



BY ANDREA BRUCE WOODALL—THE WASHINGTON POST

"Most people are much more mindful that they need to be more inclusive," says the Rev. William C. Teng, pastor at Heritage Presbyterian Church in the Alexandria area.

## Diversity Can Come Slowly to Churches

FAITH, From A1

pastor. Seminaries are offering classes on how to minister in a multiracial society.

Fueling the trend is the fact that more minorities, particularly blacks and Asians, are entering the ministry. Minority students make up about 25 percent of the enrollment at seminaries accredited by the Association of Theological Schools, compared with 6 percent in 1977.

For Green, who is serving the same community where he attended segregated schools as a child, integrating congregations is necessary to fulfill God's call, however difficult the challenge.

Many families left the church when Green became associate pastor in 1992, and a few others trickled out when he was made senior pastor in 1996. But others—some of them minorities—have joined, citing Green as one of the reasons, and kept the membership steady at about 1,000 parishioners.

"By doing this, we are representing the kingdom of God," said Green, 53. "We're not there yet. We're still working on the communication and feeling comfortable with each other. But the fact that we're in proximity to each other means that we're in that crucial place where we can start to work things through."

Race has long defined many U.S. churches. In the 1700s and 1800s, blacks walked out of the Methodist faith to protest racial discrimination and formed their own denominations, including the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Southern Baptists, the country's largest Protestant denomination, barred black congregants until the 1960s. Evangelist Billy Graham and slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. have been widely quoted as saying that 11 o'clock on Sunday morning is the most segregated hour of the week.

In Catholic parishes, multiracial congregations are more common, because membership is largely determined by geography. Protestants, with more choices of where to attend services, still tend to associate with people of their own ethnic group, even as churches have tried mergers or joint worship services to increase diversity.

But changes clearly are occurring in ministerial leadership. Not only are there more black and Asian ministers in white churches, but some are becoming national and regional church leaders. Bishop Felton Edwin May, an African American, heads the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church, the area's largest church organization, with more than 700 congregations.

The conference is considered a leader in cross-racial appointments. About 40 of its pastors had such assignments in 1999, and the number has stayed roughly the same because of turnover, said the Rev. HiRho Park, chairwoman of the conference's Commission on Race and Religion, who compiled the statistics as part of her doctoral dissertation.

Although the results of such appointments have



BY MARVIN JOSEPH—THE WASHINGTON POST

The Rev. Gerard A. Green Jr. joins in the baptismal picture-taking after a recent Sunday service at Epworth United Methodist Church in Gaithersburg.

been mixed, academic experts say the effort at least helps start a dialogue on race and culture.

"Certainly the more nonwhite pastors, the greater the interest in multiracial churches," said Michael Emerson, a Rice University sociologist who directed the Congregations Project, the 2002 national study of race and churches funded by the Lilly Endowment. "This is an issue they're going to want to talk about."

For some Asian American pastors—who make up the fastest-growing ethnic group in seminaries—serving a non-Asian church has been a necessity rather than a choice.

Park, a Korean immigrant, explained that many Asian immigrant churches are so traditional that they prefer to have older men as clergy. Others require language skills that many second-generation Asian Americans don't have. As a result, more than half of the Asian clergy members in the United States serve in non-Asian or multiracial congregations, compared with the 8 percent of black and white clergy members who minister outside their racial group, according to the Congregations Project.

Park said of Asian ministers who serve white congregations: "We feel this is our special call. This is our choice and our response to God."

Park, who served two predominantly white churches in the 1990s, said acceptance from the parishioners came slowly. Their biggest complaints were about her heavy accent and sometimes hesitant English. Her reaction was to not be offended and to provide transcripts with her sermon.

Eventually, some members praised her, saying: "Wow. You have a different accent, and it makes me listen more carefully. It helps me focus," Park recalled.

Park said that churches need to talk more openly about why integration is theologically necessary and that support from bishops and lay leaders is crucial.

The Rev. William C. Teng, moderator of the National Capital Presbytery, said he thinks more con-

gregations are willing to try cross-racial appointments. Three years ago, Teng, a Chinese American, became the first nonwhite pastor at Heritage Presbyterian Church, a nearly all-white congregation in Fairfax County's Alexandria area.

The 250-member church has parishioners who work in international business and the military and are used to being with people of diverse backgrounds, Teng said. These days, "most people are much more mindful that they need to be more inclusive," he said.

But some academic experts say the biggest danger in cross-racial appointments is that they will fail so badly that a backlash against diversity may result. Many appointments have not been successful. At United Methodist forums on race, pastors have expressed loneliness and frustration.

The Rev. Delyne "Dell" Hinton, an African American pastor who has spent the past seven years in predominantly white churches, compares the work to being a missionary. At a church in Harford County, Md., a parishioner who phoned to request a clergy visit used a racial slur, Hinton said.

Hinton said there were some successes. She and the parishioners learned about each others' different worship styles—she learned to keep her sermons under 20 minutes; they responded to her preaching with more body movement and expression.

Still, the two churches that she has served as associate pastor have remained largely white. She said she is the only person of color most of her parishioners know. "This has been a long and difficult journey, and I'm tired," said Hinton, an associate pastor at Catonsville United Methodist Church.

At Epworth church in Gaithersburg, where the appointment of Green appears to have led to a more open and multicultural congregation, parishioners are starting to wonder whether the changes will survive when he eventually moves to another church. Terry Utterback, a district lay leader who has attended Epworth for 25 years, said that the changes in the church have been dramatic but that more work needs to be done. Participation in most social activities and committees is still overwhelmingly white.

Attendance at the worship service has gone from about 95 percent white to about 70 percent white. Many of the new members who are Indian, African and African American decided to come back for a second look after seeing a minority pastor.

"It's not something that happened overnight," Utterback said. "We are so pleased with the way it is now that we don't want it to go back the way it was. To us that's not acceptable. But we'll just have to wait and see."

On a recent Sunday, Green baptized four young children. At the end of the service, the children's relatives surrounded them, snapping pictures. Green, the only nonwhite on the stage, excused himself and ran to a back room.

He grabbed his camera so he could take his own photos of the moment. They were his family, too.



BY MARVIN JOSEPH—THE WASHINGTON POST

**The Rev. Gerard A. Green Jr. talks to Carol Weiger at Epworth United Methodist Church in Gaithersburg, a predominantly white parish.**

## **On Faith**

# Minority Pastors Preach Diversity

## *Clergy of Color Help Expand Horizons of White Churches*

*On Faith appears the first Sunday of each month.*

By PHUONG LY  
*Washington Post Staff Writer*

Whenever he closed his eyes and listened, the Rev. Gerard A. Green Jr. was reminded that he was a black pastor leading a predominantly white church.

No one said "Amen" aloud during the sermons. The choir sang without clapping. And after the services, there were whispers among the parishioners of Epworth United Methodist Church in Gaithersburg: Why did their new pastor need to raise his voice and gesture to make his points?

Racial diversity is still a struggling novelty in most houses of God. Just 8 percent of Christian churches in the United States are multiracial, defined as one ethnic group making up no more than 80 percent of the membership, according to a 2002 study.

But increasingly, faith leaders are prodding churches to better reflect and appeal to the country's changing demographics—and they are doing it from the top, placing minority pastors in white congregations.

In the past few years, the United Methodist Church has made cross-racial appointments a priority, held forums on the issue and commissioned a study on how such congregations can be successful. Presbyterian officials have asked recruiting committees to bring in minority candidates when a church is interviewing for a new

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## From segregation to Generation X



CHRIS ROSSI/THE GAZETTE

At 89, Ida Pearl Green of Gaithersburg is still going strong as an Avon representative. She remains a top seller after 50 years.

# 'Miss Avon' still brings the business

BY PATRICIA M. MURRET  
STAFF WRITER

In 1958, Ida Pearl Green opened the newspaper to read that Avon Products Inc. needed a new sales representative.

After one interview, the Gaithersburg woman was hired as the cosmetic company's first black saleswoman in Montgomery County.

Last week, the woman who is still "Miss Avon" to her longtime customers — and their grandchildren — celebrat-

ed her 50th anniversary on the job.

"I called them and this lady said, 'Come on Feb. 12,'" Green recalled of her start with the company. "She explained to me about Avon and she gave me a territory. Of course, this being segregation, she gave me a territory in Rockville, that we called Lincoln Park, that was all African-American."

And so began Green's weekly trips to meet with local women and show off the latest lipstick, powder, blush and perfume.

Green's husband, Gerard, dropped her off at her cousin's house on North Stone Street Avenue on Saturdays. She spent the days walking her territory. Avon inventory arrived every three weeks, so they drove to the post office and back to the neighborhood for distribution.

"It was not hard to get sales," she said last week. "African-American churches got together a lot for enter-

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# GREEN

■ Continued from Page A-1

tainment then, so I knew a lot of people over there.”

Green, who lives in the house her husband built on Quince Orchard Road, grew up on four acres on Riffle Ford Road in Gaithersburg, she said. Family roots in the city date to at least 1868, when her grandparents helped found the Pleasant View Methodist Episcopal Church on Darnestown Road. The historic church, purchased with \$54 three years after the Civil War ended, was a home away from home until 1968, when members joined the Fairhaven United Methodist Church, where Green worships today.

Though it was just several years after Rosa Parks made history, Green does not recall her choice to sit up front at her very first Avon meeting — and at every meeting since — as a statement.

“I didn’t know anybody and I had to learn about the product,” she said. “I liked to sit up front.”

“No one was ever harsh,” she said, although some sales reps may have been surprised at her decision.

Lincoln Park residents eventually started to call Green “Miss Avon.”

“I still have some of the Lincoln Parks,” Green said. “I was telling a girl the other day, ‘Anna Rose, do you realize I’ve been selling Avon to you for 50 years?’”

Green said Anna Rose Moten of Rockville and Frances Jenkins, who is in a nursing home in Wheaton, are longtime customers. Younger generations approach her with their memories.

“Most of the older people are passed, but their grandchildren come to me and say, ‘Miss Avon, do you remember when you used to come to my grandmother’s house?’”



CHRIS ROSSI/THE GAZETTE

Ida Pearl Green of Gaithersburg packs up Avon orders.

Green once opened her front door to see a county Department of Public Works and Transportation engineer exiting his orange truck. “Miss Avon,” he said. “I’ve been meaning to stop by.” When

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*Green, 89, is in the top 6 percent of 700 sales representatives in her district.*

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he was a child, his mother was one of Green’s customers.

After five years, Green was driving herself to Rockville three days a week. Over the years she was awarded various sales prizes including living room furniture, a refrigerator, washer/dryer, organ and record player.

In 1972, Avon began issuing porcelain Mrs. Abbe dolls to those

who attained the President’s Club, achieving at least \$1,850 in sales in a year. Green’s living room curio cabinet contains one doll for every year since then. It also holds 16 porcelain cup-and-saucer sets awarded to Avon’s “Honor Society,” the next achievement level.

At 89, Green still brings in the business, working a beat she developed herself. District sales manager Jeannie Rodbell said last week that Green is in the top 6 percent of 700 sales representatives in her district.

She drops off Avon catalogues at office buildings, posts an Avon sign on her lawn and keeps catalogues in her purse and at her front door. Her sons help her distribute products once a week. Her daughter-in-law is helping her get online.

“She’s a phenomenal lady,” said Rita Green, who is married to Green’s second son, Gerard Jr. “Last year she thought about retiring after 50, but she’s not talking about retiring now!”

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BY CHRIS ROSSI — THE GAZETTE

Ida Pearl Green, 89, earned the nickname "Miss Avon" after she began selling the company's cosmetics a half-century ago.

## After 50 Beautiful Years, 'Miss Avon' And Her Sales Are Still Looking Good

### *African American Woman Peddled Makeup During Segregation*

By PATRICIA M. MURRET  
Gazette Staff Writer

In 1958, Ida Pearl Green opened the newspaper to read that Avon Products Inc. needed a new sales representative. After one interview, the Gaithersburg woman was hired as the cosmetic company's first black saleswoman in Montgomery County.

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These articles and news capsules are from The Gazette, which publishes community newspapers on Wednesdays in Montgomery County. The Gazette, which also publishes a subscription-based weekend edition covering business and politics throughout Maryland, is part of the Community Newspaper Group of Post-Newsweek Media Inc., a division of The Washington Post Co.

# Jason Green, Home After Long Obama Campaign

By MIKE CUTHBERT

**H**e is as striking today as he was as a student at Quince Orchard High School (QOHS) where he ran for and won numerous student elections in addition to starring on defense on the Cougar soccer team. Tall, confident, handsome and now accomplished, Jason Green is back in Maryland studying for the bar exam, ready to get on with the next step in an already active and impressive life.

Green finished his latest job in November. He was the national voter registration director for the Obama campaign after serving as regional field director in several states, all of them eventually voting for his candidate.

"I remember back in eighth grade Miss Williams said, 'You're going to make a great lawyer some day.' That's the first time I ever thought about going into law," said Green. He's now thinking about it a lot after earning his degree in political science and business from Washington University in St. Louis and his law degree from the Yale Law School.

"You know that all your friends took it as a matter of course that you would be the first black presi-

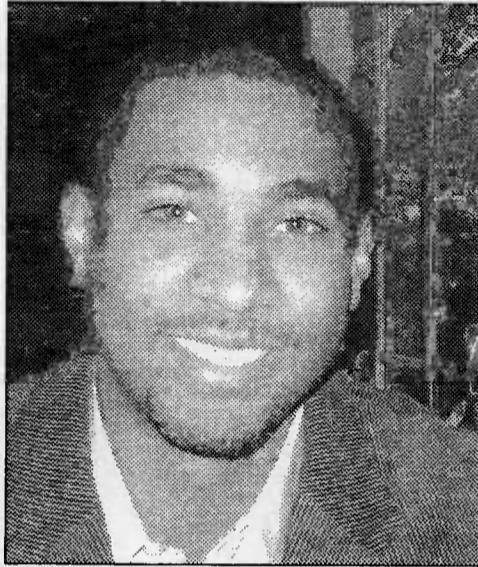


Photo | Mike Cuthbert

Jason Green

dent of the United States?" he was asked. "What kind of pressure did those expectations put on you?"

"I don't remember any pressure, but I do remember a lot of support. I never heard those things from my parents. I was never told that I had to get a certain GPA or do certain activities. I did it because I liked it, and because I thought I was good at it. I was never in that pressure situation," he said.

The only pressure Green said he felt was self-inflicted: His older sister went to Duke and is now a doctor. "The fact that she did very well made me want to do very well," he said.

After working on Doug Duncan's Maryland campaigns

and other local campaigns and with the Kerry campaign in 2004, Green saw the next logical step as applying to the Obama campaign. He ended up serving as regional field director in Nevada, focusing on community outreach in the neighborhoods and churches. He was also in his third and last year of law school. He graduated after the primary campaign following stints in at least six states that went for Obama in the primaries.

But his commitment to Obama was personal more than political.

"When I was growing up, my dad was never home," Green said. "He was still in seminary, and he was in D.C., working on preparing his sermons. The one place I knew I would see him was Sunday morning. I'd sit in the pew and listen to my dad trying to foment this sort of change, trying to inculcate these beliefs into people that would motivate action in our everyday lives. And what stayed in my mind even more than his words were the looks on people's faces, their reactions to his words that made them inspired to be part of something, wanting to take action.

"I'm sitting in Boston at the

■ **JASON GREEN**

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## ■ JASON GREEN

*from page 3*

[Democratic] convention, and I see this young, charismatic politician come on stage. I see him delivering this message in much the same way, and saw the same reaction. I saw something that I wanted to be part of. I wanted to act."

His candidate won, and Green had a key role — several key roles — in making it happen. Does that mean that Jason Green

is headed for a political appointment in the new administration?

"I take what happens. There are so many things that need to be done," he said. "What I saw in New Haven, for example, showed me what people can do once they're organized."

Once they're organized they need access to financial institutions and other supporting parts of the society in order to make themselves a permanent cause of action, he said.

Green sees many opportunities in this field and others, both inside and outside govern-

ment. As one listens to him bring his community organizing, legal and personal skills to bear on problems facing his country, it is transparent that Green no longer sees, if he ever did, a division between organizing to win an election and organizing to meet the needs of the people. They are clearly one and the same.

Those who knew Jason Green at QOHS cannot be surprised. After all, they all assumed he would be president himself one day. The way his career has gone, there is no reason to assume that it is not possible.

Dr. Keisha Green, daughter of Rev. Bernard Green, Jr.,  
and Rita Green, granddaughter  
of Pearl Green

The Gazette

# COMMUNITY NEWS

Wednesday, March 7, 2012 • Page A-4



JENNIFER LEE

White House fellows Kisha Davis, Elizabeth Cote and Ted Johnson prepare a meal for the homeless at D.C. Central Kitchen during a White House Fellow service event.

## Gaithersburg resident joins White House staff

■ Physician part of prestigious one-year fellow program

BY JEN BONDESON  
STAFF WRITER

Those who have worked with Kisha Davis said they know she is bound to do great things.

When Davis, 33, of Gaithersburg was selected this fall to be one of 15 fellows to work at the White House, they weren't surprised.

"Sometimes, you can just tell about people," said Jocelyn Hines, her co-worker and friend. "She is very organized, focused, hard working."

Davis was selected to serve one year beginning in August at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, after completing an extensive application process and competing against hundreds of applicants from across the nation, said Erika Henderson, deputy director of the White House Fellows Program.

Founded in 1964, the President's Commission on White

House Fellowships is a prestigious program for leadership and public service which offers first-hand experience working at the highest levels of the federal government — with top-ranking government officials such as senior White House staff and Cabinet Secretaries.

A fellow receives compensation of a GS-14/Step 3 Federal employee, which is \$90,343 this year.

Applicants must be U.S. citizens and have completed their undergraduate education and be working in their chosen professions.

Davis, who has a Bachelor of Science in biological anthropology from Duke University, a doctorate from the University of Connecticut and a Master of Public Health degree from Johns Hopkins University, most recently worked as a primary care physician at Chase Brexton Health Services, Inc., in Columbia and at Secure Medical Care, an urgent care facility in Gaithersburg.

Davis has a special interest in HIV, women's health, diabetes and caring for the uninsured and underinsured.

Working at Chase Brexton,

where she helped a culturally and socioeconomically diverse population, Davis said she realized that although she could counsel patients about weight loss or prescribe medicine for diabetes, she didn't have the opportunity to more broadly affect the environment that had partly contributed to their health problems.

"The recognition that more needs to be done outside of the exam room is partly what prompted me to apply for the White House fellowship," she wrote in an email.

In her fellowship, Davis has visited Chicago and Detroit to better understand how federal policies affect local programs, and has frequent lunches with leaders such as President Barack Obama and Colin Powell. Powell himself is a former White House fellow.

"Public health training has given [me] a good foundation for being able to look at the big picture," Davis wrote.

Mary Winkfield, a registered nurse at Chase Brexton who worked with Davis, said the fellowship is a good opportunity for Davis, with her background and compassion for the community

and national health care, to learn more about government policy and the affects she can have in the future for the health of the population nationwide.

"She is very passionate in assuring that everyone has access to high standard of care, and helping decrease health disparities," she said.

Hines said Davis is always busy — a few years ago, she was working full time, completing her masters and had a baby on the way.

"Some people wear their stress on their sleeve and you can see it," she said. "But she always looks like she is taking it all in stride."

Davis has two sons with her husband, Everett Davis. They are "high school sweethearts" and are both graduates of Quince Orchard High School.

Davis said her career path will be winding, but in the fellowship she is learning invaluable lessons that will help her translate ideas into action and policy to benefit her patients and profession.

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