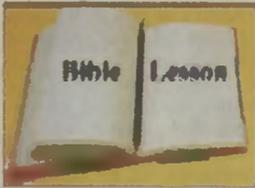


5B

RELIGION

Life 1B



Embodying truth

Titus 2: 1-10

Every child hates to hear, "Do as I say and not as I do."

It is usually a parent's desperate attempt to get his or her child to behave in an opposite manner than the parent does, and it usually fails. Children who see bad behavior in their parents take that as an excuse to behave badly themselves, regardless of what the parent says.

Imagine, too, how you would feel sitting in a church congregation listening to a pious-sounding murderer speaking about righteousness. We call that hypocrisy, and there is not much that turns people off more or faster than a dose of it.

Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus, stressing that, when it comes to selecting teachers, it is far more important to have teachers who exemplify what they teach than that they have teachers with long lists of academic qualifications. Academic training is valuable, but it is no substitute for men or women who embody the truth of the Christian life in the way they live their lives.

I. A Life Embodying Truth Is a Balanced Life (Titus 2:1-6)

Four times, in the second chapter of his letter to Titus, Paul uses a word translated as "sober" in the King James Version and "self-controlled" in the New International Version. The word indicates a kind of life that is not given to extremes in behavior or emotion.

Paul indicates to Titus that self-control would be open to excessive behavior and unbridled emotions. Such a person would be prone, perhaps, to drink too much and to give new Christians or unbelievers the impression that drunkenness is acceptable. An uncontrolled emotional outburst might teach an employee to be disrespectful to his or her boss or lead a spouse to believe that an outburst of rage toward his or her mate is acceptable.

On the other extreme, a life lacking self-control might be characterized by deep depression that could lead another to distrust God's power to give us victory over life's trials. An uncontrolled emotional state might foster a critical spirit that could cause dissension. A life having this extreme lack of self control might foster laziness or the belief that our good works do not matter to God.

However, neither of these extremes provide a truthful picture of the Christian life. A teacher who wishes to teach, by example must avoid these extremes in favor of a sober, balanced and self-controlled life, which is governed by God's truth.

II. A Life Embodying Truth is a Good Example

Please see EMBODYING/6B



PHOTO: JAMES BROWN

Mt. Moriah Primitive Baptist Church pastor Thomas Samuel and wife Juanita were guests of honor at a retirement celebration last week at Founders Hall.

A career of service

Mt. Moriah pastor Thomas Samuel retiring after 32 years

By Aisha Lide
THE CHARLOTTE POST

It's time for Pastor Thomas Samuel's grand finale.

Samuel is retiring after 32 years at Mt. Moriah Primitive Baptist Church. His last service will be held on Sunday. Among those expected to be in attendance is U.S. Mel Watt, who is expected to bring greetings.

After 49 years of service to the Lord's call, Samuel said he needs time to rest, write, and "be relieved." "I don't have any sadness about retiring," said Samuel.

What Samuel is most proud of is preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and promoting church growth. Under his leadership Mt. Moriah's congregation has increased from 400 to 700 members. The budget has also increased from approximately

\$50,000 from the time he arrived to \$500,000 yearly.

The church hosted a retirement banquet for Samuel on Feb. 17. The guest speaker was Rev. Clifford Jones from Friendship Baptist Church. "The celebration is for the purpose of telling him thank you," says trustee board member Bob Davis, who has been a member of Mt. Moriah for 75 of his 77 years. "He is a great man, he has been their whenever my family needed him in case of sickness or death."

Davis is not disappointed about the retirement. "He deserves it; he wore himself out in the service of the Lord," he said.

N.C. House Speaker Jim Black, state Rep. Pete Cunningham, Mecklenburg County Commissioner Norman Mitchell, Rev. Larry Covington

Pastor of Ebenezer United Church of Christ in Burlington were special guests. The presiding officer of the banquet was Rev. Gregory Moss Pastor of St. Paul Baptist Church.

Before Mt. Moriah, Samuel pastored at four Florida churches. He is president emeritus of the National Primitive Baptist Convention USA, past president of the Southeastern District Primitive Baptist Sunday School Convention of Mecklenburg, Cabarrus and Rowan counties. Samuel is currently the president of the North Carolina-Virginia Primitive Baptist State Convention.

In retirement, Samuel will still have duties to fulfill. He is leading a \$250,000 building expansion program for an educational facility in East Spencer.

High school Bible classes attracts ACLU

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WILMINGTON, N.C. — Gary Harris isn't seeking converts.

Still, the Bible is his business as he spends his days leading classes on its history at Laney and Hoggard high schools. The more students learn, the more complete an experience the Bible becomes, Harris said.

He's teaching, not preaching, however. The classes are academic courses open to the students who choose them, he said. His 8:30 a.m. New Testament class at Laney has barely an empty seat.

But recent inquiries from the American Civil Liberties Union have raised questions about whether

the classes and others like it at Ashley and New Hanover high schools violate the constitutional separation of church and state.

Is a class as secular as courts require if it says, for example, that the Bible's fulfilled prophecies give testimony to the fact of God's existence? What if local churches pay the

teachers' salaries? And what if only believers teach?

The civil rights group says only that it is gathering information. But its interest alone may bring significant changes as educators examine what the classes teach and, perhaps more importantly, who

See HIGH SCHOOL/6B

CANCELED TELEVISION

Debate over how media portrays Christianity

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Before memories fade about "The Book of Daniel" show, which NBC-TV canceled after only three weeks, it's worth pondering Hollywood's latest treatment of Jesus, Christians and the clergy.

Some liberal Episcopalians thought this drama (or was it satire?) might attract new churchgoers. Conservative Episcopalians said the series displayed how liberalism has corrupted their denomination. Some aimed boycotts at advertisers and NBC.

(Fresh from that fuss, NBC apparently dropped plans for Britney Spears to spoof Christian TV on "Will & Grace" by hosting a "Cruci-fix'n's" cooking show. This hilarity would



PHOTO: WHATSAYINTHESCRIPTURE.COM

have aired on Holy Thursday as Christians commemorate the Last Supper on the eve of Jesus' crucifixion.)

The show portrayed Episcopal priest Daniel and his family and flock. Plots involved Daniel's addiction to painkillers, his daughter's pot-dealing and arrest, his wife's alcohol dependence, his son's promiscuity, his bishop father's adultery, his in-laws' criminality and a Roman Catholic priest's mob ties.

Homosexual characters were prominent—not surprising since the show's creator is a gay who had been raised Catholic. Daniel seemed ineffectual and parishioners came across

Please see TV'S/7B



New Birth's coming of age

New Birth Total Praise Choir
A New Beginning
Kevin Bond, producer
EMI Gospel



This is a far cry better than New Birth's "Spirit & Truth" debut a few years ago. It gave you Vanessa Bell Armstrong singing the life out of "Suddenly" and not much else.

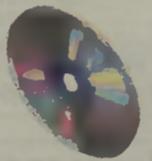
On "A New Beginning," director and producer Kevin Bond frees the choir from the stodgy sound of the first CD and makes them sound more like a mass choir. Song selection is much better and there seems to be more life and pep in the singing.

Yet, there seems to be something missing. There are 17 selections on this CD and seems like 50. At over 70 minutes in length, it feels like 120. There is more energy than the first, but some of the songs seem to go on and on. The fact that there are no solos add to the monotony.

There are also four sermonettes by Eddie Long, pastor of New Birth. Like rival pastor T.D. Jakes, Long has a shrill, screaming delivery and of course the sermonettes capture that style. All could be left for those tapes and CDs his church pushes. He gets credit for at least letting the choir grace the CDs cover with him. Jakes doesn't.

Anyway, there's no "Suddenly," but there are moments when this choir rocks. "It Shall Come To Pass" opens the CD with a bang. It's the kind of song that has made Bond one of the most sought-after producers in the gospel market. "Lord We Bless Your Name" really gets the choir pumping as well as the excellent backup band. "Be Healed" slows things down but the choir's harmony is spectacular.

There's more to like than not to like about this CD. This choir is headed in the right direction. The next CD should be a breakthrough.



Ratings

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

CHURCH NEWS

The deadline for church announcements added to the calendar is noon on Friday. Fax your announcements to (704) 342-2160 or e-mail cheris.hodges@thecharlottepost.com.

Ongoing

Grace Bible College will host winter classes at Grace Baptist Church on 1185 Little Rock Road in Newton through March 13. These classes may be taken for credit. For more information, call (828) 464-7055.

The Millions More Movement-Charlotte Inc. will move to its new location at Little Rock AME Zion Church, 401 N. McDowell St. The

group will meet the second and fourth Monday nights of the month for six months. For more information, call (704) 333-1690.

Church of the Holy Spirit Fellowship Inc of Winston-Salem and Carolinas Black Pride Movement headquartered in Charlotte have teamed up to create the

Pride Gospel Mass Choir, the Carolina's first ever gay-affirming/all-affirming gospel mass choir.

PGMC was envisioned by Pastor Roger Hayes of Church of the Holy Spirit Fellowship

Inc. This vision involved creating an outlet for gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender and gay-friendly individuals to worship, inspire & uplift through song and praise arts.

PGMC is seeking sopranos, altos, tenors, baritones, basses, musicians of all instruments, songwriters, poets, praise dancers and mime performers.

Call Pastor Roger Hayes at (336) 575-6205 or chsncc@earthlink.net

www.churchoftheholyspiritfellowshipnc.com
February 24
Rock Hill AME Zion Church of Concord will

host a concert at Barber-Scotia College Chapel, located at 149 Carrabus Way in Concord. For more information, call (704) 492-4615.

February 25

Aging Out Ministry of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church will host a workshop for ministers who care for youth who have aged out of the foster care system so that they can become mentors. The workshop will be held at the church from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in room 103. For more information, call (704) 492-0392.

February 26

Please see ELLERBE/6B