

Clergy members contribute to Orange council meeting

By Chris Sykes
Staff Writer

The reality of the continuing relevance and impact of religion and religious beliefs was displayed during the Orange City Council's reorganization meeting.

Four clerics participated in the July 1 meeting in the Orange Middle School auditorium. The group included the Revs. Reginald T. Jackson, EYESHA K. MARABLE and JOHN C. REYNOLDS and Imam Abbas Musa.

The religious members were invited for each of the council members who began new terms. Jackson participated at the request of North Ward Councilwoman Tency Eason, who is a member of St. Matthew AME Church, where he serves as pastor; Marable is the wife of South Ward Councilman Edward Marable Jr.; Reynolds was there for East Ward Councilwoman Linda Jones-Bel; and Musa attended for Council President and East Ward Councilman Hassan Abdul-Rasheed.

All of the clergy attended the reorganization meeting to ask God to bless the non-religious endeavors of the new council. Jackson prayed that the Lord would bless everyone on the council and allow them to work together for the greater glory of Him and the benefit of the residents, taxpayers and citizens of Orange, words that were reminiscent of a special sermon he delivered on Father's Day.

"God is trying to teach us something about faithfulness and keeping our word to Him this Father's Day through Abraham, who became the father of Isaac at 100 years old," said Jackson. "God blessed Abraham with the desire of his heart; the thing he wanted more than anything else, a son. God is asking you if you will continue to be faithful after you have been blessed?"

Jackson went on to say that after God blessed Abraham with a son, he put his faith to the test by asking

him to sacrifice the "thing he wanted most and loved the best" to Him. Even though it broke Abraham's heart to do so, he said he did what God was asking of him and was just about to plunge a knife into his beloved son's heart when God told him to stop.

There is a parable in the story of Abraham and Isaac, Jackson said, that is applicable to this modern world and elected officials who run for office and the "regular people" who vote for them.

"People ask for jobs, friends, lovers and whatever their hearts desire, saying, 'Lord, please open this door for me,'" said Jackson. "Well, the Lord delivered and the question now is if you're going to keep your word to Him, because we always say we promise to do this or that, if He will answer our prayers, but then we turn around and go back on our words the minute that we get what we wanted. Some of us have short memories, but the god that we serve doesn't forget anything."

Jackson said those forgetful people need to understand that faith is not always logical and faithfulness is not always agreeable. He said all the stuff we ask God for is not reasonable, and some of us "only come to God in a time of crisis."

God is trying to teach people three things, Jackson said: Whether or not they will be obedient to Him after they have been blessed; when and how to worship Him; and when you worship Him you don't always get "more."

"Some of us don't ever realize when we have been blessed because the blessing is not always 'more.' Sometimes, your blessing is the fact that you didn't lose what you have," said Jackson. "Do you know, last year, 1.5 million people lost their jobs, others lost their spouses, their homes or something else that was dear to them, but for the people who didn't lose anything, you better learn how to count your blessings."