

# Song of Solomon helps us appreciate marriage

**Lesson Scripture:** Song of Solomon 2:8-13; 7:10-12; 8:6-7.

**Lesson aims:** to describe the love Solomon and his Shulammitte bride had for each other, to recognize the symbolism that Jews and Christians share about God/Jesus and us, to understand and appreciate the sacredness of marriage, and to apply that knowledge to our relationships today.

**Background:** The Song of Solomon, sometimes called the Song of Songs and the Canticle of Canticles (lyrics), is a very controversial book. Its authorship is credited to King Solomon, but probably it is a compilation of poems by various people. The poems were accompanied with music. Some Jews and Christians view it as only an allegory of God's love for Israel and/or Jesus' love for the church. An allegory is a story in which people, things, and happenings have symbolic meanings.



Mildred Peppers  
Sunday School Lesson

a canticle divide it into songs instead of chapters. There are 13 canticles. Yes, you can see the symbolism, but don't stop there. The book contains no theological statements or revelations. It is romantic love celebrated by a man and a woman at its best!

Don't fold the paper, hear me out. For January and February our theme is "Lessons for Life." Don't we need to address this issue as well? Our Western society has created a monster that's about to swallow us up. God created humanity and

made us sexual beings. Surely, we ought to learn the proper way to handle that!

The book expresses marital love as ordained by God. This relationship lays the foundation for mutual fidelity, which is worth exploring.

**Lesson:** The Shulammitte girl opens the book longing for her bridegroom. She openly expresses her feelings for him. He in turn shares his admiration for her. They delight in each other, implying that each of them stands out in the crowd.

The bride (beloved) describes a pleasant springtime visit (verses 8-13) "that creates a picturesque succession - season, blossoms, singing, figs and vines in bloom" (The New Jerome Biblical Commentary).

The remainder of the chapter records a courtship where he complains that she is inaccessible. The beloved tells him that it isn't quite as it seems. Courtship definitely has its place!

Chapter 3 registers her troubled dream and Solomon's wedding procession. In Chapter 4, the king proposes and the bride accepts. She has another distressing dream (Chapter 5) and the bridegroom has left for reasons unknown.

In Chapter 6, he returns and praises his bride. When she speaks, her words are quite clear: "I belong to my lover and his desire is for me." The marriage is consummated. She goes on to say that her love is so great that she wants to display it publicly. That, however, is not acceptable unless it was for a brother (not incest).

As the book closes the imagery of the "seal" suggests a strong bond of love that jealousy and death can't break. True love, you see, cannot be extinguished or bought.

**Application:** God is love, no doubt about it! With that being true, how do we express our love for Him? It's really about relationships. In the Creation story, didn't He consecrate sexual activity? I know that some of you believe it exists only for procreation. Does the Bible really say that? Western society has given sensual love a bad name. We've made it dirty and twisted. There are two sets of rules, one for men and one for women. God has only one!

At one time, you didn't talk about it. The sexual revolution has at least created an environment to discuss the issue, but we've used that to sell just about everything and then some. Love between a man and a woman has been trivialized, and now it's simply a fleeting moment.

neighborhoods, states and nations to be better, we must start at home - the first community! We must go back to the old landmark. A mutually loving and nurturing relationship between a husband and wife must be in place. It's the core, but it can't be realized without God! Children learn what they see!

How can we love God without understanding what love is? My head may be in the clouds, but the evidence is all around. Nations are suspicious of one another; divorce is running wild. It's not about money (it shouldn't be). The television (boob tube) should not teach your children about love. That's your responsibility!

Community (church), you also have a role to play. Love instead of politicking; forgive instead of getting revenge; be loyal instead of following after every wind. Once we get the foundation right, we can make application in every segment of our lives. I trust that your valentine knows how much you love him or her!

## Church & State

Rev. Barry Lynn to discuss religion and politics at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Rev. Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, will present two programs. The Feb. 21 lecture, at 7 p.m., is titled "Religion and Politics in 2004: An Unholy Mix." The Feb. 22 sermon at 10:30 a.m. is "And the Church-State Wall Came Tumbling Down." Both events will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Winston-Salem, 4055 Robinhood Road, 659-0331.

Lynn has been executive director of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State since 1992. He is co-author of "The Right to Religious Liberty: The Basic ACLU Guide to Religious Rights." In addition to his work as an activist and lawyer in the civil liberties field, he is an ordained minister in the

United Church of Christ, offering him a unique perspective on church-state issues.

An accomplished speaker and lecturer, Lynn frequently appears on national news shows to offer analysis of First Amendment issues. He has appeared on ABC's "Nightline," CNN's

"Crossfire," CBS's "60 Minutes," CNN's "Larry King Live," and the national nightly news on NBC, CBS and ABC. He co-hosted a radio show with Pat Buchanan and currently does a weekly syndicated radio program, "Review of the News," with Col. Oliver North.

## Earl Carter and Shirley Dockery will be ordained

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Earl (Butch) Carter will be ordained as a deacon at United Progressive Church and Shirley Dockery, New Light Baptist Church, will also be ordained Feb. 15 at 4 p.m.

The speaker will be Pastor Sam Hickerson of New Light Baptist Church.

The host pastor is Rev. Lewis E. Devlin.

The church is at 1122 Quincy Caldwell Circle (East 12th Street and Jackson Street).

## Church continues weeklong celebration of church and pastoral anniversary

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The vision is still alive at St. Matthew Apostolic Temple Church of Jesus Christ Inc. We are continuing our weeklong celebration of our 23rd church and pastoral anniversary.

The special guests Feb. 12 at 7

p.m. will be Apostle Wallace Gaither and True Temple Holiness Apostolic Church.

The special guests Feb. 13 at 7 p.m. will be Pastor Samuel Cornelius and New Jerusalem Baptist Church.

The special guests Feb. 15 at 4 p.m. will be sister church Mt.

Sinai Apostle Church of Christ in God Bishop James C. Richardson Jr., Pastor and Presiding Bishop and Overseer of the ACGC

The church location is 3640 New Walkertown Road. Bishop Joseph P. Lowery is pastor. Evangelist Josephine Lowery is first lady.

## Calendar

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sponsor a Little Miss and Miss Unique Pageant March 27 at 3 p.m. If you have a daughter 7 to 16 years old who would like to shine, contact Priscilla at (336) 771-8715.

### Other

February services at Hanes Memorial CME  
Hanes Memorial CME

Church, 819 N. Highland Ave., will hold the following events:

- Feb. 14 - Annual Missionary Prayer Breakfast, special soloist Ralph Meadows, Second New Bethel Baptist Church, 9 a.m.
- Feb. 22 - Old-Fashion Gospel Song Fest - local gospel choirs and gospel soloists, 4 p.m.
- Feb. 29 - Missionary Sunday, 11 a.m.

Piney Grove School Age Program

The Piney Grove School Age Program is open and enrolling for after-school and summer session. Contact Cassandra Wright or call the church at 767-4044 for more information.

### Grandparents Bible study

Beginning Jan 8, United Progressive Baptist Church will have grandparents Bible study at 7 p.m. each Thursday. The church is at 1122 Quincy Caldwell Circle, at the corner of East 12th Street and Jackson Avenue. Come and enjoy.



## BLACK HISTORY MONTH HOW DO YOU CELEBRATE?



Martin Luther King, Jr. Rosa Parks. Jackie Robinson. What did they really teach us? That today, we're better than we ever thought we could be. BIPO honors civil rights heroes past and present during Black History Month. Their courage helped us change the way we look at the world - and ourselves - for the better. There are a lot of ways you can celebrate Black History Month. Just so long as you do.