

8B

RELIGION

Life 1B



Justified by faith

Galatians 2:14-21

Justification by Faith Defended (Galatians 2:14-21) Provides man's only hope (vv. 15,16)

15. We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of Gentiles.

The word we may refer to Peter and Paul, to all the apostles or to the early Jewish Christians in general. All of these were Jews by nature, that is, they were born Jewish. Certainly there were some advantages to being Jewish. The Jews had a long experience with understanding God's law, celebrating God's redemption and listening to God's prophets of the coming Messiah. This was all part of their history as God's chosen people (See Romans 9:4,5)

By referring to Gentiles as sinners, Paul is sarcastically using language that was being used against the Gentiles. According to Jewish tradition, it was not the Gentiles that were incapable of doing any moral good. They may do some good deeds, but since they don't have the law, they cannot please God. From the law's point of view, they were sinners.

The argument Paul is getting ready to make is essentially the same as his argument in Romans 2:17-29. Physical descent has nothing to do with one's salvation. Christ has come to save all people. As Paul teaches in both Roman and Galatians, the true "sons of Abraham" are those individuals who exercise faith as he did and are thus counted righteous in God's eyes (Romans 4:11, 12, 20-25; Galatians 3:7, 29).

16. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of law, but by faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of law shall no flesh be justified. When Paul says, Knowing that the works of the law does not justify a man, he is not speaking of any person in particular but of all humanity in general. He is confident of this claim, as one who had one time sought righteousness by means of the law (Philippians 3:6). (Note that he affirms three times in this single verse that the works of law cannot provide justification.) By using the word, we, he maintains that Peter knows this too. And Peter should have been just as confident of this truth, given his experiences with the household of Cornelius and at the

Please see JUSTIFIED7B

Planners, churches at odds over federal land use law

Winston-Salem congregation wants to expand facilities

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WINSTON-SALEM—A federal law designed to thwart restrictive land uses is creating tension between planners in Forsyth County and churches that want to expand to provide day cares, schools, and other services.

City and county planning officials for months have been considering ways to divide land fairly between houses of worship that want to expand and neighborhoods that want to stay intact.

One of the proposals under review would make places of worship construct large buildings at least 40 feet away from property lines. For some churches, that margin is now just 7 feet.

The current regulation allowed St. John's Lutheran Church to build a sprawling family life center next to a modest ranch house. But St. John's could not have expanded under the 40-foot proposal, church officials said.

Several churches with construction plans are concerned about the effect that any local zoning changes might have.

Glynis Jordan, the deputy director of the City-County Planning Department, said she has received surprisingly positive feedback about the proposed change.

"Something's got to happen. We don't want to run churches out of our neighborhoods, but we've got to



PHOTO/WADE NASH

Church construction in Winston-Salem may come to a halt while the county and churches battle over a federal law.

do something," Jordan said, describing callers' comments.

Planning officials said they are trying to strike a balance between the needs of neighborhood groups and those of religious institutions, while being mindful of federal law.

The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act was signed in 2000 under the Clinton

administration. It prohibits zoning laws that create a substantial burden on exercising religion. It also forces local officials to pursue the least restrictive means to further a compelling government interest, such as health and safety.

Religious institutions have used it as a platform in lawsuits nationwide to fight local governments

that they say excessively restrict how churches and others may use their land.

Jared Leland, a spokesman for the Becket Fund, a nonprofit religious advocacy group, said it's been a necessary shield for churches and has been used to fight restrictions on the type of construction carried out by St. John's.

See ACCOMMODATING/7B

Angelou to host Christmas party celebration

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SANTA MONICA, Calif. —Thinking back over her memories of Christmas, Maya Angelou recalls the aroma in her family's store in Stamps, Ark.

"My grandmother would take an orange and almost parboil it ... and she would stick cloves into the peel and wrap it up," she says. Then a week before Christmas, the oranges would be unwrapped and "the whole store, and of course, the house which was around the store, everything, would just smell of oranges and cloves."

Stirred by the memory, Angelou almost sniffs the air as she decides she may make some of those oranges herself this year.

She's also serving up another holi-

day treat this season, hosting the Hallmark Channel's "Celebrate! Christmas with Maya Angelou," replete with not only good food, but also music, laughter, memories and a solid dose of Angelou's wisdom and philosophy. It airs Friday at 7 p.m. and on Christmas Day at 1 p.m.

Back in the spring, when rhododendrons and azaleas were in bloom around her home in Winston-Salem, N.C., the Hallmark production team "dressed my house the way it would be dressed for Christmas, with two huge Christmas trees, and my family and friends came from around in a Christmas mood."

Angelou's immediate relatives — including her son, Guy Johnson, and great grandchildren, Caylin and Brandon — are at the gathering, but so are members of what she calls her "extended family," including singer-songwriters Nickolas Ashford and Valerie Simpson, whose voices and musical skills add to and accompany the impromptu chorus of Christmas songs and carols sung during the course of the party.

The couple stopped by the Santa Monica hotel where Angelou was staying on a recent visit to Southern California.

They echo each other in saying Angelou is "all about celebrating," so there was no difficulty at all in creating

Please see ANGELOU'S/7B

God to be placed on Alabama car tags

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — The phrase "God Bless America" would be added to Alabama's already crowded license plates if a bill proposed by a state legislator becomes law.

State Rep. Steve Hurst,

D-Munford, has prefiled a bill in the Alabama House that would require most Alabama car tags to include the phrase "God Bless America." Some specialty license plates and motorcycle tags would be exempt.

Hurst said he got the idea when he saw the words "God Bless America" on a specialty prisoner of war car tag.

"I thought why don't we do the same thing for all the tags in the state of Alabama. That will let all

the people in America know that we are a Bible Belt state," Hurst said.

The phrase comes from the Irving Berlin song "God Bless America." The song was made famous by singer Kate Smith and since the

Please see GOD/6B



Norful revamps an already good work

Smokie Norful Nothing Without You Special Edition Various Producers EMI Gospel



Smokie Norful has joined the ranks of those who feel like they need to fix a CD that's already hit the market.

That's not a bad thing because it seems to work. Secular artists revive sagging sales with this marketing ploy, so why not gospel? "Nothing Without You" was good enough as it was, but now it's packaged with a DVD and extra songs.

The revamped package works. The DVD was actually recorded before the CD was originally released. Norful introduced some of its songs to a live audience who seemed to receive each enthusiastically. There is a lot of talking between most of the songs that could have been left out but at least it's interesting information. The performances are very good. Norful doesn't have a lot of stage presence, maybe because there's not a lot of him. This is a little man. But the sound that comes out of his diminutive frame is incredible. Norful mixes gospel and jazz phrasing with relative ease. Norful likes the contemporary stuff but can sing the mess out of traditional gospel. "I Know The Lord Will Make A Way" and "Amazing Grace" are certainly highlights. But the contemporary songs carry the most weight. "Worthy" is powerful while "Continuous Grace" is as soothing as anything I've heard.

The DVD's bonus material includes a live performance of "O Holy Night" and "I Need You Now" video.

The CD includes two new songs. "Work It Out" is from a Ramsey Lewis gospel-jazz project. "He Knows" isn't available on anything else. Both are worth adding this package to your collection.



Ratings

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

CHURCH NEWS

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

Ongoing

New Outreach/Hoskins Community is seeking donations of turkeys for Christmas Dinners. Donations are being accepted at 3900 Gossett Ave. For more information call Pastor Brenda Stevenson at (704) 398-1777.

December 8

Divine Praise and Deliverance Ministries will host its first Youth in Action Prophetic Conference through Friday. The services will be held nightly at 7:30 p.m. at Remnant Outreach Ministries, located at 3819 S. Tryon St.

There will be praise dancers, choirs and speakers. For more information, call (704) 492-2566 or (704) 492-1337.

December 9

The Hickory Grove North Worship Department presents "An Angel's Story" a cosmic Christmas. The production centers around best-selling author Max Lucado, who imagines the spiritual conflict surrounding the coming of Christ. Tickets are \$15 and include dinner.

Show times are 7 p.m. Friday and 6 p.m. on Sunday. For more information call (704) 531-5333.

December 11

Our Children's Memorial Walkway will hold

its annual memorial service at Frazier Park, located at 1201 West Fourth St., to remember children who have departed from this life. This service is specifically aimed at giving grieving people of all faiths and races the chance to come together in a place of life rather than at a cemetery to remember their loved ones.

The event begins at 3 p.m.

• The DeiVision of Children and Youth at Friendship Missionary Baptist will hold Worship at The Y. For the Soul Survivors' Middle and High School Students: Community Worship Experience/Fun Day. The event is 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and free. For information, call (704) 392-5475.

• The Trustee Board of Greater Gethsemane AME Zion Church will celebrate its annual

day at 3 p.m. The Rev. Jimmy Griffin of Shiloh AME Zion Church will be the guest speaker.

December 18

The United for Christ Inspirational Mass Choir will be in concert at 5 p.m. The concert will be held at the Haven of Rest Baptist Church, 2435 Tboomey Ave.

• University Park Baptist Church presents "Christmas: It's All About Love," a dramatic presentation at The Park South 13733 Lancaster Highway Pineville. Show times are 3:30 and 7 p.m. Admission is free.

