

# Religion

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## AME Zion conference opens with Christian Education Day

By ROBIN BARKSDALE  
Community News Editor

Bishop William M. Smith is not happy about the decline in manners among young Afro-Americans, and he took an opportunity during his convention speech to tell them so.

"I would like for you young people to open up your mouths and speak like decent young people," Bishop Smith said during opening day activities at Christian Education Day of the AME Zion Church's Western North Carolina Conference. "Young people, let's learn to have some good manners. The reason we have so much trouble in the local church is because we



Attorney Paris Favors was the coordinator of a portion of the Christian Education Day program at the AME Zion conference.

didn't start with these people when they were young. Nobody taught them."

Bishop Smith, who spoke Tuesday at the convention center, said that parents should take responsibility for teaching their children common and simple manners. He said, too, that children should be taught early to respect the elderly and to pay more attention to the needs of older members of their communities.

Bishop Smith told the crowd of AME church members, representing more than 100 churches throughout Western North Carolina, that good manners can reap big dividends.

"Sometimes good manners can take you where money can't," he said. "We must teach our children

manners. We must teach them to open up their mouths and talk, to say 'Yes, mam' and 'No, sir.' It won't hurt them to learn manners."

Continuing his address, Bishop Smith said that he was both annoyed and bewildered by the increasing desire some Afro-Americans are having to attend predominantly white churches. In the past, he said, Afro-Americans were never invited to white churches, but for some reason are now being courted by some white churches. He said he is bothered by the number of Afro-Americans who are accepting those invitations.

"As long as these white people's buses drive through our neighborhoods, don't you get on one going to their church," he said. "Stay at your own black church. What's wrong with the black church? I don't know of a church in the world that can improve upon the heritage of the AME Zion Church. They haven't been wanting us at their churches. When that bus comes through your neighborhood to get you, you tell them that they didn't want to bring a bus through there to take you to school with them, so don't bring it through taking you to their church."

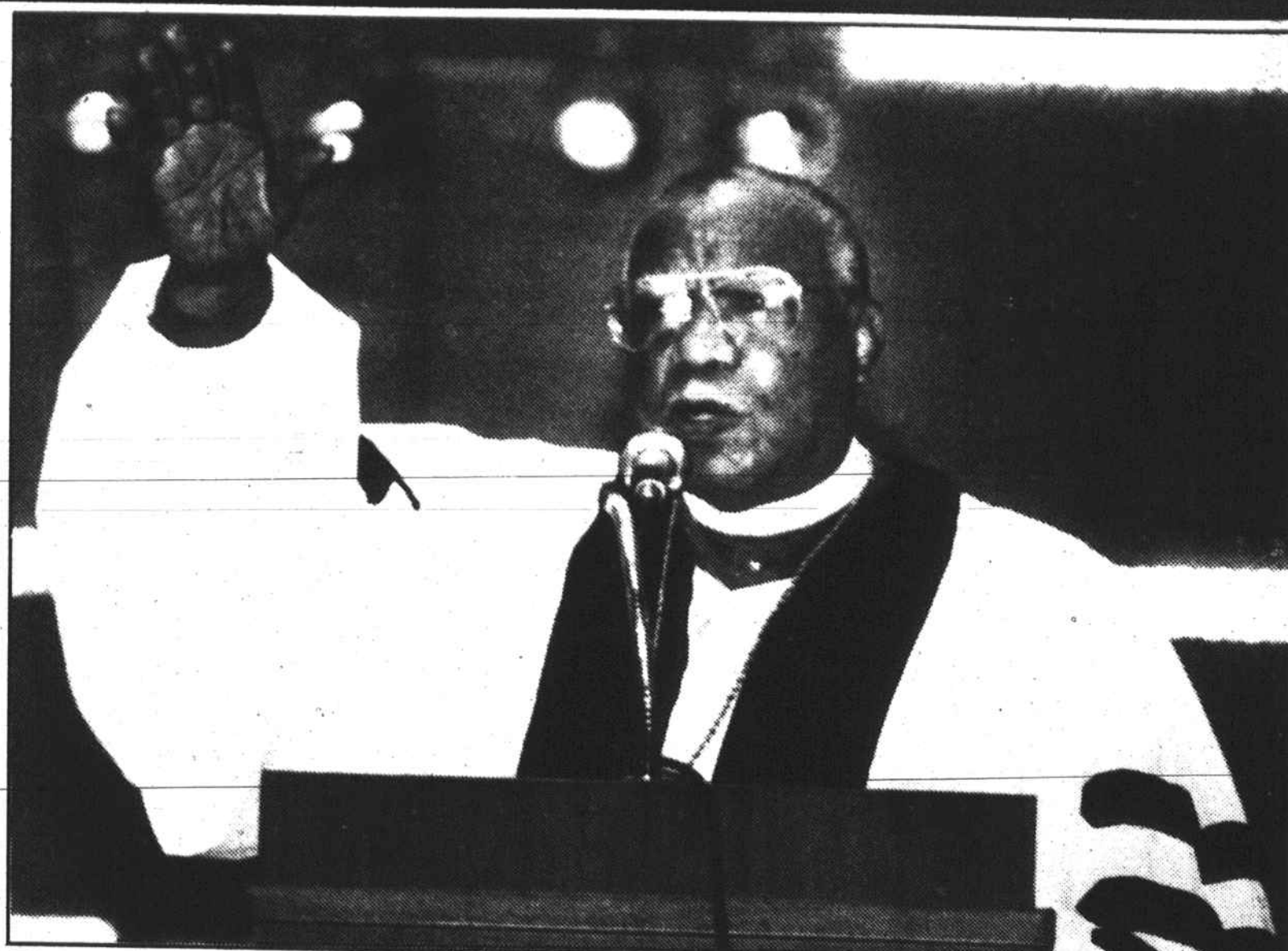
Bishop Smith said that the trend of Afro-Americans attending white churches parallels the issue of Afro-Americans not supporting their own communities and their own establishments.

"Our people must learn to support their concerns," he said. "We have to teach our people that black children are just as sweet as white children."

He said that correcting the problems can begin with an understanding that each individual owes something to another individual and that no one person succeeds alone.

"I am a debtor. They can easily figure out how much I owe the government but they fail to tell me how much I owe my people and myself," said Bishop Smith, a senior prelate in the AME Zion Church organization and presiding prelate of the Western North Carolina Conference. "If we would stop walking around with our heads up feeling like folks owe us and not realizing that really we owe them something, this would be a better world. This country is not ready to hand us something on a silver tray. You've got to prove yourself and you've got to merit it. I want to make sure that I build a foundation in this conference. I want people to know I tried to teach them right. What better place to start than with young people."

Christian Education Day activities also included



Bishop William M. Smith, presiding prelate of the Western North Carolina Conference of the AME Zion Church organization, greets the crowd on hand for Tuesday's opening-day activities. At right, a church member completes the list of members of the Charlotte AME Zion churches attending the conference. The conference will run through the week at the convention center and at various AME Zion churches in the city.

classes, seminars, workshops and a symposium. Topics of discussion included self-esteem, family life, sexuality, health, drugs and career awareness.

The Rev. Richard Harris is the district's presiding elder; the Rev. James French is host pastor; and Kath-

leen Hunt is hostess, district director and coordinator of activities.

The conference will run through Friday with activities and services being held at the convention center and local churches.

photos by Mike Cunningham

## CHURCH CALENDAR

SATURDAY, JULY 15

The Winston-Salem Day Chapter of Women's Aglow Fellowship International will hold an interdenominational meeting at 9:30 a.m. at the Central YMCA. Jean Derrick of Greensboro will be the speaker. For more information call 723-0864.

The Lillie H. Johnson Missionary Circle of St. Peter's World Outreach Center will hold a free clothes give-away from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The church is located at 1031 N. Highland Ave. For more information call 722-2285.

SUNDAY, JULY 16

The St. Peter's Wedding Guild will present "Spoken Gifts of Love" at 6 p.m. in honor of Dr. and Mrs. R.K. Hash's 53rd wedding anniversary. For more information call 722-2285.

The Inspirational Choir of Mount Zion Baptist Church will observe its 12th anniversary at 3 p.m. "No Coward Soldiers" is the theme for the anniversary celebration. Choirs from throughout the city have been invited to participate.

Men's and Women's Day will be observed at Zion Hill Baptist Church, 2920 Greenway Ave., at 4 p.m. The Rev. Benjamin F. Daniels and members of Union Baptist Church will be the special guests.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19

The Missionary Department of New Faith Chapel Holiness Church will sponsor Evangelist Hattie McCollough of Wagram in a three-night revival at 7:30 nightly. The church is located at 1419 Woughtown St.

### PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

St. Peter's World Outreach Center will present the "Single Lights," a program designed specifically to address issues confronting single people and single parents. The "Single Lights" meets each second and third Sunday at 6 p.m. There also will be monthly or bi-monthly fellowship activities. The program is an extension of St. Peter's World Outreach Center, located at 1031 N. Highland Ave. Elder J.C. Hash is host pastor. For more information call 722-2285.

Wayside CME Church will hold services until further notice at Shouse Temple CME Church, 4250 Carver Road. Worship services will be held at 2 p.m. Sundays. Prayer and Bible study will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesdays. Additional programs and services will be announced as necessary. The Rev. Emma T. Duren is the church's pastor.

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## Catholic priest suspended

N.C. native creates new black congregation in D.C.

By ROBERT GREENE  
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON -- The Rev. George A. Stallings hates the sight of empty pews, and that's one reason he wants the Roman Catholic Church to allow a special rite for black Americans.

But a black bishop contends that Stallings, suspended as a priest for creating an unauthorized parish in Washington, could wind up with a church that is no different from any other evangelical congregation competing for members and dollars.

Stallings, who is black, said in an interview last week that the Catholic church is missing the boat in attracting blacks and other minorities because its hierarchy and traditions are too bound by Euro-

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-- The Rev. George Stallings

pean culture and dominated by white males.

It fails to evangelize -- make converts -- among blacks because it doesn't train anyone to do so, he said, adding that other religions are filling the gap.

"I have been to cities where the church was closed," Stallings said. "Black Protestants came in there and took over and now they are packed to the gills."

Stallings said he wants to create a separate African-American Catholic Rite, along the lines of the ethnic

Eastern Rite churches. Those churches accept the authority of the pope, but have considerable autonomy in ritual and discipline.

The unauthorized service conducted Sunday at Stallings' Imani Temple showed at least one side of what the new rite would entail: The service combined the traditional Catholic Mass with African ritual and the foot-stomping, hand-clapping style of the traditional black Protestant church.

Baptists and Muslims also attended the service, held at Howard University Law School.

Stallings was suspended the next day by Washington Cardinal James A. Hickey and barred from performing the Catholic sacraments.

At stake in Stallings' battle are 2 million black American Catholics, a minority of both blacks -- some 30 million in America -- and American Catholics as a whole -- 54 million.

According to church figures, there are 300 black priests and 13 black bishops. Of the 17,000 Catholic parishes, 1,200 are predominantly black.

Stallings said the Catholic church must develop "an African-American Catholic liberation theology" to address social and political needs.

"It is difficult, if not almost impossible, for one ethnic or cultural group to define or to decide what is good for another ethnic group," he said. "It is always necessary for those ethnic groups to get a seal of approval from the white male power group."

But Catholic officials, black and white, criticize Stallings for his methods and what they say are his unfair attacks on the church.

"The father's argument that there is racism in the church has been



AP LaserPhoto

The Rev. George Stallings, a native of North Carolina, leads his independent Catholic congregation in prayer at Howard University in Washington, D.C. Rev. Stallings celebrated his first Mass in his new African-American Catholic congregation defying warnings from Roman Catholic church leaders.

acknowledged," said Auxiliary Bishop John H. Ricard of Baltimore, who is black. "Certainly we have a long way to go."

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-- Auxiliary Bishop John H. Ricard, Baltimore

Rather than defying Hickey's authority, Stallings should work with the cardinal to form a new rite, Ricard said, adding that the danger is leading a church that is no different from any other.

"What Father Stallings is going to find is that, frankly, the ministers who can perform the preaching

styles and rituals in his church are a dime a dozen," Ricard said, referring to the host of evangelicals crowding the airwaves. "The Catholic priest gets his authority from a Roman collar."

The Rev. William Lori, Hickey's secretary, also indicated Stallings needed to work through the Catholic hierarchy.

"The difficulty is not that he tried those channels and is blocked," Lori said. "The difficulty is that he has spurned those channels."

Lori said the church must reject the idea "that only blacks can preach to blacks" and whites to whites.

However, John H. Cartwright, an expert in black religion at Boston University, said that's part of the problem.

"The church has been colorblind to a fault," he said. "It's blind to itself. ... You almost need to hold a mirror up to it."