

Redeemer blends race and cultures

BY BECKY RUSSELL

Martin Luther King Jr. is quoted as saying the most segregated hour in America is 11 a.m. Sunday.

In the heart of Northeast Jackson, Redeemer Presbyterian Church has etched a place in history as a congregation making progress in redeeming the Sunday morning worship hour by breaking down the barriers of race, culture and tradition.

"We are a Bible-believing, Christ-centered church committed to living out the reality and diversity of the kingdom of God in our community and city. We believe the

gospel of Jesus Christ reconciles us to God, but also to one another and because of this our goal is to embrace in Christ all who would believe in him regardless of ethnicity or socio-economic level," said Pastor Mike Campbell.

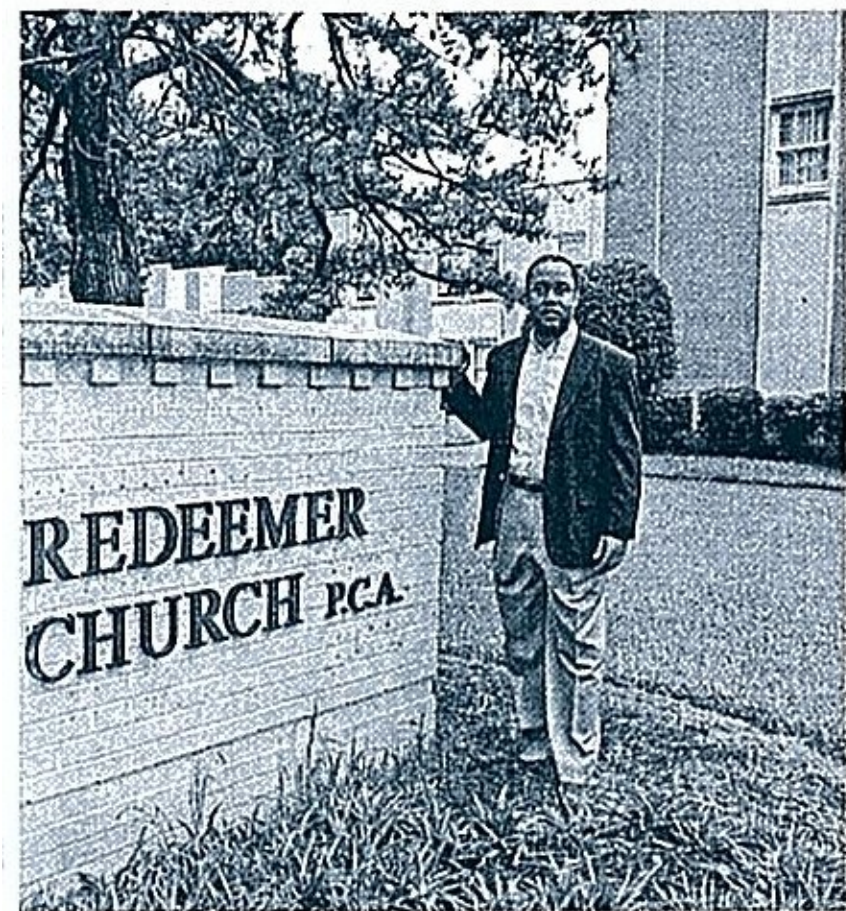
Social engineering experts across the country have tried to model communities that replicate what is being done at Redeemer. But Pastor Campbell said manufactured efforts to blend the races are not needed when the spirit of Christ is present in a real way and people come together as one.

With a congregation that is roughly 75 percent white and 25 percent black, Campbell said the church founders chose to be a church of diversity.

"Believing the gospel leads us to come together, church leaders intentionally stayed in this location right in the middle of Broadmoor which is predominantly black and Broadmeadow to the south of us which is a predominantly white affluent community. We are living out the scripture and we are called to be one body and that body is made of many different people," said Campbell.

Associate Pastor Steve Lanier has been at Redeemer since it began about five years ago. He is amazed at what God has done in the community of believers.

"God is doing all of this and it is amazing. I have seen God grow and mature people in their characters. I have seen people come in who



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have been hurt by race issues and prejudice and I have seen them healed. I like what Pastor Campbell said this church is not a reconciliation movement — this is the Gospel and as people are reconciled to Jesus they will be reconciled to one another," said Lanier.

Bryant Taylor, a ruling elder at the church, said the congregation is made up of people who are willing to sacrifice their traditions of worship in order to further the Kingdom of God.

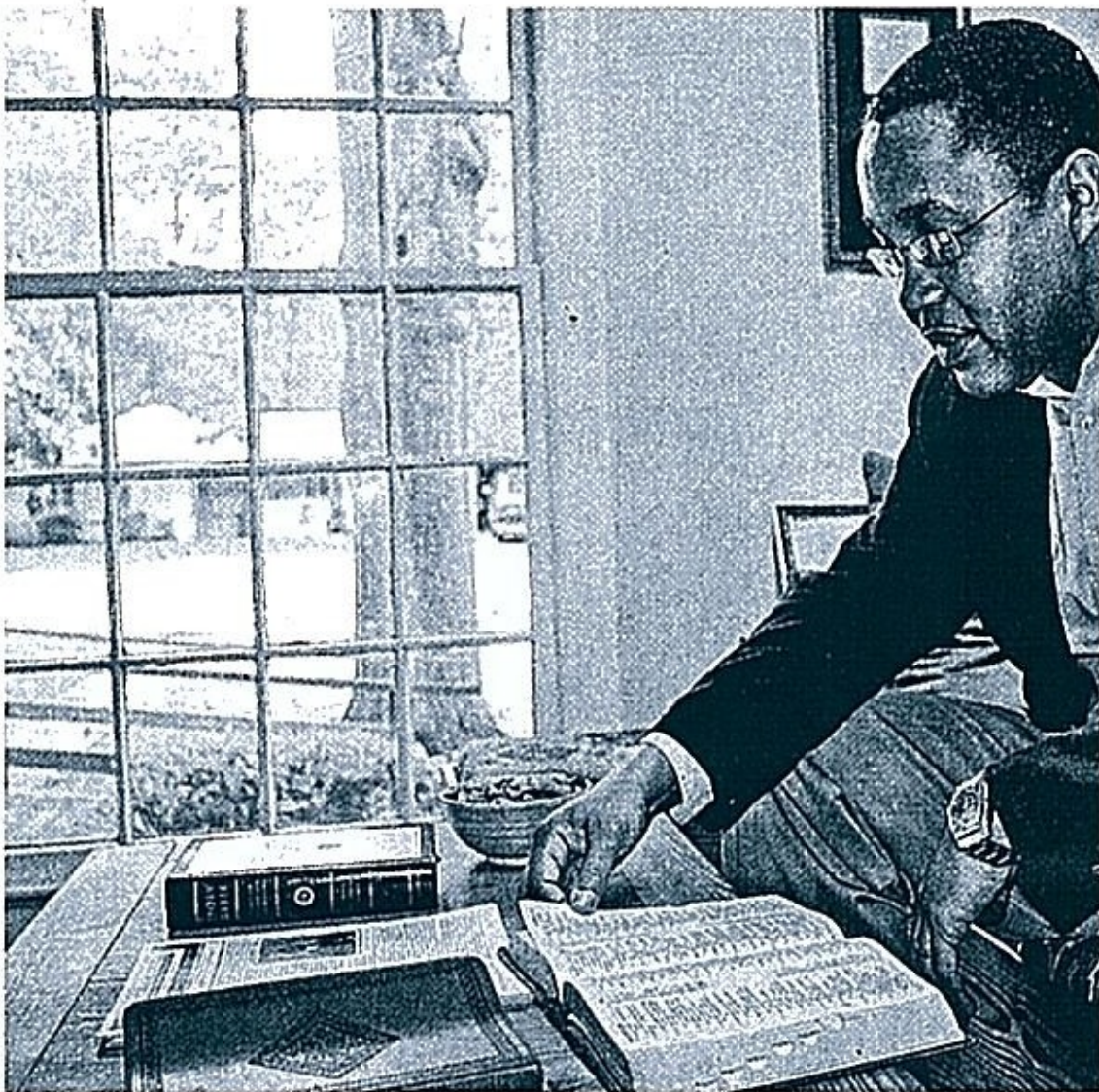
Taylor said the worship committee has made a point to blend the traditional Presbyterian hymns with African American gospel sounds.

"It is important that we have the attitude of Christ and consider others more important than ourselves. Come and visit Redeemer and you will actually see a model of what it looks like when the walls of race are broken down. God has put the people and talent in place to make this work across all barriers and reflect the eternal church," said Taylor.

Church member Rene' Menogan had been looking for a church home when she visited Redeemer about four years ago.

"As an African American I felt so welcome and now more and more African Americans are coming here. Redeemer truly is a place where the races are blending together and blending well. It has been wonderful to be here and I have learned to live more like Christ because of the actions of the people in this congregation," said Menogan.

"We want to be a church that honors Christ and upholds His word through faithful teaching and preaching. We want to live out the reality of the fullness of God's kingdom in the community around us and before the city of Jackson so that many will



Mike Campbell, senior pastor at Redeemer Church, said the church welcomes all regardless of race or economic standing.

come to know the Lord regardless of their race or economic standing," said Pastor Campbell.

For more information call (601) 362-9987 or visit www.redeemchurchms.org.

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