

JANICE GILMORE



COMMENTARY

Accomplished women give lie to hurtful stereotypes

Too often black folks behaving badly on the evening news are the images that many people assign to all African-Americans. I wish I could flash across the television screen all the positive things that the black community is doing.

For instance, this summer I was able to enjoy inspirational spiritual events presented by accomplished African-American women.

I thoroughly enjoyed Velma L. Sanders, who as a teenager experienced a life-changing encounter with the Lord, inspiring a passionate love for the Bible. Through being a consistent reader of the Bible, she is convinced that it is not only true and faithful, but also eternal, exciting and life changing for anyone who reads and studies it with a sincere heart.

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Gilmore: Life-affirming, God-centered presentations

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Sanders is the founder and president of "God's Word, Alive!," a weekly radio broadcast. Started in 2004, it is aired in Omaha; Kansas City, Missouri; Alexandria, Louisiana; Tupelo, Mississippi; and areas surrounding those places.

She also has a website, GodsWordAlive.org, where people have access to many articles and study aids she has written throughout the years.

It is not surprising that she embraced the Lord at such an early age. Her mother, Jewel Gay, a retired schoolteacher and a spiritual lady, has been a tireless leader and worker in the church for many years.

Sanders has ministered for more than 30 years to many people of different religious and racial backgrounds.

This summer, Sanders continued her Bible teaching series of

the Book of Revelation; this is her second summer teaching at the Thompson Alumni Center at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The people in her class represented 18 churches in the Omaha area.

Also this summer, at Salem Baptist Church's God's Covenant Partners Ministry during an annual retreat at Beaver Lake, Sanders, Regina Williams and Barbara Ingram presented inspiring presentations on the topic "Making Room for God in Your Life."

During the presentations:

» Sanders answered the questions on who should make room for God, where, why and how. Everything she taught was backed by Scripture.

» Williams reminded the group that keeping a journal helps you remember when God has answered prayers. She encouraged the group to have spiritual weapons such as Bible

verses, sermons, spiritual music and a quiet place to pray. She gave a powerful testimony at the end of her presentation along with Bible verses to meditate on.

» Ingram reminded participants that we should fervently seek God's will and purpose for our lives by developing and maintaining a strong relationship with Him. She gave the participants an opportunity to use their creative skills by making key chains, tying the activity to her teachings.

The summer Salem's Women's Empowerment Workshop presented by the female ministers at the church was commanding:

» Minister Jeanette Washington gave a critical explanation of the Bible text in Joshua 24:14-24.

» Minister Faith Cole spoke of family and emphasized praying for family without ceasing, keeping the enemy away from loved ones, and making the fam-

ily right. She spoke passionately about the importance of family unity.

» Minister Vanessa Johnson spoke of choosing friends wisely, giving examples on how the wrong friends can wreak havoc in your life.

» Minister Viv Ewing spoke on the joy of managing your finances as God would have you do. That included setting financial goals, leaving a financial blessing for your family and teaching about the benefits of investing.

» Minister Kimberly Cross spoke on fidelity, being loyal, faithful and trustworthy to the Lord. As Jesus Christ is her example, she endeavors to love the unlovable, to touch the untouchable and to reach the unreachable.

People doing good things like these women help keep our community from embracing negative images assigned to us.