

# Obituaries

## Mrs. Essie Mae (Watson) Hamilton

Mrs. Essie Mae (Watson) Hamilton was born April 13, 1918 to Willie Watson and Bertha Thompson in Cherokee County, Texas. She has 9 siblings, Hestella, Essie, Clifford, James(Buster), Brownie, George Ruby, Frank and 2 are survived by her, Willie Mae( Jacksonville, Texas) and Linnie (Dallas, Texas). Mrs. Essie married CoNeal Hamilton in 1932 at the age of 14 and spent her life as a homemaker. She birthed 11 children (listed in order) and one Stepdaughter\*: \*Alzata+, Teal+, Jessie Mae+, Arma Lee+, Goldie Mae (Alto, TX), Bertha Mae (Alto, TX), Roxie Ann+, Lonnie Ann (Alto, TX), Alberta (Alto, TX), Helen (Alto, TX), Katherleen (Alto, TX) and Verdie Jean (Nacogdoches, X). She is survived by 7 of her 11 children. 289 (and counting) people are apart of Mrs. Essie's bloodline: 11 children, 36 grandchildren, 101 great grandchildren, 124 great great grandchildren, and 17 great great great grandchildren.

Mrs. Essie has a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, etc that are survived by her. September 15, 2016, Mrs. Essie went on to glory joining her deceased husband and children, at ETMC in Jacksonville, Texas in the arms of her daughter, Alberta Pope. She will be missed and remembered by many people.

April 13, 1918– September 15, 2016 Tuesday, September 20, 2016 1 PM, St. Thomas AME, Alto, TX.

# The Black Church and the Response to HIV/AIDS: Where Faith Meets Advocacy



PHOTO CAPTION: Rev. Edwin C. Sanders II (left), founder of Metropolitan Interdenominational Church in Nashville, Tenn., is working to get more Black pastors involved in the fights against AIDS. (Freddie Allen/BAI/NNPA)

By Tamara Holmes (BAI Daily Contributing Writer)

It's no secret that HIV/AIDS advocates and the Black church have not always seen eye to eye. However, a new faith-based initiative could create more collaboration between those groups than ever before.

The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and UNAIDS have launched a \$4 million two-year initiative to strengthen the capacity of faith-based organizations to respond to HIV/AIDS. The effort will focus on five areas: collecting, analyzing and disseminating data; strengthening leadership and advocacy; addressing stigma and discrimination; improving the provision of

increasing demand for HIV services and ensuring that people remain in care. "Faith has played a critical role in the trajectory of the HIV/AIDS pandemic," says Phill Wilson, president and CEO of the Black AIDS Institute. "This initiative helps us expand the engagement of faith-based organizations, including those in the U.S., in efforts that are aligned with the UNAIDS and various efforts to end the pandemic." Cultivating Better Relationships The faith-based initiative comes in response to 10 recommendations made by more than 50 faith leaders in April 2015. The United Nations General Assembly, UNAIDS, PEPFAR and Emory University in September 2015 released a report titled, "Building on Firm Foundations" (pdf) that is based on those recommendations.

the faith community's desire to step up its involvement in the fight against HIV/AIDS. An interfaith service held in June 2016 led to a call to action to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Following the service was a U.N. High Level Meeting on Ending AIDS, in which world leaders adopted a Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS. Their intention: to end the epidemic by 2030.

Religious leaders have also voiced support to PLWHA and members of the LGBT community, who have been disproportionately affected by the disease. For example, in June, Pope Francis said that Christians should apologize to the gay community for the way Christians had treated them in the past.

In February, Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, Anglican archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, also adopted an accepting posture about the LGBT community. In a letter describing a resolution of the Anglican Synod of Bishops, an advisory body to the pope, Makgoba wrote, "We reaffirm our assurance to them that they are loved by God and that all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ."

Faith communities across the world have the responsibility to represent those who are affected by HIV/AIDS, particularly those whose voices aren't being heard, says Manoj Kurian, M.D., coordinator of the World Council of Churches'

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