



August 29, 2017

## BISHOP CLAUDE ALEXANDER, JR.

*Spiritual Leader; Community Icon; Volunteer Supreme; Speaker Excellence*



Our speaker today started off by paying tribute to our own Cheryl Banks of whom he said he “is very proud” for the work she does for The Park Church. He evoked laughs with his story about the small-town, Alabama farmer who took his dog, “Duke” to a dog show in New York City. When chastised that the dogs in this competition were *Purebred* (something old Duke was clearly not) the farmer exclaimed, “I know that but I thought the exposure would do him good.” And so, shared our speaker, “I’m here

today for that same reason. I think the exposure I’ll get by speaking to Charlotte Rotary will do me good.”

The thoughtful and thought-provoking Bishop Claude Alexander, Jr. is a staunch, highly respected and highly sought-after community leader, a force in dealing with critical issues in Charlotte, and the Pastor of The Park Church, which now encompasses a global ministry with three locations and weekly international reach. Having moved to Charlotte from West Mifflin, PA in 1990, Bishop Alexander set as his goal “mission and outreach” ... first to our local community via his headquarters at University Park Baptist Church and now, due to the tremendous impact of his vision and programs, there are three campuses for The Park Church with the original church on Beatties Ford Road, the second worship facility in Pineville, and, most recently, the purchase of the Charlotte Merchandise Mart (now called “The Park Expo & Conference Center”) on East Independence Boulevard adjacent to Bojangle’s Arena and Ovens Auditorium. The latter enterprise is acknowledged as one of the few churches in America to partner Christian ministry and business ingenuity.

Bishop Alexander immediately addressed the course of actions of the past few weeks specifically naming the turmoil and scary sadness of Charlottesville. The monuments and statues torn down and battered, the marches, protests, counter-protests and, sadly, the death of one innocent person and the injuries to nineteen others. “How did we get to this place?” he asked us. In simple terms ~ white supremacists who have become empowered and emboldened because no one steps up to stop them. These actions are not limited to Charlottesville, he said. Not only do we have racially-biased individuals and groups lashing out but then we have racial indifference ... those who believe racial prejudice isn’t a problem. The latter is due to a total lack of understanding heralding back to when African Americans were brought to America against their will, separated from their tribes and their families, beaten and lynched simply because of the color of their skin. They were considered “property” and hence began the introduction of “whiteness” to America.

Bishop Alexander cited the US Constitution declaring that all human beings, regardless of color, were considered equal but, as he pointed out, “African Americans were human

enough to be counted but not human enough that they couldn't be sold." He told us that military veterans are given many benefits under the G.I. Bill and yet veterans of color somehow do not always qualify for those benefits. The Federal Government underwrote \$120 billion administered in new housing between 1934 -1962. Only 2% went to non-whites. There are a myriad of examples shared by Bishop Alexander of racial bias and he gave as an example the difference in property value between a piece of property in Myers Park vs. a parcel of land the same size in Hyde Park.

There is a "That's not my fault" attitude with whites as it pertains to past discriminations. Bishop Alexander cautioned us, "It's not your fault but it is your problem." It's a problem shared by blacks and whites. None of us choose the race into which we were born. The graphic examples we see and read about in the News each day...the violent protests, the police shootings, the anger protesters feel on both sides came to light right here in Charlotte, one day after they occurred in Tulsa. The pent-up anger expressed is real; the work required to right the wrongs and take positive action is long-term. It takes courage to listen and react. Top priority: maintain attention. Have patience. Take personal responsibility. Look into the lives of others in healing and healthy ways. The long-term impact will come but it requires a commitment from each one of us, acknowledging that we are God's creatures created equally. It's time for racial bias to end.

Tim Newman, Bob Culbertson, Mike Rash, Frank Martin, Kim Brattain and Ed Driggs posed excellent and searching questions which turned our meeting today into a "community meeting." Bishop Alexander addressed Tim's question about the spirituality of discrimination ~ we must realize that denial of "personhood" frustrates the intent of God. To deny any human being such respect is wrong. What impacts one of us, impacts all of us, he reminded us. Bob Culbertson's touching childhood reminiscence of meeting up with a wounded black man on the side of the road and the treatment he got was tear jerking and impactful. It brought it home to many of us. Bishop Alexander shared with us that his own father, who was a physician who treated Martin Luther King, Jr. when he was in Mississippi, saw firsthand the injustices slung at that superb leader. Move beyond selfishness and pledge a degree of commitment, Bishop Alexander told us. When asked by Mike Rash what race relations will be like in the next forty years, Bishop Alexander said it's yet to be written but will require courage among whites ... courage to overcome fear ... noting that whites will no longer be the majority during the next era. Millennials, he said, are the hope for making race relations better. Young people live in diverse settings and have friends and coworkers who are of difference races. They "get" that racial bias doesn't work for either side. When asked by Kim Brattain if Stonewall Street should be renamed, Bishop Alexander replied that further education into whom Stonewall Jackson really was would provide the answer to that question. Frank asked the question: Were you surprised at the anger last Fall? Bishop Alexander said it didn't so much surprise him as it saddened him. That having been said, the majority didn't feel it was enough. Ed Driggs spoke on behalf of his role as a member of City Council, reminding Bishop Alexander that our city leaders do NOT take all of this lightly but have a feeling of helplessness because there's a need for the black community to work to turn it around, themselves. Black-on-black murders are rampant; broken laws are never acceptable. Can you, asked Ed of Bishop Alexander, put some of the burden on your own congregation to help make things change for the better? Can African-Americans accept responsibility on how they live their lives? Bishop Alexander acknowledged the truth in all points made and stated that no matter how well black people live their lives, they can still be discounted simply because of skin color. We must, he said, understand the degree of courage it takes to NOT be angry ... and rather, to channel that anger in constructive ways. When you feel you aren't being heard, you tend to do things in a disruptive and destructive manner.

Editorial comment ~ Abraham Lincoln believed in two things: loving one another and

working together to make this world better (per Mario Cuomo). “And what he greatly thought, he nobly dared.” (Homer)

Speaker Write-Up: Marilyn Bowler

Head Table: *Margaret Marshall, Mike Hawley, Cheryl Banks, Kyle Woodruff*; Invocation: *Cheryl Banks*; Visitors & Guests: *Bob James*; Photos: *Bert Voswinkel*

## CLUB NEWS

**Travis Vance** introduced **Warren Henderson** to the club on Tuesday. Warren has quite the military background where he served as a Colonel in the U.S. Air Force, fighter pilot and commander of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Group “Flying Tigers,” and lead combat units engaged in Iraq, Kosovo/Serbia and Afghanistan. He was with The Boeing Company in St. Louis and is currently a realtor with Allen Tate Company. Welcome, Warren – [warren.lee.henderson@gmail.com](mailto:warren.lee.henderson@gmail.com).

**Alexandra Myrick** continues improving since her bicycling accident in July. The blood in her brain is going away and new bone is growing around her clavicle (surgery not needed). She misses Rotary and sends regards to everyone. **Bryan Adams** and **Phil Van Hoy** were selected for inclusion in the 2018 edition of Best Lawyers in America. Phil was listed in the category of Employment Law-Management and Bryan was listed in the categories of Employment Law-Management, Labor Law-Management and Litigation-Labor and Employment. Both of these super stars are also in the new edition of Super Lawyers for Employment Law for Management.

Mark your calendar for the **Flu shot clinic**...September 26, 2017 from 11:30AM to 2:00PM. The nurse will be set up at a table by our name badge boxes and you'll be in and out in no time. Thank you past president **Catherine Browning** for making these arrangements.

You can support the **October 17 Rotary Golf Classic** in several ways: register to play, donate a cool item for the door prizes/raffle, or attend the BBQ dinner that will be provided at the end of the tournament (around 5ish).

## 100 SERVICE PROJECTS (97 completed)

- **Queen City Honor Flight** has added a second flight for the October 7<sup>th</sup> trip to Washington, DC. 16 Veterans have signed up so far and there about 40 seats that need to be filled. Priority seating is open to WWII Veterans, and this flight is also available to Korean and Vietnam Veterans. Desert Storm, Granada and Panama Veterans who returned with life limiting physical conditions may also apply. Applications for Veterans and Guardians can be found at [www.charlotterotary.org](http://www.charlotterotary.org), click on the Service tab, then Flight of Honor information in the middle column. **UPDATE:** September 17<sup>th</sup> is the application cut-off date.

- **HeartBright Invitational Golf Tournament** coming up September 12 at the Ballantyne Resort. Contact: Tom Blocker [tomblocker48@gmail.com](mailto:tomblocker48@gmail.com).

- **Konica Minolta NFK Golf Classic** will be held **September 25** at River Run Country Club. Volunteers needed for three shifts: 7:30AM-10:30AM registration; 9AM-4PM volunteer scorers, 2PM-5PM post-event reception. Contact: Rob Hayden [Robert.hayden@kidney.org](mailto:Robert.hayden@kidney.org).

- **Platelet Donation:** Register at the American Red Cross or Community Blood Center of the Carolinas to donate platelets. UPDATE - 76 donations to date. Donations have fallen off in the last 3 months and not meeting the goal of 100 donations will jeopardize

this effort. Contact: **John zumBrunnen**: [jzumbrunnen@zumbrunnen.com](mailto:jzumbrunnen@zumbrunnen.com).

## MEMBERSHIP

07/01/2017 309

08/22/2017 308

Net Increase: -1

New Members: Kyle Woodruff, Ann Clark, Margaret Marshall, David Seroy, Warren Henderson

Resignations: Sheila Cox, LJ Stambuk, Ben Pendry, Kelly Mirt, Tyler Richardson, Lee Morris

Visitors & Guests 17

Club Members 154

Total 171 (60.5%)

Guests: Terry Mack, Kathryn Mahoney, Hannah Rapp, Lynn Lee, Sherry Waters, Howard Hoyle, III, Mary Hoyle, Howard Hoyle, Sr., Ella Hoyle, Bart Stanley, Greg Seagle, Bess Pickett, Chad Champlin, Toussaint Romain, John Sherman, Isaiah Scott, Michelle Hamilton, Brad Thomas

### UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS (09/08/17 – 09/13/17)

09/08 Tom Blocker, Patricia Shafer, Wes Jones

09/09 Colleen Brannan, Robbie Kirk, Tom O'Brien

09/11 John Armistead, Bryan Adams

09/13 Cheryl Banks

### UPCOMING ANNIVERSARIES (09/08/17 – 09/13/17)

09/09 Robin & Tom Gibson

09/10 Libby & Alan Simonini

09/11 Meg & Bryan Adams

09/12 Quincy & Mike White, Linda Gallehugh & Elly Clary

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

09/05 Winn Maddrey, TedX Charlotte

09/12 Sharon Decker, Tryon International Equestrian Center

09/19 How I Got Where I'm At

09/26 Dr. Patrick Graham, Charlotte Works

Photos from our luncheons and other events can be found on **Flickr** [Click here](#)





**Rotary**  
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Charlotte



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