

Visions

Monument of Faith Church
A Ministry of the Church of God of Prophecy

Celebrating 78 Years



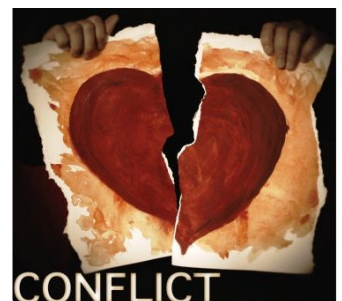
1933 — 2011



Our Church History
A Historical Synopsis



**Family is What You
Make It**
An Adoption Story



**Congregational Health
Bulletin**
*Confronting and
Managing Conflict*

The Musings of a Pentecostal Pastor

Pentecostalism, when narrowly defined, is often reduced to a group of Christians in the free church tradition who believe in speaking in tongues, laying on of hands for spiritual healing and ascribe to spontaneous and prolonged worship times with little interest in the Christian year, printed prayers or confessing creeds. Moreover, Pentecostals are often characterized as anti-intellectuals and social escapist who embrace an eschatology deeply rooted in the afterlife. Today, many view Pentecostals from a lofty ecclesiological place through theological eyes of suspicion and irrelevance. To do so, however, is to dismiss the fastest growing Christian movement in the world.



Bishop
Clarence Laney, Jr.
M.Div.

Pentecostalism is growing rapidly and has touched every continent, especially those in the southern hemisphere. Despite the global influence, there remains considerable confusion over the use of the term. Those in the media and scholars often refer to Pentecostalism as if it is a phenomenon, but in reality it is a complex social movement with many different strains. An in-depth look into Pentecostalism will reveal classical Pentecostal denominations such as the Church of God in Christ, Assemblies of God, Church of God, the Church of God of Prophecy and a plethora of indigenous and independent Pentecostal churches. Some of these churches emphasize the “Prosperity Gospel” of health and wealth, while others focus on evangelism, healing and ecstatic worship; still others focus on the social gospel. The latter have active social ministries ¹.

With a broader definition and understanding of Pentecostalism, it is easier to recognize that the movement is diverse and far reaching. As I reflected

upon global Pentecostalism, I am thankful that God has called me to serve a congregation deeply rooted in this tradition. Although diverse and theologically eclectic, Pentecostal diversity has not always been embraced or reflected in many local Pentecostal congregations.

In this anniversary edition we celebrate the diversity, sustainability, spirituality and theological evolution of this congregation. When it is asked or discovered that I serve a progressive Pentecostal liturgical congregation with a strong emphasis on social activism, I am often greeted with looks of confusion and disbelief. Pentecostalism is usually

not defined as progressive or liturgical. However, a close reading of scripture, specifically the gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, from which Pentecostalism traces its roots, demonstrates the newly formed community of faith had components of both.

“When it is asked or discovered that I serve a progressive Pentecostal liturgical congregation with a strong emphasis on social activism, I am often greeted with looks of confusion and disbelief.”

Is it possible to be Pentecostal and not be progressive, when the church in Acts offered a new paradigm for ministry? Can one be filled with the Holy Spirit and be disconnected from one another and their community when immediately after receiving the Holy Spirit the church was driven into the streets

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Our Church History

A Historical Synopsis

In the year 1933, Elder Cleveland Robinson began having prayer meetings in the home of Mother Julia Luster. Brother C.L. Taylor, State Bishop of North Carolina, officially appointed Elder Robinson as Pastor of the Durham church.

Charter members included:

Mother Julia Luster, Joe and Fidelia Howard, Bertha Gregory, Nuorlean Tetter, Eva Luster Bell, Cleo Luster Melvin, James Fletcher, Aaron Peterson, Kedessa Stanback, Rosa Lee Howard, Classie and Ludi Nicely, Lela Bains, Deacon Thomas Melvin, Christine and Jeanette Alston, Mother Cora Davis, Deacon Ernest and Rosa Briggs, Connie Mangum, Lucille Fleming, Mother Betty McNeal, Mother Harriet Melvin, Mother Winnie Carr, Letha McIver, Ida Bell Briggs, Alice Weathers, Mother Winbush, Hattie Neal, Bertha and Dorothy Caesar, Esther and Virginia McCoy, Randolph and Hildred Helms, Grace, Josephine and Christine Fincher, Lela and Gregory Queen, Mazaree and Gurther Lee Hinton, Annie Bell Forrester, Consolo McCrae, Rowena Allen, and Maybelle Williams.

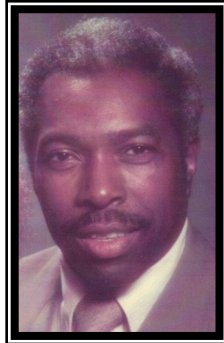
The Lord increased the church in different areas of its work and blessed the congregation through the years. The Pastors responsible for the spiritual, financial, and material growth are: Cleveland Robinson 1933-1937; Archie Melvin 1937-1947 and 1949-1951; Floyd McIver 1947-1949; Charles Scotton 1951-1955, Rufus B. Finlayson 1955-1959; Barney Trogden 1959-1963; Marvin Scotton 1963-1965; James Ricks 1965-1968; Eva Gilmore 1968-1970; Jimmy Foxx 1970-1975; Carl Waden 1975-1981; Willie Walters 1981-1985; Harold Williams 1985-1996.

In March of 1996 Clarence Laney, Jr. was appointed as Interim Pastor and was officially appointed as Pastor in July of the same year. Significant growth in membership and finances has occurred under the leadership of Pastor Laney.

In May of 1998 the name Monument of Faith Church (MOF) was added to personalize the ministry. MOF is a progressive church on the move for God. Inspired by our vision, our lives as individuals and as a church body have been greatly enriched and our community has been positively impacted.♦

Pastoral History

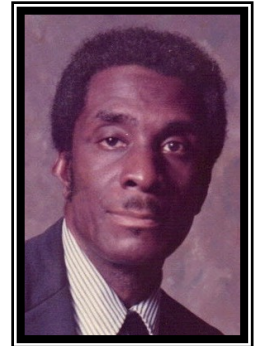
1933 - 2011



Bishop Rufus Finlayson
1955-1959




Bishop Barney Trogdon
1959-1963



Bishop James Ricks
1965-1969

Pastors Not Pictured



Cleveland Robinson
1933-1937

Archie Melvin
1937-1947
and
1949-1951

Floyd McIver
1947-1949

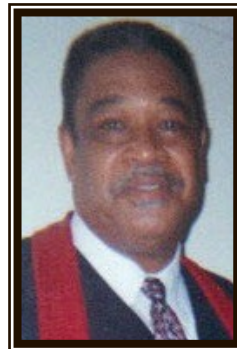
Charles Scotton
1951-1955

Marvin Scotton
1963-1965

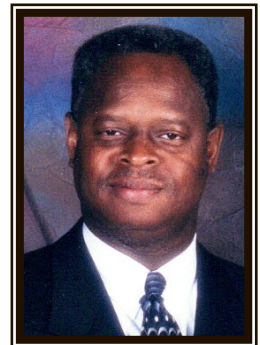
Willie Walters
1981-1985



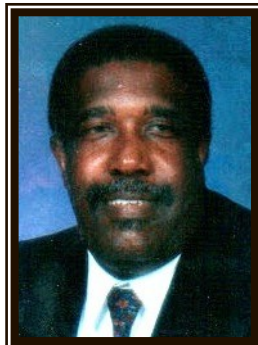
Pastor Eva Gilmore
1969-1970



Bishop Jimmy Foxx
1970-1975



Bishop Carl Waden
1975-1981



Bishop J. Harold Williams
1985-1997



Bishop Clarence Laney
1997-present



Family is What You Make It *By Gwen D. Roulhac*

Stories of adoption intrigue us and capture our attention. We are all familiar with the details of the story of Jesus' conception and birth as well as his adoption by Joseph. Many of us followed the developments in the legal challenge that threatened to disrupt superstar Madonna's adoption of a Malawian toddler. Actress Angelina Jolie has garnered a tremendous amount of public attention for her adoption of children from Cambodia, Ethiopia and Vietnam.

Although she may not have attracted worldwide media attention, Johnnie M. Palmer is a star to her six children and her local community of faith. She has raised two biological daughters, both of whom are adults, and she is currently raising her four adopted children – twins Katiya and Katya (age 13), Taric (age 8) and Cedric (age 5). Born and raised in Durham, NC as the middle child in a sibling group consisting of two older sisters, two younger sisters and a baby brother (one brother died in infancy), Sis. Palmer initially became a foster parent to “give [biological] parents an opportunity to get themselves together to get their children back,” she says. With a chuckle, she adds, “I didn't go in to adopt. I just wanted to foster.” Over the years, she estimates that she has fostered 10 children.



Sis. Palmer, Foster Parent Association President, recalls that her experience fostering a group of homeless children, who she calls “the sweetest kids”, changed her mind about the possibility of adoption. It was hurtful to realize these children and many others like them had no place to call home. She estimates that 137 children in our local community are waiting to be adopted. The United States Department of Health and Human Services reports that, on any given day, 2,722 North Carolina children (under age 16) in public foster care are waiting to be adopted; nationally, almost 115,000 children in foster care are available for adoption.

Sis. Palmer wanted to make a difference in children's lives by bringing them into her home and

welcoming them into her family, and she first did so with Taric. Describing Taric's adoption as “easy, smooth”, she tells the anecdote about the Durham County Department of Social Services (DSS) Social Worker who believed in prayer and who said early on in the process that Sis. Palmer was destined to become Taric's mother. Adopting through DSS gave Sis. Palmer an opportunity to help children in her local community and provided the least expensive way to adopt.

Sis. Palmer is grateful for the family support she receives from her mom and sisters as she juggles the schedules of her four school-aged children, all of whom attend different schools. Her day starts early at 4:30 a.m. and includes breakfast, family prayer, trips to school bus stops, a full day of work at the Durham County Tax Office, dinner, homework checks, one-on-one conversations with the children, television, video games, baths and bed. She finally gets into bed around 12:30 a.m. Despite her busy, jam-packed days as a parent, Sis. Palmer says that the greatest joy of being an adoptive parent is “at the end of the day to hear Cedric say ‘Mama, you know what? You're a great mom. I love you so much.’” Teasingly, she will ask him, “What did I do?” to which he answers simply, “You loved us.”

The number of children in need of help far surpasses the availability of foster and adoptive parents. Sis. Palmer has learned to say “no” when DSS social workers call to ask if she can accept another child



although she will sometimes consent to an emergency, temporary placement of a child. To encourage other adults to foster children, DSS and the Foster Parent Association offer support to foster parents through training, support group meetings and four days of respite care per month.

Looking back, Sis. Palmer rejoices she did not let her initial reservations about being a single parent and needing to work full-time stop her from adopting her children, and affirms that “the whole experience is a lovely thing.” Her advice to anyone who has even “the smallest curiosity about adoption” is to “pray, focus on the resources you do have, and let God take care of the resources you don't have.”

I know many people are glad Sis. Palmer followed her own advice. ♦

Musings, cont . . .

(Continued from page 2)

where the people were? How can one gather in the name of the Holy Spirit without singing hymns, praying, reading scriptures and celebrating the sacraments when these components of the liturgy are demonstrated in the earliest Christian community?

As we celebrate our congregation’s 78th year of ministry, we rejoice in our evolution as a Progressive Liturgical Pentecostal congregation. We commemorate, unashamedly and unapologetically, the ways the Holy Spirit is manifested in our midst. We also thank God for our worship distinctiveness which distinguishes us from many other Pentecostal congregations and denominations. Our social engagement and quest for justice, our fostering of academic excellence and pursuits and our connection between the Holy Spirit and the Spirit’s work in this space is what makes us uniquely The Monument of Faith Church.

“ . . . we rejoice in our evolution as a Progressive Liturgical Pentecostal congregation.”

As we look forward to our future, let each remember: God, who has begun a good work in us, will complete it until that day. What an honor it has been to have served this congregation for fifteen years and to witness the Spirit leading us into uncharted waters. I look forward to where the Spirit will take us as we open our hearts, minds, spirit and doors to God’s will.

It is a joy to be your Pastor. ♦

¹ Donald E. Miller and Testsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 1.



Congregational Health Bulletin

Confronting and Managing Conflict

Rev. Chalice Overy
Community Consulting
www.communityamor.org

Conflict is inevitable, and the church is not exempt. Unfortunately, the church is more hesitant to deal with conflict than other organizations because “Good Christians aren’t supposed to fight.” When we fail to manage conflict properly, we may not end up in a physical brawl at the church meeting, but we still engage in passive aggressive fights that can hinder the congregation’s mission. We talk about people rather than talking to them. We stop participating in certain ministries and activities. We may even withhold contributions in protest of a decision that we don’t like. This behavior quickly produces a divisive and contentious atmosphere in the church that makes it hard to get things done.



When we confront conflict in healthy ways, we will strengthen relationships, work better together, and accomplish more than we imagined possible. Matthew 18:15-22 gives us a model for dealing with conflict.

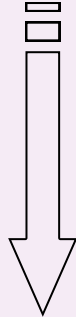
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Reconciliation Road

Staying on Track

Common Detours

Set aside a time to talk— Most conflict can be reconciled if we follow this first step. Schedule a time to meet to ensure that you have adequate time and privacy.



Matthew 18:15
Go **DIRECTLY** to the person, and speak with them **PRIVATELY**



Talking to others— It may make you feel better for a while, but it does nothing to solve the problem, and it causes tension in other relationships.

Confronting publicly— This only makes the person defensive and difficult to reason with.

Secure a helping hand— If the conflict persists get help from people who are calm, fair and reasonable (another member, lay mediator, or lay leader).



Matthew 18:16
Involve others who can be **HELPFUL**



Involving instigators and sycophants— We sometimes seek help from the wrong people—people who are willing to say and do what we won't, or people who are more committed to us than they are to truth and reconciliation.

Take responsibility— Take a look at your role in the conflict. Consider what you can do differently/better, and do that consistently and continually.

This may also be the time to involve clergy or even a professional mediator.



Matthew 18:17a
Involve church leadership



It's not ME, it's YOU— When we allow more people to view the conflict, they may see our fault as well as the other's fault. We derail reconciliation when we fail to acknowledge our own shortcomings.

WWJD?— See Matthew 9:9-13 to remember how Jesus treated Gentiles and tax collectors. He did not distance from them, but spent time with them. He offered them special care so they could be reconciled to God.



Matthew 18:17b
Treat them as a **Gentile or tax collector**



Breaking Relationship— We sometimes think Jesus is giving us a green light to kick people out of the church. Whether or not we go to this extreme, we often choose to distance ourselves from those we disagree with.

Jesus has entrusted us with the ministry of reconciliation.

Let's avoid the detours and STAY ON COURSE!

Why do you love MOF?

"I love MOF because Pastor Laney is teaching us that we need to do good things and not bad things, and that we should worship God in His house."

—**Malachi McCain**



"I love MOF because of the people. When I started attending MOF, I was looking for something different. I really enjoyed the slogan, "A church where everybody is somebody and Jesus is Lord!" This wasn't just a saying, people really acted as if I was somebody important. Another reason is Pastor Laney. Even though he is young, he truly has shown himself to be a great leader and teacher and spirit-filled man. Anytime I have approached him, he has always been willing to help, pray, or give advice. I feel God's spirit here, and the word is relevant to our daily life."

—**Mother Thelma Sherrill**

"I love MOF because I've been here since I was young. I've gotten to know a lot of people and I feel like everyone is family. I feel welcome when I come and I feel like I'm at home. If I ever need help with homework or anything else, I can come here and ask for help. I feel like a lot of people are like second parents to me, if my mom or dad were not here. There are different activities that I could choose to participate in, not just the choir. So I chose ushering, something I like to do. I just enjoy going to MOF."

—**Ashley Mitchell**



"It's interesting how you posed the question – I've been coming to MOF even before it became MOF. I've been coming to the Church of God of Prophecy practically all my life – since I was a young child. I enjoy Pastor's leadership, as he sticks to the teachings of the church and in the Bible. And I love MOF because of the family atmosphere and the Christian fellowship."

—**Delbert "Cat" Watson**