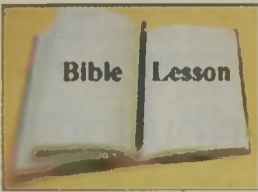


# 8B

# RELIGION



## For whom should we pray?

1 Timothy 2:1-2

Chapter One ends with Paul addressing false teachers, particularly Hymenaeus and Alexander. They were teaching false doctrine and needed to be disciplined immediately because they were leaders of the church and because their position provided them with the opportunity for them to continue teaching incorrect doctrine if they were not stopped.

This is important to remember as Paul begins to provide instructions for Timothy as he leads the Christians in Ephesus.

When Paul told Timothy to pray for everyone, he did not mean that Timothy must devote all his time and energy to praying for every man, woman and child on earth. However, he did want Timothy to realize that there was a large group of people with whom he dealt regularly who needed his prayer: There were believers in his congregation, as well as opponents to their beliefs; the latter needed Timothy's and the other believers' intercessory appeals just as much as the former.

Paul meant there were to be no exclusions on Timothy's prayer list. Timothy probably did not wish to pray for the mobs of outraged Ephesians who had hounded Paul and his traveling companions.

Timothy probably didn't wish to pray for the Roman authorities who were growing impatient with the trouble that seemed to follow Paul where ever he went.

Timothy probably didn't wish to pray for the people who opposed his own ministry, but Paul reminded him that he must not exclude those people from his prayers. They were also God's created beings and they might be specifically brought to God through prayer.

Paul drove home the issue by specifically mentioning kings and those in positions of authority. He was not telling Timothy to pray for Caesar because he was a great leader, but because the position Caesar held was ordained by God to promote an orderly society.

- Can you be Godly if you refuse to do what God has told you to do?
- Make a list of leaders for whom you will pray.

## 40 days, one purpose: The meaning of life

Pastor embarks on helping others find answers to existence



PHOTO/FILE

Pastor Michael Stevens wants to help people find their purpose in life. Over the next 40 days he will.

By Cheris F. Hodges  
cheris.hodges@thecharlottepost.com

Ever wonder why you're here, what's the purpose of your life?

For the next 40 days, starting Sunday, the Rev. Michael Stevens at University City Church will help people find the answer to that question using "The Purpose Driven Life," by California pastor Rick Warren.

"The Purpose-Driven Life" takes the groundbreaking message of the award-winning Purpose-Driven Church and goes deeper, applying it to the lifestyle of individual Christians. This book helps readers understand God's incredible plan for their lives. Warren enables them to see the big picture of what life is all about and begin to live the life God

created them to live, according to Warren's web site.

Stevens said this campaign is a good way for people to start the New Year with a clean spiritual plate.

"It's all about the people," he said. "With the New Year, people make resolutions and what better way to start off the New Year?" Over 30,000 groups

across the country have incorporated Warren's book into service and helped people discover what God wants them to do in life.

The book is also credited with bringing accused Atlanta courthouse shooter Brian Nichols to justice without additional bloodshed.

Please see FORTY/7B

## Fire destroys church known for gospel music

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO—The architecture was majestic, the gospel choir was inspiring and services at the Pilgrim Baptist Church were so popular that worshippers in the 1930s and '40s had to show up an hour early to find a seat.

On Friday, the 115-year-old church, an integral part of the development of gospel music, was destroyed by a fire so intense that its flames and smoke could be seen from miles away. The fire gutted the church and collapsed its roof and steeple. The cause wasn't known.

"It was a landmark church. God, it was just so beautiful," said Lena McLin, who was baptized at Pilgrim as a 12-year-old in the early 1940s. "It was very spiritual—you felt you were meeting the Lord there."

McLin's uncle was Thomas A. Dorsey—considered the father of gospel music—and Pilgrim was where he perfected his cross of the raw soulfulness of the blues with the sacred music of his youth. His all-time greatest hit, "Take My Hand, Precious Lord," was popularized by Mahalia Jackson and became a favorite of the

Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

He was Pilgrim's music director from 1932 until the late 1970s. The church was designated a Chicago landmark in 1981.

Over the decades, the gospel stars who performed at Pilgrim included Jackson, Sallie Martin, James Cleveland and the Edwin Hawkins Singers. The funeral service for early 20th century boxing champion Jack Jackson was held at the church.

The congregation recently numbered about 300, but in its heyday in

Please see FIRE/7B

## Bishop calls all forms of birth control sinful

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHOENIX—Solidifying his reputation as one of the most conservative clergy in the nation, Phoenix Catholic Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted says that birth control of almost any kind is sinful.

Olmsted now is one of only three bishops in the country to require a full course of natural family planning for anyone who wants a church wedding. In doing so, he joins his counterparts in Denver and Fargo, N.D.

Natural family planning or the so-called rhythm method—abstaining from intercourse during the time a woman ovulates each month—is the only church-approved method of birth

control.

In July, Fargo Bishop Samuel Aquila announced that the Diocese of Fargo would require couples who plan to marry in the church to take a course on natural family planning as part of their marriage preparation. Aquila was a priest in the archdiocese of Denver before he was named bishop in Fargo in five years ago.

"Through my personal experience in preparing couples for marriage and through discussions with priests, I have seen a great need for this instruction to help couples fully live the sacrament of marriage," Aquila said in a statement in July.

In a series of articles that

reopened a contentious debate in the church, Olmsted argued that a "marriage itself is gravely harmed" when a couple uses birth control and that marital infidelity increases. He said "the use of contraceptives is always morally evil, and many of them have harmful side effects as well."

He also urged those using birth control or even fertility treatments to "seek forgiveness."

Lisa Tucker of Chandler has used natural family planning for 10 years. The 42-year-old mother of four and stepmother to a fifth says that among other reasons, she had several health issues with the pill. She said natural family

planning has been effective for her and her husband and actually improved their sex lives.

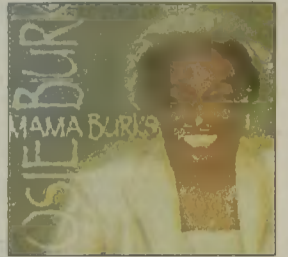
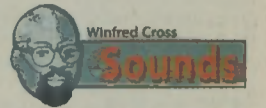
"It's about the idea of chastity, not just abstinence," Tucker said.

About 2,000 couples a year are married in churches in the Phoenix diocese.

The key point, Olmsted argued, is that married couples should be open to children. However, in his writings he doesn't explain how avoiding childbirth through natural family planning fits into that.

Dr. Ingrid Haas, a Scottsdale obstetrician-gynecologist, said long-term health effects from the birth-control pills and similar meth-

Please see BISHOP/5B



## Burks' solo project is real gospel at roots

Mosie Burks  
Mama Burks  
Jerry Smith and Derrick Lee,  
producers  
Malaco Records



Mosie Burks has been singing with the Mississippi Mass Choir for years, belting out those high energy shout songs. So at 70, Burks decides to step out on her own with a solo CD.

'Bout time. Burks has the perfect ol' school voice to carry an entire CD and she doesn't disappoint on her first try. "Mama Burks" is the perfect way to start a new year in gospel.

There's nothing new or spectacular about this recording, but it's necessary. It's the kind of gospel music older folks can rally around and younger folks can learn a few things from. Burks is from an era when gospel singing was unmistakable. It wasn't mixed with R&B and other things. It was the basis for R&B and other things.

Burks kicks off the CD with "I've Got A Grip," written by Benjamin Cone III. It's one of those classic churchy songs that will ignite a congregation. Burks puts her foot in the song. She's singing with conviction and faith. She shares the mic with Greg Thompson on "What A Debt I Owe," a slow burning number which features some stout choir vocals. Burks steps out of the way most of the time, giving Thompson's soothing tenor room to caress the song.

Burks picks up the pace again on "I'm On My Way To Heaven" with gospel legend Dorothy Norwood. It's typical of the churchy stuff both do. Norwood's voice is a bit deeper and a little shaky, but she can still hold her own.

"God Has Brought Me From A Long Way," "What Do You Know About Jesus" and the gutsy "You Must Be Born Again" round out a very likable CD. Burks didn't have to wait so long but we're all the better that she did.

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

## CHURCH NEWS

The deadline for announcements in the calendar is noon on Fridays. Fax your to (704) 342-2160 or e-mail cheris.hodges@thecharlottepost.com.

**Ongoing**  
Grace Bible College will host winter classes at Grace Baptist Church on 1185 Little Rock Road in Newton through March 13. These classes may be taken for credit. For more information, call (828) 464-7055.

The Millions More Movement-Charlotte will move to its new location at Little Rock Zion Church, 401 N. McDowell St. The will meet the second and fourth M. nights of the month for six months. For more information, call (704) 333-1690.

**January 15**  
Bethlehem Baptist Church, 4 Ha Bridge Road, Simpsonville, S.C., will host Martin Luther King Jr. celebration at

The keynote speaker will be the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson Sr.

**January 22**  
Person-Gillespie United Methodist Church will celebrate 135 years with dedication service of renovations and ions to their fourth site. The church, located at 3545 Beatties Ford Road, spent 10 to renovating their current location and g additional classrooms, offices, storage

areas and a choir room. For more information, call (704) 399-2717.

**February 12**  
All For One Youth Choir will resume practices at 3:30 p.m. at Western Avenue Baptist Church, located at 1206 Museum Road, Statesville. New members will be accepted through February 19.

