

RELIGION

CALENDAR

Feb. 20
Spring Banquet
Alpha Pregnancy Support presents the 2015 Spring Banquet featuring the Rev. Dr. Johnny M. Hunter on Friday, Feb. 20 at 7 p.m. at the J. Smith Young YMCA Event Center in Lexington, N.C. Hunter, of Fayetteville, is the leader of a prominent African-American evangelical pro-life ministry in the United States. He is the Board Advisor at the Virginia ProLife Coalition and the Virginia Christian Alliance Board. He is an ordained minister and currently serves as the Pastor of Worship at Cliffdale Community Church. He is the Pastor Emeritus at Church of The Living Water in Buffalo, N.Y. He is a graduate of Hampton Institute. He received an honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree at the Methodist-Episcopal Church, USA. He considers time spent in jail for acting on his beliefs as his greatest achievement.



Hunter

Individual tickets are \$20 each and includes dinner. Sponsorship tables for eight guests are \$250. For reservations and information call Alpha Pregnancy Support at 336-242-1218 or alpha3@lexcominc.net or alphapregnancy1@gmail.com.

Feb. 21
Lunch and Learn
Mt. Zion Baptist Church and Merchant & Farmer's Bank will offer a "lunch and learn" series called "Grow Your Church," designed especially for faith-based and non-profit organizations to learn about best practices in compensation, sustainability and succession planning, the importance of financial statements and how to utilize remote deposit capture to your benefit. The event is free and will be held at Mt. Zion Baptist, 950 File St., on Saturday, Feb. 21. Lunch will be provided. Registration starts at 9:30 a.m. and the event is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. RSVP by Friday, Feb. 13 to Wendy Morgan Butterfield Williamson at 336-722-0200 ext. 22 or by email at wendy.morgan@mfbonline.com.

Feb. 22
Farrakhan address
Nation of Islam leader Min. Louis Farrakhan's Saviour's Day message will be broadcast live via satellite on Sunday, Feb. 22 at the Enterprise Conference and Banquet Center, 1922 S. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. Doors open at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call 336-499-0436.

Mapping sermon
The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Winston-Salem, 4055 Robinhood Road, will hear the Rev. Lisa Schwartz speak on "The Map Is Not the Territory" at 9 and 11 a.m. Sunday. At the 9:15 a.m. forum, Jasper Brown, retired NLBR attorney, will talk about cases that were high points in his career. The 9:30 a.m. Explorations in Adult Sunday school will hear Kate Chanas speak about "The Spiritual Power of Music." Visitors are welcome. Find more information at www.uufws.org.

Black History event
Mount Sinai Full Gospel Deliverance Center, 2721 Manchester St., will host the annual Soul Food Feast on Sunday, Feb. 22, from 1 to 5 p.m. in celebration of our rich heritage and family traditions during Black History Month. The Sunday Dinner is a symbol of love, unity and family in the African-American culture. Again, this year, a spectacular, delectable feast will culminate the month-long celebration. For additional information, contact the church office at (336) 722.2624 or msfgdc@bellsouth.net. The Rev. Yvonne H. Hines is senior pastor.

Youth in charge
The youth and young adults will be in charge of the morning service at New Direction Movement Cathedral, 3300 Overdale Drive, at 11 a.m. on Feb. 22. For more information call 336-771-2111

Fruit of the Spirit
New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, 1201 New Hope Lane, will hold the annual Fruit of the Spirit service on Sunday, Feb. 22, at 4 p.m.

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Submitted photo
National Bankers Association President Michael Grant, U.S. Black Chambers Inc. President Ron Busby, and A.M.E. board member Rev. Jonathan Weaver discuss a new plan for economic development through the Black Church.

A.M.E. Church leaders announce black economic empowerment as 2015 goal

BY HAZEL TRICE EDNEY
TRICEEDNEY@WIRE.COM

When Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, he and other protesters had won passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Therefore, his agenda had turned toward the next major issue -- economic empowerment for Black people.

Therefore, on April 3, 1968, planning a march on behalf of oppressed sanitation workers, Dr. King told preachers at the Mason Temple in Memphis, Tenn., "It's all right to talk about long white robes over yonder, in all of its symbolism. But ultimately people want some suits and dresses and shoes to wear down here!"

"It's all right to talk about streets flowing with milk and honey, but God has commanded us to be concerned about the slums down here, and his children who can't eat three square meals a day."

"It's all right to talk about the new Jerusalem, but one day, God's preacher must talk about

the new New York, the new Atlanta, the new Philadelphia, the new Los Angeles, the new Memphis, Tennessee. This is what we have to do."

The next day, Dr. King was assassinated.

Nearly 47 years later, as America last month celebrated the King birthday holiday and is now celebrating Black History Month, a group of church leaders appears to be carrying out this Black economic empowerment goal in earnest. Invited to speak at a recent gathering of pastors and leaders of the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church, National Bankers Association President Michael Grant cited the words of human rights champion Paul Robeson:

"We realize that our future lies chiefly in our own hands," Grant quoted. "We know that neither institution nor friends can make a race stand unless it has



Weaver

strength in its own foundation; that races like individuals must stand or fall by their own merit; that to fully succeed they must practice the virtues of self-reliance, self-respect, industry, perseverance, and economy."

Grant continued in his own words: "We played a major role in growing America from a small colonial outpost to the greatest industrial giant the world has ever known. We don't have to argue about our ability to grow wealth. We have made everyone else rich, some filthy rich. Isn't it time that we finally make our efforts productive for ourselves?"

Grant was keynote speaker during a special session on "Economic Development through the Black Church" during the A.M.E. Church's 2nd District Mid-year Opening Plenary Session in Raleigh, N.C. late last year.

His speech preceded a panel discussion that also included Marie Johns, former deputy administrator at the Small Business Administration; Ron Busby, president/CEO of the U.S. Black Chambers Inc. and the Rev. Jonathan Weaver, senior pastor of Greater Mt.

Nebo A.M.E. Church in Bowie, Md., and board member of the A.M.E. organization that deals with economic growth and development projects.

After the forum, Weaver says A.M.E. pastors, led by Bishop William P. DeVeaux, are now poised to carry out a specific plan that they hope will spread to other denominations and ultimately catch fire in other denominations and the Black community throughout 2015.

"Clearly where we are at this point is to actualize and implement what we discussed in Raleigh," said Weaver in an interview. "The whole thrust was how Black churches can help to empower Black businesses."

The starting plan, in a nutshell, is for churches located in the A.M.E. Second District -- North Carolina, Maryland and D.C. -- to commit to the support of two Black-owned businesses. They are Thomas Morehead, president of a BMW dealership in Sterling, Va., and Donnell Thompson, co-founder/co-owner of RWDT Foods, Inc., a

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Triad-area leaders work on strategy for future

BY DONNA ROGERS
THE CHRONICLE

There was a special session on "Economic Development through the Black Church" during the A.M.E. Church's Second District Mid-year Opening Planning Session in Raleigh, N.C. late last year.

The speakers included a banker and black businessman who described how the church can move toward economic prosperity.

The target area involves churches in the A.M.E. Second District -- North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland and D.C. -- to commit to support two black-owned businesses. They are Thomas Morehead, president of a BMW dealership in Sterling, Va. and Donnell Thompson, co-founder/co-owner of RWDT Foods Inc., a chain of restaurants based in N. Snellville, Ga.

The Rev. Dr. Conrad Pridgen, presiding elder of the Western N.C. Conference of the Second Episcopal District of the A.M.E. Church, said Friday, Feb. 13, that his division of the church, which includes the Triad, is working with Thompson

to develop a plan to mutually help each other. It includes providing discounts to A.M.E. church members who use his businesses.

"We just wanted to get started with him with some kind of opportunity," said Pridgen, who lives in Whitsett in Guilford County. "We're just trying to keep our dollars in our community. I think that makes sense today."

Pridgen said he believes Thompson owns a Denny's restaurant in Durham.

"We're interested in working with him on functions we would have any way," such as a fellowship dinner, Pridgen said.

Another idea in the planning stage is that church members might get



Pridgen

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Panel to discuss the premise of the Black Church dying

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Vitality of worship in the black church is rarely lacking.

The vibrant signature of black praise and worship has always been spontaneity and response, lots of self-expression, freedom of movement and freedom of voice.

In every sense of the word, it appears that the Black Church is much alive. Not so, says Dr. Eddie Glaude Jr. Ph.D., professor of Religion and chairman of the Center for African American Studies at Princeton University.

"The Black Church, as we've known it, or imagined it, is dead," he writes. His writing was featured recently in the Huffington Post.

The Rev. Dr. Derek Hicks, the Rev. Christopher Manning and Ms. Jasmyn Graham will



Hicks

share discussions on Saturday, Feb. 21, on the topic "The Black Church Is Dead." The discussions begin at 9 a.m. in the Family Life Center of St. John C.M.E. Church, 350 NW Crawford Place.

Hicks is an assistant professor of Religion and Culture at Wake Forest University and serves on the founding steering committee of the Religion and Food Group at the American Academy of Religion. Hicks holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Grambling State University, a Master of Arts degree from Dallas Theological Seminary and a doctor of philosophy degree from Rice University.

Rev. Christopher N. Manning is an associate minister at St. John C.M.E. Church. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religion from Methodist University and a Master's of Divinity in Systematic Theology from the Philips School of Theology at the Interdenominational Theological Center. He teaches a weekly Sunday school class for youth, in which he uses critical thinking

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Clothed and Ready

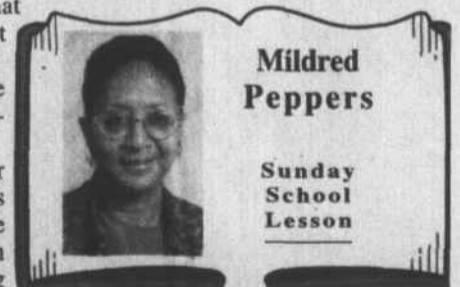
Scripture: Ephesians 6: 10-20

By the end of this lesson, we should

- Recognize that the church is in a constant battle against evil
- Understand the need to be ready for battle
- Include prayer as a daily part of our lives

Background: The fifth epistle was written by Paul to the young church at Ephesus. This ancient gateway city was a religious and commercial center that was fertile ground for lots of ideas and practices. There wasn't an apparent problem there but the apostle wanted to know "how to live" as believers. Don't forget that church means people not buildings. Paul viewed the church as a living organism that would grow and grow. As he wrapped up this letter, he chose to encourage them to always be ready to fight evil wherever it pops up. The Roman soldier's battle gear is the model.

Lesson: Paul declares that the church, as a living organism, is in constant warfare against evil. He points out that evil isn't just physical but spiritual also. The battle is real and will confront every believer. They must be ready! To do battle, each believer (the church) must be clothed physically and mentally for it. Each item mentioned in the text comes in the order that a soldier would put them on. Preparedness ahead of time is vital. The first step is to know the Word of God. Study, not memorization, is the key. Knowing the truth paves the way for righteous living. Not perfection but intentionally living according to God's standards -- love, mercy, patience, forgiveness, longsuffering (etc). Believer's feet are to be ready when the Commander speaks. That means standing for and being balanced when the orders are given. The shield provides protection as the



Mildred Peppers

Sunday School Lesson

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