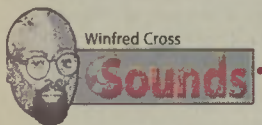


8B

RELIGION

Randle tries hard, but Jackson 'Tribute' doesn't cut it



Lynda Randle Tribute To Mahalia Jackson Barry Beckett, producer Gaither Music Group

☆☆

Doing a tribute to a legendary artist is a risky thing. Many will feel the person

doing the tribute has to emulate the artist, or at least do the music with the same kind of fervor.

Mahalia Jackson has no equal in gospel. She is one of the most influential artists of the 20th century because of her voice and ability to touch people of any religious background, color or creed. She is essence of gospel for a lot of people.

That said, Lynda Randle may have bitten off more than she can handle. She's the deep-voiced black woman that shows up at a lot of the

Gaithers' homecomings. She can sing, but she's no Mahalia. That's not a jab, just the truth and she'd even tell you that. There's no problem with her voice - it's a rich instrument that's full of expression.

But Randle isn't a gospel singer, per se. She's more comfortable with the inspirational stuff the Gaithers sing. Nothing wrong with that, but it just doesn't fit well with Jackson's fiery songs. It's not the same kind of emotional release. This CD is so homogenized, so sanitized that it

doesn't come close to evoking memories of Mahalia.

That's not to say there are no good moments. "If I Can Help Somebody" has a bit of passion. "I Know Who Holds Tomorrow" and "Precious Lord, Take My Hand," almost reach the kind of peak you'd expect on this type of project - almost.

What this CD needs is a dose of spontaneity. There are times I want to shake Randle and say "don't be safe, take that chance and sing!" For those who know nothing of Mahalia's work may find

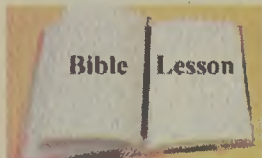
this CD something special. But for those who've heard Mahalia's power and strength, a tribute this is not.

Ratings

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



Mahalia Jackson



Prayer and arrest

Matthew 26:36-50

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is will, but the body is weak."

He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.

Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for."

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.

Tying the knot

Civil contract or holy matrimony?



By Kevin Eckstrom
RELIGION NEWS SERVICE

Are 10 little words — "By the power vested in me by the state of..." — the most crucial phrase in the culture war involving gay marriage?

They are some of the most significant powers delegated to a member of the clergy, when acting for both God and country, he or she pronounces a couple to be married as husband and wife.

But any couple who has ever filed a joint tax return will tell you it is the civil marriage license, not the minister or rabbi's blessing, that entitles them to the legal benefits of marriage.

So if marriage is essentially a civil contract, shouldn't a couple be singing — the Dixie Cups' 1958 standard notwithstanding — that they're going to City Hall, and not the chapel, if they are "gonna get

married?"

"We don't ask the state's permission to do confirmations, baptisms or funerals, so why should we ask the state's blessing to do weddings?" asked the Rev. Christopher Webber, vicar of Christ (Episcopal) Church in Canaan, Conn.

Since 1994, when he published "Re-inventing Marriage," Webber has argued for a separation of church and state when it comes to marriage. There is no good reason, he said, to confuse civil marriage with holy matrimony. Proponents of gay marriage agree.

Long ago they set aside dreams of church bells and flower-covered altars to focus instead on the legal document that conveys the rights and responsibilities of marriage. They also point to places like Sweden, France and Japan, where newlyweds pursue both sacred and secular nuptials as a matter of routine.

Defenders of traditional marriage, meanwhile, argue that marriage will be forever harmed if either church or state is granted sole custody.

"One of the strengths of marriage is that it combines the two," said Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, co-director of the National Marriage Project at Rutgers University. "To have this kind of splitting off weakens our understanding of what we have held marriage to be for centuries."

A small but growing number of clergy — mostly from liberal mainline Protestant churches — say they feel uncomfortable granting state approval to marriages, especially if they cannot also bless gay unions. "There are many people, myself included, who feel uncomfortable acting as an agent of the state when we as pastors are asked to sign marriage licenses," said the Rev. Lois

Please see **SHOULD/5B**

Lyons: Greed got best of me

By K. Chandler
THE WESTSIDE GAZETTE

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — "I firmly believe my stay in prison was the will of God."

With these words Rev. Henry Lyons, 61, former head of the million-member National Baptist Convention, launched into a poignant narrative of his meteoric rise to fame and fortune in the mid-90s.



Lyons

Scarcely four years later, Lyons' spectacular success would be marred by scandal and a cataclysmic fall from grace after he was convicted in 1999 of swindling \$4 million from insurance and mortuary firms desiring to do business with the Baptist Convention membership.

In an exclusive interview with The Westside Gazette Newspaper, Lyons talked about what led up to his tragic fall, how he coped while in prison, and what his future plans are now that he is once again a free man.

"Let me say first of all that I have taken full responsibility for my actions. As I have thought about it and prayed about it for some five years now, I've had time to reflect on what could have happened to me to have worked so hard to ascend to where I had ascended to, to rise to that point and then to experience such a dramatic and drastic fall. I had to ask myself, 'What happened to me?' Not, who did something to me. But what happened to Henry Lyons?"

"As I think about the many wonderful and admirable programs that the National Baptist Convention fostered, I also knew as its president I had to be its chief fundraiser. I had to actually 'churn the butter' in terms of funding those programs. Our convention, big as it was, didn't quite have all the funds to do

Please see **LYONS/7B**



Since March is Women's History Month, I have been pondering a question. What does it take to be considered a woman of God? I could say it requires determination or character but the only way to know for sure is to consult the Bible.

The Bible has a couple of books named after women of honor. It also has countless

What makes a woman of God?

stories of godly women like Miriam the prophetess; Mary Magdalene, the first deliverer of the news of the resurrection of Christ and Mary the mother of Jesus.

Yet, there's a passage that gives a vivid picture of what is required from the daughters of The Most High. In Proverbs 31: 10-31 the author pins a short section at the end of Proverbs detailing what is required of righteous women.

In the passage the author

says a woman of good character is worth more than money and her husband can put his complete trust in her. In return, that wife will bring him no harm for her entire life.

Over the years I have met women who are waiting to find husbands so they can stop working and chill at home. But when I read this passage in Proverbs the writer does not give the impression that a woman of

noble character gets to live a life of leisure. In fact it appears that she has a number of responsibilities and it sounds like she has a job that contributes to the family household.

Proverbs 31: 15-18 says "She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls. She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vine-

Please see **WHAT/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 281344 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 18-19
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 p.m.

March 19
White Dove Chapel at 993 Summers Road Morganton will hold "Gospel Sing" at 7 p.m.

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.

• Friendship Missionary Baptist Church at 3301 Beaties Ford road will hold "A Celebration of Women in Song" concert at 7 p.m.

• Chappell Memorial Baptist church will hold "What It

Means To Be Women of Purpose" at 8 p.m. The cost of the conference is \$10.

March 21
Trinity Park Baptist Church at 9115 Trinity Road will hold its Usher's Annual Day at 3 p.m.

March 22-23
Please see **SPIRITUAL/7B**

