

8B

RELIGION



Faithful in His service

I Thessalonians 1:2-10; 3:6-10

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spirit of severe suffering; you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you. Therefore, brothers, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

A cry to pastors

By R. Lynn Moore
SPECIAL TO THE POST

What's in your life? Are you truly fulfilling the call that God has given you? Is there more that you should be doing?

Are you taking the time to feed on the word and minister it effectively to the flock that God has placed in your circle of influence? Is the word you are ministering a lesson or a lifestyle? Do you truly realize that God is holding you accountable?

God has given you an awesome task. He has placed you in a position of authority. A position where you are going to be held accountable. It is such an awesome task to undertake. When you answer the call of pastor, you in essence say to God that you are taking on the responsibility

Please see PASTOR'S/5B

Church leaders see more young people



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. — The spirit is apparently moving young people along the Grand Strand.

Church leaders in this resort area say they are seeing children, teens and twenty-somethings worship in a surprising revival of faith.

Some believe the condition

of national and world affairs, like the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 and the continuing war in Iraq, have left youth with many questions.

"We have seen more young reaching out because they have been touched by what is going on in the world," says the Rev. Fred Johnson, pastor of Sandy Grove Missionary Baptist

Church in Myrtle Beach. "They are troubled, and they are turning to God for help."

A study of 3,000 teenagers done in 2002 by the California-based Barna Research Group, which studies cultural trends and the Christian Church, showed that they are among "the most spiritually interested individuals in the nation."

Myrtle Beach Community Church has about 350 children out of 1,350 members. About 200 of the children attend church each Sunday.

At Living Faith Church in Myrtle Beach, youth membership increased from 12 to 60 in about a year's time.

While world events play a part, many church leaders believe the real reason rests in the nation.

Please see YOUNG/5B



To learn your life's meaning, let go and trust God to provide purpose

How far are you willing to go and what are you willing to sacrifice to truly be happy?

When I say happy I mean getting to the point where you feel satisfied that something is right or has been done right.

A few years ago I could say that I wasn't willing to go far to be happy. There were times I would sit in church and squirm when preachers would speak on how God required us to sacrifice things in order to follow him and find true happiness.

I never really understood why statements about sacrifice would bother me so much because in my mind I had nothing to give up.

However, I was wrong. I did have something I needed to sacrifice—myself. I couldn't see it but I was the very thing that was something standing in my way.

I was letting my past successes, failures, fears and my ideas about life block me from finding peace and developing a deeper personal relationship with Jesus, my Lord and Savior.

I wanted to hold on to what I believed I needed in order to be happy versus letting go of everything to truly find happiness. For the first time in my life I am willing to walk away from everything I have worked for in order to be happy and to find peace of mind.

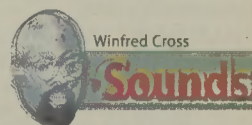
I believe for some time God was trying to show me the way to happiness but I wouldn't listen. A couple of years ago the passage in Matthew 13:45-46 surfaced in my spirit. The verses read "Again the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it."

The scripture and its meaning remained oblivious to me until today.

Today I know that I have spent my entire life trying find out my life purpose. Now I know I can never truly understand what my purpose is until I give up everything I have created to find out why I was created.

In that scripture the merchant was looking for something very valuable just like every man or woman who is actually seeking their divine purpose.

When the man found what he was looking for he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. Now I have found my precious pearl, which symbolizes purpose and freedom to me. In order for me to purchase my precious pearl I have to release all of my ideas, walk away from all my achievements so I can obtain what I have been looking for — purpose and a peace of mind.



Dillard provides pure energy

Ricky Dillard & New G Unplugged... The Way Church Used to Be Ricky Dillard & Michael Taylor, producers Crystal Rose Records



Ricky Dillard has long been the favorite of many youth ministers across the country. His high energy-style of directing usually will keep the young folk on their feet throughout a performance.

But Dillard is digging deeper into his church roots these days. "Unplugged ... The Way Church Used To Be" is as energetic as anything he's done, but it will appeal to those more grounded in traditional gospel music.

Indeed, many of these songs dip back to the '80s and 90s when mass choirs were gaining popularity. Dillard has taken these songs and adapted them to his ensemble New G (shortened from New Generation).

He's picked some great ones. Nikki Ross Turnley sings the mess out of Percy Bady's "There Is No Way." New G swells to rafter-raising levels as Turnley soars above them. It's a heart-wrenching performance that may prove to be the most popular song from this recording.

LaVanga Hubbard gives Turnley stiff competition on Timothy Wright's "Let Us All Go Back," a foot-stomping, shout-inducing song with enough energy to keep the saints on their feet forever.

Then there's LaShun Pace killing, repeat, killing Myrna Summers' "Oh, How Precious." What else can be said about this woman's voice. She could sing the Yellow Pages and make it sound good. "How Precious" is something much more than that, however. Pace puts an update for the ages on this song.

Heck, pick any of the 13 tracks and your soul can't help but be touched. If Dillard's own "Take Me Back" doesn't get you going, check your pulse.

This is the best gospel album so far this year. Someone is going to have to bring it to do better.

Ratings

Classic;	★★★★★
Excellent;	★★★★★
Good	★★★★
Fair	★★★
Why?	★★
No stars — A mess	★

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" May 1 at Independence Park. For more information call (704) 493-2536.

April 15-16
The Youth of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church at 517 Baldwin Avenue will hold its annual Youth Revival at 7:30 p.m. The Junior Choir will hold a musical program at 4 p.m.

April 17
Morehouse College Men's

Glee Club will hold a concert at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church at 7 p.m.

April 18
Greater Bethel AME Church will hold Women's Day at 10 a.m. The speaker will be Rev. Valerie Jackson of Augusta, Ga.

April 22-24

Transfiguration Ministries will hold "Rise, Shine For the Light Has Come" at 2707 Little Rock Road at 7 p.m.

April 22-25
The O'Zion AME Zion Church at 13921 Hamilton Road will hold its Music Ministries 2004 gospel music

Please see ECONOMIC/6B