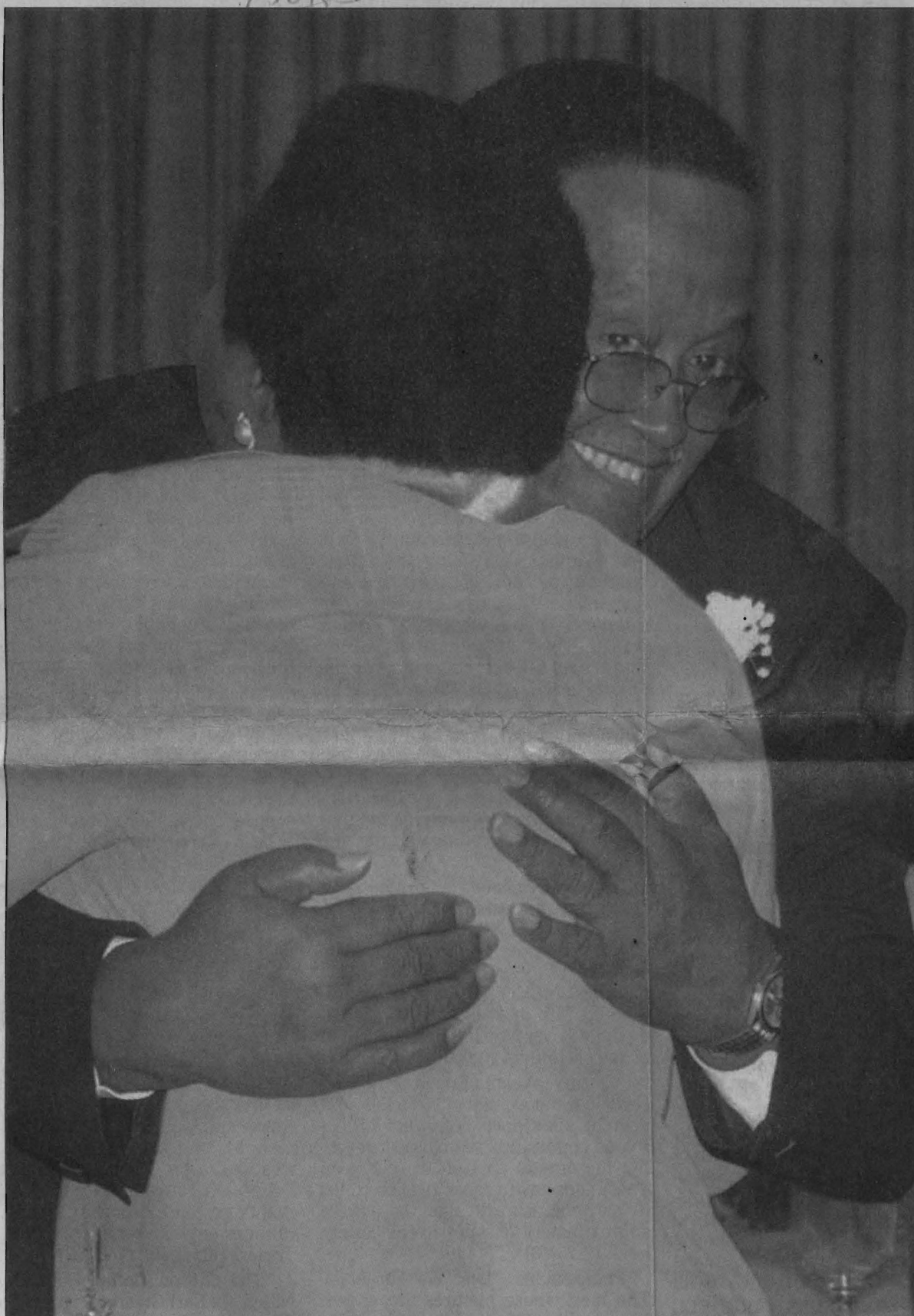


POWER TO PERSEVERE COURAGE TO CHANGE



Rev. J.C. Harris has been serving his flock for 41 years. In that time, he has battled segregation and worked to alleviate poverty.

FRONT PAGE

BY KATIE BE...
RECORD & LANDMARK

When the Rev. J.C. Harris came to Statesville in 1954, he planned to stay for three years.

He's not good at keeping on schedule.

This is Harris' 41st year as pastor of First Baptist Church on Garfield Street. He has outlasted every teacher and preacher he met when he came to town, and he has surpassed the 37-year tenure of his predecessor, the Rev. J.W. Crook.

"I even beat Moses," Harris says with a chuckle. "He only spent 40 years in the wilderness."

Spending 30 or 40 years with a congregation is not unusual in a black church, according to the Rev. William J. Shaw, president of the National Baptist Convention USA Inc.

But it is still a significant event.

"I think this signifies a tremendous tribute to ministry," said Shaw, who was the guest speaker at Harris' 41st-anniversary celebration Friday at the Statesville Civic Center. "When a man stays this long, he establishes strong pastoral ties."

"Generations can relate to a central figure, and that's good for strengthening faith."

Harris was 27 years old when he arrived in Statesville with his wife, Leola, on his arm. He was full of energy and ready to change the world, even if it meant stepping on a few toes along the way.

In the 1960s, Statesville was at the height of segregation. Restaurants refused service to blacks, and even the county courthouse had separate bathrooms for each race.

Honoring his efforts: Reverend J.C. Harris, pastor of First Baptist Church on Garfield Street, receives a hug from Ruby Clark on Saturday during Harris' 41st pastoral anniversary celebration at the Statesville Civic Center.

TYRONE SUMMERS / RECORD & LANDMARK

See **REVEREND**, Page 2

REVEREND: *'I will always remember his preaching'*

continued from Page 1

Harris adopted the civil rights crusade as part of his ministry.

"I tried to give the church an image of being interested in everybody," Harris said. "I had Klansmen calling me, threatening me. I could tell you things that you just wouldn't believe."

He participated in sit-ins and boycotts, bringing many church members with him. When a restaurant refused to serve him, he came back the next week with 300 African-Americans. By the end of the day, 22 of them had been arrested for trying to eat with white people.

"His actions have opened many doors," said the Rev. Charles Moser, a longtime friend. "His life has been threatened, his home has been a target, but he has dared to stand. He's a brave man who has strong convictions and a will to stand up for what he believes at any cost."

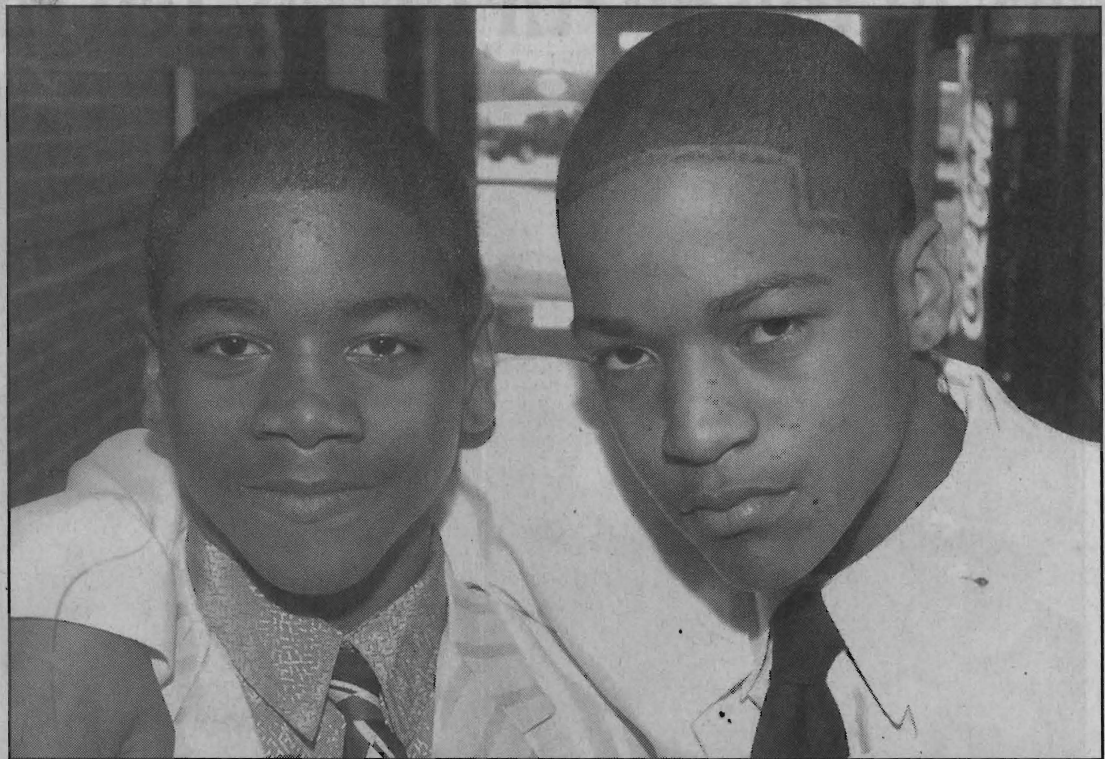
Harris didn't stop at civil rights. As he watched the neighborhoods of south Statesville deteriorate, he petitioned the government to establish housing and anti-poverty programs.

He was met with uncooperative local officials who took his ideas but refused his help. When the housing authority was finally established, someone else was chosen to oversee it.

"Those were some of the years that were sort of painful," Harris said. "Some people just didn't like those changes. I was a real challenge to people who didn't want to change."

While he was making an impact in the community, Harris also ministered to his own 800-member congregation. The church soon outgrew its building on the corner of Garfield and Green streets, and Harris oversaw the church's move to its current home in 1967.

Building a church takes money, and Harris didn't have



TYRONE SUMMERS / RECORD & LANDMARK

Grandchildren: Rev. J.C. Harris' grandsons, Chettney (left) and Keyon Harris, made sure they were on hand to honor their grandfather. "He's showed us how to respect our elders," said Chettney.

much of it. He was told that if he kept quiet in the community and stopped expressing his opinions, some people might provide him with funds for the new church.

"Well that wasn't going to happen," Harris said. "I'd rather struggle for it. I've been struggling since I've been here. The struggles gave me staying power. There's always another challenge, always another issue that needs to be addressed."

Harris had several opportunities to move to bigger churches in bigger cities. But he felt that his work in Statesville wasn't done.

Today, membership isn't as large as it used to be, and only about 40 members remain from Harris' first year at the church. Many have died, some have moved to other congregations. The church that used to hold 800 now sees about 250 people on Sunday mornings.

Margaret McClelland has been attending First Baptist for 41 years, except for a few

years spent at the church she grew up in. She watched Harris mature as a person and a pastor over the years.

"He's a God-fearing person who is concerned about the community," McClelland said. "He puts out more than he receives. He's a great minister and we love him."

Harris has passed many of his mannerisms on to his grandsons. Fourteen-year-old Chettney and 12-year-old Keyon hold themselves with the same dignity as their grandfather, and say they have learned many lessons from him over the years.

"He's showed us how to respect our elders," said Chettney, who attends church almost every Sunday with his brother and the rest of the family. "I will always remember his preaching. He's speaking the word."

Harris compares his own life to that of Moses, who spent years searching for the promised land. After 41 years, Harris is still searching for ways to make Statesville into

its own kind of paradise.

He wants to build a housing project or a nursing home on the 18 acres of land surrounding the church. He wants the small pockets of prejudice still alive in Statesville to disappear. He wants to visit fewer men and women in prison -- although, he said, he's never met an inmate who went to prison from church.

Harris knows those are lofty goals, but he estimates that he has at least 10 more years left to see them happen. He's waiting until his 50th anniversary to even consider retirement.

"I got a very clear view of the Biblical mandate of Egypt to the promised land. You win some; you lose some. Some turn against you; some join you. If you're able to endure, that's the one thing that is your anchor," Harris said. "It's been a long, hard road, but I've enjoyed it all."

"I wouldn't take anything for the journey."

First Baptist Celebrating Anniversary

Harris To Be Honored By Church

Members of the First Baptist Church on Garfield St. will honor their pastor, Dr. J.C. Harris, on his 24th anniversary during the 11 a.m. worship service today.

Dr. Harris is a native of Louisburg, the son of the late Jordan C. Harris, Sr. and Elizabeth Harris.

He was educated in the public schools of Franklin County and received a bachelor's degree and master of divinity degree from Shaw University in Raleigh. He also attended the N.C. A & T State University, in addition to receiving certification in pastoral care from Bowman Gray School of Medicine, with special training in grief therapy, community development and family counseling.

Dr. Harris was formerly pastor of Symona Grove Baptist Church in Oxford, Social Union Baptist in Nashville, First Baptist in Wadesboro and New Shepherd in Cooleemee.

He served as moderator of the Rowan Baptist Association from 1975 until 1980 and was former director of Youth Bible Camp of the Woman's Baptist Home and Foreign Missionary convention. He is presently executive secretary of the Rowan Association and is a trustee of Shaw

Divinity School, chairing the board's instruction committee.

He has supervised 24 VISTA volunteers in 1964; wrote a program for Iredell County's anti-poverty program in 1965; drew up a petition establishing Statesville's Housing Authority in 1964; director of Legal Service of North Carolina, 1977-83; member and past president of the Statesville Branch of the NAACP and former member of the citizens advisory committee during James B. Hunt's gubernatorial term; and a member of the Statesville Housing Authority.

Dr. Harris has a long record of service within the General Baptist State Convention, having served as chairman of the general board, member of the executive committee, vice president at-large, statistician, fourth vice president, chairman of the personnel committee, first vice president and coordinator of the budget and evangelism committees. At present, he is a candidate for the president of the General Baptist State Convention.

He is married to the former Leola Thompson, and they have one daughter and a grandson.

Guest speaker for the occasion this morning will be Rev. A.D. Logan,

Jr., assistant executive secretary of the General Baptist State Convention and interim editor of the Baptist Informer.

Rev. Logan was educated in the public schools of Reidsville. He received his bachelor's degree from Wake Forest University, his master of theology degree from Duke University Divinity School in 1976, and his master of divinity from Duke University in 1975.

Rev. Logan has done further studies at Campbell University School of Law in Buies Creek, Howard University School of Religion in Washington, D.C., and North Carolina Central University in Durham.

He has written extensively in the area of the black church, black theology, liberation theology and the New Hermeneutic of Systematic Theology. He is noted for several publications.

He has worked and served as a volunteer in several alcohol and drug abuse programs, including the Psychiatric Institute of Washington D.C. and Duke University Medical Center, and as an associate minister of Covenant Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.



DR. J.C. HARRIS
...24th Anniversary...

Minister on the campaign trail

Harris hopes to win presidency of General Baptist State Convention

By BEVERLY JAMES
Staff Writer

STATESVILLE — Even though he was one of 12 children, the Rev. J.C. Harris' grandmother knew Harris was the special one.

"She would always tell my mama 'that boy is different, he's going to do something different,'" Harris said.

Now, decades after being called into the

ministry, Harris is widening his pastoral scope. He is running for president of the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, the largest organization of black Baptist churches in the state. The election is Oct. 26.

Harris, who has been pastor of First Baptist Church on Garfield Street for 32 years, also heads the prison ministries program at the Piedmont Correctional Institution.

He now hopes to lead the 459,000-member General Baptist State Convention for four years.

Harris, 62, is not new to the organization. Over the years, he has served as statistician, vice president and vice president at-

large. He is currently serving his second term as the group's statistician.

The Statesville minister has been campaigning diligently for the position, speaking at churches across the state. The hard work has paid off with endorsements from groups such as the Rowan Baptist Association, the Mount Peace Baptist Association and the Cedar Grove Baptist Association, Harris said.

Harris doesn't think it will be difficult to lead his church and head the state organization with its more than 1,700 member churches.

"The presidency is not a job that

requires me to be there daily," Harris said. "We have an executive secretary who runs the program and I would preside over meetings and chair the executive board."

Harris says his flock will help him win the presidency of the General Baptist State Convention.

"Anyplace you go you're not going to find everybody is supportive of what you're doing, but there are those who will support me," he said.



Harris

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12—MOORESVILLE, (N.C.) TRIBUNE—



DR. J.C. HARRIS

Harris To Seek State Church Post

Dr. J.C. Harris, pastor of the First Baptist Church on Garfield Street in Statesville, has announced that he is a candidate for president of the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, Inc.

Dr. Harris currently serves as vice president at large of the convention. The elections will be held during the 119th annual session which will convene in Asheville during October 27-31, 1986.

In a prepared statement, Dr. Harris said:

"It is my personal commitment to the cause of Jesus Christ and my wide experience in the General Baptist State Convention that leads me in the decision to seek the 1986 presidency."

"The helmsman of a church-related institution as great as our convention must be boldly committed to the principles of our faith and practice. I point not only to my personal discipleship, but to the pastoral ministries I have been privileged to serve across the years and across this state."

"My role as minister of the First Baptist Church of Statesville serves but to further enforce my commitment to the cause of Christ in the earth. I echo — in my ministry and in my public service — the mandate of Christ Himself to voluntarily take up the Cross, daily, and follow Him."

"Not only must the GBSC president show unfaltering commitment to our Lord and to His Church, but he must be prepared for the task and the challenge of leadership."

Dr. Harris has served in leadership posts under four former convention presidents as convention statistician, fourth vice president, chairman of the convention's personnel committee, first vice president, budget coordinator, personnel chairman, and vice president at large and chairman of the General Board at the present time.

Dr. Harris cited a seven-fold basis in his candidacy:

—The convention must be united to carry out objectives upon which it was founded in 1867.

—Never stray from the convention's role in the training of ministers and church leaders in making disciples of all men for Jesus Christ.

—Understanding and support of the methodology of the convention by its members.

—Work to build support, both financial and moral, for Baptist headquarters and staff.

—Information, fellowship, cooperation and support as critical to the life of the convention.

—Use working structure in place toward achievement of goals and objectives.

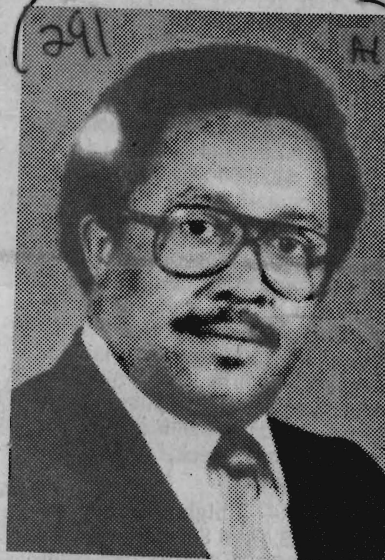
—As an institution proud of her roots in the church, program with the local church in view and at the forefront.

A part-time counselor at Mitchell Community College here, he also is chairman of Statesville's Black Pastors' Conference; a member of both the Executive Committee and General Board of the GBSC; and a member of the board of trustees of Shaw Divinity School.

He is married to the former Leola Thompson of Lumberton. They have a daughter, Rhonda, and a grandson, ChaRon. //

RECORD & LANDMARK
STATESVILLE, N. C.

JUL-19-85



DR. J.C. HARRIS

Anniversary To Be Noted

The 23rd pastoral anniversary of Dr. J.C. Harris will be observed this Sunday at First Baptist Church on Garfield St.

The observance will commence with the 7:27 a.m. morning service and will continue through the 11 a.m. morning worship.

Rev. James Henderson, pastor of Calvary Presbyterian Church, will be the guest minister for the 7:27 service and Keith Roseboro, state worker of the General Baptist Convention of the Layman's League, will be the guest for the 11 o'clock service.

The public is invited.

JAN-24-86

Lumber River Baptist Association

The Lumber River Baptist Association will have its planning session Saturday at 10 a.m. in the Greenville Baptist Church. Dr. J.C. Harris, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Statesville and vice-president at large of the General Baptist State Convention, will deliver the sermon.



J.C. Harris

Dr. Harris received degrees from Shaw University and Shaw Divinity School. He has studied at North Carolina A&T University and received a certificate in pastoral care from the Bowman Gray School of Medicine. He received his doctorate from Shaw Divinity School and has conducted studies in Community Development, Grief and Death Therapy and Marriage and Family.

Dr. Harris is married to the former Leola Thompson of Lumberton. They have one daughter, Rhonda, and one grandson.

Rev. Harris Campaigns To Lead Baptist Group

STATESVILLE—The Rev. J.C. Harris, pastor of Statesville's First Baptist Church and vice president at large of the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, Inc., has announced that he is a candidate to become the next president of the GBSC during the 1986 elections to be held in October at the 119th annual session to convene in Asheville.

In announcing, Harris said, "It is my personal commitment to the cause of Jesus Christ and my wide experience in the General Baptist State Convention that leads me in the decision to seek the 1986 presidency.

"The helmsman of a church-related institution as great as our convention must be boldly committed to the principles of our faith and race. I point not only to my personal discipleship, but to the pastoral ministries I have been privileged to serve across the years and across this state. My role as minister of First Baptist Church of Statesville serves but to further enforce my commitment to the cause of Christ on the earth. I echo—in my ministry and in my public service—the mandate of Christ Himself to voluntarily take up the cross, daily, and follow Him."

He said that not only must the GBSC president show unfaltering commitment to God and the church, but he must be prepared for the task and the challenge of leadership. "I am honored and pleased to have worked under the leadership of four former convention presidents," said Harris.

He added, "The basis of my candidacy and my belief about our convention is sevenfold: (1) our convention must be united in order to carry out the objective upon which she was founded in 1867; (2) we must never stray from a historic stance on the convention's role in the training of ministers and church leaders in making disciples of all men and

women for Jesus Christ; (3) the methodology of our convention must be one that the General Baptists of this state understand and will rally to support it; (4) we need to work to build support—both financial and moral—for the Baptist Headquarters and staff, who work for us to make our mission dreams real; (5) information, fellowship, cooperation and support are critical to the very life of our convention; (6) toward the achievement of our goals and objectives, we must use the working structure already in place and at our disposal; and (7) as an institution proud of her roots in the church, we must program with the local church in view and at the forefront.

Harris has earned degrees from both Shaw University as well as receiving certification in pastoral care from the renowned Bowman-Gray School of Medicine. Harris has had continuing education in several areas, including community development, grief and death therapy, and marriage and family.

Harris has served on the board of directors of North Carolina Legal Services. Former Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., made him a gubernatorial appointee, naming him to a special Citizens' Advisory Committee during his term. Harris has served pastorships in Oxford's Symona Grove Church, Aberdeen's St. John Church, Nashville's Social Union Church, Wadesboro's First Church, Cooleemee's New Shepherd Church, and he is currently pastor of Statesville's First Baptist Church.

Harris claims, "The General Baptist tower can be built as high as God intends it to be in 1986 through 1990. The cost is indeed high, but God has given us the necessary means to finish it. The tower needs to be built, the material is present and abundant, I am in place and ready to lead the construction."

291- J.C. HARRIS

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Friday, July 14, 1995

NC
Statesville Record & Landmark

Page 5-A

33rd Anniversary Service Set At First Baptist



DR. J.C. HARRIS

The members of First Baptist Church, Garfield St., will celebrate the 33rd anniversary of their pastor, Dr. J.C. Harris, on Sunday, July 16, during the 11 a.m. worship service.

Rev. Joseph Parks, pastor of Zion Hill Baptist Church of Winston-Salem, will be the guest speaker.

Dr. Harris is a native of Louisville. He is a graduate of Shaw University and Shaw University Divinity School, Raleigh. He attended North Carolina A&T State University, and received a certificate in pastoral care from Bowman Gray School of Medicine, Winston-Salem. The Doctor of Divinity degree was conferred upon him by Shaw University.

Before coming to Statesville as the eighth minister to serve the First Baptist Church, he was the pastor of Symona Grove Baptist Church, Oxford; St. John Baptist Church, Aberdeen; Social Union Baptist Church, Nashville, and First Baptist Church, Wadesboro. While at First Baptist, he also served at New Shepherd Baptist Church, Cooleemee, for a number of years.

He served as trustee of Shaw University Divinity School and is a past president of Shaw Theological Alumni Association.

Dr. Harris has been involved in the General Baptist Convention of North Carolina, serving in a number of positions.

He is married to Leola T. Harris, and they have one daughter, Rhonda, and three grandsons.

The Vacation Bible School final program will be held Sun-

day at 9:45 a.m. during the Sunday School hour. Parents and friends are invited to attend and stay for the pastor's anniversary program.

RECORD & LANDMARK
STATESVILLE, N. C.

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Harris Seeks Baptist Post

Dr. J.C. Harris, Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church on Garfield St., has announced his candidacy for president of the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, Inc.

Dr. Harris has been pastor of First Baptist Church for the past 12 years. A native of Louisburg, he received his A.B. degree in history and social studies from Shaw University in Raleigh. He also received the Master of Divinity degree from Shaw Uni-

versity Divinity School. He has done further study at A&T State University in Greensboro, and received a certificate in pastoral care from North Carolina Baptist Hospital and the Bowman Gray School of Medicine in Winston-Salem.

He received the honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Shaw University Divinity School in 1975 for outstanding work and community participation. He has special training in community development, grief therapy and family counseling.

Prior to his pastorate at First Baptist, he served churches in Oxford, Nash County, Aberdeen, Wadesboro, and Cooleemee. He has served on the local NAACP board, the N.C. Advisory Committee to the Director of Prisons on Religion, chairman of the Task Force on Minority Affairs of N.C. Chaplain Services, and served as moderator of the Rowan Baptist Association for five years. He has also been on a number of committees of the General Baptist State Convention. He was recently appointed vice chairman of the board of directors of the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc., by its new president, Henry J. Lyons.

Harris and his wife, the former Leola Thompson, have one daughter, Rhonda, and three grandsons. (See 3, Page 4-A)



DR. J.C. HARRIS, JR.

Reveals Candidacy . . .

3

Continued From
Page One

In announcing his intention to seek the post, Harris recalled the "best of times, worst of times" quote from Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*. "We are experiencing the best of times as our society and particularly our people have achieved unparalleled progress in a brief period against the backdrop of human history. The dream of freedom and equality derived from the teachings of Jesus and eloquently described by the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to some extent, has been realized or is within the grasp of our people.

"Yet, it is also the worst of times. We are moving with unprecedented speed, backwards. Digression and regression appear to be the norm. Our people and way of life are plagued by old adversaries, racism, and prejudice which are firmly rooted and grounded in the fabric of American culture. Therefore, many of us continue to struggle spiritually, economically, socially, and psychologically. Further, it appears the church has neither changed with the times, nor risen since the sixties, to meet the challenges before it.

"The spirit of the times and my concern for broken humanity have brought me to this hour. It is my feeling and strong belief my varied experience as a member and servant of the General Baptist State Convention qualifies me as a bridge over which the knowledge and wisdom of personalities of the past can link arms with the energy and ideas of those who represent the present and future of our great convention," Dr. Harris said.

The election will be held Oct. 26 at the annual session of the General Baptist State Convention in Fayetteville.

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Dr. J.C. Harris, Candidate for P Convention of North Carolina

The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor; He has sent me to announce release to the captives; and recovery of sight to the blind; to send forth delivered those who are oppressed - who are downtrodden, bruised, crushed and broken down by calamity; to proclaim the accepted year of the Lord.

Luke 4:18,19

A view of Home Missions under a J.C. Har-

ris Presidency includes new methods in mission: one hundred twenty scholarships, two from each Association; a Baptist Student Union Auxiliary, maintaining and reclaiming Baptist students for Baptist churches; a full-time Student Union Director with a goal to recruit one thousand (1000) students each year; each Association to provide \$1,000 to be

matched by Home Missions; establish a College Day in every Association for programs and recruitment; leadership training and job placement; a statewide coordinator for Associational programs in Home Mission.

It includes the development of a Preaching and Teaching Clinic to be held four (4) times per year in order to focus on college and se-

President of General Baptist State

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It includes making



DR. J.C. HARRIS

See HARRIS page 3

HARRIS

prison ministry an objective of the convention. Each association will sponsor a halfway house (e.g. Prodigal House with interfaith policies) to be funded by gifts and grants; organize a prison volunteer program of the General Baptist; establish a prison ministry in each Association; coordinate prison work through North Carolina Chaplaincy Services where possible; make church membership available to prison inmates; and sponsor evangelistic programs in prison.

It includes the establishment of the General Baptist Foundation, Inc. The creation of a General Baptist Credit Union is essential; five percent (5%) Home Mission to pastors annually for annuities; investments and loans; scholarships and endowments - Sherrill, Alston, and Horne Scholarships; development of the Baptist Assembly to include (a) home for

and budget proposed by April 1st of each year; methods of income (a) gifts and grants, (b) contributions from churches, (c) contributions from Associations, (d) auxiliary and unions, (e) wills and special gifts, (f) interest, (g) special projects, (h) investments, and (i) designated gifts (eliminate unless they are convention objectives); each objective outline its budget needs; operation costs; and total annual budget.

Dr. J.C. Harris has been endorsed by the Rowan Baptist Association and by several distinguished Baptist leaders, pastors and laypersons of the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Harris record of service and contributions include; pastorates of Symona Grove Baptist Church, Oxford; St. John Baptist Church, Aberdeen; Social Union Baptist Church, Nashville; First Baptist

children of need, (b) program for local community usage, and (c) meeting place for the convention and associations; a task force to write grants and seek gifts for senior citizens programs and projects and youth projects; and insurance.

It includes the establishment of Christian Athletic Associations. Such associations should request the usage of schools facilities on Saturdays and off school days for youth programs; seek sponsors of youth projects; appointment of a recreation director by each Association; and each church organize a crime prevention task force with associational and state support to be worked through law enforcement agencies and Laymen League.

It includes management by objectives: line item budget with program; budget attainable goals for the objectives with programs; each objective submit a program

Church, Wadesboro; New Shepherd Baptist Church, Coolemees; First Baptist Church, 1962 - present, Statesville; past president Statesville Branch NAACP; Rowan Baptist Association - Moderator, Executive Secretary (presently); General Baptist State Convention of NC, Inc - Statistician (under leadership of the late Dr. J.W. White); 4th Vice-President (under the leadership of Dr. C.R. Edwards as chairman of the first Personnel Committee); 1st Vice-President (under the leadership of Dr. J.J. Johnson) also Chairman, Personnel Committee, Coordinator, Budget Committee, and represented GBSC in West Africa (1976); Chairman of Committee on the Baptist Assembly (appointed by Dr. J.R. Manley); Vice-President-At-Large (Chairman of General Board under the leadership of Dr. E.B. Turner); and Statistician (appointed by Dr. E.B. Lewis).