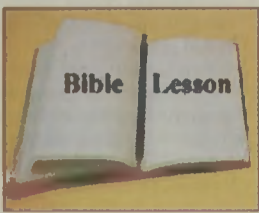


8 B

RELIGION

Life 1B



Where should I sit?

Luke 14:7-11

Proud are humbled (vv.7-9)

7. And he put forth a parable to which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them.

People are selecting their seats for the banquet just ahead. One wonders what goes through the Lord's mind as He observes them. Does He shake His head or even roll His eyes as He sees people poster for recognition? Does it grieve Him to observe how they step across one another in an attempt to appear more important than their counterparts? Perhaps He sighs as He recognizes that in order for His disciples to be effective they will have to change their way of thinking and develop a genuine humility in their hearts and lives.

Jesus thus tells a parable that illustrates the folly of pomposity. It is fairly easy to see how we find ourselves with the same attitudes at times.

8. When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him.

Imagine that you've heard that an important elected official is coming to town for an event followed by a meal. Somehow you assume that he will want you to be seated next to him at the head table. You put on your best clothes and proceed to make your way to the front. Moments later, his security detail comes and forcibly removes you from the building! This scenario is both frightening and humiliating.

Jesus teaches that we should not assume that we are the most honored guest or the most important person in any situation. How embarrassing it would be to have someone of an even higher status show up unexpectedly. The next verse illustrates the type of embarrassment that can come when we assume that we are more important than we truly are.

9. And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

One can picture that uncomfortable, awkward moment! Someone has assumed a place at the head

Please see WHERE/7B



PHOTO: CURTIS WILSON

Black United Methodist pastors from Western North Carolina and Atlanta gathered in Charlotte for a history making convocation.

Methodists make history

For first time, black ministers meet collectively

By Cheris F. Hodges
cheris.hodges@thecharlottepost.com

Black United Methodist pastors made history in Charlotte last weekend when they held their first convocation in western North Carolina.

The Rev. Dewey Smith, who works for the Western

North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church, said the convocation gave the pastors a chance to connect with one another.

"We really don't get a chance to spend a lot of time with each other. The mission is to connect with

each other as clergy and people of color," he said.

The three-day event featured speakers from Atlanta, Nashville, Tenn., and the Charlotte area. Smith said the pastors often focus on their individual ministries and growing their churches

that they neglect their "spiritual selves and our brothers," he said.

"It's a time that we're not only learning to build our church, but build ourselves as well," he said.

The Rev. Vance P. Ross, a

Please see BLACK7B

Assassination plea met with shock

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. —Religious broadcaster Pat Robertson suggested on-air that American operatives assassinate Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez to stop his country from becoming "a launching pad for communist infiltration and Muslim extremism."

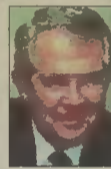
"We have the ability to take him out, and I think the time has come that we exercise that ability," Robertson said Monday on the Christian Broadcast Network's "The 700 Club."

"We don't need another \$200 billion war to get rid of one, you know, strong-arm dictator," he continued. "It's a whole lot easier to have some of

the covert operatives do the job and then get it over with."

Chavez has emerged as one of the most outspoken critics of President Bush, accusing the United States of conspiring to topple his government and possibly backing plots to assassinate him. U.S. officials have called the accusations ridiculous.

"You know, I don't know about this doctrine of assassination, but if he thinks we're trying to assassinate him, I think that we really ought to go ahead and do it," Robertson said. "It's a whole lot cheaper than starting a war ... and I



Robertson

don't think any oil shipments will stop."

Robertson, 75, founder of the Christian Coalition of America and a former presidential candidate, accused the United States of failing to act when Chavez was briefly overthrown in 2002.

Electronic pages and a message to a Robertson spokeswoman were not immediately returned Monday evening.

The Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America in Charlotte issued a statement Wednesday denouncing Robertson's statements.

"The way of Jesus is not the way of murder and violence," stated Gary

Please see TELEAVANGELIST/6B

Documents provide insight to town secret

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ALDERSON, W.Va. — Hundreds of old documents recently discovered in a historic church provide insight into black secret societies and paint a portrait of a town that defied segregation.

Kevin Jones, a parishioner of the 126-year-old Shiloh Baptist Church, is trying to preserve every document in plastic until historians can make sense of the books, ledgers, letters and pictures found in the upstairs hall.

Shiloh Baptist was organized in 1879, two years before Alderson became a

town. "This might have been the first African-American-built church in the area," Jones said.

A photo, circa 1921, shows 60 little boys and girls in the Sunday school class alone.

Documents found in the church show that Alderson's father, George Alderson, thumbed his nose at the rule against black landownership by selling the church lot to Shiloh's founders for \$5.

"There were rules against African-Americans congregating in groups larger than four," Jones said. "... But here,

the most prominent family in town made possible an African-American church, right in the center of town.

"We're not saying it was a perfect paradise. But there is evidence people lived and worked side-by-side. It was totally unlike the cities of the North, and totally unlike the plantations of the South."

Alderson, a depot along a major railroad route with The Greenbrier hotel and several coal mines nearby, was found to be a decent place for free blacks to settle as early as 1803, Jones said, "possibly because of the nature of Appalachia." "Even though the Alder-

sons themselves came with an entourage of slaves, this is not the kind of topography that lends itself to that," Jones said. "It literally was the frontier."

Settlers had to rely on each other, regardless of race.

Meanwhile, Alderson became a hub of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, a black secret society that helped foster the civil rights movement, documents show.

The Odd Fellows met secretly in an upper room in the church hall, where ledgers provide clues to

Please see OLD/6B



Winans' final CD feels God's power

Ron Winans, Family & Friends A Celebration Doreonne Stramler, producer Entheos Records



The liner notes for Ron Winans' final "Family & Friends" recording seem foreboding. Brother Marvin writes of a time when Ron was told he was dying and would never sing again. Ron proved this doctor wrong by surviving several years and recording a couple of projects. Unfortunately, Ron Winans died a few months after this release.

Still, the power of God is present throughout this recording. It's a praise and worship CD that celebrates God's limitless power of healing, uplifting and redemption.

Ron Winans certainly sang more on this CD than the others. You get the feeling he was ready for whatever his outcome would be when he sings "I Shall Not Die But Live." He sounds so at peace. On "My Help," he and sister Cece sing with conviction. Ron joins Shawn McLemore, Marcus Cole, Agee Smith and Rance Allen on the moving "I Made A Promise." All are good, but it's Allen who makes the song work. His voice is one of the most recognizable in gospel music and he makes any song his own.

As on the other recordings, guests contribute a lot of the vocals, which works well most of the time. The weakest offering is from the Katinas. "My Father's House" is OK but lacks power of the other numbers. Not so with Marvin and Gladys Knight. "Can't Help But Love Him" is better than anything Knight offered on her "One Voice" CD. Vanessa Bell Armstrong's performance on "Salvation Is Free" puts her back in the gospel diva category. She sings this song.

"A Celebration" is certainly not the best of this series, but it makes a good finale. Ron Winans will be missed for his work with his brothers and these fine recordings. May he rest in peace.

Ratings

- Classic: ★★★★★
- Excellent: ★★★★
- Good: ★★★
- Fair: ★★
- Why?: ★
- No stars - A mess

CHURCH NEWS

The deadline to have your church announcement added to the calendar is 5 p.m. on Fridays.

Ongoing

Chappell Memorial Baptist Church will open its Clothing Closet to families in need every first and third Saturday of the month.

Families can come to the church, which is located at 110 Bradford Drive, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

For more information, call (704) 394-5615. There is no charge for the clothes.

Plaza Baptist Church, located at 3321 The Plaza, will host an eight-week video study by Bruce Wilkinson designed to show how the Prayer of Jabez can release God's favor. The series begins nightly at 7 p.m. For more information, call (704) 334-3913.

August 26

Faith Bible Church presents Children Play-

ing in the Overflow Prayer Conference for children ages 8-12. The Fort Mill-based church will host the conference at 3605 Centre Circle Drive. The conference lasts for two days.

For information, call (803) 802-2565.

August 27

Gethsemane Baptist Church, 565 Jetton Street in Davidson, will host "05 Back 2 School Break-Out" festival from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the church. This year's themes are: "P.A.S.S. - Parents And Students Succeeding" and "The Paths to Success are God, Education and Fellowship."

There will be parent seminars, entertainment, games for kids, free food and school supplies. Free. For more details call (704) 892-1635.

August 28

Chappell Memorial will celebrate Men's Day with a guest speaker and concert at 4 p.m. "Men of Majesty: Serving Outside the Garden" will be this year's theme.

The event will feature some of the region's most dynamic male groups. Although the event is free, each program participant is asked to donate a canned good or non-perishable item to the church's Food Pantry.

Rev. Reginald Flynn, pastor of Temple Zion Baptist Church, in Columbia, S.C. and founder of the Nehemiah Project Inc. — a faith-based, non-profit, community renewal and housing development initiative — will serve as the 11 a.m. guest speaker. A special Men's Day Choir also will perform.

University City Church will host Community Empowerment Day at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. with Les Brown as the guest speaker. The event is free and open to the public. The church

is located at 7829 Old Concord Road. For more information, call (704) 716-3610 ext. 230.

September 21

Park Road Books Presents Bruce Feiler, author of "Where Was God Born" at Myers Park Baptist, 1931 Selwyn Avenue, at 7 p.m.

October 15

Gospel Music Day is back in the second year at Paramount's Carowinds. This year's festival includes artists Tonex, J Moss and Stephen Hurd. Grammy nominated artist and gospel sensation Tonex will headline this fall's event. Tonex's latest release "Out of the Box," has garnered a Grammy nomination as well as six 2005 Stellar Awards.

Also appearing is Detroit-raised artist J Moss whose album The J Moss Project garnered a Grammy nomination. Please see GOSPEL/6B

