

5B

RELIGION

Life 1B



The book of Judges

LESSON BACKGROUND
The book of Judges records the history of Israel from the time of Joshua's death until the time of Samuel, Israel's last judge (see 1

Samuel 7:15). This is roughly the time period 1400-1050 BC. During this time period, Israel had no king but was instead guided by judges. Judges were men and women who arose provisionally in times of national crisis to deliver the nation. They seemed to be endowed with the Spirit of God in a special way (at least some of them). The judges were a colorful cast of characters, including the woman-warrior Deborah, the fleece-man Gideon, the left-handed assassin Ehud, and the ancient "superman" Samson.

The judges of Israel served several functions. At times they were judicial arbiters. More often they were national deliverers, frequently as military leaders. Judges were not like kings in that there was no hereditary succession. The one son of a judge who tried to succeed his father in this manner failed (Abimelech, son of Gideon; Judges 9).

Furthermore, the judges of Israel did not function like kings by imposing taxes or negotiating treaties with other nations—functions expected of kings. Israel's judges had no standing army but relied on the tribal leaders of Israel to provide men when military action was necessary. The judges did not have grand palaces or courtiers. They were seen as regular citizens with extraordinary responsibilities.

The period of the judges is in many ways the record of Israel's "Dark Ages." The Israelites had become a settled nation, living in cities and villages. They were farmers, not nomadic shepherds like the patriarchs. Yet this is a time of crisis between faith and culture, between covenant loyalty and the enticing sins of the Canaanites.

Chapter 2 gives a preview of the book and outlines a cycle that is repeated many times in the period before Israel has a king. The cycle is tragically repetitive: apostasy leads to crisis, which leads to repentance, which leads to deliverance, which drifts back to apostasy. The verdict of the book of Judges is that this was a time of moral chaos. "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).

TODAY'S AIM

Facts: to examine how God raised up leaders to meet the need of His people at every crucial moment in their history.

Principle: to show that God raises up the right people at the right times to do His work in this world.

Application: to demonstrate that when we turn away from

Please see JUDGES/7B

Strengthening ties that bind

Author's goal is to help produce long-lasting marriages

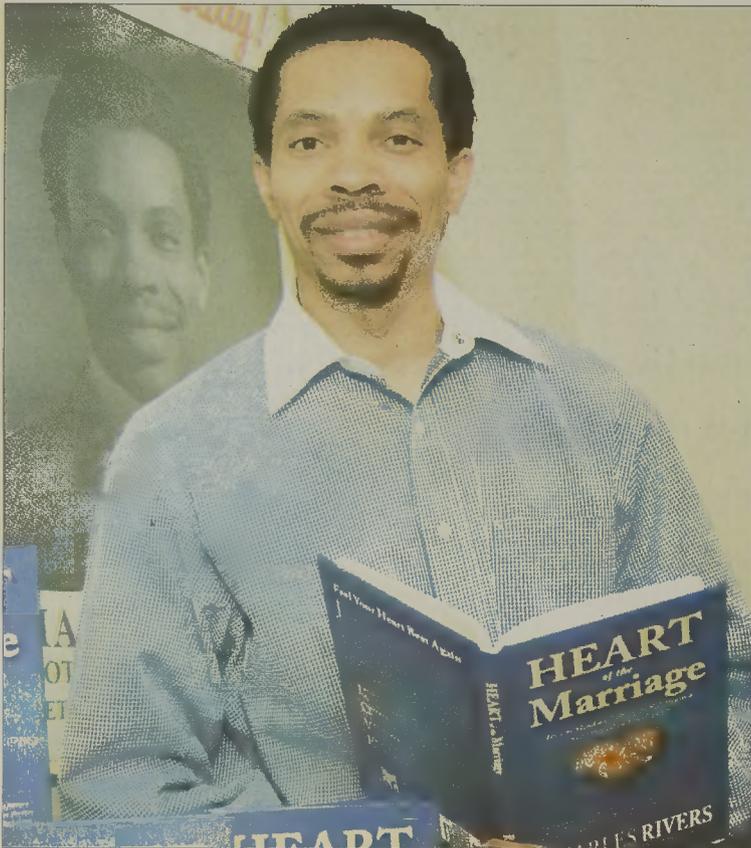


PHOTO: CALVIN FERGUSON

Charles Rivers' new book is all about having a Christ centered marriage without driving your partner away.

By Cheris F. Hodges
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Charles Rivers wants to save your marriage.

With his new book, "Heart of The Marriage," Rivers lays out how to have a Christ-centered union without judging your spouse who may not have the same type of relationship with God.

"The religious audience has a higher divorce rate," Rivers said. "As soon as someone finds God, (he or she) tries to remake their spouse."

In the book, Rivers teaches couples how to LOVE. Leave - learn how to jointly leave what was self-centered about your relationship in order to achieve a Christ-centered marriage.

Observe - learn how to observe using your five senses, your spouse's wants, needs and desires of the heart. Volunteer - learn how to cater to your spouse's desires of the heart while avoiding the pitfalls that recreate past hurt and pains. Evolve

- learn how to evolve into a more loving prosperous relationship because you dared to venture on the journey called love.

"I show couples how to attain the Agape level of love and live marriages according to God's will," Rivers said.

He said people often think everything they had prior to finding God is dirty and that sometimes includes

Please see AUTHOR'S/6B



V3 trio a SO-SO effort

V3
Produced by
Doubledutch
EMI Gospel



There are several female gospel trios and quartets that sound as if they are striving to be the next Destiny's Child, only singing for the Lord.

Add V3 to that growing group. These women - Shelley, La'loya and Sacha - are pretty and create tight, liting harmony, but possess little of the emotional fire that makes gospel, well, gospel.

That's not surprising. As much as artists sing about leaving the secular behind, gospel music inches closer every year to vanilla urban - not the earthy stuff that can still send chills.

It's not that V3 isn't trying. There are moments when things start to smolder. "I Need You," "Irreplaceable" and even the wispy "Thank You" all start to gather steam, but never really reach a boiling point.

However, there's a lot that shouldn't be here at all. "Take Me There" gives shout outs to the "ATL." On "Have You Ever," the group is a bit too seductive vocally for my tastes. "Let Go" sounds as if the women are trying to start a party.

The lyrics don't help much. This is more "message music" than gospel. It wouldn't take much to make this a pop urban CD. You don't hear Jesus, Lord or God much. There are a lot of ambiguous references to higher forces, morality and the like, but not often enough.

For those who like gospel lite, this may be your ticket. You could easily play this CD and casual listeners couldn't tell this is a gospel CD. That's exactly why this CD misses the mark.

NYC priest gets prison for thefts from his parish

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK—An apologetic Roman Catholic priest was sentenced to prison for stealing more than \$800,000 from his parish to finance vacations, country clubs and fancy clothes.

"I am truly, truly sorry for what has taken place," Monsignor John Woolsey said Friday before a judge sentenced him to one to four years in prison. "I used money to which I had no right. I am deeply, deeply sorry for my conduct."

Woolsey, 68, who was pastor of the

Church of Saint John the Martyr, pleaded guilty to grand larceny in May in return for the sentence. He could have gotten up to 15 years in prison if convicted and will be eligible for parole in one year.

Assistant District Attorney Matthew Amatruda said Woolsey spent the money on luxuries for himself, including expensive watches, trips to Europe, golfing vacations, fancy clothes and cosmetic dentistry. Woolsey doctored church records to hide what he had stolen, the prosecutor said.

State Supreme Court Justice Bruce Allen received dozens of letters on behalf of Woolsey, which he said he considered in deciding the sentence.

One letter, signed by Cardinal Edward Egan, asked that when Allen sentenced Woolsey, he "take into consideration the more than 40 years of service to others that Monsignor has given as a priest of the Archdiocese of New York."

Woolsey's attorney, Nicholas DeFeis

Please see PRIEST/7B

Woman hired to cleanse spirits from dwellings

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RICHMOND, Va. — Some people would say B.J. Wall is a psychic, but she calls herself a communicator.

Wall says she sees and talks with spirits.

Real-estate agents call her to cleanse spirits from houses that won't sell, by homeowners who see, hear or sense

strange things, or by people whose dogs bark incessantly for no apparent reason.

The problem is usually stuck spirits, said Wall, a Henrico County resident.

"I get them to move on I look at them and I talk to them," she said. "It's like having a sixth sense. I have always been able to see

them"

Animals can perceive spirits as well, she said. That's why they behave strangely at times.

Wall said stuck spirits might have guilt or anger, she said. It could be unfinished business. Sometimes they are just lost, she said.

"I gently move them out."

she said. "I do it with love, always with love."

And where do they go?

Some people call it heaven, Wall said. "It is a place to rest, have fun and understand what it is all about. No matter if the spirit is 5, 50 or 500, they want to understand what that (life) was all about."

Please see HIRED/8B



Ratings

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

CHURCH NEWS

The deadline for the calendar is noon Fridays. Fax announcements to (704) 342-2160 or e-mail cheris.hodges@thecharlottepost.com. Please put "church news" in the subject line.

Ongoing

We Empower Women For Life At Women of The Harvest Bible Study Wednesdays at 6 p.m. at 6636 Suite L Hickory Grove Business Park.

September 28

Nazareth Primitive Baptist Church, 2230

Bancroft St., will host its Jubilee/Homecoming 2006 through September 28. For more information, call (704) 525-6433.

Greater Gethsemane AME Zion Church, 531 Campus St., will host its homecoming and revival services, celebrating 134 years of Christian service. Revival runs through Sept. 28.

September 29

The Southwestern North Carolina District of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas will host a one-night back to

school revival. The event begins at 7 p.m. and will be held at St. Matthew FBH Church, located at 205 Nat Barber St., Gastonia. For information, call (704) 867-0701.

September 30

Calvary Church of Nazarene will present a full length drama and dinner theatre at 5 p.m. For more information and tickets, call (704) 536-6485.

October 1

Youth Missionary Society of Myers Taberna-

de AME Zion Church, 509 Cherry St., invites youth choirs, soloists, liturgical dance and other Christian performers to a "Sharing Our Faith" program at 3 p.m. This program is being held to conclude the Victorious Living Through Evangelism Weekend Celebration. For information, call (704) 222-6408 or (704) 391-5580.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 3001 Beatties Ford Road, will host the Harvest

Please see HARVEST/6B