

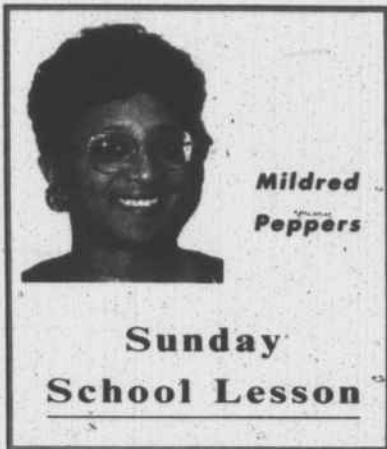
RELIGION

Believer's ministry is reconciliation and sacrifice

Lesson Scripture: II Corinthians 5:11-21

Lesson Aims: To understand that believer's ministry is reconciliation, to appreciate Christ's sacrifice for us, and to extend reconciliation to others.

Background: This epistle is the most personal and revealing of Paul's writings. The motivation for this letter was different from I Corinthians written a year or so later, Paul addressed the distrust in him. Some felt that he was not sincere while others questioned his apostolic authority. Here Paul presented his love and commitment through ministry. Chapters 1-4 centered on the believer's ability to comfort others because they had been there at one time or another in their life. A deep



Mildred Peppers

Sunday School Lesson

sense of love enabled them to forgive and to testify to the glory of God. This made their lives transparent. Therefore with confidence, a believer can admit their weaknesses thus revealing

God's strength and power. Paul's defense was his sincerity in serving God. All of the evidence used was centered around the concept of ministry.

Lesson: Paul begins by stating his reasons for serving the Lord. Reverence for Him is first. Fearing (terror) the Lord isn't being scared of Him. Rather it is respecting the awesomeness of God. Recognizing that He knows Paul's heart and will hold him accountable for his actions serves as the catalyst for ministry. Secondly, Paul does what he does because of his love of Christ. This love leads him to devote his entire life to Christ. At times he appears "crazy" for the Lord. This enthusiasm creates a "selfless" love for all people (revolutionary). Paul

reminds the Corinthians in verse 15 about Christ's ultimate sacrifice. Sin breaks the relationship between God and man. Something must mend it by standing in the gap. Christ is sent to redeem man and to renew the broken relationship. The love of Christ transforms Paul into a new creature. The new creation views the world differently. Their goals and values are elevated to new heights. Therefore, the conversion experience makes each person an ambassador for Christ. Paul's life is evidence of his newness.

Application: If our sincerity were questioned, what evidence would we use? Paul's response wasn't out of anger and neither should ours. God knows all about us and therefore we can

not fool Him. The believer's life is committed to the will of God. We are flesh but we don't rely on flesh to get things accomplished. Our lesson today has a two fold purpose-reconciling the world to Christ and reconciling with one another. Too many times relationships are broken. To mend them, Jesus' love is needed. The world is in bad shape. Families are torn apart; factions in countries are killing each other; corruption is everywhere. Attempts are made at fixing the situation. Without Jesus, no real improvement is made. As believers we become new creatures. No longer do we use the world's measure (our brains) to remedy the current state. Instead, we rely on Christ. Yes it may appear crazy to some, but

other ambassadors understand. The emphasis on self is removed and every effort is placed first on others and then on ourselves. To spread this new concept of service, others need to be persuaded to follow Him. As more transformations occur, the world changes, not on its own but because of Christ. Christ is the bridge back to God. Since this is true, we believers are to mend broken relationships with each other (believers and non-believers). Believers then should be the best mediators. Our change is on the inside but manifested on the outside. Therefore, we must tell the world about this Jesus, God's Son who can create a new to compel us to serve, MS. Peppers (336) 784-7270

Lyons answers questions about torched church and builder's funds

By PAT LEISNER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

LARGO, Fla. — A secretary for the Rev. Henry Lyons told jurors Friday she accidentally sent a letter to the Anti-Defamation League indicating he'd distributed \$225,000 the group gave him to help burned black churches.

Lyons, president of the National Baptist Convention USA, is accused of stealing the money. Prosecutors say he deposited \$60,000 in his personal bank account, gave \$12,000 to his wife, sent checks to love interests, paid his credit card and redecored his house.

Earlier in the week, a group of Lyons' supporters testified that the embattled Baptist leader did not mishandle church funds.

"I cannot think of anything he

did under this administration that the previous presidents did not have the privilege to do," the Rev. Lacy Curry said.

Curry was one of three convention ministers who testified as the defense began presenting evidence at Lyons' racketeering trial.

Lyons and his alleged mistress, Bernice Edwards, are accused of swindling more than \$4 million from companies hoping to sell cemetery products, life insurance policies and credit cards to convention members.

The convention voted to keep Lyons as president after Florida prosecutors began investigating his finances in 1997.

A convention ethics commission reviewed Lyons' conduct, focusing only on whether he stole any money from its treasuries, and found nothing wrong.

"That's what we zeroed in on and that's what we dealt with, mainly," said the Rev. Edward V. Hill, who led the commission. "We didn't want to go any further."

Defense lawyers say failed business deals are not criminal matters. They spent much of Wednesday presenting testimony from the ministers who said they believe Lyons has the right to earn profit from his post as president and to spend the money as he chooses.

ADL officials testified earlier in Lyons' grand theft and racketeering trial that he sent them a letter saying he had given the money to six burned churches and needed more money. They sent another \$19,500 before learning only a fraction of the money had been distributed to churches.

"I was just so new at that time," convention secretary Deborah

Blake testified during her second day on the witness stand.

Lyons, she said, had dictated the letter to her by telephone while he was out of town and she typed it up, stamped his name to it and mailed it.

"I assumed that he meant for it to go out in the mail," she said.

Lyons' lawyers maintain he had planned to distribute the money, but first was researching where it should go. But before that could happen, his wife was arrested in 1997 for setting fire to a waterfront home he owned with another woman, Bernice Edwards, and prosecutors began investigating his finances.

Lyons repaid the money when the ADL asked to get it back.

The minister alone is accused in the grand theft charge. He and co-defendant Edwards together are

charged with racketeering, accused of swindling \$4 million from corporations seeking to do business with the powerful church organization.

In other testimony Friday, a consultant who helped arrange a marketing deal between Lyons and Globe Life Insurance Co. denied he told a Lyons' aide to make up a mailing list for the company.

Administrative assistant Bonita Henderson had testified that Fred Canfield instructed her to simply make up a list of names and addresses for the company, which was seeking to sell life insurance policies to the convention's 8.5 million members.

"That's absolutely, absolutely a lie, okay? This was a very important project," Canfield said. "Never, I never did that."

Prosecutors call the member-

ship figure a hoax, and say no list of convention members ever existed. Instead, they say, Lyons and Edwards used the promise of such lists to dupe companies and use their money to buy expensive homes, luxury cars and diamond jewelry.

Defense lawyers say the membership figure was used before Lyons ever became president, and maintain he was trying to compile a membership list and never misled the companies.

The judge ended court early Friday afternoon because Edwards became ill with the flu. Testimony resumed Tuesday, the day after the President's Day holiday.

Lyons also is scheduled for trial this spring on 54 federal charges of bank fraud, wire fraud, extortion and money laundering.

New Bethel Baptist to hold annual leadership observance

Special to THE CHRONICLE

The deacons, trustees and spouses of New Bethel Baptist Church will hold their 25th anniversary Leader Observance Feb. 21 at 4 p.m.

The Rev. Bobby Best of St. John CME Church will be the guest speaker.

Best was born in Wilson and attended public schools there.

He received his bachelor of science in business administration from UNC Chapel Hill and a master of divinity from Duke University, graduating cum laude.

He has extensive training in bereavement care and hospital visitation.

He is currently the Director of Evangelism, Missions and Human Concerns of the CME church. He is also associate dean of the Carolina Annual Conference Bishop's School for Ministers.

Prior to his assignment to St. John in 1996, Best served as pastor of Broomfield CME Church in Gastonia, North Carolina Missionary Temple CME Church in Raleigh and Brooklyn



Rev. Best

CME Church in Chessness, S.C.

Although Best has only been in the city three years, he is fast emerging as a community leader. He is married to the former Jacqueline Howard of Charlotte. The couple has one daughter Bridgett, 12, and a son Brandon, 17.

Others scheduled to appear on the program are presiding — Trustee Wesley Curtis; scripture — Diane Piggott; invocation — Trustee Gerald Pauling; welcome — Trustee James Brown; introduction of speaker — Rosetta Paul-

ing; recognition of visitors — Deacon Harold Easter and special honors and recognition — Trustee Carl Bankhead, Mildred Griffin and Deacon Douglas Joyner.

Remarks will be given by the Rev. Jerry Drayton.

The Leadership Observance was first sponsored by the deacons, trustee and spouses in 1975. The annual prayer breakfast led by the deaconess, trustee wives, deacons and trustees is the first program sponsored by an auxiliary each year.

The Leadership Observance is presented on the third Sunday in February and is designed to set the tone for leadership in the church for the new year. Guest ministers from sister churches and their congregations share in the observance. Members are recognized for their dedicated service and honored with plaques and certificates.

Monies raised during the observance are donated to the following church causes: building fund, 30 percent; youth council, 20 percent; van fund 10 percent; contingency, 20 percent and scholarship fund, 20 percent.

Macedonia to celebrate 67th anniversary

Special to THE CHRONICLE

Macedonia True Vine Pentecostal Holiness Church of God will celebrate its 67th anniversary throughout the February and March.

The celebration begins with Feb. 28 at 6 p.m. with "Sisters in the Name of Love," a gospel concert featuring a number of local women. The concert will feature Vickie Johnson Hicks, Patricia Green, Belinda Daniels, Billie Mason Todd, Gayle



Bishop Johnson

Couthen, Sharon Allen, LaKeshia Goldsmith, Twana Gilliam, Demetria Dillard and Carolyn Nap-

per.

The celebration continues March 7 at 6 p.m. with a worship service featuring the Rev. Joseph Samuels, of St. Stephens Baptist Church.

Services continue March 14 at 6 p.m. with a special service featuring Bishop Raymond H. Gardner of Waller Memorial TVPH of Martinsville, Va.

Macedonia is located at 500 Kinard St. The pastor is Apostle Sylvester D. Johnson.

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Lift Your Voice In The Chronicle



Pastor Byron Ingram and wife Co-Pastor Cheryl Ingram

Shekinah Glory Praise Center will celebrate their 6th Pastoral Anniversary of Pastor Byron Ingram and Co-Pastor Cheryl Ingram. The first service will be held on Sunday, February 21, 1999 at 4 p.m. with Pastor Essie McCullough and New Direction Movement Cathedral as the guest pastor and church. Our second service will be held on Sunday, February 28, 1999 at 4 p.m. with Pastor Aldine Ingram and Steadfast Apostolic Church of Christ as the guest pastor and church. Come in as we celebrate our love for our pastor.

542 North Trade Street
Winston-Salem, N.C.



Celebration of Black History Month

Remembering the life, ministry, and legacy of a great man...

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
"If a man has not found a cause to die for, he is not fit to live."

"As recipients of Grace, we are committed to being givers of Grace."

OUR CAUSE TO LIVE!

GRACE UNITED COMMUNITY CHURCH

"a non-traditional Baptist Church seeking to reach all people"

Dr. Joseph B. Parks, Senior Pastor

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Worship: 11:00 am Sundays Family Night and Word Study: 6:00 pm Wednesdays