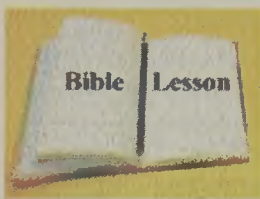


8B

RELIGION



Integrity in seeking God

Job 9:32-35, 13:20-24; Job: 19:25-27 and Job 23: 10-12

He is not a man like me that I might answer him, that we might confront each other in court.

If only there were someone to arbitrate between us, to lay his hand up us both, someone to remove God's rod from me, so that his terror would frighten me no more.

Then I would speak up without fear of him, but as it now stands with me, I cannot.

Only grant me these two things, O God, and then I will not hide from you: Withdraw your hand far from me, and stop frightening me with your terrors.

Then summon me and I will answer, or let me speak, and you reply, how many wrongs and sins have I committed?

Show me my offense and my sins.

Why do you hide your face and consider me your enemy?

I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.

And after my skin has been destroyed yet in my flesh I will see God:

I myself will see him with my own eyes-I, and not another.

How my heart years within me!

But he knows the way that I take when he has tested me; I will come forth as gold.

My feet have closely followed his steps; I have kept to his way without turning aside.

I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Tell what Job said he wanted from God in the midst of his suffering.
2. Compare Job's need for a mediator with the need that is fulfilled by Jesus as our mediator.
3. Praise God that we have Jesus Christ to make intercession for us.

# Finding solutions to youth problems



## Church, sex and singles

Eventually the church as a whole is going to have to address sexuality and the Christian single and the problems that occur when these two meet.

I, like many, accept the biblical interpretation that sex outside of wedlock is wrong.

But what is the church going to do about people who had sex anyway and found themselves in the midst of a sin that at times can be addictive and quite enjoyable.

I have listened to preachers or spiritual advisers tell sinners to pray for deliverance. But what do you do with a single who is praying for deliverance while still having sex? Do you tell that person to continue to pray for deliverance and use safe sex until they are?

Do you tell that person if they continue to have sex they don't love God? Or do you tell them if they keep sinning God will no longer love them?

Ever since I was a child I have attended church. Throughout my 31 years on this Earth I have heard a great deal of sermons from different ministers either sending Christian singles who are having sex straight to hell or threatening to kick them out of church. Yet, the number of babies born out of wedlock and co-habiting couples continue to increase.

For most of my adult life I have been sexually active but still I agreed with all of the hell and brimstone sermons or messages that sent me home overburdened with guilt and fearing eternal damnation. Which probably explains why I, along with others who frequently visit church and say we love the Lord, suffer from low self-esteem.

Last week, I took an HIV/AIDS test and Tuesday I received news that I'm HIV negative. Once I took my test there were a number of issues I promised God I would address if my results were favorable. Not that God can be manipulated but I gave my word about addressing safe sex and sexuality in the church so I'm doing so.

When I started to think about the church and how it handles sexually active singles, I realized that most messages I have heard deal with sex a more harshly than other sins. I have heard ministers say that a person isn't going to get a mate until they stop having sex. Yet, a great deal of those condemning saints had sex with their spouse before marriage.

I always wondered if the God these people are talking about hates fornication more than gluttony. Does God take away food from a person who overeats until they learn to eat properly?

After sermons it's time for altar call. Then if no one comes, preachers call out particular sins to get people to run down front. And one of the first sins called out is "If you have had sex outside of wedlock come down for prayer." I'm not saying that's wrong, but if it's good for one sinner, it's good for all. When are the same people going to say things like "Those who

Please see FEAR/7B



By Artellia Burch  
artelliaburch@thecharlottepost.com

Adolescents are faced with an abundance of problems.

At least 2.8 million children were reported as suspected child abuse or neglect cases in 1998 and more than 900,000 of them were confirmed as victims of child abuse and neglect. Black and Native American children are significantly over-represented among abuse and neglect victims-double their proportion in the national population.

Some teenagers even have to go through puberty being tossed from one foster home to another. Juveniles represent

an estimated 30 percent of the foster care population. Sixty percent of the children in foster care are children of color and 43 percent are black.

According to the Mecklenburg County Adolescent Sexuality Report, 1,559 gave live birth or had therapeutic abortions.

And sexual transmitted diseases among youth are on the rise.

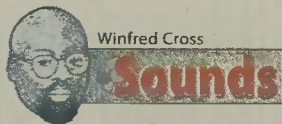
Problems for adolescents are many but Live Ministries hopes its Jan. 30 youth rally "I'm Mad" will help offer solutions.

"I'm Mad" will be held from 7-9 p.m. at New Life Theological Seminary at

3117 Whiting Ave. It's free and open to children and young adults ages 12-20.

"I'm Mad" is a combined effort of Live Ministries and seven churches. The rally will include church youth groups expressing their concerns over problems they face. Participants will be asked to provide solutions, plus they will be allowed to compete in categories such as singing, free style rapping, drama, puppetry and stepping/interpretive dance. Youth groups will be expected to represent their church in a spiritual way and wear moderate

Please see RALLY/5B



Carl Blair and the Family Circle  
Lord Remember Me



Locally recorded gospel CDs basically give artists the chance to express their love for God and singing. They are never particularly good and the songs are OK.

But that's not a bad thing. Sometimes you have to listen to that kind of gospel because it reminds you of when the music wasn't so industry driven. Nothing's ever been pure - even gospel singers have wild stories they can share about themselves and their contemporaries - but local groups can remind you when it was about singing.

It's obvious Carl Blair and the Family Circle aren't polished and professional, but that adds to the charm of this record. The overall sound is better than expected, but pure

emotion can't be denied. Blair's tenor is of school, sounding a cross between Willie Banks and Willie Neal Johnson. He's a quartet singer and a good one to boot.

The backing vocals on this CD are air tight. It's typical quartet sound - high and tight harmony. Rightfully so, all the background singers are women.

The CD is filled with a mix of hymns, new songs and traditional quartet fare. The title song is especially moving while Jesse Dixon's "I am Redeemed" is as strong as the original.

You will not hear much of this in your fancy churches of today unless it's at an afternoon program and maybe not then. But there's still a place for this sound. Blair and the Family Circle may not be chart bound, but this CD will bring any listener a lot of joy.

For CD purchase or booking, contact Carla Turner at (704) 394-8838 or (704) 553-7076.

Ratings

Classic;	☆☆☆☆☆
Excellent;	☆☆☆☆☆
Good	☆☆☆☆
Fair	☆☆☆
Why?	☆☆
No stars - A	

## Bittersweet homecomings in war-weary Sudan

Author Omar, a tailor, crafts a shirt and a new life at his old home in Sudan's Nuba Mountains after 14 years away.



WASHINGTON POST PHOTO/EVELYN HOCKSTEIN

By Emily Wax  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KAUDA, Sudan — His journey took him from Nairobi's throbbing urban streets to Sudan's shrubby plains. He carried only what he needed: his faded memory of his mother's face, a few pairs of jeans and two hip-hop cassette tapes.

His voyage was strenuous, he said, with little water and less food. He jostled for rides, squeezed onto the backs of lopsided, vibrating trucks and rattled through the countryside. When there were no cars and

no roads, he tromped through tall stalks of weeds where land mines lay hidden like deadly insects waiting to strike.

At the end of a four-day journey and a 14-year absence, James Badradin, 24, returned home last month to the Nuba Mountains in central Sudan. At first, he was startled at the beauty before him, the golden grasslands of Nuba's many hills.

But the novelty soon wore off. He couldn't find his mother. There were no jobs. He did not know how to farm the steep, rocky land. He was tired of the mosquitoes, the

See BITTERSWEET/7B

## CHURCH NEWS

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Diocese of Charlotte office for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development is accepting grant applications for the 2004-funding year. CCHD makes small grants from \$500 to

\$5,000 to organizations with official regard to religious affiliation. Applications must be postmarked by Feb. 14.

The CCHD Committee solicits programs and projects that:

1. Seek to affect the root

causes of poverty in the target community;

2. Involve genuine participation of the people served in the planning and decision making of the sponsoring organization
3. Indicate potential for

institutional change, empowerment for the people and community involved, and the development of local leadership

4. Conform to Catholic social teaching
- For an application, contact

Terri Jarina, Diocesan director, 1123 South Church St. at (704) 370-3234 or hit [www.cssnc.org/justice-peace](http://www.cssnc.org/justice-peace).

January 23

Please see CHURCH/7B