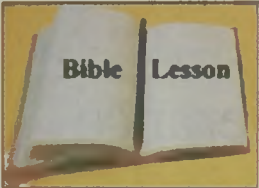


8B

RELIGION

Life 1B

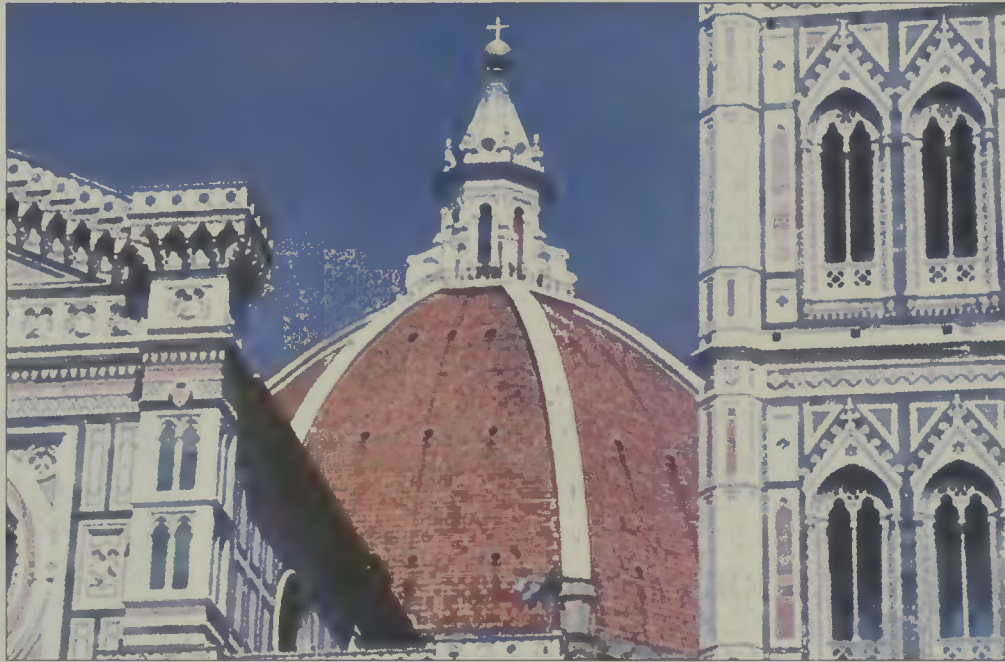


Phillip obeyed Acts 8:26-28

As mentioned in the previous lesson, Phillip was one of the seven men chosen to organize and distribute food in the early Church. His ministry, like Stephen's, was characterized by compassion and service to the body of Christ and the lost. In his ministry, God provided Phillip with opportunities to share the Gospel, for he had been taught by the apostles in Jerusalem.

While he and six other specifically had been chosen to minister to the needs of early believers, Phillip's ministry extended beyond the boundaries of Jerusalem to include Samaria. Persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, so many of the believers began to scatter (Acts 8:1). The bible informs us, "Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Phillip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed Christ there" (Acts 8:4-5, NIV). During his evangelistic efforts in Samaria, Phillip imparted the Word, and many were saved. It is only logical to conclude Phillip drew crowds wherever he went. After all God used him to preach salvation and perform many wonders and signs. While evangelists today may enjoy the perks of being a central figure in a large crowd, our text reveals such a desire did not taint Phillip's heart and mind. God first sent Phillip to a city where many accepted him and the message he preached.

In stark contrast, an angel of the Lord then led Phillip away from the crowded city to the desert. Perhaps Phillip had been curious about his new assignment that was leading him to a place where there possibly would be little or no interaction with people. The fact that God directed Phillip to share the Gospel with a single person shows how significant individuals are to God. Successful ministry develops through obedience to God's leadership and is not characterized necessarily by a large number of followers. Too often, the success associated with ministering to large crowds can cloud the vision and dull the hearing of God's servants, leading to disastrous results. Phillip, however, obeyed God and began his southward travel from Jerusalem toward Gaza. After obeying the angel of the Lord, Phillip encountered an Ethiopian eunuch who had gone to Jerusalem to worship. The man was reading from the Book of Isaiah, regarding the Messiah. Phillip joined him at the urging of the holy spirit.



PHOTOSTOCK MARKET

Religion or spirituality?

People of all backgrounds wrestle with age-old question

By Cheri F. Hodges cheri.hodges@thecharlottepost.com

Some people call themselves religious, while others say they're spiritual. Is there a difference?

Spirituality is defined as of the soul or of the spirit. Religion is defined as a belief in and worship of God.

According to Fellowship Journal, a Christian magazine, religious living can lead to zealotry and exclusion of others who don't follow a specific doctrine.

"Religion is in our blood. We are religious people by

nature and we must be very careful. It is easy for us to think, we see the truth and no one else does," the magazine stated.

In the dark ages, Christian crusades left thousands dead in their wake.

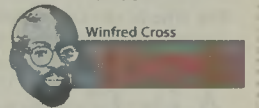
Some religious fundamentalists believe their cause to have grave and even cosmic importance. They see themselves as protecting not only a distinctive doctrine, but also a vital principle, and a way of life and salvation. Community, comprehensively centered upon a clearly defined religious way of

life in all of its aspects, is the promise of fundamentalist movements, and it therefore appeals to those adherents of religion who find little that is distinctive, or authentically vital in their previous religious identity, according to Wikipedia.com.

Psychologist Paschal Baute wrote that "Spirituality is living one's life from the realization that the body/mind/ego personality we have been taught to identify with is just the tip of our iceberg, our little head sticking through the window of the senses into this world, whereas our

true body is the universe. It is recognizing that our perceived world is mostly an illusion, a shared dream we are asleep in, and that the goal of life is to awake to our real Self which is vast and multidimensional - already intimately connected with all of creation, with a twin shadow self that is already scripted, mostly primitive, and hidden from us, but that this whole Self is already One with this mystery we call God/dess whose essence can hardly be understood, but to which we give names as

See THE GREAT /7B



Adams scores with some new inspirations

Yolanda Adams Day By Day James Harris III, Terry Lewis and others, producers Atlantic Records



Many may scoff at Yolanda Adams' new CD as a gospel record, but they need not be so critical. This is more inspirational than anything else but it rivals Adams' best work.

Adams seems to be singing with a renewed vigor. True, it's more gospel lite, but she still packs a wallop when she digs into this material. Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis have really gotten this gospel thing right, offering some of the CD's best songs. "Alwaysness" isn't a real word, but it's an amazing statement on God's grace and understanding. Then of course there's "Be Blessed," the radio

smash that launched the coming of this CD earlier this year. Adams tears into the song with full fervor. She believes every word she's singing. The message is simple: turn your problems over to God and live with a peaceful mind.

There's lots else to like. "Victory" is a rousing exhortation. The chorus is delivered in a staccato fashion that accentuates each word. These folks feel this song. Donnie McClurkin and Mary Mary guest on "Lift Him Up." What? Did you think McClurkin wouldn't make an appearance. It nearly comes to a screech, but each party keeps a lid on things. "I'm Grateful" is nearly an ol' skool jam session.

Adams closes with "This Too Shall Pass," a big, rousing number that allows her to use most of her glorious voice. She soars on the big sweeping passages with little effort but lots of gusto. It's a great way to close on a high note.

Most of this may not work in a church service, but it's well suited for everyday listening. Radio needs more positive songs. Adams offers a dozen to choose.

Ratings section with star icons and text: Classic (5 stars), Excellent (4 stars), Good (3 stars), Fair (2 stars), Why? (1 star), No stars - A mess

Air Force sued for religious intolerance

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — A Jewish military veteran sued the Air Force, claiming senior Air Force Academy officers harassed and forced evangelical Christian views on cadets.

The suit was filed last week by Mikey Weinstein, an academy graduate and outspoken critic of the school's handling of religion. Weinstein, who is Jewish, has one son who graduated

from the academy in 2004 and another who is a junior there. Both were subjected to anti-Semitic slurs from evangelical Christian cadets, Weinstein said in an interview.

Over the past decade or more, the suit claims, academy leaders have fostered an environment of religious intolerance at the school, in violation of the U.S. constitution.

According to Weinstein, evangelical

Christians have coerced attendance at religious services and prayers at official events.

"It's a shocking disgrace that I had to file this thing," Weinstein told The Associated Press.

Lt. Col. Frank Smolinsky, an Air Force spokesman, responded by saying: "The United States Air Force is committed to defending the

Please see AIR FORCE/7B

Black, white congregations share churches

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EUCLID, Ohio — Black and white worshippers share three churches on the east side of Euclid, but that does not mean the city has found religion when it comes to integration.

Three predominantly white congregations — Master's United Methodist, Euclid Lutheran and Lake Shore Christian — rent their churches to congregations that are all-black or mostly so. But services are at separate

times, and mingling, while friendly, is minimal.

These are marriages of convenience. Reflecting the inner-ring suburb where they gather, the white congregations are aging and depleted by sprawl. The rent money helps pay the bills. The black churches are young, just getting started. They hope to grow with the city's minority population and find their own homes.

Church-sharing is common in regions that experience racial and cultural

change, said the Rev. Ralph Curtin, a Southern Baptist pastor in Florida who wrote a book on the subject. The practice has expanded in the last 15 years because of immigration, the spread of minority groups into new areas and white flight, he said.

Master's United Methodist Church peaked at 600 to 700 members in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Today, the number is around 100. New Freedom Ministries, which has rented from Master's for

the last year, is three times as large. Master's Pastor Jeff Branche says his church could not survive without a tenant.

"I hate to see these beautiful church structures not be used," Branche said. "New Freedom Ministries was a blessing, not only in the sense that they were able to help financially."

"They were a blessing in that they use the building," Branche said.

Euclid Lutheran began renting to Ambassadors

Please see BLACK /7B

CHURCH NEWS

The deadline for church announcements to be added to the calendar is 5 p.m. on Fridays. Fax your announcements to (704) 342-2160 or e-mail your announcement to cheri.hodges@thecharlottepost.com.

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.

• Plaza Baptist Church, 3321 The Plaza, will host an eight-week video study by Bruce Wilkinson designed to show how the Prayer of Jabez can release God's favor. The series begins nightly at 7 p.m. For more information, call (704) 334-3913.

October 15

Gospel Music Day is back in the second year at

Paramount's Carowinds. This year's festival includes artists Tonex, J Moss and Stephen Hurd. Grammy nominated artist and gospel sensation Tonex will headline this fall's event. Tonex's latest release "Out of the Box" has garnered a Grammy nomination as well as six 2005 Stellar Awards. Appearing before Tonex is Detroit-raised artist J Moss whose album The J Moss Project garnered him several Dove award and Soul Train nominations. Also appearing on the lineup is music minister and Integrity Gospel recording artist Stephen Hurd. Paramount's Carowinds will be open from 10am to 8pm. Gospel Music Day performances will begin in the early evening. The combination concert ticket includes admission to Paramount's Carowinds and all the concerts in the Padiam Amphitheater plaza. Seating is limited, so early ticket purchases are suggested. Seating is reserved.

• The Bethany Baptist Church will host its first "Letting Your Light Shine" fashion showcase. Tickets are \$5. The church is located at 4700 Willard St. For more

information, call (704) 277-2139.

October 16

Galilee Baptist Church, located at 2933 Shady Lane, will host its annual revival service through Oct. 20. Services begin nightly at 7 p.m.

October 17

University Park Baptist Church will host its fall revival through Wednesday. Services begin nightly at 6:30 p.m. The guest speaker is Charles Booth, senior pastor at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, Columbus, Ohio. The church is located at 6029 Beatties Ford Road. For more information call (704) 369-7736.

October 23

The Women's Ministry of Tabernacle Baptist Church presents "Making the Shift: Moving from self-confidence to God-confidence." Sunday, the Rev. Richetta Daniels will lead the Woman's day service. The women's revival begins Monday at 6:30 p.m. For more information call (704) 568-2374.

October 29

The Greater Mount Moriah Primitive Baptist Church will host its sixth annual golf tournament at Renaissance Golf Course, 1525 West Tyvola Road. For more information, call (704) 376-8806.

November 4

Reeder Memorial Women's Ministry will present an evening of pampering featuring a facial-nails and fashion show. Registration is required and the cost is \$10. The church is located at 3725 Beatties Ford Road.

November 5

Pineville Church of the Nazarene will host its fourth annual Christmas Arts & Crafts Festival from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. The church is located at 8614 Pineville-Matthews Road. For more information, call (704) 542-3618.

• Reeder Memorial Women's Ministry will present "A Celebration in the Midst of Womanhood" workshop beginning at 9 a.m. The church is located at 3725

Please see THRIVE/7B

