

Unity Revival will unite churches

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Church congregations of various dominations and races from all over Winston-Salem will gather next Saturday, June 2, for the first ever Unity Prayer Gathering at the M.C. Benton Convention Center.

The gathering is designed to break down the barriers that normally divide churches and unite Christians together in prayer for the city, the nation and the world. As of last Friday, approximately 100 churches had signed up to participate in the revival.

The event is the brainchild of the Rev. Sir Walker Mack Jr., pastor of Union Baptist Church, who feels there is a real need for both prayer and unity right now.

"The Unity Prayer Gathering is designed to accumulate churches for worship, prayer, and a time for us to get together and realize that we all have one thing in common, and that is that Christ is the center of all our churches," said Mack.

During the three-day event — which will start Thursday, May 31 and is called the Unity Revival — churches will take part in special events such as joint prayer or worship services. Several guest ministers have been booked as speakers for the event. The June 2 culmination event will start with a Unity Parade at 10 a.m. from Corpening Plaza to the convention center, where the prayer gathering will begin at 11 a.m. The first hour of the gathering will involve singing and worship, while the second hour will focus on prayer.

Mack said the event is multicultural and will incorporate the traditions of many of the churches involved. He also said all are welcome to participate in the march and the prayer gathering, regardless of if he or she has a church affiliation.

Mack said that aside from the sheer size of the endeavor, his biggest challenge has been the resistance some churches, both black and white, have had to crossing the racial divide and worshipping together. Mack said that the divide that keeps Christians in churches that are predomi-



The Rev. Sir Walker Mack Jr.

nately one race is a cultural one. People want to worship in a culture that resembles theirs, he said, but what everyone needs to realize is that Christ transcends all cultures and all races. He said any resistance he's gotten to the gathering has validated his conviction for it.

"I grew up in the city so I know the history of how our churches have been so divided. And you know on one side of town you have your black churches, the other side of town your white churches and now your hispanic churches. So, as our city continues to grow, it's just going to become more evident that we all need to come together and begin to impact the community together," said Mack.

More than 40 predominately white

churches and about 10 predominately Hispanic churches have signed up. Mack said more churches are signing up every day and that he is pleased with the response so far.

One predominately white church participating is Redeemer Presbyterian Church. Francis Smith, Redeemer's missions and mercy pastor, is on the steering committee for the event. He said his church plans to hold prayer services with Goodwill Baptist, a predominately African-American church. He hopes the service shows people that, even though they may have different worship styles, they can all still worship together.

"And as we get to know each other better, we tear down walls of ignorance and begin to understand and appreciate and affirm each other that we're all in this together," said Smith.

Smith hopes to see real relationships built between pastors and between members of the different churches because of this event. He said, on a personal level, he's already befriended pastors, some from East Winston, that he wouldn't have met otherwise. He said he's already gained a great deal in friendship and insight from being a part of the gathering.

"It's really uniting churches and pastors in a way we've never done before," said Smith.

Mack said that he hopes that churches come together more after the gathering with a stronger alliance of pastors and people to make for a stronger community. He's hoping to see a large, diverse turnout next Saturday.

"Let's for one day put aside Highway 52, let's for one day put aside the communities we're so accustomed to worshipping in and praying in and come together and see that all of us confess to the same Christ," said Mack.

Any pastor who wants to participate in the Unity Prayer Gathering, can call 724-9305 extension 223. Go to www.unionbaptistwsc.org for more information about the event.



Residents and city leaders pose beneath the sign.

Sign

from page A1

dents can be proud to say they live. The family-friendly environment has attracted many home buyers over the years, and it continues to be a great place to live, work and raise families," she commented. "I would like to acknowledge the Castle Heights Neighborhood Watch ... for their efforts in maintaining a peaceful atmosphere for many young and senior citizens."

The Rev. Waymon Monroe, pastor of the nearby Solid Rock Baptist Church, extended words of support and encouragement to inhabitants of Castle Heights, detailing a tradition of collaboration between the church and the community that existed under his predecessor, the Rev. Charles Leak.

"Solid Rock has been a supporter of this community for over 20 years," he said. "We just thank you for allowing Solid Rock to serve this community and we pray that if there's anything we can do to be supportive, we want to continue to open up our doors and let you know that ... Waymon

Monroe supports this community as well as the Solid Rock Baptist Church family."

The Castle Heights neighborhood serves as a model for many fledgling communities today, Burke said.

"This is a fine, decent place and it can be used for other folks when they want to come into the city to look and say, 'Well, we can live in Winston; we can develop ourselves,'" she related. "It gives me a boost so when I speak in city government, I can say that Castle Heights neighborhood is a neighborhood where people can work together with pride, dignity and have self-esteem that's high. I'm as happy as I can be."

Johnson says that he has seen many changes take place in Castle Heights over the four decades he has lived there, and not all have been positive.

"We have (more) people that are renting, and we have children that are just walking around unsupervised and that presents a lot of problems," he remarked. "But we love our neighborhood. We're not going to give it up without a fight."

Lawrence

from page A4

Lawrence worked with well-known minority-owned companies including Johnson Products, Johnson Publishing, and Soft Sheen Products, as well as mainstream companies such as McDonald's and Sears, Roebuck.

At McDonald's, he was the first African-American regional advertising manager in the history of the company. He was responsible for the development and implementation of marketing and promotional strategies for 300 stores in a four-state region and \$200 million of sales in the nationwide rollout.

He has left a lasting impression in the \$5 billion multi-cultural beauty business, where he served in various executive capacities:

promotion and advertising manager at Johnson products (Gentle Treatment, Ultra Sheen and other brands), marketing director for Supreme Beauty Products, the hair care subsidiary of Johnson Publishing Company (Ebony, Jet, and Fashion Fair cosmetics); promotion director for Soft-Sheen Industries (and Soft-Sheen products); and business director for the American Health and Beauty Aids Institute (AHBAD), the trade association of minority-owned hair and beauty care companies which display their Proud Lady silhouette of a black woman on products and advertising. His 30 years experience in marketing, advertising and promotion served him well in meeting the challenges of SMSi's Fortune 50 clients, including Procter and Gamble, Johnson & Johnson and General Motors.

Lawrence was laid to rest May 16 at Piedmont Memorial Gardens after a funeral service at St. Peter's Church and World Outreach Center.

He is survived by his wife, Sharon, a 13-year-old son, Christopher and adult children Krystyn Johnson, Marshall Wade and Harold Johnson.

In lieu of flowers and other commemorations, the family asks that memorials be made to a scholarship fund for his son, Christopher Rodney Lawrence. Checks should be made payable to the Joseph Rodney Lawrence Scholarship Fund and mailed to the Truliant Federal Credit Union, Victory North Financial Center, 889 North Liberty Street, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27101.



Lafayette Jones

Why wouldn't you get
your Free Checking
from the bank rated
#1 in Customer
Satisfaction
six years in a row?

Unbeatable Free Checking WITH WACHOVIA

- Free Online Banking
- Free Online BillPay
- Free Balance Alerts
- No direct deposit required
- No monthly service fee
- No minimum balance
- Free Check Card
- Free Visa Extras rewards program
- Unlimited access to Wachovia Financial Centers and ATMs

STOP BY YOUR LOCAL
WACHOVIA FINANCIAL CENTER TODAY,
CALL 800-WACHOVIA (800-922-4684)
OR VISIT WACHOVIA.COM.



WACHOVIA