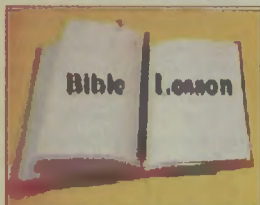


8B

RELIGION

Life 1B



Guidelines for giving

Matthew 6:1-4

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

The ancient Jews are frequently instructed to give alms, which are charitable gifts for poor people (Deuteronomy 15:11). People who have plenty are to share with people in need (e.g., Acts 9:36; 10:2; 24:17; 2 Corinthians 9:6, 7). Handicapped people would lie beside the public thoroughfares, waiting for someone to take pity and give them money (Acts 3:2). In a day with no welfare department or charitable foundations, this one-on-one approach to giving is vital.

It is easy, however, to do the right thing in the wrong way. A very righteous person may innocently think that personal giving should be a good example for others to follow. Such a person may think of himself or herself as simply modeling the godly life. Eventually, however, a person's real reason for public act of righteousness may be so that he or she can be seen by others. People may praise such a person for his or her goodness, but that person will have congratulations from God.

Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

If a very righteous person decides that his or her giving is a good model for less righteous people to follow, then it stands to reason that such a person should call attention to what's being done. (After all, if very righteous deeds go unnoticed, how will others learn?) So the pompous Pharisee perhaps rationalized to himself that it is appropriate to make ostentatious displays when inviting beggars to receive his generosity.

Jesus ridicules such trumpet-blowers as hypocrites. A hypocrite is a pretender. People who pretend to be religious but seek the glory of other people are phonies in God's eyes. They are nothing but playactors. When they receive the applause of people, they already have all the reward they will ever get.

B. Right Way to Give (vv. 3, 4)

But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.

Common courtesy should tell the donors that a gift to a needy person should be given quietly. If nothing else, this respects and protects the recipient's dignity. This kind of giving also help protects the givers own character and integrity.

By saying that the left hand should not know what the right hand is doing, Jesus means that the gift should be given without attracting attention. We do not need an audience, taking smug satisfaction in our righteous act. The audience is not others, nor self—the audience is God.

Thought to Remember:

"For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10).



PHOTO: GALVIN FERGUSON

Robert P. Mathis gives the children a Bible lesson. Studies show children raised in church have fewer problems.

A child will lead them

There are advantages to raising kids in the church

By Janell J. Lewis
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Katerra Riggins has been attending Weeping Willow AME Zion Church since she was 5 years old. She said her mother hasn't ever had to threaten her to be in the house of the Lord.

"I go to church voluntarily," Riggins said. "My mom never has to drag me out of

bed to go to church."

For Riggins, 17, going to church has become almost innate. But she doesn't simply go on Sundays. Riggins is highly active in her church as well as her school and community. At church, she's a summer camp counselor, participates with Sunday School, sings in the junior choir and is on the

usher board.

At school, she is a cheerleader, yearbook editor, a part of DECA, National Honor Society and National Technical Vocational Honor Society.

In the community, she is a delegate and president of the youth council for the Charlotte district usher board.

Statistics, studies and experts say that these are all advantages of being raised in a religious environment.

Dr. Harold Koenig, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Duke University Medical Center, has performed numerous stud-

See THERE/7B

Church asks to ban baggy pants, gold teeth

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — A church has asked for a citywide ban on low-hanging pants and gold-capped teeth, saying they promote a thuggish image.

Changing the image of young people could help Jacksonville cut unemployment, racial profiling and a rising per-capita murder rate now the highest in the

state, said Richard Burton, deacon of Epiphany Baptist Church.

The 250 member independent Baptist church approved the resolution last month.

"They were tired of seeing kids' underwear," said Burton, who serves on the NAACP's national board.

Jacksonville city officials have yet to take up the mea-

sure, although Councilwoman Elaine Brown said she was willing to discuss it with church members.

Others were less encouraging.

"I think it's unenforceable," Councilman Daniel Davis told The Florida Times-Union for Sunday's edition.

Duval County public schools have banned sag-

ging pants and exposed underwear, but not removable gold or silver teeth caps.

Dentists say the caps can help breed tooth-rotting bacteria.

A proposal to ban exposed underwear died in the Florida Legislature this spring. Lawmakers in Louisiana and Virginia have also failed to ban exposed underwear.

Righting a wrong, black chaplain is dismissed

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LANDOVER, Md. — For the last 10 years of his life, Henry Vinton Plummer struggled to overturn the dishonorable discharge that forced him out of his post as the Army's first black chaplain.

He wrote a torrent of letters to politicians, the military, even presidents, pleading his case and asking to be reinstated. He even offered to serve in the Spanish American War to make amends. Yet Plummer's fruitless efforts died along with him in 1905.

More than 100 years later, he finally got his wish. With an honor guard, 21-gun salute and the playing of "Taps," the Army formally overturned Plummer's 1894 dishonorable discharge Friday, presenting his great grandchildren with discharge papers, a tightly folded American flag and the message that an injustice committed long ago had been righted.

"It seems like it's been so many years of our family trying to vindicate him," said his great-granddaughter, Olga Plummer-

Talley, of Aurora, Colo., who stood quivering with emotion after a soldier handed her the flag. "It finally has happened."

Plummer's descendants petitioned the Army last year to overturn the dishonorable discharge and court martial the chaplain received in 1894 for allegedly drinking with enlisted men and swearing in front of a woman. The appeal claimed the decision was made on little evidence by an all-white judicial panel that convicted him because of his race.

In February, the Army Board for Correction of Military Records upheld the court martial, saying modern legal standards couldn't be applied to a century-old case and would set a bad precedent. But the board did reverse the discharge, allowing Plummer to have a military memorial service at National Harmony Memorial Park in Landover.

Maj. Gen. David Hicks, chief of Army chaplains, said the service and decision to reverse Plummer's dismissal is symbolic of

Please see AFTER/7B



THE STOCK MARKET

Today, it has some 22,000 and is among the nation's largest, said Michelle Pullen, its membership director. Houston's giant Lakewood Church is larger, boasting more than 25,000 worshippers, and the New Life Church in Colorado Springs, Colo., is also large with 11,000.

"The congregation was growing too quickly and the other church was just too small," said Salem Baptist member Maurice Allen, 47. "Anyway, too big is better than too small."

Though not everyone agrees. A few blocks away at the tiny brownstone Paradise Temple Church, Gloria Gregory was among the fewer than a dozen other parishioners who climbed the crumbling concrete steps Sunday morning.

Please see CHICAGO/6B

CHURCH NEWS

The deadline to have your church announcement added to the calendar is 5 p.m. on Fridays.

Ongoing

Chappell Memorial Baptist Church will open its Clothing Closet to families in need every first and third Saturday of the month. Families can come to the church, which is located at 110 Bradford Drive, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

For more information, call (704) 394-5615. There is no charge for the clothes.

July 9

Trinity Park Baptist Church, located at 9115 Trinity Park, will host a Community Outreach/Cook-out and Health Fair from noon to 3 p.m.

There will be free blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose and hearing screenings. Also information on HIV, diabetes, stress management, free refreshments and much, much more.

• Pleasant Hill Baptist Church will host a community health fair in the Cherry Community from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. For more information, call (704) 376-1201.

• University Park Baptist Church will sponsor its annual Prayer Conference. Breakfast will be served at 8 a.m. and the conference begins at 9 a.m. The theme is "Enter the throne room, ignite your passion for prayer." The church is located at 6029 Beaties Ford Road. For more information call (704) 392-1681.

July 16

BET Gospel Explosion will be held at Paramount's Kings Dominion through July 17. Featured artists include Kurt Karr, Tye Tribette and others. For more information, call (804) 876-5000. Kings Dominion is located in Richmond, Va.

July 17

A Gift of Love Ministry will host its semi-annual Gospel Festival beginning at 3 p.m. The event will be held at Hoskins Avenue Baptist Church, located at 101 S. Hoskins Road.

• Trinity Park Baptist Church will hold its annual Woman's Day Celebration at 4 p.m. The guest speaker will be Minister Dorothy Wallace, associate minister of Christian Family Baptist Church.

The church is located at 9115 Trinity Park Road.

July 18

Maryland based King's Apostle Church World Ministry will hold its 95th Holy Convocation in Charlotte through July 22 at the Adam's Mark Hotel. On sight registration is \$70 for KA members and one day registration is \$15 for non members.

John P. Kee and the New Life Community Choir

Please see CHURCH/6B