

14A

## RELIGION

Follow  
the only  
true  
leader

**Sunday  
School Lesson**

Devotional Reading: John  
10:31-42  
Lesson Scripture: John 10:1-  
30

Do you remember an old game called 'follow the leader?' The leader likes to choose a course or perform feats that others couldn't accomplish, and so they would have to fall out.

Even without that game, we will probably never cease following leaders. In that respect we resemble sheep, whose tendency to move in flocks is well-known.

What leader shall we follow? That question is best answered in today's lesson, introducing Jesus as the Good Shepherd who not only leads but by direction and example, but gives His very life to caring for those who elect to follow him.

In the church the true shepherd leads by example, doing what the sheep have not yet learned to do; also by teaching, saying what the sheep do not yet know or believe.

The Lord said that His sheep would know His voice and would follow him.

I am the door. The sheep would come through Him for protection and would go through Him to find pasture. Those who could claim the right to lead and feed their flocks must come through him. Later He said plainly, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the father, but by me."

Our Good Shepherd does indeed create division when He comes as owner of the sheep and calls His own to follow Him. If He would limit himself to works of mercy and words of wisdom, all kinds of sheep would follow him to the trough. But when he claims sole authority and asserts that none can come to the heavenly father except by following him, multitudes will choose to follow other leaders, more comfortably adjusted to the world around them. But the world around them is doomed to ultimate destruction.

# MAKING A JOYFUL NOISE

*Organ special  
to Friendship's  
Gerado Stroud*

By Tammie Tolbert  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

**G**erado Stroud has been playing an organ since his foot could push down on the instrument's foot pedal.

"Ever since I saw a pipe organ in the Riverside Church in New York City, I have had a desire to play the pipe organ," said Stroud, the director of music at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church. "I learned how to play on a pipe organ when I was a kid and I always wanted to have an organ that would duplicate the string sounds of the pipe organ in New York City.

Stroud's wish came true when Friendship got a computerized organ as part of the church's expansion. Just like that old organ in New York, Friendship's instrument duplicates strings. And drums. And flutes. And horns.

"I gave Rev. Clifford Jones (Friendship's pastor) a 28-page proposal of what I wanted the organ to look like and he liked what he saw," said Stroud. "I am thankful that Friendship afforded me the opportunity to design and play the church's pipe organ."

It took two years to build the organ because it's case had to be assembled, there were over 3,000 handmade pipes, and there was an extensive amount of wire cable that had to be properly routed.

"The organ is also computerized and it can play music by



PHOTO/PAUL WILLIAMS III

Gerado Stroud, director of music at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church has played the organ for the church for over 25 years.

itself," Stroud said. "All I have to do is play in the music."

Stroud says that the organ has up to 25 memories, which comes in handy when musicians have to change compositions.

Stroud, who has been playing organ for 48 years, 25 at Friendship uses music to supplement the spiritual message.

"He has done nothing but grow and the skills as a musician ministers to the people in the congregation," said church member Brenda Williams.

Stroud says that most people in the congregation don't realize why he is leaning and stretching when he's playing the organ. "I am changing the organ as I am playing to make the music more interesting,"

Stroud said. "Every Sunday to me is worship and I am always looking to find ways to improve the quality of the music during the service because bad music can make for a bad service."

With a broad smile on his face, Stroud said, "I love church music and I had a lot of support when I was learning to play the organ."

Stroud plans to teach music because he says that there is a shortage of church musicians in Charlotte.

"Most of our music students in school don't have a desire to play in the church and the only way that we're going to get them interested is to actually bring them into the church program and actually teach them to play," he says.

“All I have to do is play in the music.”

Gerado Stroud, director of music at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church

## Eye On Gospel

**A lot of feelin':** Early buzz is great for O'Landa Draper's newest album, "Gotta Feelin'", which released April 9. While the release marks Draper's fifth album with his Memphis-based choir, The Associates, it is his debut recording on Warner Alliance Records, where the project is getting an impressive promotional push. "O'Landa is one of our priority projects for this year," notes Warner Alliance Gospel vice president, Demetrus Alexander. "We're looking for it to be a big record for us and to that end, we're doing special packaging, postcard announcements and other promotional niceties. We're also putting a great deal of money into making him more visible at Christian events."

Not only that, but the mainstream side of the label (Warner Brothers) has prioritized him as well and is securing airplay for the lead single, which is also the title track. Of course, no one could be more pleased with this than

Draper himself.

"What I feel with this project is that it shows the different sides of just who O'Landa Draper and the Associates are," he said. "Warner has let me express the energy and spontaneity of the record-of the creativity in what we try to put in the music. In the past, being a young artist, we were trying to please a lot of people and our music was being directed."

"Looking back, I don't think it necessarily reflected where we were coming from as far as the church and community and what we are about."

On his latest release — a blend of traditional and contemporary gospel, peppered with hip hop and jazz — Draper took on an even more active role, writing the majority of the tunes. This, Draper believes, will give fans a clearer ideal of where the choir is going musically.

"The difference with this album and our choir," he says, "is balance and variety. Many

times in our churches and community choirs, we limit ourselves and confine ourselves to one safety zone.

What I've tried to do is challenge my singers and choir members to learn not only how to sing what we consider to be true gospel, but to go out and learn things that will broaden their horizons into non-traditional areas of music so that when opportunities come our way that are not cast as traditional gospel, we can walk through those doors."

With all that's happening, the 32-year-old performer who formed the 60-plus member choir in 1986, is just now beginning to enjoy more of his life. "A lot of frustration is leaving," he reports. "The marketing has really been off and a lot of people don't know who O'Landa Draper is. They were also trying to put a name with the a face. I think this album will change that."

And just who is O'Landa Draper? "A young man,"

states Draper, "that has had a dream and who has worked with nothing to come up with something."

**Briefly:** CeCe Winans kicks off her first solo tour on May 3 at the Temple Baptist Church in Redford Mich. Winans, who is enjoying her first pop hit, "Count On Me," a duet with pal Whitney Houston, will be promoting her own solo debut, "Alone In His Presence." The three-month tour will take Winans to more than thirty cities...The Clark Sisters, Walter Hawkins and Lashun Pace were special guests of James Hall & Worship & Praise as they celebrated nine years on ministry at Brooklyn's First AME Zion Church...Congratulations to Kirk Franklin, who topped off in gospel at the 27th Annual NAACP Image Awards.

*This week's scripture: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination."*

## Faith on trial in Oregon?

**Couple charged with manslaughter after son's death**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ALBANY, Ore. — A manslaughter trial began Monday for a Brownsville couple whose son died of leukemia after they refused, for religious reasons, to allow him to have medical treatment.

Prospective jurors were questioned about their religious beliefs Monday in the trial of Loyd and Christina Hays.

The Hayses are accused of manslaughter and criminally negligent homicide in the November 1994 death of their 7-year-old son Tony.

He never saw a doctor. The Hayses belong to the Christian fundamentalist Church of the First Born, which emphasizes the healing power of prayer over modern medicine.

They have contended their right to privacy and freedom of religion were violated when they were indicted. They also alleged that state law accepts spiritual healing as a form of care for a sick child.

An autopsy on the boy showed the boy died of acute lymphocytic leukemia, a treatable form of the disease.

## Farrakhan blames big business for U.S. problems

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO — Louis Farrakhan, beginning an eight-city tour to defend his overseas trip, blamed corporate greed for America's problems with African and Mideast nations the United States accuses of supporting terrorism.

"I believe America is a modern Rome, a modern Babylon, a modern Sodom and

Gomorrah," the Nation of Islam leader told several hundred followers Monday night.

Farrakhan's tour of Africa and the Mideast earlier this year included stops in Libya, Iraq, Sudan and Iran.

When Libyan president Moammar Gadhafi took over the country and nationalized the oil industry, Farrakhan said, "corporate America, greedy corporate America said 'that man has to go.'"

"What is democracy if greed

determines foreign policy?" he said during a speech lasting more than two hours.

Farrakhan will carry this message to Detroit, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Washington, New York, Houston and Los Angeles during the remainder of the month.

He belittled the government's interest in determining whether he should register as an agent of a foreign nation.

"We didn't join on to

America's enemy, but that's their perception," Farrakhan said.

He said he found Gadhafi "sincere in his efforts to help us," referring to reports that the Libyan leader offered \$1 billion to help the Nation of Islam.

Farrakhan said that if his group received the money, he would invest it in failing Midwestern farms and he

would offer a partnership with General Motors to open auto parts factories in the nation's central cities.

Farrakhan repeated a familiar complaint that white America tramples blacks and wants to keep African nations from developing strong, independent economies.

He said the No. 1 fear of white Americans is that they soon will be outnumbered by blacks and Hispanics.