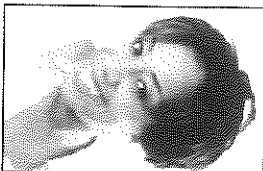


# 25th anniversary fete to be a Hale affair

8/1/04 By Jennifer French Parker

Platinum-selling recording artist Oleta Adams and jazz violinist Ken Ford will be serenading the Rev. Cynthia L. Hale at a big bash celebrating her 25th year of ministry on Aug. 13.

Hundreds of officials, well-wishers and members of the Ray of Hope Christian Church, where Hale is senior pastor and founder, are expected at the 6 p.m. event at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis hotel in downtown Atlanta.



Oleta Adams

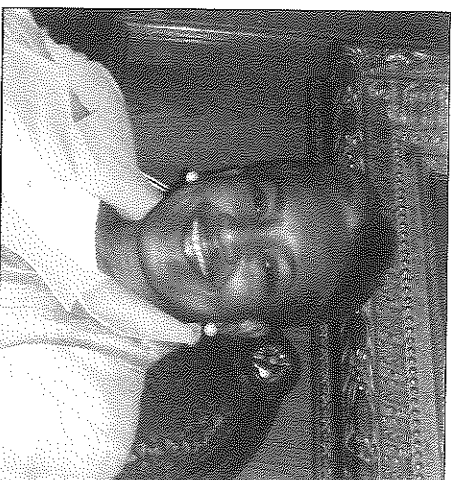
Hale, a dynamic preacher, entered the ministry in 1979 and six years later, the Disciplines of Christ Church tapped her to develop its first predominantly African-American church in south DeKalb County.

She arrived in Decatur in late 1985 and started Bible study with four people in her tiny Evans Mill Road apartment. Eighteen years later, The Ray, as the church is fondly called, has grown to 7,500 members.

The ordination celebration, titled "Celebrating 25 Years in Ministry, Living on Purpose," is apt.

During her ministry, Hale has lived and directed her congregation to live purposeful lives. For Hale, community goes way beyond the church's Snappinger Road campus.

"We are called to transform our world,



Pastor Cynthia L. Hale, founder of Ray of Hope Church, entered the ministry in 1979.

to share with others the joy that God has so graciously given us," she says. "We will be transforming our world by transforming the lives of others."

Under Hale's leadership, the Ray of Hope established the Hope Clinic, which provides health and dental care, food and clothing to impoverished residents of South Georgia, and church members have been on missions to Jamaica and Africa. But it has not been an easy walk for

Hale, a charismatic leader whom church members call "genuine," "the joy bringer," and "the passionate one."

When she got out of seminary school at Duke University, established churches didn't want her for their pastor because she was a woman. She tells the story of being passed over by a 25-member church in Greensboro, N.C., who picked an untrained barber over her.

When she arrived in South DeKalb to start The Ray, pundits predicted she would fail.

But God had a different plan for her. "I was going to be happy with a congregation of 200," Hale says, "but God really used me."

From the pulpit, the 6-foot Hale cuts an imposing figure. But church members talk about the heart in her ministry and how much she laughs, hugs, preaches and teaches.

Those qualities have helped Hale's ministry grow.

"When there is excitement and joy in the place," she said, "people want to be part of it."

## 2/14/90 THE DEKALB NEWS/SUN PAGE 3 B SOUTH Ray Of Hope Christian Church Hosts Programs, Seminars On Black History

The Ray of Hope Christian Church is celebrating black history, inspired by the theme, "Black by God's Design: A Masterpiece."

The observance, which began Jan. 21, will continue through March 3 with weekly sermons during Sunday worship service and Friday seminars. On each Friday in February at 7 p.m. a different seminar will be given.

In the upcoming weeks, emphasis will be placed on the educational, occupational, recreational/creative, and spiritual aspects of the black experience. In addition to sermons on these topics, dramatic readings, poems, biographical sketches and articles by some of God's black "masterpieces" from history will be presented.

The Friday seminars will allow members and guests to explore in depth some of the key elements of being black in America. The first Friday seminar addressed "Our History and Heritage," through film, pantomime, oral presentation, audience participation, and panel discussions. The Feb. 9 seminar will address "Threats to Our Heritage." Major issues that prevent black Americans from fulfilling their potential such as substance abuse, and other self-defeating behaviors will be presented.

On Feb. 16, the focus will be placed on youth with an overnight program for youth between the ages of nine to 18. An informative fun-filled night will be provided for the young people by adult members of the church. The program's activities will include films, discussion groups, presentations, and the young people expressing themselves through their own talents and abilities.

"Going Up Yonder" on Feb. 23 will identify the ways in which black people have faced trials and tribulations over the years, giving them the strength to cope and to survive in spite of overwhelming obstacles. This will be a time of sharing songs, poems, scriptures, other readings, as well as experiences that have helped individuals to meet great challenges and overcome great odds for success.

The March 3 "Taste of Soul" dinner will be held as the culminating event of the black history celebration. Persons are encouraged to dress in African garments and to bring original arts and crafts for display. In addition to preparing and bringing a dish, members and guests will be invited to introduce themselves through an African naming ritual and to show and share personal family artifacts.



Big Bethel AME Church

After a two-year ministry funded by the Lilly Endowment, Paul Wilkes of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington identified these metro Atlanta churches as "excellent."

## Excellent Catholic Parishes

### Cathedral of Christ the King

2699 Peachtree Road N.E.

- Membership: 4,928 families
- Senior pastor: The Rev. Thomas Kenny
- Committee Ministries to the homebound and hospitalized: well-attended women's Bible study 10 weeks

- Web page: [www.cckn.org](http://www.cckn.org)
- Phone: 404-252-2168

### St. Thomas Aquinas

224 Irving Road, Alpharetta

- Membership: 5,000 families
- Senior pastor: The Rev. Albert Jowdy
- Committee: Small faith communities provide education with emphasis on adult formation. Life Team outreach to recent Hispanic immigrants
- Web page: [www.224.org](http://www.224.org)
- Phone: 770-770-3300

## Excellent Protestant

### CONGREGATIONS

#### Ben Hill United Methodist Church

1744 Polkton Road

- Membership: 5,478
- Senior pastor: The Rev. McCollister Hollins
- Committee: Large African-American congregation. Outreach to young adults from other churches. Outreach to young adults from other churches. Outreach to young adults from other churches. Outreach to young adults from other churches.

- Web page: [www.benhillumc.com](http://www.benhillumc.com)
- Phone: 404-374-0818

#### Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church

220 Auburn Ave. N.E.

- Senior pastor: The Rev. James D. Lee
- Committee: Numerous outreach programs include: Church's Commission and Ministry Team and outreach for S.F.I.S.H. children.

# In Atlanta area, these 14 churches make national list

After a two-year ministry funded by the Lilly Endowment, Paul Wilkes of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington identified these metro Atlanta churches as "excellent."

### Cathedral Presbyterian Church

201 Washington St. S.W.

- Senior pastor: The Rev. Ted Wardlaw
- Committee: Outreach ministries include work with homeless families; Central Methodist program provides care, counseling and spiritual perspective to enhance pastoral care; choir for all ages.
- Web page: [www.cathedralpres.org](http://www.cathedralpres.org)
- Phone: 404-528-0274

### First Presbyterian Church

6400 Woodloch Road, Lilburn

- Senior pastor: Bishop Todd Long
- Committee: African-American congregation provides substance-abuse ministry, CEBI classes, family life classes, Bible classes and outreach to homeless; church provides group, youth ministry.
- Web page: [www.1stpres.org](http://www.1stpres.org)
- Phone: 770-624-0720

### St. Alban's Episcopal Church

1000 Peachtree Drive, Decatur

- Senior pastor: The Rev. Larry Peters
- Committee: Music and youth ministries; Sunday school for all ages; inclusion groups; drug and alcohol classes; family counseling; outreach to homeless; outreach to young adults from other churches.
- Web page: [www.stalban.org](http://www.stalban.org)
- Phone: 404-378-3477

### Christ Church Presbyterian Church

1100 Peachtree St. N.E.

- Senior pastor: The Rev. Glenn (Miss) Strasse
- Committee: Multiple congregations with ministry to men and women; community outreach; outreach to young adults from other churches.

### St. Paul's Episcopal Church

1000 Peachtree St. N.E.

- Senior pastor: The Rev. William D. Lee
- Committee: Outreach ministries include: church's outreach to young adults from other churches; outreach to young adults from other churches; outreach to young adults from other churches.

- Comments: One of the largest Presbyterian churches in America; pastoral counseling center midweek alternative worship service; large sing and youth ministries; support, recovery groups
- Web page: [www.pearcepres.org](http://www.pearcepres.org)
- Phone: 404-842-5800

### Rev. of Hope Christian

2778 Shapinger Road, Decatur

- Membership: 5,300
- Senior pastor: The Rev. Cynthia Hale
- Committee: Hosts Bible study and breakfast and provides transportation to Sunday services; homeless men; quarterly job fairs for youth and adults; emphasis on evangelism and the arts in worship; extensive youth programs.
- Web page: [www.hycopa.org](http://www.hycopa.org)
- Phone: 770-696-5100

### St. Philip African Methodist Episcopal

240 Canfield Road S.E.

- Membership: 8,000
- Senior pastor: The Rev. George Moore
- Committee: Inviting African-American congregation has several choirs; prison ministry; child development center; outreach to the homeless; dance ministry.
- Web page: [www.stphilip.org](http://www.stphilip.org)
- Phone: 404-371-0749

### Trinity Presbyterian Church

444 Howell Hill Road N.W.

- Membership: 4,241
- Senior pastor: The Rev. Joanne Adams
- Committee: New music concert brings multi-generational members together for live festivals and concerts; many small groups, including group for seniors, young adults and young families.
- Web page: [www.trinitypres.org](http://www.trinitypres.org)
- Phone: 404-371-0749

### Young Men's

2700 Buford Road, College Park

- Membership: 20,000
- Senior pastor: The Rev. Chris Doherty
- Committee: African American congregation offers a variety of programs and ministries; ministry; business network; marriage counseling; financial credit outreach to young homeless; outreach to young adults from other churches.
- Web page: [www.youngmens.org](http://www.youngmens.org)
- Phone: 770-907-9490

### Young Men's (Associate)

3100 Oakleaf Road, Doraville

- Senior pastor: The Rev. Lynn K. (Paul) Kim
- Committee: Has two Korean-language Sunday services; traditional and contemporary; several youth ministries; outreach to young adults from other churches; outreach to young adults from other churches.
- Web page: [www.youngmens.org](http://www.youngmens.org)
- Phone: 770-956-2640

—Coyle White

The CHAMPION, Wednesday, JANUARY 10-JANUARY 16, 1996

# RAY OF HOPE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

CYNTHIA L. HALE, D. MIN., Pastor • Trunell D. Felder, M. DIV., Assoc. Pastor  
• 3936 Rainbow Drive • Decatur, GA • (404) 288-4673

## SUNDAY SERVICES

Worship Service 7:45 A.M.  
Church School 9:30 A.M.  
Worship Service 10:45 A.M.

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY 11:00 AM AND 7:00 PM

**Pastors**

Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Hale, Senior Pastor  
Rev. Trunell D. Felder, Associate Pastor

**Ministers**

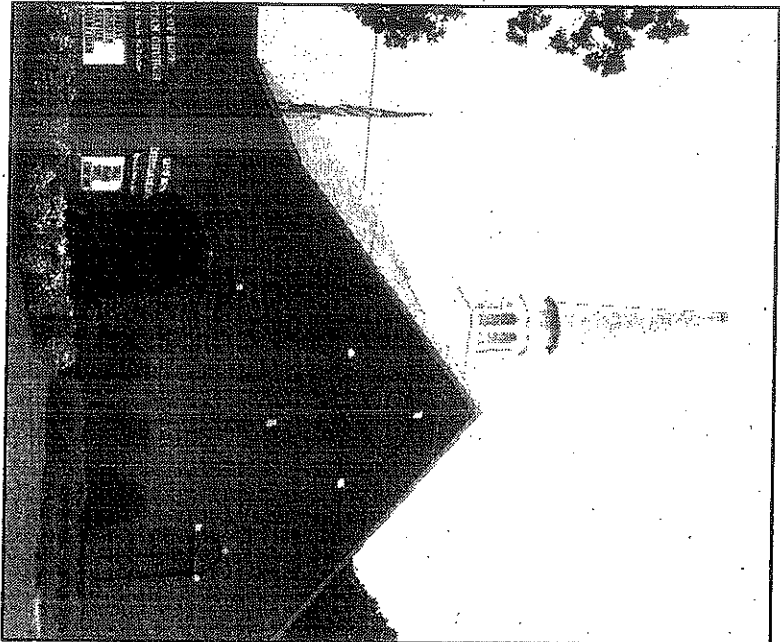
Rev. David Hodge, Minister of Christian Education  
Rev. Ransey O'Daniel, Minister of Youth  
Rev. Steven Wilhite, Minister of Music  
Rev. Kenneth Henry (One of the founding members)  
Rev. Terrance Robinson  
Minister Linelle Ruffin  
Minister Cheryl Underwood

## DeKalb Mega Churches Offer Variety of Services and Experiences

**Ray of Hope Christian Church**  
2778 Snapfinger Road  
Decatur  
770-696-5100

Dr. Cynthia L. Hale, who has been in ministry for 24 years, is the founding and senior pastor of the Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur. The church reports an active membership of 3,500 and an average of 2,000 in worship each Sunday. Ray of Hope, recognized in 2001 by a national protestant rating system as being among the "300 Excellent Protestant Congregations," strongly emphasizes social involvement and encourages members to register and to vote in all elections. Among its many activities for members are a basketball league and a fitness program.

Over the years, Ray of Hope has continued to expand its membership. It outgrew a former property on Rainbow Drive four years ago and moved into the former home of New Birth Missionary Baptist Church on Snapfinger Road. The church has an active music ministry and spearheads social events and concerts throughout the year.



Ray of Hope Christian Church