

Faith, works
inseparable

Sunday School Lesson

Devotional reading: Genesis 22:1-8.

Lesson scripture: James 2:14-26, 5:7-20.

Faith in God is absolutely essential, but a faith that is completely intellectual without any commitment to service is useless. As James puts it, faith without works is dead.

In the first few months of its existence, the church in Jerusalem certainly understood this. When it became obvious that many of the members were in need, "all that believed were together and had many things in common; and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men, as every man had need." Faith and works combined to see a problem and solve it.

Apparently things changed in the years that followed. If the people had continued to demonstrate their faith by their works, James would not have had to write the admonition that we find in today's lesson. We don't know why this change came about, but we can offer some possible reasons. Very often new converts have a zeal and enthusiasm for their faith that older members lack. As time passes, so does the zeal.

Perhaps the change came because the most zealous member of the Jerusalem church became imprisoned or had fled from Jerusalem to escape persecution. In any event, James thought it necessary to remind his reader whether in Jerusalem or among the "twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" that faith can not be separated from works.

The argument about whether we are saved by faith or good works has gone for centuries. Jesus had to face this in his ministry. Many of the Jewish leaders, especially the Pharisees, taught that one is saved by observing the law, including the countless regulations they added to the law of Moses. Often their concern for the law was a cover to hide their greed.

Several centuries later, some church officials restated the idea of salvations by works. They said a person could have his sins removed by paying money, a pilgrimage or doing an act of penance.

In truth, we are justified by faith, but faith cannot live alone. One is justified by faith and works.

Caldwell graduates

Mildred Feemster Caldwell recently received her Doctor of Divinity from Teamer School of Religion.

Caldwell is the daughter of the late Deacon James W. and the Rev. Irene Feemster. She

was educated in the public schools of Mecklenburg County. She continued her education at Central Piedmont Community College, A.O. Steele Bible Class of Johnson C. Smith University, Winston-Salem State University, and the James W. Teamer School of Religion where she earned a Bachelor of Theology degree.

Caldwell has been a member of the Fire Baptised Holiness Church of God for 15 years. She has served as a Sunday School superintendent, church clerk, secretary of Sisters of Charity Auxiliary, district president of the Sisters of Charity, secretary of the Finance Committee for the General Board, and Youth Congress Secretary.



Caldwell

Lone nominee ready for SBC

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

OKLAHOMA CITY — It will be a surprise if the Rev. Tom Elliff isn't voted president of the Southern Baptist Convention this week. It will also be a surprise if the day comes when he is no longer pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City.

Elliff says he knows God's call for him is to be pastor of First Southern.

"It just boils down to I'm here because I love serving him here and he's asked me to be here," he said.

Elliff is the lone nominee for president of the SBC, which began its convention Tuesday in

New Orleans. Some rivals rise on the convention floor, but Elliff has no organized opposition.

The Southern Baptist Convention is the organizational body for a denomination with 15.6 million members in about 40,000 churches.

Elliff, 52, said being elected during the convention in New Orleans would mean Southern Baptists are continuing a conservative resurgence that began more than a decade ago.

Elliff's church has 14,000 members on its roll and an average Sunday attendance of about 2,500. The church is becoming known for producing SBC presidents.

Elliff's brother-in-law, the Rev. Bailey Smith, now an evangelist in Atlanta, was elected president while pastor at First Southern in 1980 and 1981. Another former pastor, the Rev. Jimmy Draper, was elected president after he left Del City to lead a church in Texas.

Joe Cox has seen Elliff lead the congregation through a \$15 million construction debt that resulted when the church moved from Del City to an acreage in Oklahoma City.

"He's a man of character, to stay here and fight it (the debt) when most people would have taken something much easier," said Cox, a 25-year First Southern member and chair-

man of its board of deacons.

Elliff said he feels a mandate from God for him to be there.

"I love the people. I love Oklahoma City. I wake up, eat, sleep, live, breathe Oklahoma City," said Elliff, who celebrated 10 years as pastor there in February.

"But more than the city and more than the people, which I think is our greatest resource, more than this church, which loves me and I love them — I'm here because the Lord who loves me and the Lord I love has called me to be here," he said.

Cox said Elliff's focus on God and the Bible is what the congregation looks for in a pastor.

Will priests marry?

Catholic Church explores options of matrimony

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Frank Endres isn't much different from many other Catholics who have disagreed with certain rules of the church. But the one about celibacy chased him from the priesthood.

Endres turned in his collar in 1969 and married a former nun, but he never really stopped being a priest. He says once a priest, always a priest — whether or not he's on the altar.

"People mostly accept you for what you are," said Endres, a social worker at a mental health clinic and the Wyoming County Jail outside Buffalo. "Title and uniform are not as important as the vocation."

Like 10,000 other priests who resigned to marry between 1969 and 1975, Endres left not because he had given up on the Catholic Church, but because he had no longer wanted to be celibate.

With the shortage of priests reaching a crisis stage, the Buffalo Alliance for a Married Priesthood has promoted the idea of allowing their top clergy to get married and fulfill both desires.

"There are so many people out there who want to be priests but don't want to be celibate," Endres said Sunday. "It's the same as eating meat on Friday. It could be changed with the stroke of a pen."

Catholics are not supposed to eat meat on Friday's during Lent, the 40-day period before Easter. Priests have not been allowed to get married since 1139, when the church's Second Lateran Council made celibacy mandatory for them.

Among the 65 members in the alliance are Monsignor Jerome Sullivan and Monsignor Vincent Becker, both of whom were classmates of Endres in the seminary during the 1950s.

Becker helped organize the alliance after a parishioner asked for help on a college paper about priests and marriage. Already, Becker had experienced the problem as a missionary for 10 years in Bolivia.

"For several months, I was the only priest for 35,000 baptized Catholics," Becker said. "In South America, the crisis already exists."

According to the 1993 book, "Full Pews and Empty Altars," half of the world's priests will be 55 years or older by the year 2005 and only one in every eight priests will be 35 or younger. Catholics are expecting a 65 percent increase in parishioners during the same time period.

The Vatican Directory in 1988 said 10 percent of the U.S. churches and 43 percent of those worldwide were without pastors. Many believe the problem has worsened over the last eight years.

There are about 22,000 married former priests living in the United States, according to William J. Manseau, regional representative of the Core of Reserve Priests United For Service. There are at least 100,000 former priests who are married around the world.

The Catholic Church in recent years has battled the problem by taking into its priesthood former Episcopal, Polish National Catholic, Lutheran and Methodist clergy who are married.

"It's going to be necessitated," Endres said. "It has been just a Band-Aid for years, and the Band-Aid isn't working."

On the rebound



PHOTO/WALLACE DEESE JR.

Matthews-Murkland Presbyterian Church pastor Larry Hill (right) and NAACP national board chairman Myrlie Evers-Williams met with the media Sunday during Evers-Williams' tour of the destroyed sanctuary. Matthews-Murkland's congregation met for Sunday services as usual in its current sanctuary, which was undamaged. Authorities arrested a 13-year-old girl in connection with the torching of the old sanctuary.

Historic building destroyed, not faith

By Wallace Dees Jr.
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

"Lift Every Voice and Sing," was the hymn that was vocalized by the spiritually fulfilled congregation on Sunday during worship service.

With a part of their history burned to the ground last week by an arsonist, the church turned eyes on their future by observing Children's Day. Rev. Larry Hill, Pastor of

Matthews-Murkland said the fire was not going to stop this celebration. The youth choir was dressed in kente cloth.

"Good No Evil Can Destroy," Hill called out as he delivered the message to the overflowing crowd of 300. "Instead of burning a church, who ever is responsible for the fire might have just started a church" referring to the number of visitors, politicians, and family

members that came out for the morning service.

The overall atmosphere in the church was joyful and unified. "Some good will come out of this," said Walter J. Cuthbertson, a long time member and elder as he stood on the side porch of the present sanctuary looking out to the pile of ashes.

Matthews-Murkland moved into its present site in 1975 on

the same seven-acre site. The church was a historical landmark. The burned church represents the merger of Matthews Chapel and Murkland Presbyterian, both founded by former slaves.

The old wooden sanctuary which dated to 1903 was built by three black men, whose bodies lie in the church's cemetery in unmarked graves.

Eye On Gospel

Going for the gold: Is what Kirk Franklin and the Family member Jon Drummond hope to do at this summer's Olympic Games in Atlanta. Drummond is a sprinter when he is not singing with the family. At 26, he is ranked the third fastest man in the world in the 100 meters. His goal is to go down in history as a world record holder.

The world class sprinter, who runs for Nike International, sings tenor with Kirk Franklin and the Family. He and Franklin first met at a rehearsal at Texas Christian University in 1990. "He was playing piano," said Drummond. "We hit it off right away. It's been music ever since." When Franklin organized his backup ensemble in 1993, Drummond became the first official member. "I used to tell Kirk all the time," remembers Drummond,

"that as long as we separate God from what we do, there's no reason we won't be successful. Then as I became successful in track, he became successful in music. I figure since the album went gold, I'll win a gold medal."

Winans update: Last week we updated you on the doings of Marvin Winans, well, here's an update on the rest of the clan. Carvin Winans is working on a gospel video show called "Video Time." He is hosting the show with former Miss USA Carol Gist. The pilot aired last month on a Detroit NBC affiliate and they're currently negotiating to sell it as a 30-minute weekly broadcast. Meanwhile, Michael and his wife Regina just competed a run of the gospel play "Where Do We Go From Here?" which played mostly on the East Coast and in the mid-

west...Finally Ron Winans is keeping busy with the latest installment of his "Ron Winans Family & Friends IV" project which was recently released. He'll be making special appearances with the Family & Friends Choir. On a related note, BeBe Winans and Motown Records have parted company. Winans had been picked earlier this year to head up the label's gospel division.

Together as one? Picture this: The Mighty Clouds of Joy, Slim and the Supreme Angels and the Williams Brothers all sharing the same stage to honor the heritage of gospel music. Well, that just what happened in Atlanta on March 10 and is now being released on record to coincide with Black Music Month. The concert, billed as "the Gospel Super Bowl," was

recorded live and has been titled "Together As One: A Tribute to the Heritage of Quartet Music."

Briefly: Verity Records is commemorating Black Music Month with a gathering of its own. The label is gathering its roster of artists together for a night of gospel at the world famous Apollo in Harlem on June 23. Finally, word is that Karen Clark (of the Clark Sisters fame) is negotiating for a solo recording contract with Island Records.

This week's scripture: Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he goeth in the glory of his father with the holy angels. St Mark 8:38.