

Rev. John Mendez: Controversial, Maligned, Misunderstood From previous page

island in Cuba," he said.

A few years ago, he and Benjamin Chavis, the executive director of the NAACP, went to Angola, a nation at war with South Africa.

"I hope when I die, I die in Africa," he said. "I have no problems leaving the United States eventually maybe to live in Africa and die there like W.E.B. DuBois."

An Ardent Philosopher

Mendez enters the Howard Thurmond listening room inside Emmanuel. It is a warm place that functions as a counseling room and a location for members to privately mediate.

Thurmond, one of Mendez's most influential role models, was a professor of theology at Howard University who traveled to India to visit Ghandi in the thirties. Mendez celebrates Thurmond's birthday yearly.

Dr. Rembert Malloy of Winston-Salem, also an admirer of the philosopher, compared Mendez's

powerful sermons to the soft-spoken Thurmond.

"Rev. Mendez is a dynamic speaker. He gets your attention by the eloquence of his voice, his flowing words. But Thurmond was quiet and soft. If Rev. Mendez ain't said nothing, you're going to be listening," he said.

One of his primary functions as a minister, Mendez said, is restoring the self-confidence of African Americans, young and old.

Youths and young adults are an important part of Emmanuel. Twenty-two-year-old Lisa Black and Mendez's 18-year-old son Sekou, a sophomore at Howard University, work as counselors of the church's summer youth program.

A Family Man

Aside from his activism, Mendez is a family man who devotes much of his time and energy to those he loves.

He has been married to the former Sarah L. Howard for 21 years.

The attractive woman with shoulder-length, dark curly hair met her husband at a Harlem church. The couple has two children, Sekou and Jamila, a 16-year-old junior at East Forsyth High School.

The Mendez home is a spacious house with a two-car garage in middle-class suburban Kernersville. The neighborhood is predominately white, with a few black families near the minister. Mendez said that when he first moved in, rocks were thrown through his windows.

Inside the house is an impressive collection of African art, much of which was brought back from his many excursions to Africa. A huge painting of W.E.B. DuBois hangs above the front door.

The family's basement recreation room is the epitome of comfort. A large-screen TV stands against one side of the room, a train set and wet bar along the other. Books and videotapes line the wall beside the TV.

Also located in the basement is

Mendez's personal office. Like his church office, the shelves are lined with books, representing nearly every subject imaginable. Another statuette of "The Thinker" sits on the desk. The room is cluttered with old photographs and memorabilia.

He shows a visitor a letter he received that morning. Sent anonymously, the letter is addressed to Mendez and Alderman Larry Womble and recommends that they leave the city.

"Courage to Be Free"

It is a beautiful Sunday morning in July at Emmanuel, located in a picturesque neighborhood surrounded by attractive houses with well-manicured lawns. Inside, the eclectic blend of people who make up Emmanuel's membership begin to congregate. A woman in a white suit is instructing a Sunday school class. A couple is dressed in African kente cloth prints. A deacon stands in front of the congregation, singing an inspiring spiritual.

Service is about to begin. Mendez enters the pulpit

adorned in a white robe with a red sash decorated with gold crosses. Today he will speak on "The Courage to Be Free and Stay Free." Using no prepared script, Mendez becomes philosophical, telling his audience that although freedom is an inherent right, it must be practiced in order to retain its utility.

"If our convictions convince us that we are right, it becomes necessary that we break the silence," he shouts.

Mendez mentions a short list of his role models that includes Thurmond, King, Ghandi and Socrates as individuals who rejected the accepted norms to express their sometimes unpopular views.

Referring to the derogatory letters in the newspaper that have attacked him and his supporters, he condemns the intolerance of contrasting ideas and promotes love and unity.

"The whole attack is saying 'get in your place.' I have news: I

have no place to be put in and neither do you."

His deep, rhythmic voice is now dynamic and fiery, ensuring the audience's attention with every word. He relays his own personal struggles, recalling how he was compelled to take a stand when it was safer and easier to move with the crowd. In spite of the sparse attendance — a likely result of the holiday — he is as charismatic as ever.

"You may think you're free on the outside, but you're not free unless you're free on the inside," he says. "Free your head and free your heart. My mother used to tell me, 'Be an engine and not a caboose.'"

The congregation stands for the singing of the last hymn of the day. The benediction is given and a buzzing murmur fills the room as the members converse among themselves.

Service is over.

Top Ladies of Distinction and Top Teens Attend Atlanta Syn-Lod



(L. to r.) Ozell Dean, Top Ladies of Distinction national founder; Marie Stellos, national president; and Bobbie Miller, inductee.

Over 1,000 members convened recently in Atlanta for the 28th Syn-Lod of Top Ladies of Distinction Inc. The theme for the international convention was "Programming Our Thrust for Effective Empowerment in the 21st Century." The focus was "How to Assure Implementation."

Ladies Wilma Wheeler, Chlores Shore and Bobbie Miller and Top Teens Dwight Hash and Cory Morgan represented the Winston-Salem chapter.

The Syn-Lod included a career fair, induction and memorial services, president's reception, prayer breakfast, forums, plenary sessions, a Top Teens speakers tournament, awards luncheons, workshops, black and white ball and a public banquet.

Lady Lena Turner received a humanitarian award for her work with Top Teens of America Inc. Turner and Cheryl Lindsay-Christmas, a former Top Teens president, along with other employees of Sara Lee Knit Products presented a workshop for over 475 teen-agers. Sara Lee also gave the teen-agers T-shirts and educational materials.

Top Ladies of Distinction Inc., a national professional and humanitarian organization, was an outgrowth of a meeting by Mrs. Lyndon Baines Jones, shortly after she and President Johnson moved into the White House.

The organization has programs for Top Teens, senior citizens, improving the status of women and community beautification.

Top Ladies of Distinction was incorporated Sept. 8, 1964. The Winston-Salem chapter is the first chapter in the state of North Carolina.

It was organized in 1982 by Lady Theilma Small, who is now deceased.

Lady Mariett Stellos was reelected national president.

Lady Hattie Morris is the Area IV director. Lady Wilma Wheeler is the Winston-Salem chapter president.



Chlores Shore (left) and Bobbie Miller attend the Business Youth Career Awareness Conference in Atlanta.



Top Teens Dwight Hash and Cory Morgan attend the Business Youth Career Awareness Conference in Atlanta.



L. to r.: (front) Constance Hash, local president; Wilma Wheeler and Judy Williams; (back) Daisy Staten, Janie Williams, Ann Dew, Jackie Pierce, Minnie Ervin and Lillian Satterfield.

When Someone Describes A Home As Rustic, Victorian, Or Colonial, Be Sure They're Not Talking About The Heating System.

6%

The only style homeowners should look for in a heating and cooling system is modern, like Duke Power's Comfort Machine[®], a money-saving, energy-efficient heat pump.

Call today for details on our 6% loan for heat pumps and insulation up-grades.

Call 727-4359

This offer is good through November 15, 1993.

DUKE POWER

Smart People With Energy

SPRING INTO SUMMER

WITH THE LATEST IN HAIR FASHIONS

CALL JENNIFER JETER AT:

MIRACLES SALON

624 WEST FOURTH STREET (Downtown)

(919) 773-0507

BRING THIS COUPON AND RECEIVE \$5.00 OFF ANY SERVICE

BY APPT. ONLY EXP. 8/31/93

JEROMES

Just Arrived!!!

Girls Chubby Dresses

Your Accounts Welcomed

520 N. LIBERTY CURTAINS • READY TO • BEDSPREADS 722-7474
DRAPERIES WEAR • SLIPCOVERS

Open 9:15 to 5:30 p.m. • Monday - Saturday • Closed Wednesday