

Churches Baptist Big Miller Grove

Oct. 1, 1992 (Thurs) 1A-B2

Big Miller Grove Church breaks ground at new site

By Greg Easterly
STAFF WRITER

tithes and other offerings from the congregation.

The Rev. Miles E. Fowler, Big Miller Grove's pastor, hopes the church's new location can be a launching pad for his congregation to continue reaching out to the community.

When Rev. Fowler became Big Miller Grove's pastor in October of 1977, the church had about 350 people in the congregation, a \$40,000 mortgage and \$850 in the bank, he said.

Since then, the mortgage has been paid off, a van bought and site at the corner of Old Panola and Salem Roads. A 200-car motorcycle ferried a crowd of about 350 people to witness a flag corps as well as musical performances by the Grady Brantley Institute for Christ Orchestra, a Big Miller Grove Ensemble, and the capella singing group D'Vine.

"We had a great turnout," the Rev. Fowler said.

Three phases of construction, beginning in December, will ultimately give the church and community a new sanctuary seating about 1,000, an athletic center, and an elementary school.

The \$6 million project will be funded exclusively through

After expanding as much as possible on the land surrounding the existing church, it became obvious that more room was

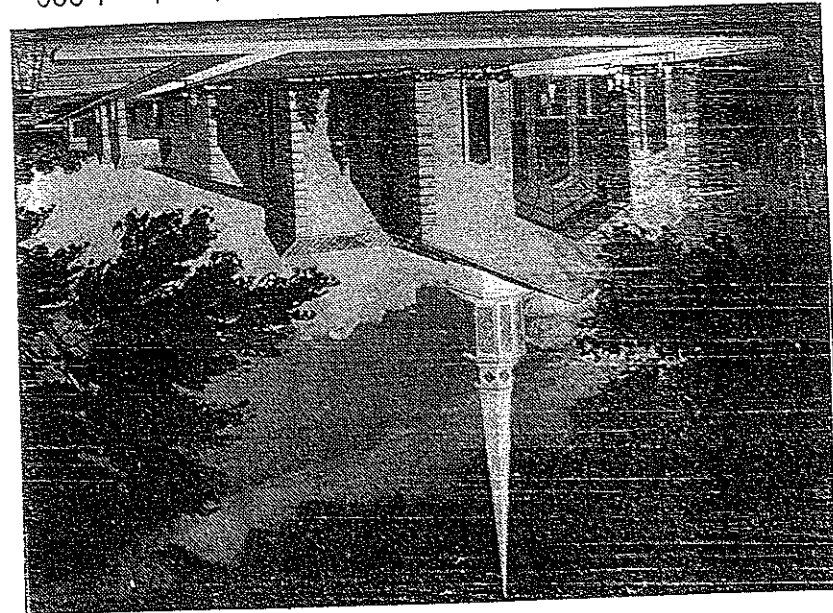
needed, Rev. Fowler said. After a short search, a 28-acre site near the corner of Old Panola and Salem roads was chosen.

"When you're boxed in, you're boxed in," Rev. Fowler said, "but we didn't want to move out of the community." The new site is only two miles from the church's current location.

Rev. Fowler plans to make the new church a "City of Refuge" — a place of "safety, sanctity and security."

The first phase of the new construction will be the Life Center, which should be completed

Later, Rev. Fowler foresees the construction of school buildings on the site for a Christian school to offer kindergarten through seventh grade and later, high school classes.



Construction at its new site will give the church a 1,000-seat sanctuary, an athletic center and an elementary school.

in six to nine months. The Life Center will serve as a place of worship until the new sanctuary is completed, hopefully within two years, Rev. Fowler said.

After completion of the sanctuary, the Life Center will house a professional-sized gymnasium for basketball and volleyball as well as aerobic facilities, spas and weight rooms.

New worship center is culmination of years of effort

For Big Miller Grove Missionary Baptist Church, the road to their long-anticipated worship center was a long one.

But on Feb. 2, Bishop Miles Fowler and his congregation will celebrate the completion of the new \$10 million facility with a ribbon cutting ceremony and a dedication service.

"Our members worked very hard to make this vision come true," said Fowler, who has been pastor of the church since 1977.

The 47,000-square-foot facility that members, friends and well-wishers will give thanks for at the dedication service was on the drawing board for seven years before ground was broken in 1999.

It was completed in December and on Dec. 8, church members marched in a procession from their old sanctuary next door to their new home, which seats 1,500. Fowler said that seeing the completion of the building was "a feeling that was hard to describe."

"I was happy, ecstatic, grateful, thankful and humble," he said. "We are really blessed by the Lord who brought us to this point."

In addition to a modern sanctuary with state-of-the-art video screens,



Bishop Miles Fowler has been pastor of Big Miller Grove Baptist Church in Lithonia since 1977.

audio and closed circuit television, the building has offices, classrooms, nursery and a 100-seat children's church.

Fowler said they plan an administrative and education wing within the next five years, and an assisted living facility sometime later.

"We are building a City of Refuge," he said. "That is what this church is about. That is what God wants us to do."

Fowler said God gave him the vision in 1991 to minister to the

financial freedom.

Big Miller Grove, which started in 1909 in a founding member's home, was housed in six locations in Lithonia before it bought the 30-acre property on Salem Road. When Fowler arrived 26 years ago, the church had 250 members. Today it has more than 1,500.

In 1994, the church built a Family Life Center that the congregation worshipped in until last December.

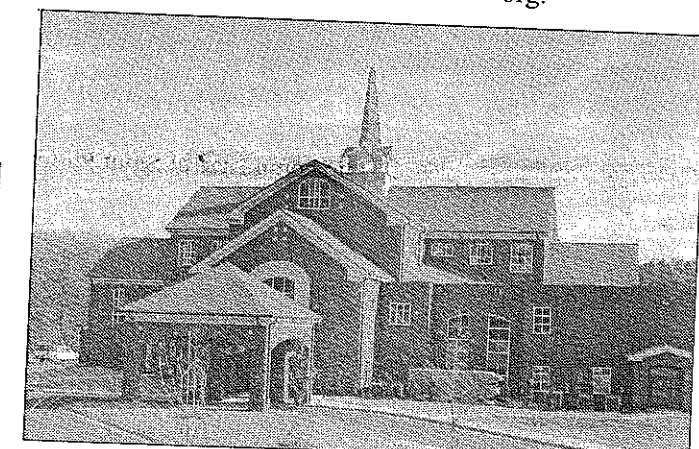
With the completion of the new sanctuary, the Family Life Center has become a full-time recreational facility with after-school, seniors' and sports activities that include basketball, aerobics and softball.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony takes place at 2:45 p.m. Fowler will speak at the dedication service at 3 p.m. Tours of the facility will be offered at the end of the service.

Big Miller Grove is at 3800 Big Miller Grove Way in Lithonia. For more information, call 770-981-3800 or visit www.bigmillergrove.org.

needs of the total man and build a self-contained city that will deliver man spiritually, physically and mentally.

To realize that mission, Big Miller Grove operates 15 ministries with outreaches in nursing homes, prisons and hospitals. It also operates two investment clubs that teach



The church's new sanctuary has state-of-the-art video and audio systems and seats 1,500.

Subject Files Box 12 Miller Grove

THE BODY OF CHRIST MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL
Open Hands, Open Heart, an Open Church.

I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God and they shall be my people. (2 Corinthian 6:16)

560 LaDonna Drive
Decatur, Georgia 30032
(404) 292-5431

Schedule of Services	
Sunday	
Church School	9:30am

"Remember the Promise:"

THE CHAMPION, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10-JANUARY 16, 1996



BIG MILLER GROVE
MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
"THE CITY OF REFUGE"
1800 BIG MILLER GROVE WAY
LITHONIA, GEORGIA 30038
(404) 981-3800 Min. Miles E. Fowler, Pastor Res. Phone (404) 243-1574

God Is Good -- All The Time, All The Time -- God Is Good

Worship Services Sunday		Wednesday	
Early Morning	8:00 AM	Bible Study	10:00 AM
Sunday Morning	9:45 AM	AWANA (children's service)	7:20 PM
Regular Service	11:15 AM	Bible Study	7:30 PM
Youth Church	11:15 AM		

Radio Broadcast • WYZE-1480 AM • Friday 11:15 AM • Sunday 2:30 PM

Big Miller Grove Church Breaking Ground Sunday

Members of the Big Miller Grove Missionary Baptist Church in Lithonia will be worshipping in a new sanctuary within the next year if plans go as scheduled.

The church recently purchased 28 acres of land at the corner of Salem Road and Old Panola Road. During the first phase of construction, A Big Miller Grove Life Center will be built to serve as place of worship until the main edifice is completed.

"Construction for the Life Center will begin in December and should be completed within six to nine months pending the weather," said John Gordon, chairman of the Church Building Committee. "Phase Two will be the construction of the permanent sanctuary and will begin in two years."

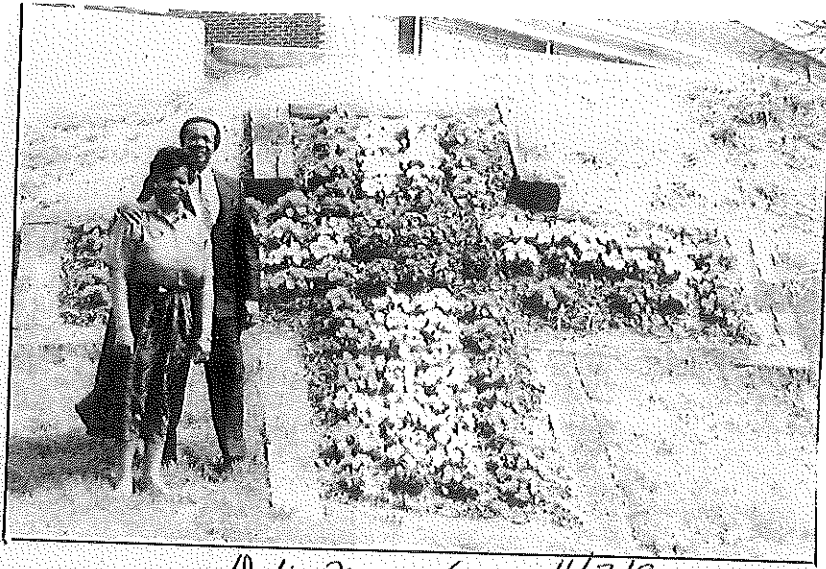
After completion of the sanctuary, the Life Center will become a multipurpose building and will include a college and professional size gymnasium for basketball, volleyball and other recreational activities. It will also include weight rooms, his and her spas and aerobic facilities. A range of special interest courses will be offered on an ongoing basis. In addition, community and professional organizations will be encouraged to utilize the Life Center's meeting spaces.

"It is our desire to build a city of refuge that will not only meet the needs of our congregation but those in the community as well," according to Minister Miles E. Fowler, pastor of Big Miller Grove since 1977.

BIG MILLER GROVE has been in its present location on Panola Road since moving from a house across the street where it was founded in 1909. The church currently has two services on Sundays in the present sanctuary built 16 years ago to accommodate their congregation of 1500. "We began having an early morning worship service three years ago in order to eliminate the overcrowding conditions," says Pastor Fowler. "We are now at full capacity in both services and have no room to expand in our present location."

The community is invited to share in the ground-breaking ceremony for the Life Center on Sunday, Sept. 27. A motorcade procession will depart Big Miller Grove (2418 Panola Road) at 2 p.m. and travel to the parking lot of Salem Presbyterian Church (5197 Salem Road). Additional parking will also

be available at the Salem Crossings Shopping Center. After parking, participants will take part in an organized walk to the ground-breaking ceremony site.



Delt News Sun 4/3/91

Special Photo By William O'Kelly

Winning One For The Cross

Big Miller Grove Baptist Church ran into problems when its landscaper, Raymond Hurt, and groundskeeper, Sidney Parker, built a landscaped cross to beautify a hillside at the church. As one church member put it, "Satan gets busy when something is being done for the upbuilding of God's kingdom." Someone complained to county officials, who issued the church a citation charging that the cross was blocking vision at the intersection of Miller Grove and Panola roads. Church members did two things: pray and appeal the citation. An agreement was reached with the county to leave the cross in place but to lower its height by removing one layer of crosssties. The Rev. Miles E. Fowler, pastor at Big Miller Grove, and his wife, Helen, are shown with the revised cross.

CHURCH ST., LITHONIA.

Worship News Item



*10/14/92
Big Miller Grove Baptist Church*

Helen Heath's *debut*
Album Presented *next Sun*

The first solo album by Lithonia evangelist Helen Heath was presented at a debut concert at Big Miller Grove Baptist Church, where she is a member. The album by Gramercy Records, "An Endless Praise," features background vocals by the Charles B. Jackson Singers of West Columbia, S.C.

10-14-92