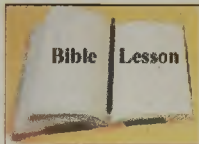


5 B

RELIGION



Love above all

1 Corinthians 12

Lesson Corinthians 13 is a key part of Paul's division to the problems of a divided church. Up to this point in the letter, he has discussed several serious issues that were points of conflict for the Corinthian church. These ranged from sectarianism, to sexual sin, to lawsuits among believers, to divorce, to Christian liberties, to propriety in worship.

Chapter 12 begins a long section on the pride and arrogance that had entered the church through, ironically, the use of spiritual gifts. That discussion continues into chapter 14, but Paul pauses to give the short answer to all the questions thus far: love. Love for one another, properly understood, will put everything into perspective. Love will unify the church and empower believers to glorify Christ together.

The Preeminence of Love (1 Cor 13:1-3)

1. Why is it important to study 1 Corinthians 13 in the context of spiritual gifts?

Often, this passage is studied independently. Many sermons have been preached just on this passage of scripture. However, in order to understand the true mean of 1 Corinthians 13, we must understand the context of this scripture.

Paul was answering questions to the church at Corinth concerning spiritual gifts. In chapter 12, he describes the different types of spiritual gifts and their uses in the body of Christ. Chapter 13 focuses on love, which is greater than any spiritual gift from God. Verse 31 of chapter 12 implies that there were some envy in the Corinthian church concerning spiritual gifts. Paul contrasts the gift of tongues with the gift of prophecy in chapter 14, which indicates that the gift of tongues was a popular gift.

2 How did Paul view those who had spectacular spiritual gifts but did not have love (v. 2-3)?

Everyone who is in the body of Christ has at least one spiritual gift. Ideally, Christians will use that gift to glorify God and advance His kingdom. However, there are some individuals who use their gift(s) to gain glory from other people. Some use their gift for personal gain instead of advancing God's kingdom.

Paul's point in verses 2 and 3 is that without love, a spiritual gift is meaningless. Whatever we do in this life, we need to do it because we love God. And if we love God, then we will love other people as well. Our gifts are meant to help lost souls find Jesus Christ. It is important that we let God change our hearts so that we can do everything in love.

The Performance of Love (1 Cor. 13:4-7)

Please see THE8B

'Free' to sing the Word

Immersion in music helps Sharrond King as gospel artist



PHOTO WADE NASH

Sharrond King's latest CD sends a message of salvation and freedom.

By Cheris F. Hodges

When gospel singer Sharrond King takes the stage to sing, she's offering the word of God for all to hear.

"I've been singing for a very long time," she said. "Music of all kinds was created by God."

King hopes the success of her first disc, "Dedicated," which peaked on the Billboard Gospel charts at num-

ber nine, will help her continue to spread the word with a new CD "Feel'n Free."

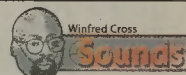
"With so much tragedy going on, people are in bondage, whether it is financial bondage or habits that they are caught up in or peer pressure for the youth," King said. "With this project, we deliver a message of freedom of deliverance in Christ so that people can just be set free."

King has been singing nearly all of

her life

Born and raised in Marianna, Ark., King began singing as a 4-year-old in her family gospel group, the Evening Stars. As a young student King joined the church choir, school talent shows and music showcases. In high school, she played in the Lee High School marching and concert band, (clarinet and bari-sax) and concert choir.

Please see GOSPEL/6B



Cole's hip old school plays well on debut

Marcus Cole Write My Song Luther "Mans" Hanes, producer Pure Gospel



Cece Winans is serious about her gospel label. She won a Grammy last year for "Purify" and has since been busy signing new artists.

Marcus Cole is Winans' latest find. Cole was once a member of Commissioned (post-Fred Hammond and Michael Brooks) which should give you a good indication as to what's on this CD. Cole's sound is steeped in Commissioned. It's hip enough for younger folks but older listeners will enjoy as well.

Cole's voice is nothing spectacular, yet very enjoyable. He never tries to do too much. He's certainly emotional, but doesn't go into screaming fits. I'd say he's between a true gospel singer and a Contemporary Christian artist.

Cole works well with the engaging material. All songs lean heavily toward contemporary gospel - nearly R&B. Cole co-wrote nearly each song, primarily with producer Luther "Mans" Hanes. He opens with the greasy "That's Alright (Cause I Got You)," which owes more to Al Green than André Crouch. "The Lord Has Been Good" was written by producer Hanes but sounds a lot like Hammond's work. Kayla Parker joins Cole on "Finally." It's sounds much like Parker's writing, but she didn't write a word.

My favorite song is "Remember To Breathe." It's one of those life-affirming songs that speaks to the heart. The chorus says simply "You have what you need inside/And you are still alive/Remember to breathe." Sometimes the most powerful message can be expressed in the simplest words.

Cole's solo effort is worthy of a serious listen. He's a talented singer and writer who looks to have a great future as a solo artist.



MARCUS COLE

Ratings

Table with 2 columns: Rating (Classic, Excellent, Good, Fair, Why?, No stars - A mess) and corresponding star icons.

Please see CLERIC/6B

State probes landlord's 'God test for tenants'

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEWARK, N.J. — The way Joe Fabics sees it, he has the right to choose who lives under his roof with him. His choice: God-fearing Christians.

But state officials are investigating whether Fabics is violating housing discrimination laws by asking tenants in his New Brunswick house to sign leases with phrases such as, "This is a Christian household" and "If you hate God, do not move in."

"I try to tell people to believe in God and the Ten Commandments, not the desecration of today's teachings," he said. "I'm just telling them that this is a Christian household and that if they don't believe in God, they will feel uncomfortable. Most people understand that and don't try to push their way in. This is not communism."

But it might be discrimination, according to state officials. New Jersey law "makes it unlawful to refuse to rent,

show or sell property based on a person's race, creed, color" or many other factors.

It allows landlords to have prospective tenants fill out applications, but they cannot include any reference to factors including religion.

Frank Vespa-Papaleo, director of New Jersey's Division on Civil Rights, would not say if Fabics appears to have violated the law, saying his office has just begun looking into the matter.

But in general terms, he

said, "It is a clear violation of state and federal housing laws to deny rentals to individuals of one religion or another, or to require that people be of a particular religion."

Fabics insists that because he lives in the two-family house, along with four tenants, his building is an owner-occupied dwelling and he can legally rent — or not rent — to whomever he chooses.

"I don't want people telling Please see LANDLORD'S/7B

Religious groups build attacks on abortion rights

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATHENS, Greece — Famed for its human rights work, Amnesty International is under siege from religious groups outraged by a proposal that would expand Amnesty's mandate to include supporting access to abortion in cases such as sexual violence.

A small but growing band of anti-abortion campaigners and Roman Catholic clerics —

including some who have backed Amnesty's activities in the past — claim the Nobel Prize-winning group is drifting away from its principles of unbiased advocacy.

They have threatened to pull away members and donations, and have called for a flood of protest letters to Amnesty offices — the same strategy Amnesty uses to pressure for the release of political prisoners and others.

Amnesty officials note that any decision is still more than a year away at the earliest, and defend their right to debate, abortion and birth control within the context of women's rights.

Top Amnesty officials were unavailable for interviews, but the group released a statement from its London headquarters saying the group "does not make policy according to the ebbs and

flows of external pressure."

It's unclear how deeply the anti-abortion factions could punish Amnesty. But religious groups have long been a pillar of the organization, which was founded in 1961 by a Catholic lawyer in Britain and now has more than 1.8 million members and many other supporters around the world. Its work to free people held by repressive regimes

Please see CLERIC/6B

CHURCH NEWS

The deadline for announcements is 12 p.m. Friday. Fax The Post (704) 342-2160 or e-mail cheris.hodges@thecharlottepost.com. Please put "church news" in the subject line.

August 4

Overflow Ministries will host a two night revival at Church Rock of the Kingdom, located at 6640 Suite A at Hickory Grove Business Park on W.T. Harris Blvd.

Services begin at 7 p.m. For more information, call (704) 605-7022.

August 5

The MetroLina Baptist Association will host a Women Reaching Women Conference at Carmel Baptist Church, 1145 Fiveville-Mathews Road. For more information, call (704) 847-8575.

Trinity Park will host its annual Community Fish Fry/Health Fair at 10 a.m. The church is located at 9115 Trinity Park Road.

August 6

Elder Felicia McCoy of Greater Bethany

Holiness Church in Philadelphia will be special guest psalmist during the Sunday Worship Celebration at Immanuel Christian Fellowship in Huntersville. Service location: Huntersville Arts & Cultural Center, 109 S. Old Statesville Road at intersection of Gilead Road. For more information, call (704) 785-4016 or web site: www.jtwministries.org.

Next Level Ministries will hold its first service at 8 a.m. at A.E. Grier and Sons Funeral Service, located at 2301 Statesville Ave.

August 7

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church will have its annual revival through August 11. Services begin nightly at 7:30 p.m., with the Rev. Montel Burton as speaker for the week. The church is located at 517 Baldwin Ave.

August 12

Cornelius Parks and Recreation Department will host its third annual gospel fest at Smithville Park. Tonya Rivens of Fraise 100.9

Please see VOICES/6B