

8B

RELIGION

Walking a long mile in Judas' sandals

By Tom Shales
THE WASHINGTON POST

Jesus Christ was one groovy dude — at least according to "Judas," an ABC movie that tells a very familiar story but from a unfamiliar point of view.

In the modern-vernacular film, which aired Monday on ABC, Jesus is certainly the Good Guy (OK, the Best Guy), but Judas isn't simply

the bad one. History's most famous traitor, in effect, gets plopped down on an analyst's couch and probed, and though he's guilty as sin of betraying Jesus, we're asked to consider him as a complex human being with traces of decency as well as dishonor running through his veins.

At least these filmmakers adhere to the physicians' credo "First, do no harm." Unlike Mel Gibson's notori-

ous "The Passion of the Christ," ABC's movie seems happily lacking in anti-Semitic aspersions. Writer Tom Fontana, whose impressive credits include the uncompromising "Oz" on HBO, has Pontius Pilate's wife tell her husband, as the assassination of Jesus is plotted on Palm Sunday: "Fix it so the Jews themselves are held responsible."

It might have been better

still if the conversation had continued with Pilate scoffing, "Who'd believe that?" and his wife replying, "You can always find a few bigots and idiots who'll believe anything." Regardless, the Big Lie was born, and two millennia later, Gibson would find a way to recycle it and gross more than \$200 million in the process. Surely his parking space in Hell has already been reserved.

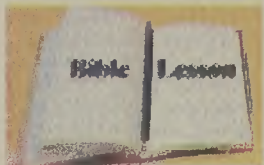
The movie sets the story of Jesus against the power grabbing of the time, with spin doctors either proclaiming Him the son of God or denouncing Him as a charlatan. The disciples resemble advance men, scouting locations and drumming up enthusiasm for their "candidate."

One impediment to taking Fontana's movie more seriously—
See ABC'S JUDAS/7B

Thomasina Johnson funeral



Thomasina McCollough Johnson entered into eternal rest on March 9, 2004. Arrangements are pending. A.L. Jinwright Funeral Service is in charge of services.



Loaf and Cup

Luke 22: 7-23

Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed.

And he sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat."

And they said unto him, where wilt thou that we prepare?

And he said unto them, "Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.

And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?"

And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished; there make ready.

And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover.

And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

And he said unto them, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer:

For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:

For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

Likewise also the cup after supper saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

Ministry's goal is shoes for the poor



By Artellia Burch
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An international ministry is focused on brining a life-changing message of hope a pair of shoes at a time.

Samaritan's Feet is holding a 5-kilometer Life Walk through Uptown Charlotte on April 10 at 9 a.m. The walk will raise finances, collect shoes and bring attention to the plight of impoverished people in Third World countries.

"We demonstrate compassion by washing and equipping their feet with shoes and touching their hearts with the love of God," said Emmanuel Ohonme,

founder of Samaritan's Feet.

Nigerian-born Ohonme's life was changed at the age of 9 when he received his first pair of tennis shoes from what he calls a "Good Samaritan" who was visiting his hometown of Lagos. The shoes gave him an opportunity to participate in sports and he eventually earned a full sports scholarship at the University of North Dakota.

Ohonme went on to compete in sports activities in Africa and developed a love for competitive basketball. He was offered the chance to attend college in America under a full basketball scholarship and later earned an

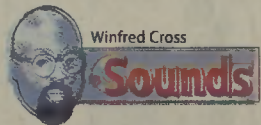
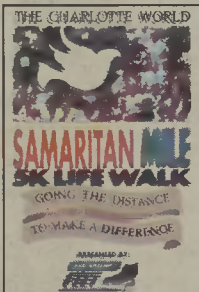
executive position at a leading technology company.

Although Ohonme continue to progress in the U.S., he never forgot the plight of African children who still live under the strain of poverty, drug abuse, war, gangs and other criminal activity.

Determined to help impoverished Africans as well as people living in Charlotte, Ohonme left the comfort and security of his executive position to start Samaritan's Feet.

Through the organization, Ohonme return the love he received when he was given shoes to millions. His goal is to "put shoes on 10 million impoverished people, with 10 million pairs of shoes, over the next 10 years," he said.

Please see MINISTRY/5B



New Direction
Rain
Jeral Gray Sr. & Percy Gray Jr.,
producers
Gospeo Centric Records



The Chicago area keeps churning out spectacular gospel choirs, groups, ensem-

bles and singers - most of which are associated with the Church of God In Christ (COGIC).

Add New Direction to the growing list. It is an energetic group that sings with lots of spirit and spunk. It is more contemporary than traditional but most of the songs would fit during a Sunday morning worship service.

Most of the songs are uptempo foot-stompers. The opening song "New Direction" sets the tone perfectly. When this group sings "I'm headed in a new direction/Don't want

to go the same ol' way" it's not only a statement of faith, but one of the group's mission. It ain't the "same ol' way." The group will appeal to new school and 'ol school gospel folk. The music's snappy enough and the vocals are strong enough.

"I'm Gonna Wave My Hands" will definitely appeal to the new school, though it owes as much to 'ol school funk as it does new school gospel. Kevin Vassar even borrows a few chops from James Brown, talking about getting on the good foot. The musi-

cians obviously listened to the JB's.

Everyone ought to like "Heal The Land," a moving ballad led by Cedric Hodo, a Ruben Studdard sound-alike if there ever was one. Not a bad comparison, because this kid can blow like Studdard.

"I Can Make It" is the most traditional. Percy Bady wrote and produced the song and it's typical Bady - melodic and simple with direct lyrics. Kirk Franklin and Hezekiah Walker also contribute to the project.

Please see A NEW/6B

Teacher suspended over 'The Passion'

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — An elementary school teacher was suspended this week after school officials learned that he showed students excerpts from the movie "The Passion of the Christ."

Ronald Anthony, who teaches at Malcolm X Elementary School, was placed on paid leave while investigators look into the incident, Elfreda Massie, the interim superintendent for District of Columbia Public Schools, said Friday.

Massie said Anthony acknowledged showing some of his sixth-grade students portions of the film on Tuesday. The movie, which has been R-rated, meaning it is not recommended for people under 17 years old, depicts the crucifixion of Jesus and includes violent scenes. At least 16 students are believed to have seen portions of the film, Massie told The Associated Press.

School officials learned of the incident when a parent complained, Massie said.

The school sent a note to parents Wednesday, saying the film shouldn't have been shown and that the teacher believed it connected historical events from the students' social studies book.

Massie said Anthony "used poor judgment" and should have relied on more appropriate materials for the lesson.

Attempts to reach Anthony for comment were unsuccessful.

School officials also said they are looking into how Anthony obtained a copy of the film, which has not been released on video.

The Mel Gibson film has drawn criticism from Jewish leaders who fear it will lead to anti-Jewish sentiment, while winning praise from some Christians for its portrayal of Christ.

Please see NETWORK/7B

CHURCH NEWS

Christian Women of Elegance is sponsoring a 100-word essay contest on "Why Your Mother Should Be Considered The Greatest Mom of Charlotte."

The writers' age categories are ages 5-9, 10-17 and 18 and older. All essays should be mailed or faxed to Christ-

ian Women of Elegance, Water Oak, Pineville 28134 or fax to (704) 889-1209.

The winners will present the awards to their mothers at the Gospel Day In The Park- "A Day To Celebrate Women" to be held May 1 at Independence Park located at 300 Hawthorne Lane. For

more information call (704) 493-2536.

March 13

The University City Church will hold a special Passion the Christ Community Forum at 9 a.m.

March 14

St. Phillip Missionary Baptist Church will celebrate its

9th Anniversary of Rev. Larry Daniel. The Rev. Timothy Graham of Tabernacle Baptist Church will deliver the sermon at 2:30 pm.

• First Mount Calvary Baptist Church will hold its Annual Pastor's Aide program at 3 pm.

• O'Zion AME Zion Church

at 13921 Hamilton Road will hold its annual Pastor's Aid program at 3:30 pm.

March 16-19

Bishop Kevin L. Long and the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship of North Carolina will hold its 9th Annual State Conference "Is there not a cause?" at Silver

Mount Baptist Church. The "Parade of Choirs" will be held March 16 at 7 pm.

March 20

C.N. Jenkins Memorial Presbyterian Church will hold "Forced Justice: The Legal Battle To Integrate The Schools of America" at 4 p.m.

Please see NETWORK/7B