

5B

RELIGION

Life 1B



Trust God for the real meaning of your life

We live in a microwave generation. It seems that mankind is constantly in a rush to get something done. We are a very impatient bunch, and our attention span gets shorter by the moment I remember having read a cartoon years ago that showed in one panel several adult characters who had just been involved in an automobile accident. As each of them lay sprawled throughout the intersection, the text balloons above their heads showed their off-the-wall thoughts. One woman wondered what she would fix for dinner that night. Another man thought about meeting a project deadline at work, and so on. The crash had occurred only seconds earlier, but their thoughts were now on other less urgent matters. We will learn in today's lesson that God's timing is perfect and that we must learn to rely on Him when the world gets dark and crazy-as it is now rapidly becoming. We must turn our attention to Him, and know that we are operating on His time, and not the other way around.

We learn in Romans 8:28 that "all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (NKJV). The ungodly may have a fatalistic philosophy, concluding that things just happen and nothing can be done to change them. Those who love God can see situations develop and conclude that He has a plan for them and is implementing it. A common saying is that one can curse the darkness, or light a candle to dispel it. Our approach to life determines how we evaluate the various experiences we have. This lesson from Ecclesiastes teaches us that we must anchor ourselves in God and let all the pieces fall into place in due time.

Lesson Background Along with its opening verses and its closing command, the best-known part of the book of Ecclesiastes-which was written by Solomon, "the son of David, king in Jerusalem" (Ecc. 1:1, 12, 16)-is the "there is a season" passage (Ecc. 3:1-8). Its description of the many contrasting phases of life has struck a chord even with the irreligious. What accounts for this passage's popularity? It seems to appeal to people's need for consolation and peace amid the changing circumstances of life. The idea taken from

Please see TRUST GOD/7B

Macedonia pastor charged

John Walker accused of lying on tax returns, bank applications



PHOTO/WADE NASH

Macedonia Baptist church is led by the Rev. John Henry Walker, who was indicted last week on nine federal counts of lying on his tax returns and making false statements to banks.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The lead pastor at a Charlotte church was indicted Friday on nine federal charges that accuse him of tax evasion and making false statements to banks and federal officials.

John Henry Walker, senior pastor at Macedonia Baptist Church, is accused of underreporting his income between 1999 and 2003 by almost \$550,000 and evading federal income taxes of more than \$125,000 for those years, according to U.S. Attorney Gretchen C.F.

Shappert

Walker, 47, is charged with five counts of tax evasion, three counts of making false statements in connection with a bank loan and a single count of making false statements to federal agents.

An indictment handed up in U.S. District Court in Charlotte says that between rent-free housing in a church-owned residence, a base salary, a housing allowance, various bonuses and honorariums, paid vacations and other payments, Walker collected more than

\$900,000 from the church from 1998 through 2003. According to Shappert, when funds in the church's general account were not enough to pay Walker, he arranged to take money from the church's building fund account and from an account set up for the church's summer youth program.

Between 1999 and 2003, when Walker received some \$600,000 in taxable income, he reported less than \$55,000 to the Internal Revenue Service, Shappert said.

Please see MACEDONIA/6B



Stellar Awards Essentially recordings solid

Various artists Stellar Awards Hits 2006 Various producers Artemis Gospel



It doesn't seem the Stellar Awards have been around for nearly a quarter century, but they have. Essentially the "Gospel Grammys," the show's production values have gotten a lot better but the show dips into the secular more and more each year.

Even the music has gotten more secular. But such is the way of the music industry. To reach a younger audience, certain concessions have been made. Has it worked? Depends on who you ask. Of the 12 songs of this CD, only five are nontraditional gospel artists and each has a big impact.

Even so, this CD is fun listening because the song selection is odd. These are supposed to be songs nominated for this year's Stellas. Commissioned by "Running Back To You" is culled from its stunning "Reunion" CD, but it's at least four years old. Even Kirk Whalum and Jonathan Butler's "Falling In Love With Jesus" has some age on it.

Still, neither annoys like Detrick Haddon's "God Is Good," which is a conspicuous copy of Michael Jackson's "Baby, Be Mine." Israel Houghton and New Breed's "Again I Say Rejoice" is the epitome of praise & worship but essentially no more than disco gospel. RiZen is a young trio but they sing with an old school sensibility. We've Come To Magnify The Lord" is close to churchy, but has enough to make young folk happy.

Of the traditional stuff, Mosis Burks of the Mississippi Mass Choir sings the life out of "I'm Not Tired Yet." "Dottie Peoples is a bit ho-hum on "He Said It" And

See FLOOD/6B

Please see STELLAR/6B

Flood of new Christian books hit the market

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The ongoing furor about Christianity's role in American politics is provoked especially by the conjunction of difficult moral issues with rising conservative activism and closely fought elections.

In the recent flood of books about this, several warrant special attention:

"American Theocracy" (Viking) by Kevin Phillips. This one-time Republican analyst attacks America's oil

dependence and indebtedness but especially decries religious conservatives' alliance with the Republican Party.

"Our Endangered Values" (Simon & Schuster) by Jimmy Carter. The former Democratic president shares many partisan themes with Phillips in a superficial attack on "fundamentalism" in politics and within his own Southern Baptist Convention.

"American Gospel" (Random House) by Jon Meacham. This Newsweek magazine editor's discursive historical essay says that in a democracy, it's inevitable that religious groups will address public issues.

"Washington's God" (Basic Books) by Michael and Jana Novak. The authors examine the faith of the first president and religious precedents he set.

"A Godly Hero: The Life of

William Jennings Bryan" (Knopf) by Michael Kazin. This is the best of the lot. A Georgetown University expert on the Populist era provides an engaging portrait of a three-time (1896, 1900, 1908) candidate for president.

Bryan's movement fused Bible-based moralism with the Democratic Party. That history demolishes Phillips'

See FLOOD/6B

Vatican official boycotts 'Da Vinci Code' movie

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ROME - A Vatican official reportedly called for a boycott of the upcoming "The Da Vinci Code" film Friday, saying it contained "slandereous" offenses against Christianity that would have provoked a worldwide revolt had they been directed against Islam or the Holocaust.

Monsignor Angelo Amato - Pope Benedict XVI's former No. 2 when Benedict was head of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith - made the comments in a speech at the Pontifical Holy Cross University, which is run

by the conservative Catholic movement Opus Dei, the ANSA news agency reported.

"I hope all of you boycott this film," the Italian agency quoted Amato as saying. He said the film, based on the best-selling novel by Dan Brown, was full of "offenses, slander, historical and theological errors concerning Jesus, the gospel and the church."

"Slander, offenses and errors that if they were directed toward the Quran or the Shoah would have justifiably provoked a worldwide revolt," he said, referring to Islam's

holy book and the Hebrew word for Holocaust.

"Yet because they were directed toward the Catholic Church, they remain 'unpunished,'" he said.

Church officials repeatedly have spoken out against the novel and the upcoming film adaptation, which stars Tom Hanks and Audrey Tautou and is scheduled for release May 19.

"The Da Vinci Code" contends that Jesus married Mary Magdalene and had descendants, and that Opus Dei, which is close to the Vatican, and the Catholic Church

were at the center of a cover up.

Last year, Italian Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone - Amato's predecessor at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith - called for a boycott of the book. And earlier this month, the preacher for the papal household, the Rev. Raniero Cantalamessa, denounced theories that make huge profits in denying church teaching about Jesus - an obvious reference to the film.

However, Opus Dei, which is portrayed as a murderous, Please see VATICAN'S/8B



Ratings

Table with 2 columns: Rating (Classic, Excellent, Good, Fair, Why?, No stars - A mess) and Stars (☆)

CHURCH NEWS

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

May 4 Trinity Park Baptist Church, 9115 Trinity Road, will host a free Medicare D (prescription drug) information seminar for senior citizens and their families at 7 p.m. For additional information call the church at (704) 393-0130

May 6 Seigle Avenue First Church of God Girls in Action for Christ presents the first Mother and Daughter Luncheon, "Empowering Another Generation." The event runs from 11.30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Bette Rae Thomas Recreational Center, 2921 Tuckaseegee Road. Tickets are

\$10 in advance and \$15 at the door. For more information, call (704) 537-4690.

May 9 Women's Initiative Network will celebrate its second anniversary at their next chapter meeting on Tuesday, May 9 at the Doubletree Hotel in SouthPark at 6 p.m. Speaker is Kathy Helou. Register on-line at www.womensinet.com http://www.womensinet.com or call (704)541-0277.

May 13 House of Life Full Gospel Ministries will host its third annual Health Fair at Southview Recreation Center, 1720 Vilna St. at 10 a.m. There will be blood pressure checks, diabetes testing, sickle cell testing and other health care services.

May 15 True Way Church of God in Christ will host its annual Men's Conference through May 17. The church is located at 2931 James Road.

May 20 Christian Women of Elegance will host its fifth annual "Gospel Day in the Park-A Day to Celebrate Women," at Independence Park, located at 300 Hawthorne Lane from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. For more information, call (704) 332-9434 or (704) 493-2536.

May 26 The community outreach committee of Steele Hill AME Zion Church is sponsoring a two day - one night trip to the Gullah Festival in Beaufort, S.C. May 26-27. Steele Hill AME Zion Church is located at 6021 Charlotte High-

way, Lancaster, S.C. For more information, call (704) 488-5008.

May 27 Tickets for JoyFest '06, a gospel showcase of praise and song, are currently on sale.

The concert is scheduled to take place at the Paladium Amphitheatre at Paramount's Carowinds. The concert features Detrick Haddon, Stellar Award winner - one of Gospel Music's most prestigious prizes. Also appearing are Tye Tribbett & Greater Anointing, Cross Movement and Serenity, a gospel group from Charlotte.

Advance ticket purchases and discount tickets for Season Pass members are available

Please see JOYFEST/8B