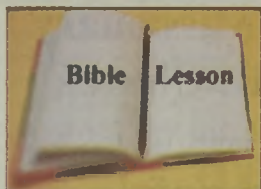


8B

RELIGION

Life 1B



Saul of Tarsus

Acts 9:1-7

Other than Jesus Himself, no other person did more to shape the history of Christianity than the apostle Paul. Prior to his personal encounter with Jesus, Paul was known as Saul. He was named after Saul, Israel's first king. Having been trained under the premier teacher of his time, Gamaliel, Saul had been exposed to some of the finest religious training available. In addition, he also became a Pharisee and possibly a member of the Sanhedrin. Although he was wrong, Saul sincerely thought the Christian movement was a danger and needed to be stopped at all costs. So strong was his belief in the traditions and teachings of his religion that he was driven to have a deep hatred of the Christian faith, which led to his merciless persecution of new believers in Christ.

Saul felt that his actions, which included imprisonment and brutal executions of Christians, pleased God. Like the other Pharisees of his day, Saul had been operating by the letter of Moses' Law, rather than the spirit of the Law God intended. Saul may have thought his belief and actions to be correct for many reasons. For example, Jesus, the "alleged" Messiah, had been crucified. How could Saul and the other Pharisees believe Jesus was the true Messiah when their law taught that anyone who hanged on a cross was cursed? Because of this, the Pharisees saw followers of Christ as blasphemers. In Saul's mind, this "new religion" was so dangerous that it had to be destroyed before it destroyed the very foundation on which Judaism was founded.

Armed with letters from the high priest to the synagogues in Damascus, Saul intended to hunt down all the believers and bring them back to Jerusalem to be punished. There are several possibilities why the Jews in Jerusalem wanted to pursue the Christians in Damascus. Many Jerusalem Christians had fled to other places to escape persecution. The Jews wanted them to be seized and brought back to Jerusalem so that their views would not be spread any further. Damascus was a major city with access to several other major cities. Saul may have thought that if he prevented the spread of Christianity in Damascus, he could stop it from spreading to other major cities.

Saul also may have seen this as a way to advance his reputation as a Pharisee, giving

Please see SAUL/7B



PHOTO/WADE NASH

The Rev. Monica Redmond of Temple Church lives her life with no limits despite having MS. She travels the country giving her testimony and letting people know through faith anything is possible.

Fighting back

Minister with multiple sclerosis won't be deterred

By Cheris F. Hodges
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When most people think of multiple sclerosis, the image of a wheelchair or a person pushing a walker may come to mind.

But if you meet the Rev. Monica Redmond, you'd see a vibrant 39-year-old who is not only living with MS but thriving.

Redmond is the director of ministries and an elder of Temple Church in Charlotte. In 1998 she was diagnosed with MS.

MS affects the central nervous system, particularly the brain and spinal cord. MS is thought to be an autoimmune disease as the immune system does not distinguish between foreign antibodies, such as

a virus, and the body's own tissue. As a result, the immune system attacks the myelin sheath of nerve cell fibers and causes inflammation and destruction of the myelin that surrounds and insulates nerve fibers (axons), a process called demyelination.

"I had gone for years without a diagnosis. I could go back almost 10 years knowing there was something in my body and going from doctor to doctor," she said. "In 1992 there was a doctor who put me through a battery of tests. By the time I got to 1998, they couldn't find anything and I knew there was something."

Redmond said doctors

had given her all kinds of diagnosis, including depression.

It may be understandable to see why doctors missed Redmond's MS. According to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, caucasians, primarily those of Northern European descent, are more likely to develop the disease than people of other ethnic backgrounds. MS is not considered to be a hereditary condition, although there is a higher incidence of MS among family members. This suggests that certain individuals may be genetically susceptible to the disease.

Redmond said she experienced numbness on the entire right side of her

body and she became really concerned and she went to see Dr. Ophelia Garmond-Brown.

At this time she was working as a youth minister at Salem Baptist Church and very active but by 10 p.m., Redmond said she was extremely tired. When she saw the doctor, she went through another battery of tests then, was referred to a neurologist.

The onset of MS usually occurs between 20 and 40 years of age, and is twice as common in women than men. The onset of the disease rarely occurs in children or the elderly.

Redmond, still not knowing what was wrong with

Please see DISEASE/7B

Nightclubs file against religious groups

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBUS—Nightclub executives upset with proposed restrictions on strip clubs have filed two complaints alleging a religious group has threatened state senators to get them to vote for the bill.

Phillip Burruss, the executive director of the Citizens for Community Values, wrote supporters in an e-mail that if he had to, he would form a political action committee to campaign against senators who voted against the proposed nightclub legislation.

The Buckeye Association of Nightclub Executives said the Cincinnati-based group has violated restrictions on political activity by nonprofit organizations.

The association also asserted in the complaints that the organization used improper lobbying tactics to bully senators into favoring the bill.

Its lobbyist, Neil Clark, filed complaints with both the state Elections Commission and the legislative inspector general on Monday. The commission will hold a hearing on Dec. 1.

The bill's most controversial section places statewide restrictions on clubs that include keeping dancers at least six feet from patrons and closing down all dance shows at 11 p.m.

Opponents of the bill, which has already passed the House, testified that the restrictions will hurt, if not kill, adult businesses that are violating no laws and serving consenting adult customers.

The bill could come up for a vote in the Senate this week.

Burruss said lawyers

review the activities of the group, which he pointed out has separate charitable and lobbying arms.

Deputy Legislative Inspector General Don Petit said e-mails submitted with the complaint appear to be to the group's members, not lawmakers. He said it doesn't look like Burruss, who is not a registered lobbyist, violated any lobbying laws.

On the Net:
Citizens for Community Values:
www.ccv.org
Ohio Senate:
/www.senate.state.oh.us/

CHURCH NEWS

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

November 4

Second Calvary Baptist Church's drama ministry will present a dinner theatre production of three one-act plays. The cost is \$10 per ticket and \$15 at the door. The play will begin at 6 p.m. There is also a show on Saturday. For more information, call (704) 399-0378.

November 5

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

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

located at 3725 Beatties Ford Road.

• Thomasboro Church of Christ, 216 Bradford Drive in Charlotte, will be hosting an "Employment Search Training Boot Camp" from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at the church facilities. The topics to be covered include: Job search strategies, resume/cover letter writing, dress for success, and interview strategies. A continental breakfast and lunch will be served. For more information and to RSVP, please call (704) 392-4253.

November 6

Pineville Church of the Nazarene will host the group River in concert at 6 p.m. The church is located at 8614 Pineville-Matthews Road. For information, call (704) 542-3618.

• The Chappell Mass Choir, under the direction of Minister Christopher L. Gray, will perform at 6 p.m., in the sanctuary of Chappell Memorial Baptist Church.

Guest emcees will be Praise 100.9 FM personalities Tanya Rivers and AC Stowe. Also performing will be C&C Mimes, an area worship dance group, and Ree Ree and Matt, winners of the kids, talent competition at the legendary Apollo Theater in New York. The event is free and open to the public. For information about the concert or Chappell Memorial, please call (704) 394-5615 or visit the church web site at www.chappellbc.org.

November 8

First Church of Christ, Scientist, located at 1048 East Morehead St., will celebrate its centennial anniversary. The speaker for the event will be Elise Moore. The celebration begins at 7:30 p.m.

November 12

University Park Baptist Church, located at 6029 Beatties Ford Road, will host "Thrive" women's conference that is designed to help

women maximize their potential for influence. The church is hosting a simulcast from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tickets for the event are \$40. For more information, call Valerie Williams at (704) 369-7736.

• The Women's Ministry of Bethany Baptist Church, 400 Willard St., will host a program "Allow the Spirit to Flow" at 4 p.m. For more information call (704) 391-8467.

• Little Rock AME Zion Church will host a celebration to welcome the church's 23rd pastor, the Rev. Dwayne Anthony Walker. The event begins at 4:30 with a reception to follow. For information, call (704) 334-3782.

November 13

The Anointed Voices will perform at 4 p.m. at Marable Memorial AME Zion Church in Kannapolis. The church is located at 400 Huron St. For information, call (704) 932-2863.

Please see BETHLEHEM/6B



Sapp lifts 'Exalted' to new heights

Marvin Sapp
Be Exalted
Marvin, Melinda Sapp
and Max Siegel, executive
producers
Verity/Zomba Records



Marvin Sapp's tenure with Commissioned introduced him to the gospel world. Sounding much like Fred Hammond at an octave higher, he's never tried to be anyone but himself. That's a good thing.

I've never been a huge fan of Sapp, but I've never doubted his vocal ability. Now he's found the right combination of songs to compliment his expressive voice. "Be Exalted" is his best work.

Sapp has selected a group of producers that push his expressive voice. Donald Lawrence does the best job on the Rudolph Stanfield Jr. classic "Perfect Peace." Sapp is so into this song, it sounds as if he wrote it himself. It's a tremendous song of praise. The background vocals are classic Lawrence, soaring at the right moment and coming back to a near whisper. Sapp's lead vocals are exceptional. James Poyser (who did fine work with Mariah Carey earlier this year) is nearly as good on "Everything That I Am." Again, Sapp's expressiveness shines. He's locked into the lyrics.

Most of the remaining tracks were produced by Israel Houghton and Aaron Lindsey or Steve White. The Houghton/Lindsey collaborations are what you might expect - disco praise. These two thrive on uptempo praise and worship and it's not bad. Their tracks for Sapp have more bite than those done with New Breed. "Strong Tower" is more Tower of Power than gospel, but the sassy horn arrangement does make the song strut.

Sapp has never sung with more conviction and it pays off on this CD. His song selection is strong and the production is tight. That makes for a great recording.

Ratings

Classic ★★★★★
Excellent ★★★★★
Good ★★★
Fair ★★
Why? ★
No stars - A mess