.

The association chose the

theme of "Love: The Greatest" for the coming biennium.

It was also noted at the meeting that the national organization has changed the organization's official name from "Alliance" to "Association of Ministers' Wives."

Mrs. Lonnie Robinson was chosen as the new program chairman; Mildred Leak was selected as the new membership chairman.

The group's next meeting will be held at First Baptist Church; Lucy Summers will be the hostess.

CHURCH NEWS DEADLINES ...

The deadline for announcements is Monday at 5:30 p.m.

CHURCH CALENDAR

THURSDAY, JAN. 15

• There will be an Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment chapter meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the Highland Presbyterian Church Activity Building. The topic will be "How Shall I Love Thee," presented by Kris Grapes and Tom Holm. For more information call 724-9226.

SATURDAY, JAN. 17

• The Shaw Divinity School Organization of Women Ministers will meet at Holy Trinity Baptist Church, 1200 E. 11th St., at 1 p.m. For more information call 788-1678.

• The Winston-Salem Day Chapter of Women's Aglow Fellowship will hold an interdenominational meeting at 9:30 a.m. and at 1 p.m. at the Central YMCA on West End Boulevard. The speaker will be Naomi Hopkins, who will discuss "God's Woman in a Chaotic World." For more information call 924-5942.

SATURDAY, JAN. 24

• The ushers board of Christ Rescue Temple Apostolic Church, 1500 N. Dunleith Ave., will sponsor a breakfast and dinner sale in the church fellowship hall from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Henrietta Howard is president of the ushers board; Bishop Willie Davis Jr. is the church's pastor. For more information call 722-9841.

FRIDAY, JAN. 30

• The Downtown Church Center will hold its 12:10 luncheon at the Mountcastle Forum at the Sawtooth Building from 12:10 to 12:50 p.m. The discussion topic will be "Humor and Healing." Gail Hamilton will be the speaker. The lecture is free and open to the public. The cost of the optional lunch is \$3. For more information call 722-5128.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

• St. Benedict the Moor Catholic Church, 1625 E. 12th St., will conduct Bible study sessions and Masses for senior citizens and retirees every first and third Thursday of each month. Sessions will be organized by Sister Maxine Towns, S.A. Each session will start at 10 a.m. and will last until 11:30 a.m. The Mass will be said every third Thursday by the Rev. Morris Boyd. There will be prayer and meditation sessions following the Mass. All in the community are welcome to attend. For more information call 725-9200.

• St. Peter's Church of God Apostolic, 1031 Highland Ave., will hold a free six-week sign language course. Candi York will be the instructor. The classes will be held from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays at the church. To register call 722-2285 Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.