

12A

RELIGION

Jesus calls his disciples

Sunday

School Lesson

Devotional reading: Luke 22:54-62.

Lesson scripture: Matthew 4:18-20; 16:13-23.

Today's lesson text consists of two selections from the Gospel of Matthew. The first records Jesus' call to Peter to become a full-time follower and disciple. Peter had met Jesus earlier, thanks to his brother Andrew (John 1:40-42), and perhaps had had the opportunity to listen to Him teach and watch Him perform miracles. Now, however, Jesus was calling Peter to leave his life as a fisherman, never to return to it again. This event took place rather early in Jesus' public ministry.

The second portion records an event that happened as much as two years later in Jesus' ministry, after the disciples had walked with Him for many months. The Lord asked them whom they believed Him to be. Peter, speaking for the group, declared that they believed Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God. We call this Peter's Good Confession.

We have noted in the lesson background that Jesus was already familiar with these brethren. Simon was called Peter. While Jesus had given him the name of Cephas (John 1:42), which is an Aramaic word meaning "rock," he became known by the more familiar Greek name of Peter, which has the same meaning. We shall see, in the second portion of our lesson text, why the name Peter became so significant.

Follow me was a call to life-changing commitment. Peter and some of the other disciples had accompanied Jesus on other occasions before this (at the wedding in Cana, for example, according to John 2:1,2). They may even have been with Him for several days at a time, but they always went back home to their work. Now, Jesus was inviting them to make a complete break with their old lives. He was asking them to leave their business, their home, and their family to follow Him.

For now, Jesus told the two brothers that He would make them fishers of men. This figure is easily understood, yet challenging to apply. Peter and Andrew knew about fishing. They knew it involved hard work, long hours, uncertain results, and even danger. It would be the same for a fisher of men. McGarvey explains the elements of the figure in this way: "Disciples are fishers, human souls are fish, the world is the sea, the gospel is the net, and eternal life is the shore wither the catch is drawn" (Fourfold Gospel, page 162).

Peter and Andrew did not hesitate, but straightway (immediately) left their nets. They had seen and heard enough of Jesus to convince them that He was from God and that following him was the most important decision they could make.

At this time the disciples had been with Jesus for about two years. They had traveled the length of Palestine with Him. Now Jesus led them to Caesarea Philippi, which was to the extreme north, about 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. He appears to have led them to where the crowds would be less likely to interrupt, so that He could have some privacy with the disciples. They did not enter into the city itself, at least not at once, but remained in the coasts, or general vicinity.

The history behind Caesarea Philippi is noteworthy, given what was about to occur there. It was a center of worship for the Greek god Pan.

Mount Moriah says no to road



Mount Moriah Primitive Baptist Church may sit in the way of uptown urban renewal. Plans developed by the Planning Commission and other groups show everything from a road to a new train station at the corner of Trade and Cedar.

By Jeri Young
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Members of Mount Moriah Primitive Baptist Church are watching developments in uptown carefully.

Their problem is innocuous enough. It is simply called New Road.

"It is supposed to tie Third Ward to Fourth Ward," Mount Moriah pastor the Rev. T.W. Samuels said. "It seems to me it is an intrusion."

New Road, part of the renovation of Third Ward proposed by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, runs through an edge of property currently owned by the church.

"This kind of thing has happened to Mount Moriah before," Samuels said. "Where the city has decided that property could be better used by another entity. We are sometimes invisible to them."

The old Mount Moriah was moved from Alexander and 11th streets in 1964 for the urban renewal that brought down historic Brooklyn. For years, all-black Brooklyn was known Charlotte's "second city."

According to Samuels, whose church owns another 1.5 acres purchased in 1989, the plan has not been adopted by the City Council, but the street is on every diagram drawn by Planning Commission. Samuels also notes that most buildings are identified by name in the diagram. Buildings on the block where Mount Moriah sits are not.

"For about 18 months, the street has been shown on maps," Samuels said. "They say they don't want us to move, but no effort has been made to redirect the street. They have given us lip service, but it has not been taken off the map."

Samuels said the church recently completed a study and

has plans to expand the church onto the additional 1.5 acres.

"We spent \$750,000 to purchase that land," he said. "We plan to build a new sanctuary and a family life center, day care or senior center. We have put our plans on hold. We would like to be able to use the land without the city chopping it up."

The difficult part, according to Samuels, is that members of the church were not alerted to the changes.

"We found out about it through TV," he said. "Some of our members were watching and saw that on the block where our church is, there was a road."

A spokesman for the Planning Commission admits that New Road is in the plans, but points out nothing has been finalized.

Interim Planning Division Manager Debra Campbell said she wasn't aware of the contro-

versy, but hopes something can be worked out with Mount Moriah. She and Warren Burgess, who helped put together the Third Ward plan, plan to meet with church members later in the month.

"My understanding from Warren Burgess was that there were previous meeting with the church prior to the public presentation," Campbell said. "I was not aware of a significant controversy."

According to Campbell, the road "does not make or break the plan," and the plan has not been scheduled to be taken to city council.

"Until we have worked out some resolution that is acceptable to Mount Moriah, we will not take it council," Campbell said. "If it means rerouting the road, that is a possibility."

According to Campbell, another

option is to "not have the road at all."

"There is a need for religious institutions throughout the community," she said. "This is not an attempt to single out one church."

Burgess agrees with Campbell and insists in spite of what happened in the past, no church will be forced to move.

According to Burgess, a group that includes Nationsbank has proposed a train station near the church.

That doesn't sit well with Samuels or many in his flock who will be affected by any change.

He and his congregation will continue to watch New Road.

"We are not against change," Samuels said. "But we don't have any plans for leaving. We are not invisible and we will not be treated as such."



Mt. Moriah was originally located at the corner of Alexander and 11th streets. The church was forced to move in 1964.

Welfare makes its way to local congregations

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GREENVILLE, S.C. - More churches are "adopting" welfare families and helping them make the transition to independence.

The goal is to have 50 churches and civic groups signed up by Jan. 22, when the governor gives his State of the State address. There were 42 commitments as of Wednesday.

"Here we are actually developing relationships with people - caring, compassionate relationships," said the Rev. Rod Mays

of Woodruff Road Presbyterian Church. "This is like Christ taught. We are responsible for those who don't have - the widows and orphans and the poor."

The Putting Families First Foundation aims to give people on welfare a personal, long-term commitment.

"This is necessary," director Lisa Van Riper said. "There's a need and there's an imperative." Gov. David Beasley set up the foundation with \$200,000 left over from his campaign fund. The foundation spent most of its

first year getting organized. Now it is looking for churches to participate.

By the end of 1997, the organization wants to have five people from the private sector in each county to commit to coordinating efforts in their communities.

Ms. Van Riper hopes to involve 500 churches within the next two years. That still would reach only a fraction of the state's 43,000 welfare recipients.

Quawn Griffin, director of volunteer services, said she comes from a family that received pub-

lic assistance and understands how a helping hand from the faith community can help lead to independence.

"I think if the churches don't come forward, we'll lose a lot of moms," she said.

Recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children can learn about the program through the Department of Social Services. If they decide to participate, their caseworkers will pair them with a faith group or civic group of their choosing.

Parents turn to Bible for names

By David Briggs
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

There are 30 different Zecheriahs in the Bible, and many more are still showing up on birth certificates across the country.

Also expect to see a lot of Nathans, Sarahs, Elizabeths and Jessicas enrolling in elementary schools soon.

The search for roots and the return to tradition are on again, and biblical names are back in style, according to Anita Diamant, author of "Bible Baby Names," a compendium of nearly 1,000 boys' and girls' names drawn from Scripture.

"Names always reflect fashion and trends. They're like hemlines," Diamant says. "And we're definitely in a period when biblical names are fashionable again."

In her new book, from Jewish Lights Publishing of Woodstock, Vt., Diamant compares naming a baby to a "second conception," an act of creation that harkens back to the biblical account of creation, when God commands Adam to name every living thing.

"Like Adam's task in the Garden of Eden," Diamant says, "giving the 'right' name to your baby is an exercise of creative power, mandated by God yet also expressive of your tastes, your history and your dreams for your child."

Reflecting the patriarchal culture of ancient times, there are about 3,000 men's names in the Bible and fewer than 200 given names for women. Many women in the Bible, Diamant said, are referred to without a name, such as the daughters of Jethro and the wife of Noah.

But that does not mean parents of daughters cannot find plenty of meaningful names in the Bible other than such perennially popular ones as Mary and Ruth.

For example, Ophrah or Ofra, meaning a young deer or gazelle, is a descendant of Judah, according to 1 Chronicles. And Joanna or Joanne, meaning God has shown favor, is one of the women who accompanies Jesus and later announces the resurrection.

Sarah, Elizabeth and Jessica are other biblical names currently popular for girls, Diamant said.

One of her favorite names is Ariel, meaning lion of God, or Ariella, a feminine version meaning lioness of God.

Among popular names for boys, there are still a lot of Michaels and Matthews, she said, but there is also a resurgence of other names drawn from the Bible, Diamant said. She knows several babies named Nathan, and even Noah is no longer an unusual name.

As for Zechariah, it was not a name she grew up with.

"Now there are Zechariahs all over the place," she said. "There's an interest in sources and roots and traditions."

Religious and community groups can get information on how to set up a team to help a specific family.

Each team will include a coordinator, a mentor to contact the family weekly, a special events coordinator to plan birthday parties and holidays, and a financial planner to help with household budgeting.

Members with specific skills and experience will help in such areas as tutoring, job skills, parenting and transportation.