

4B

RELIGION

Life 1B



The mind of Christ (Philippians 2:1-5)

1. Why did Paul pose rhetorical questions to the Philippians (Philippians 2:1)?

Paul begins this section with four rhetorical if-statements. These are rhetorical in the sense that Paul does not question whether these things are true but wants his readers to ponder them for a moment. Can we find consolation (or encouragement) in knowing Christ? Yes. Can we find comfort in living a life of love? Yes. Can we find sweet fellowship through the Holy Spirit with God and other believers? Yes.

His presence is a common bond among all believers, which certainly ought to have a unifying effect in any church. It is difficult to comprehend church fights when each member claims to be a child of God. The Holy Spirit promotes unity and fellowship instead. They also had a sensitivity to the needs and hurts of others and compassion for them in times of sorrow. This is the meaning of "bowels and mercies."

2. What were the things Paul wished to be true of the Philippians so that he would have joy in them (v. 2)?

Paul is hundreds of miles away from his beloved Philippi brothers and sisters. But there is still something they can do to bring him great joy. Paul's claim was that if the Philippians believers acted a certain way, he would be filled with joy. Because of the unity among believers that should be inherent in their position in Christ, four things should be true. They should be like-minded (thinking in a similar vein), consistently loving (showing the mind of Christ, which Paul was about to explain), in one accord (united in spirit and attitude), and of one mind (sharing the same purpose of living for Christ).

3. What kinds of attitudes are referred to by "strife" and "vainglory" (v. 3)?

Why do we do the things we do? Almost any action has an underlying motivation. Why do we mow our lawns? One man does it because he loves things to be neat and tidy. Another man does it because he is afraid his neighbors will speak negatively of him if his home looks unkempt. A third man does it because that's the way his dad taught him, and he still wants to do things to please his father.

Paul uses the words strife and vainglory to describe improper motives. Selfish recognition should never be the motivation for anything a believer does. A self-centered attitude must have arisen among some of the Philippians believers, so Paul pointed out very succinctly what is wrong about that and what should

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Faith is NFL star's goal

Shaun Alexander's autobiography is a lesson in humility

By Cheris F. Hodges
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In a world where professional athletes make headlines for all the wrong reasons, Seattle Seahawks' running back Shaun Alexander is often overlooked.

Last year, he authored a book chronicling his Christianity and success in sports. Maybe because he wasn't calling out teammates, like the Dallas Cowboys' Terrell Owens touted autobiography, or recounting wild sexcapades that people weren't interested in.

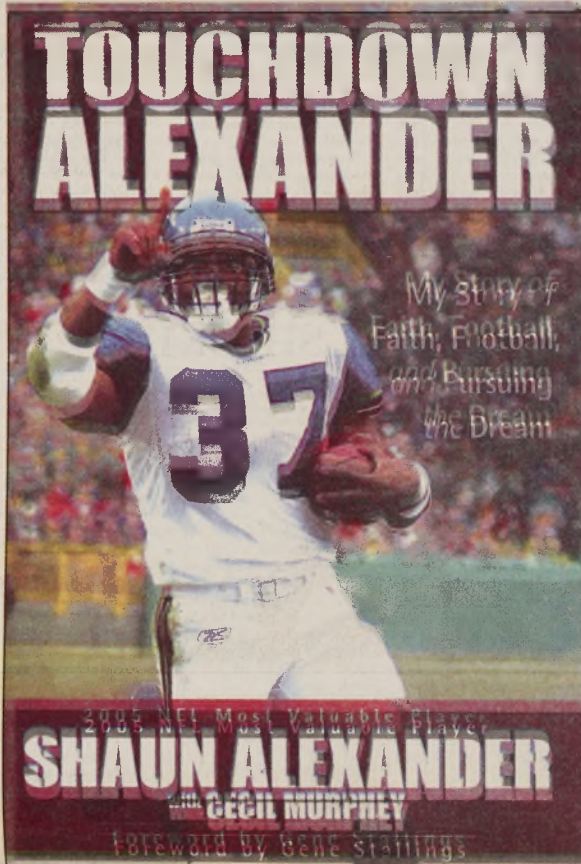
That's a shame. "Touchdown Alexander" is a story that should be shared with sons and daughters.

Alexander isn't cocky and doesn't define himself by what he does. As a child born into a single-parent family, Alexander's foundation helps navigate the tough times.

Unlike Keyshawn Johnson's autobiography and Terrell Owens' two autobiographies, Alexander's book has substance. He decided to remain a virgin until marriage, puts God above touchdowns and follows the Bible. Alexander takes care of his family and signs his autographs with a Bible verse. Psalm 37:4 "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart."

It's a shame this book went relatively unnoticed. I didn't see NFL Network do a segment on Alexander's book. They did poke fun at Owens' book for weeks and weeks. When people talk about what's wrong with athletes, people like Alexander are ignored. His book is spiritual and moving. It should be required reading for

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Church worker accused of lying under oath may get probation

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A church office worker has pleaded guilty to nine counts of lying under oath to a federal grand jury investigating tax fraud allegations at Macedonia Baptist Church.

Federal prosecutors have agreed to recommend that Veronica Briscoe, 43, get probation instead of prison time. "Ms. Briscoe's perjury did-

n't adversely affect our ability to conduct the investigation," Assistant U.S. Attorney David Brown said. "It is the government's position that Ms. Briscoe is as much a victim as many other folks defrauded by John Walker."

The Rev. John Henry Walker is accused of failing to report thousands of dollars of taxable income. He pleaded guilty last month to tax eva-

sion, bank fraud and lying to federal authorities.

A judge told the 48-year-old minister he would probably get prison time.

Federal prosecutors said Walker used his Charlotte church's credit card to pay for erectile dysfunction medication and hotel visits with female parishioners.

He failed to report more than \$750,000 of income

between 1998 and 2004 and lied on loan applications to buy a \$46,000 Lexus, a \$62,000 Mercedes and a 5,300-square-foot home, prosecutors said.

Walker earlier this month asked his congregation to forgive him, which they did and voted to keep the embattled reverend at the head of the church.

Museum touts Muslim culture in Bible Belt Mississippi

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JACKSON, Miss. — This mid-sized Southern city with its thriving Baptist, Methodist and Catholic churches may seem an unlikely home for one of the only museums in the United States devoted entirely to Muslim culture.

Still, the International Museum of Muslim Culture opened in April 2001, an attempt by organizers to

educate their churchgoing neighbors about a faith that many viewed as mysterious, possibly violent.

The museum is right at home in Jackson's downtown art district, which continues to host the international ballet competition every four years and, for several years, was home to traveling exhibitions of culture and art treasures from around the world.

Since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, museum executive director Okolo Rashid said the project in Mississippi has taken on added significance, particularly since many people have serious misconceptions about Muslims and their culture.

"And, of course, after 9/11 and even prior to that, the whole thing about terrorism—that Muslims are terrorists and Muslims are vio-

lent—and really not understanding any of the contributions or the significant influence that Muslims have had on the Western world," Rashid said.

The museum was born of an idea to create a companion to the "Majesty of Spain" exhibition—featuring works from the Prado and other prominent museums—that was showing at the Missis-

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Atlanta rappers take crunk to pulpit

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA—Heavy bass beats echo through the church as youngsters rush down the sanctuary aisles. Colorful stage lights spin around overhead as the eager fans start screaming, "JESUS, JESUS, JESUS!"

When the sextet Dem Unknown WarriorZ appears up front, the music and the fans go quiet. Group leader Bennie "Preacha" Foster asks the crowd of about 2,000 to first "give God the praise." Then the beat returns even louder than before.

This high-energy act that could stand as the headliner at any nightclub is instead performing its own religion-infused version of "crunk" hip hop at various churches in the Atlanta area.

"We're fishing," Foster said after the performance at Divine Faith Ministries in suburban Jonesboro. "The bait youngsters are eating is hip hop. So we take that music, dice it up, we put some Jesus flavor to it and save souls in Jesus' name. That's how we do it."

To its fans, crunk music, with its electronic drums and synthesized brass instruments, generates excitement akin to a religious experience. But the genre—most often associated with R-rated chants by hip-hop artists—is seldom heard in churches.

Crunk became popular through Southern-based producer Lil Jon, who is known for his energetic trademark shouts and raunchy hit singles, "Get Low" and "Snap Yo Fingers." "I respect Lil Jon as a producer," Foster said. "But we switch up the message with the thumping beat they recognize. We present ourselves in a hip-hop manner, so youths can have something they can relate to."

Dem Unknown WarriorZ first came together in 2001 through Foster's NowFaith International Ministries. They came up with the group name when a fan called them Christ's warriors, who aren't concerned about receiving recognition for their good deeds.

Their unorthodox approach isn't always a hit.

With distinctive baggy clothing, long shiny chains and Foster's mouth full of gold teeth, the group members are often mistaken for thugs.

After group member Greg Taylor posted a performance of their song "Walks Down" on the Internet video sharing site YouTube in June, their single received over 23,500 hits—and mostly negative reviews.

Some viewers said they couldn't bear to watch the entire video after a scene where one person hops off the pulpit, while the entire crowd dances frantically.

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CHURCH NEWS

The deadline for calendar announcements is noon on Fridays. Fax your announcements to (704) 342-2160 or e-mail your announcement to 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.

• Steele Creek A.M.E. Zion Church, 1500 Shopton Road, will have noon day Bible study from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.

• Join Scouting at Steele Creek A.M.E. Zion Church, 1500 Shopton Road. Boy Scout and Girl Scout troop meetings are held each Wednesday night at 6:30 p.m. Call 704-523-6552 to register or to obtain additional information.

January 7

New Beginnings Fellowship Church will hold its initial worship at 11 a.m. The church is

located at 800 West Hill St. in the Cedar Hill Building on the fifth floor. Bible study begins Jan. 10 at 6:30 p.m.

January 13

The University of Tennessee at Martin choral ensembles and the clarinet choir will perform a concert of diverse, engaging and exciting music as they tour throughout the Southeastern Coastal region of the United States. Selections from the program include the music of Aaron Copland, W.A. Mozart,

Benjamin Britten, Eric Whitacre and Moses Hogan. The ensembles are led by Dr. Mark Simmons, UT Martin director of choral activities, and Amy Parks Simmons, UT Martin assistant professor of woodwind studies.

The UT Martin Department of Music has 100 students majoring in music with 13 full-time faculty members. The choral ensembles tour yearly and the January tour in 2007 will take them to Myers Park Presbyterian

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