

# RELIGION

## Mount Carmel helps dedicate Habitat home

By Herbert L. White  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Habitat For Humanity of Charlotte dedicated the first home sponsored by a black church last week.

Mount Carmel Baptist Church on Tuckaseegee Road, sponsored the construction of Jerry and Brenda Melton's home at 1700 N. Allen St. in the Belmont community. Church leaders said building the home is in keeping with community activism.

"I hope it will inspire other

leaders to emerge from the African American community to do positive things for other families and community members," said Sam Caldwell, the project's leader and member of the Habitat Board of Directors.

Other black churches are doing that. Friendship Baptist Church, also one of the first black congregations to fully sponsor a Habitat home, has begun construction on their Adopt-A-Home project in the Lakewood community.

Mount Carmel, which has a

congregation of 800, has been active in Habitat before, said Elizabeth Ross Dargan, the church's treasurer and trustee. But the church wanted to go a step further and sponsor a home.

"For many years we've contributed financially to Habitat, but we decided to go further," she said. "The members got very excited about being able to help more completely."

In addition to Habitat sponsorship, Mount Carmel, described by Dargan as an

"outreach" church, is involved in several activities. Beneficiaries of the church's outreach include organizations such as Crisis Assistance, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Urban League, Afro-American Cultural Center and Foundation For The Carolinas. The church also contributes to several churches and a scholarship fund.

For more information on Habitat For Humanity, call 376-2054.



PHOTO/PAUL WILLIAMS III

Mount Carmel Church member Bernice Caldwell presents photo album to Brenda and Jerry Melton during home dedication.

### Sunday school lesson

## Things are not always as they seem

There is a Chinese parable about an old man who lived with his son in a tiny cottage. One night the old man's horse — the only horse he had — wandered away, and his neighbors all came to say how sorry they were about his misfortune. "How do you know this is ill fortune?" he replied.

A week later the horse came home, bringing with him a whole herd of wild horses. The neighbors then congratulated him on his good fortune.

The man's son began to ride the new horses. One day he was thrown from a horse, and the fall left him with a crippled leg. Right on cue, the neighbors approached the old man to express their regrets over his bad luck.

A few days later a Chinese warlord came by and conscripted all able-bodied men for a bloody war, but the old man's son, being crippled, was passed over in the draft. Once more the neighbors came by to congratulate the old man on his good luck, and once more he replied, "How do you know this is good luck?"

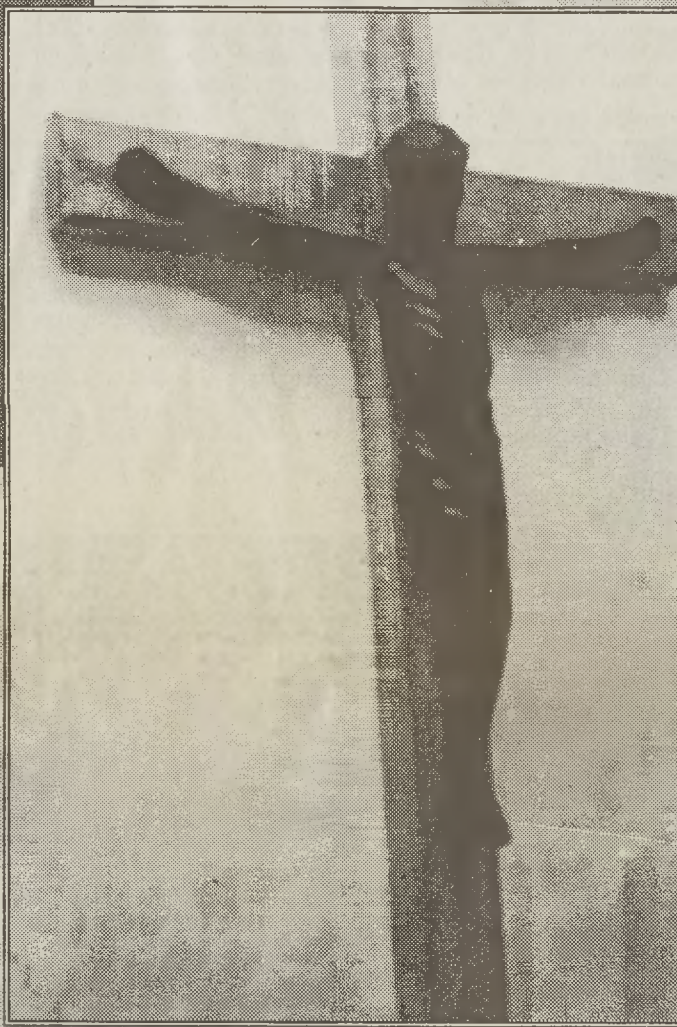
The story ends there, though it could have gone on forever. The point of the parable is that things are not always as they seem. In the long run, some immediate circumstance, good or bad, may ultimately lead to a most unexpected outcome.

Today's text was written to people who were convinced that their immediate circumstances was the worst of fortunes. The message of the prophet, however, enabled them to see that their temporary suffering would lead to a glorious future. Unlike the Chinese parable, however, which pictured a life driven by fate, this prophetic message declared that Israel's negative circumstance would be turned into something good by the power of a sovereign God.

Laborers who work diligently with few or no visible results have to be admired. Egyptians who first labored to build the pyramids did not live long enough to see the project completed. Though they observed progress year-to-year, they could imagine what the finished structures would look like.

Assembly line workers usually see only a small part of the product they work on. Soldiers risk limbs and life in battle, as they advance into enemy territory or stand off enemy attacks, even though they do not know how things are going in the larger war effort. Teachers, social workers, and other "people persons" often work with little visible proof of their effectiveness. All of these folk are motivated by some degree of faith that they are making a contribution in the advance-

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PHOTOS/JAMES BROWN

## A day of atonement

By Rev. Chester Debnam  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

With the assistance of Curtis Sinclair and another friend, I have searched the Scriptures on the matters of atonement and about atonement. Chapter 23 talks about a day

of atonement. In both of these chapters, we see that as part of the atonement process, animal sacrifice was required in order to have the children of Israel's sins covered.

**God displeased with animal sacrifices**

In the prophet Micah's day, he prophesied that God was not pleased with the blood sacrifices of animals. He said these words: Wherewith shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? (Micah 6:6-7?)

**Jesus became the sin offering**  
God sent His only begotten

son, who became the sin offering for man, one time and forever. It is written: Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 5:17). It is also written: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, Much more, Being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Romans 5:10).

**Animals' blood covered sin**

Under the Levitical law, animal sacrifices used for "atonement," which in this case means "covering," here, the Hebrew word for "atonement" is kippurim. When Jesus died for our sins, we received "atonement," which in this instance means "reconciliation," and here the Greek word for "atonement" is to God is by accepting Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

I testify, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

**Issues rooted in sin**

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### Eye on Gospel

**Gospel's big night:** The icy rain that ushered in the blizzard of '96 couldn't keep a near-capacity crowd away from the gospel music industry's biggest night, the 11th annual Stellar Awards on Jan. 6.

John P. Kee, nicknamed the "prince of gospel," was crowned the night's big winner with a grand total of five awards, including album of the year (contemporary) and producer of the year. It was a near-clean sweep with Kee having triumphed in five of the six categories in which he received nominations.

It was also a big night for Dottie Peoples, who was easily

the "people's choice." Peoples pocketed four awards, including traditional female vocalist, song of the year and album of the year (traditional). Newcomer William Becton was named new artist of the year for his debut album "Broken," which was also the top urban gospel pick.

Citing outstanding achievements by African Americans in gospel music, the two-hour program, which serves as an annual tribute to the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., will air in national syndication Jan. 13 through Feb. 18. The brainchild of executive producer Don Jackson, the program is distributed by his

Chicago-based Central City Productions. "Living Single" star Kim Fields-Freeman, comedian Jonathan Slocumb and actor James Avery ("Fresh Prince of Bel Air") shared co-hosting duties for the show, which featured live performances from Kirk Franklin and the Family, Shirley Caesar, Fred Hammond, Yolanda Adams, the Mighty Clouds of Joy and CeCe Winans. Presenters included Angela Bassett, Jasmine Guy, Larenz Tate, "Sister Sister" stars Tia and Tamara Mowry and "The Parent Hood's" Suzanne Douglas. Special honorees included the Rev. Milton

Brunson, who was not on hand to pick up the Pioneer Award, and the Fairfield Four, who won the coveted James Cleveland Award for their contributions to the quartet sound. A complete list of winners is as follows:

Contemporary female vocalist: Yolanda Adams, "More Than A Melody;" traditional female vocalist: Dottie Peoples "On Time God;" contemporary male vocalist, John P. Kee "Show Up;" traditional male vocalist: Rev. James Moore "Live At Jackson State;" Contemporary group or duo: Anointed, "The Call;" Traditional group or duo: Canton Spirituals "Live In

Memphis II;" traditional choir: Dottie Peoples & Peoples Choice Chorale; Contemporary choir: New Life Contemporary Choir; instrumental performance: Ben Tankard, "Play Me In Your Key;" urban gospel: William Becton, "Broken;" music video: New Life Generation Choir, "Show Up;" new artist: William Becton; album of the year (traditional): "On Time God;" Dottie Peoples & Peoples Choice Chorale; song of the year: "On Time God;" Dottie Peoples & Peoples Choice Chorale.

This week's scripture: "Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character" I Corinthians 15:33.