



By Mrs. Bessie Wilbon

Lesson Background: The author of the Fourth Gospel, John the Apostle and brother of James, was excellently qualified to give us valuable insights into the life and ministry of Jesus. Scholars generally agree that this Gospel was the last of the four to be written.

John takes us back beyond history, back to the real beginning of all things. In so doing, he lays a ground work for Jesus' deity that is beyond challenge.

"In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made," (John 1:1-3).

The opening words of John's Gospel remind us of the opening words of Genesis, intentionally so, perhaps. Beginning. This is not to say that the Word came into existence at some remote time in the past. John wants us to understand that the Word existed in the eternity prior to the appearance of the physical world.

The Word was God. It is impossible to imagine a stronger affirmation of the deity of Christ than this. Any person who would deny the deity of Christ must at the same time deny the intent of verse 1.

"In Him was life; and the life was the light of men," (Vv. 4-5).

Not only did the Word live; He imparted life to all other living things. One of the greatest mysteries to scientists is the origin of life. No scientist has even come close to giving an adequate explanation of this mystery. Yet John gives us that answer very simply; "In Him was life." John then connects life and light. Clearly more than physical light is intended here. The word light is often used to indicate both intellectual and spiritual illumination. The Word does both. By creating man with mental faculties, the Word has provided for his intellectual illumination. By coming to live in the flesh, He provided spiritual illumination.

As light is often used in the figurative sense to designate good, so darkness is often used to designate evil. The latter part of verse five offers two translation possibilities: ("And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehend it not.") The verb translated comprehend may also be translated "overcome." One translation states that while the light shines in the darkness, yet the darkness cannot understand it. The other states that the darkness has never been able to overcome, or extinguish, the light Christ brought.

Both translations fit the context, and historically both have been demonstrated many times in the past. At times Jesus has certainly not been understood. Yet in spite of all kinds of violent attacks, the friends of darkness have never been able to extinguish the light.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," (v. 14).

In the simplest of language John expresses the most profound theological thought: the Word, who was God in every sense of the concept, became a man with all the limitations that this involved. We cannot hope to understand this, but our lack of ability to understand does not alter the fact.

The word translated dwelt suggests some interesting possibilities. Literally, it means to "live in a tent" or "tabernacle." Because a tent is usually a temporary dwelling, John's use of the term here means that the Word's residence in the flesh was only temporary. The term might also remind the Jews of the Old Testament tabernacle that symbolized God's physical presence among them.

The fact that Christ dwelt among men is a strong affirmation of the incarnation. Because He dwelt among them, the witnesses had an opportunity to see that He ate, drank, spoke, and worked as any other human being did. John speaks of Christ in this way when he refers to that "which we have heard" which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, (1 John 1:1).

We behold His glory. John now adds the fact that at the same time the Word became flesh He also shared the divine glory. This glory may have been demonstrated in several ways - in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His loving service to the needy. John also may have reference to Christ's transfiguration, (Matthew 17:1-9). In that experience Christ's face shone like the sun and His garments were as white as the light, impressive evidence of His divine glory.

Several implications flow from the fact that Christ came to earth to dwell among us. First, it indicates that our planet is under constant surveillance by God. His eye is always upon us. Second, it shows that God has concern for us - a concern so great that He sent His Son from the splendors of Heaven to visit us with His love. Finally, we need to understand that if God visited us once, He can do it again. His first coming was to bring salvation; the second will be to administer justice. Will we be as poorly prepared for the second coming as most of His people were for the first?

We cannot begin to understand the incarnation, yet alone explain it. Human reason is incapable of understanding how He who is divine and infinite could become human and limited. But even if we cannot understand it, yet we can believe it and appreciate it. What satisfaction there is in the fact that we have a Savior who has experienced life in the flesh with all of its pain and weaknesses! We do not pray to a remote God who has no empathy with our earthbound existence. We have not a high priest who "cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," (Hebrew 4:15). Because He did dwell in the flesh and suffer our infirmities with us, we can "come boldly unto the throne of grace" to obtain "mercy and find grace to help in time of need," (Hebrew 4:16).

In the light of the great amount of suffering and strife in the world, we may at times find it hard to believe that we live in a world that was designed not only to make life possible, but also to make life pleasant for our well-being.



The first sale transacted at South Boulevard Chrysler-Plymouth is commemorated by (l-r) dealership president Omar Leatherman, buyer Ella Hand with daughter Telia, and salesman Felix Otero. Mrs. Hand, business manager for Ferguson and Watt law firm, purchased a 1984 Chrysler LeBaron.

Second Black-Owned Automobile Dealership Opens In Charlotte

By Jalyne Strong
Post Staff Writer

Omar Leatherman, president of the recently opened South Boulevard Chrysler-Plymouth car dealership, has entered the status associated with Sam Johnson and Sam Johnson Lincoln-Mercury. Johnson was once Leatherman's mentor. It seems appropriate that Johnson became the first black man to own a car dealership in Charlotte and Leatherman is now the second.

Leatherman is proud to have gotten in on what he states is "the hottest selling franchise in the country." He is well versed in the Chrysler philosophy: "Make a good product. Charge a fair price to make sure you sell a lot. Give high quality service—fix it right the first time." "With this combination," assures Leatherman, "you're going to make an awful lot of money."

"An awful lot," Leatherman emphasizes and judging from his background, he's a man who ought to know. One could say that Leatherman is steeped in automobile industry experience.

He was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan. "It's kind of hard to grow up in Detroit and not be in the car business," he points out. "The industry there offered many job opportunities for blacks and paid well."

Leatherman earned a B.S. in business administration from Wayne State University in Detroit and then entered the college graduate training program of the Ford Motor Company. The job he received following the training program involved his visiting car dealers in Ohio and Pennsylvania selling Lincoln-Mercury cars and monitoring financial positions.

It wasn't long before Leatherman became interested in learning what it took to run a dealership and the possibility of owning one. "One day I heard through the company grapevine," remembers Leatherman, "that there was a black man who owned a dealership in St. Louis and also that he was about to open a second one in Charlotte, North Carolina." Leatherman sought out this man. He wanted to know more.

The man was Sam Johnson of Sam Johnson Lincoln-Mercury and presently also owner of Metro Lincoln-Mercury. "I moved my family 600 miles to Charlotte," says Leatherman, "and went to work for Johnson." He worked at Lincoln-Mercury for a few years before he set his sights on opening an auto leasing company.

Quickly Leatherman moved into a leasing franchise opening in 1979 a Hertz Rent-A-Car company.

Then came the expansion of Douglas Municipal Airport and rent-a-car concessions were being offered. Without missing a beat, Leatherman took on a partner, Nat Green, they bid for a concession and won. Together they closed a deal with Greyhound franchise and opened Greyhound Rent-A-Car at the airport. This business ran for two years until Greyhound sold the parent company. Leatherman and Green terminated their arrangement with Greyhound and turned around and re-established one with General Rent-A-Car. Their General Rent-A-Car business is now operating. "And doing well," adds Leatherman.

Leatherman's latest career move was determined when he received information pertaining to the Chrysler Corporation's wish to find qualified minorities for training programs that could lead to dealership ownership. "I was interested," admits Leatherman. He turned over the operation of the General Rent-A-Car company to Hardy Statz, a third partner and also the company's vice president and general manager. Arthur Jacoby,

president of FAB construction company is also a partner in the General auto renting company. Then Leatherman entered the Chrysler Corporation training program in May, 1984.

Under the guidance of Chrysler Corporation, he trained at Friendly Dodge in Charlotte where president Lee Laney became his second mentor. "From Laney I learned all about the automobile industry and car dealerships. He is the most successful dealer in the Southeast. He is the number one Dodge dealer in sales and profits," boasts Leatherman.

After six months of training, on November 1, 1984, Leatherman opened his dealership. He now sits comfortably in the presidential seat of the South Boulevard Chrysler-Plymouth dealership and projects, "The outlook is of a very good year ahead of me."

The first black man to own a car dealership in Charlotte says of Lea-

therman, "I think it's a fantastic opportunity for him. I believe he'll do quite well and the business is good for the community. Then adds Sam Johnson, recalling his impression of the young Leatherman who worked for him years ago, "I thought he had the ability, and, given the chance, he would do exactly what he's done."

Separated Women

WomanReach will sponsor "Alone Again," a weekly support group, on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. designed to explore the problems and resources of women who are newly separated from a relationship. This will be held at the WomanReach Center, facilitated by Ginny Sullivan and Gloria Cothart.

For more information and to register, call a WomanReach peer counselor at 334-3614 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

City Council To Fill Vacancies On Four Boards

The Charlotte City Council plans to fill eight vacancies on four boards and committees by March, 1985. The vacancies are as follows: (1) Zoning Board of Adjustments—Three positions for three-year terms. This position involves hearing appeals to the zoning ordinance or decisions of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Building Standards Department. Nominations will be made January 14, 1985. (2) Citizens Committee for Recycling—Three positions for two-year terms. This committee is concerned with encouraging recycling through awareness and public service programs. Nominations will be made February 10, 1985. (3) Insurance Advisory Committee—One position for a three-year term. Nominees must be an insurance company underwriter and should be able to provide advice in risk management and insurance matters to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Insurance and Risk Management Agency. Nominations will be made February 10, 1985. (4) Council on Aging—One position for a three-year term. Position involves advising local government on matters related to aging and the elderly. Nominations will be made March 10, 1985.

Some 300 local citizens provide voluntary service to City government on 40 different boards, commissions and committees. Interested persons should contact any member of the City Council. Application forms may be obtained from the Office of the City Clerk, City Hall, 600 East Trade St., telephone 336-2247.

PTL

A grand opening celebration for the opening of the 504-room world class Heritage Grand Hotel will be held Saturday, December 22, at the Heritage USA. The grand opening celebration will begin at 6 p.m. with an electric light parade proceeding from the Youth Chapel around Lake Heritage to the front of the Heritage Grand Hotel. Eighteen floats and several other events will add to the already existing beauty of Christmas City USA and the excitement of the evening. Della Reese will be the Grand Marshall of the parade.

Visitors and guests are welcome to join in this event. The hotel will be open for viewing.

When completed the PTL Partner Center will be the largest hotel complex in the Carolinas, housing an 11-acre hotel, shopping mall, cafeteria and convention center in a complex entirely enclosed and climate controlled.

**Happy Holidays
Coke is it!**

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