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By JAMES W. WADE III

Staff Reporter

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Howard came to Cleveland by way of his friend and mentor Rev. O. M. Hoover, then pastor of the Olivet Institutional Baptist Church, who recommended Howard to preach for a service at GFBC even before the church started looking for a pastor due to the passing of Rev. C. T. Nelson.

Over the years Howard has been a tremendous blessing to the church and various people. He is highly regarded among colleagues and in the community and is one of the great men of God.

GFBC was established in 1955 by Rev. Bibbs and Rev. Jenkins.

In 1957, Rev. C.W. Alexander was called in addition to Rev. C.T. Nelson, who was well known for his outstanding preaching ability.

After listening to hundreds of sermons by hundreds of preachers (some famous, most not) in various settings for years, you have to come to some conclusions about great sermons and great preachers. Howard has many great sermons that he has preached over the 39 years at Greater Friendship.

Recently, Howard was honored at Morehouse College by being inducted into the Morehouse College Board of International Preachers on April 5, 2011. This event was well attended by many including Rev. Otis Moss Jr.

Howard was born November 27, 1948 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He is one of seven children born to the late Rev. Moses Howard, Sr. and Lee Ethel Howard who presently resides in Oklahoma City.

He attended public schools in Oklahoma City, is a graduate of Douglass High School before graduating from

Bishop College

(1971-72) receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Religion and Philosophy. He extended his studies in

Christian Doctrine at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas in 1971.

Howard preaches and teaches to implement the vision of the church. He guides the day-to-day activities that result in the overall advancement of the cause of Christ through the parishioners.

To celebrate and honor Pastor and Sis Howard, they've already had Rev. Benjamin Curry and the Star of Bethel Baptist Church. Then, a special appreciation service for Sis Howard will be held on May 14th at noon. Rev. Marcettes Cunningham and Mt. Zion Baptist Church from Elyria, Ohio, will be present on May 15, at 3:30 p.m. On May 22, at 4 p.m., the Rev. A. E. Williams and Beulah Missionary Baptist Church will be guests and they'll close out with Dr. Leonard King and the

First Lady Gwendolyn Howard, MSSA, LSW, was named Ohio School Social Worker of the Year. She is a dedicated social worker at Saint Martin de Porres High School. In addition, she directs the Ministry of HOPE (social services) at the Historic Greater Friendship Baptist Church, where she is a member. First Lady Howard is also the Regional Director for OSSWA (Ohio School Social Work Association) and has been working with Cleveland State University on the launch of their School Social Work Program.

GFBC is a church where you can go and hear good preaching, teaching and singing. Minister Earl McElrath has been working with music department for years. The church has many great members who have been with the church because of their love for Pastor Howard.

Walking into GFBC, you never know who you may see, including the great Glenville coach Ted Ginn praising the Lord and leading songs. While visiting the church, members are very friendly such as Emily Lighty and Evon Burton to name a few.

So, if you need to hear some great songs that you grew up on like "I will trust in the Lord" and "Pray for Me" doing altar call, stop by the GFBC one Sunday morning.

Rev. Howard would love to meet you and even see you become a member.

The Call & Post would like to salute Rev. and Sister Howard on 39 great years at the Historic Greater Friendship Baptist Church.