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Bill Abrams Receives

MSW Degree From UNC

Bill Abrams will receive a Master of Social Work from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill May 12, 1974.

Abrams, a native of Gray's Creek presently resides at Morganton, N. C. where he is employed by Western Carolina Center as a social worker

He has served as minister of Haynes Memorial Baptist Church and supplied for other churches while a student. He received his B. A. in Religious Education from Gardner-Webb College in 1971 and continued his studies at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

He is married to the former Dianne Watson of Chase Community and has one child, Angela, age 2.



BILL ABRAMS

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Fairmont: Times-Messenger
Farmville Enterprise
Forest City Courier
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Rev. Bill Abrams stands in front of South Point Baptist Church in Belmont.

Kermit Hull/The Gazette

Belmont pastor doubles as social worker

By Elsie Hamilton
Gazette Lifestyle Reporter

BELMONT — Few congregations, no matter their size or financial stability, boast a social worker on their staff.

But at South Point Baptist Church, the pastor and the social worker are one and the same — the Rev. Bill Abrams. A graduate of Gardner-Webb College and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, he holds a master's degree in social work from UNC-Chapel Hill. He was a social worker in Morganton before accepting the Belmont pastorate.

"While I was earning my master's degree in religious education in seminary, I had a keen sense of Christian calling to the field of social work," Rev. Abrams said. "But although I served interim pastorates and as a supply pastor, I couldn't get rid of the conviction that God wanted me in the pastoral ministry."

Pastor of the Belmont church since 1977, Rev. Abrams has put to good use his social work experience.

RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

Your religious heritage is a feature devoted to the many pieces of worship in this area. Each week, Gazette Lifestyle reporter Elsie Hamilton takes a look at one church or synagogue and its history, congregation and interesting facts.

"Social work gives you a different perspective on people and their needs," the Baptist minister said. "It helps me to help people deal with family problems and even church-related issues."

"There's no doubt that the problems associated with drugs and the breakdown of the family require a lot of counseling. I feel a little like Moses — my ministry has been varied."

And what the minister has learned as counselor he applies to his own home life.

"After I first came to Belmont, I came to realize as pastor I had a responsibility to my family," he said. "I think the pastor has to set the example as husband and father. Thursday night is family night for my wife Dianne and daughter Angie."

"Dianne and I were married between our junior and senior year of high school. We have worked together in the struggle for education, establishing a home, having a family and finding God's place and purpose for our lives. Ours is a teenage marriage that worked. Dianne is one of my greatest assets."

The South Point church, which began in 1937 as a mission of First Baptist Church, has grown from a membership of 77 to more than 500.

"After I came here, we conducted a survey to find out who lived in the South Point area and to learn church preferences," Rev. Abrams. "That's when our prospects began to grow. There is not a Baptist church beyond us, and over the years a number of housing developments have sprung up."

Rev. Abrams said he conducts a Discovery Class in which he teaches Baptist beliefs and practices to new members.

"We have discovered that you can't tell a lot about a church building," he said. "You have to get to know the pastor and the people and know what they believe."