

## 8B

## RELIGION

CHARLOTTE CHURCH  
IN AFRICAThe  
Park's  
Kenya  
missionBy Artellia Burch  
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The vision of The Park Ministries is to provide apostolic ministry locally and globally.

To fulfill the vision, the Rev. Claude R. Alexander, Jr. and 18 members of University Park Baptist Church went in Kenya earlier this month for a missions trip. The goal: plant a church,

exhort students towards educational excellence and abstinence-based training, conduct HIV/AIDS seminars and provide medical care. The team traveled to Nairobi, Nakuru, and Kisumu with Shalom Outreach Inc. of Dale City, Va.

The Kenya trip, organizers say, was in obedience to the word of God found in Acts 1:8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

For more information, contact the church via phone, 704-392-1681; via fax, 704-392-7507; or via the internet, www.theparkministries.org.



Rev. Claude Alexander Pastor of University Park Baptist Church.

## Acknowledging black history



PHOTOS/WADE NASH

Mayfield Memorial Baptist Church is sponsoring a Black History Month exhibit highlighting contributions of African Americans. At left, Rene Moore shows off a display on tennis champion Arthur Ashe. Below, Will Simons checks out an exhibit of Charlotte Post archives.



## Poll: American college students value their spirituality

BELIEFNET.COM

More than half of college students place a high value on "integrating spirituality" in their lives, with 77 percent saying "we are all spiritual beings" and 71 percent saying they "gain strength by trusting in a higher power," according to initial

findings from a study by the University of California, Los Angeles.

And 76 percent are "searching for meaning and purpose in life," although 62 percent say their professors never provide opportunities to discuss life's meaning.

The multiyear project first

surveyed 3,680 students from 46 colleges and universities last spring. The survey revealed changes between the student's freshman (year 2000) and junior years (2003).

Fifty-two percent reported attending services frequently the year before they

entered college, but 29 percent attend frequently by their junior year.

But the study showed a rise in the number of students who say it's "very important" to integrate spirituality into their lives (51 percent in 2000 to 58 percent in 2003).

Although data specific to

Lutheran students hasn't yet been culled, results showed they are more likely to retain denominational affiliation from their freshman to their junior year, said Jennifer A. Lindholm, project director.

Other findings:  
• 66 percent are thankful

to God "for all that has happened to me."

- 51 percent believe "in the sacredness of life."
- 77 percent pray.
- 73 percent say their spiritual beliefs "helped me develop my identity."
- 78 percent discuss religion/spirituality with friends.

## Former Mass. sect member convicted in son's prophecy death

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TAUNTUN, Mass. — A former member of a religious sect was cleared of murder charges but convicted of assault and battery for starving her infant son to death to fulfill a prophecy.

Karen Robidoux was set free after the verdict because she has already spent nearly three years in state custody. Judge Elizabeth Donovan

sentenced Robidoux to 2 1/2 years in prison on the assault and battery charge. "It hasn't fully hit me yet," Robidoux said outside the courtroom. "I'm just glad that the nightmare door is shut."

Robidoux and her husband Jacques were members of a tiny religious sect that rejects modern medicine. After another sect member told them about a message

she received from God, they began withholding solid food from their son, Samuel. The baby died in 1999 just days shy of his first birthday.

Robidoux's defense lawyer had argued that she was brainwashed and tortured by her husband, Jacques, and other members of the group.

But prosecutor Walter Shea said in his closing argu-

ment that the real victim was the baby. "What's confusing about the verdict is how they could find that she did in fact take part in the assault, but not to the extent that includes the death of the child," Shea said after the verdict was announced.

After nearly two weeks of trial, the jury deliberated for parts of two days before reaching its verdict. Prosecutors had sought a second-

degree murder charge for his wife, but jurors also had the option of finding her guilty of manslaughter or assault and battery. Jacques Robidoux, was convicted of first-degree murder in 2002 and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Robidoux's lawyer, Joseph Krowski, called just two witnesses to the stand — both forensic psychologists who

examined her at a state hospital.

An unwed mother at 15, she grew up in a strict religious family and was married off to Jacques Robidoux, who along with his father was the leader of the sect. The group, called "The Body," isolated itself from society and modern culture, shunning doctors, banks, televisions, radios and newspapers.

## CHURCH NEWS

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 without regard to religious affiliation. Applications must be postmarked by Saturday.

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, CCHD, and Office of Justice and Peace, 1123 South Church Street at (704) 370-3234 or hit [www.cssnc.org/justice-peace](http://www.cssnc.org/justice-peace).

**February 15**  
Silver Mount Baptist Church will hold its Glimpse

of Hope Radio Choir concert at 6 pm.

**February 16-19**  
The Mecklenburg County Missionary Union of the Women's Baptist Home and Foreign Missionary Convention will be held at 1303 Hawthorne Lane.

**February 21**  
Winston-Salem State University Concert Choir will perform at Friendship Mis-

sionary Baptist church at 3301 Beatties Ford Road.

**February 25**  
Ash Wednesday Service will be held at Friendship Baptist Church at 7 pm.

**February 28**  
The North Carolina Baptist Ushers Convention one-day session will be held at M.G. Benton Convention Center at 301 West 5th Street, Winston-Salem at 8 a.m.. Regis-

tration is \$10.

**February 29**  
Fifth Sunday Hymnsing: A Celebration of Our Heritage-Metered Hymns & Spirituals will be held at 5:30 pm.

**March 5-6**  
A gospel comedy show will be held at Dr. U.I. McCall Activity Center at 1200 North Irby Street at Old Wilson High Auditorium in Florence, S.C. at 8 pm.