

# Religion

THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 2007

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## Defendants subpoenaed (Isaiah 1:10)

1. Why did God refer to Judah as Sodom and Gomorrah (Isaiah 1:10)? By referring to Sodom and Gomorrah in verses 9 and 10, Isaiah hoped to impress on the people the seriousness of their situation. These cities were destroyed because of extreme wickedness (Genesis 19).

Surely the people of Judah must have resented being called Sodom and Gomorrah! There was no way they were that bad! But Isaiah was not speaking his own opinion. He was calling the people to listen to "the word of the Lord."

The references to both the "rulers" and the "people" show the same to be true of Judah. The Lord threatens punishment because His chosen people are sinful at all levels of society. The word of the Lord is parallel to the law of our God, both referring to the specific charges in the next verses.

Plaintiff Reads Charges (Isaiah 1:11, 14-15)

2. Why was God sick and tired of Judah's sacrifice offerings (v. 11)?

The Lord begins His testimony with a rhetorical question—a question that actually makes a statement. The problem is not the number of sacrifices (a multitude of them) nor the type of sacrifices (burnt offerings prescribed in the law). Neither is the quality of the animals at issue.

It must shock the people to learn that even though they offer sacrifices that are plentiful, correct, and good in and of themselves, God is not pleased.

God's assessment was that these people were just as hypocritical and sinful as those in the cities He had destroyed in earlier days had been. Their actions were repulsive to God, particularly their acts of worship. These acts followed the law of Moses, but were carried out ritualistically and without meaning. When the Lord says I am full, it is as if He is saying, "Your offerings make me sick—I am fed up!"

3. How can you better prepare yourself to hear the Word of the Lord? What progress have you made in this regard?

It has been said that understanding God's Word is like a bank account: you get out of it what you put into it. A true hearer of the Word of God must invest time and effort into the task. It is not just listening to a message one day a week, but also daily taking time to read and hear God's Word (see Proverbs 8:34).

Ecclesiastes 5:1 says that we need to "be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools." The sacrifice of fools in this context is about speaking many words about or to God while failing to hear words from God (compare

Please see DEFENDENTS/6B



Norma Brewton, Josephine Allison and Vivian Roberts stock the Loaves and Fishes shelves.

## Mount Carmel opens food pantry at Freedom Mall

By Herbert L. White  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Mount Carmel Baptist Church's temporary food pantry is open for business.

The church's temporary location for its Loaves & Fishes pantry is Freedom Mall, 3205 Freedom Drive. The move was necessitated by the May 2 roof collapse of Mount Carmel's pantry, which left the church without a place to provide food for families in crisis in northwest Charlotte. Loaves & Fishes gives a week's worth of groceries to clients who are referred by human services agencies, medical providers, clergy or schools.

"Mount Carmel has always been one of the

busiest pantries and any new location needed to be easily accessible by bus," Loaves & Fishes executive director Beverly Howard said in a statement. "We are delighted that a replacement has been found so close by."

Mount Carmel volunteers have staffed the pantry since 1994 and last year provided food for 4,305 families. The volunteers will also staff the Freedom Mall site, one of 17 pantries in Mecklenburg County. Last year, Loaves & Fishes, which started in 1975, served more than 73,000 clients.

On the Net:  
Loaves & Fishes  
[www.loavesandfishes.org](http://www.loavesandfishes.org)

## Sharpton representatives to visit blackface skit church



Sharpton

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GASTONIA—The pastor of a Gastonia church where a blackface skit created a controversy wants his congregation to welcome members of the Rev. Al Sharpton's organization if they visit next Sunday.

"This is a Christian church, a welcoming church," the Rev. Thomas Holbrooks Jr. said at the beginning of Sunday's worship service. "We are good people, Christian people. We will welcome those who say they are coming here next

week."

Attention focused on the church, which has a few black and Hispanic worshippers, after photos taken during a banquet in May showed three church members in blackface during a skit.

Holbrooks said the skit was intended to honor the history of gospel music and not to be disrespectful to anyone.

John Barnett of Charlotte is a representative of Sharpton's National Action Network and said his group wants an apology from the church.

## Civil rights leader James Bevel charged with incest in Virginia

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LEESBURG, Va.—A civil rights leader who worked closely with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. has been charged with incest in Virginia.

The Rev. James L. Bevel, 70, was arrested late last month in Eutaw, Ala., after being indicted by a Loudoun County grand jury on one count of unlawfully committing fornication. The indictment followed a complaint to the Leesburg Police Department in September 2005, said Lt. Jeff Dube, a police spokesman.

According to the indictment, the crime occurred between Oct. 14, 1992, and Oct. 14, 1994, when the accuser was 13 to 17 years old. Virginia has no statute of limitations for

felonies.

Defense attorney Buta Biberaj said Saturday that no plea has been entered in the case yet and that it would be premature for her to comment. A bond hearing was set for June 14.

Bevel appeared briefly Friday in Loudoun County Circuit Court but did not speak.

Bevel has been credited with playing a key role in some of the country's major civil rights protests.

He organized the 1963 Chil-

dren's Crusade in Birmingham, Ala., and was a leader of the Freedom Rides to desegregate public accommodations throughout the South in the early 1960s. And he was an architect of the March on Washington in 1963 and the Selma-to-Montgomery march in Alabama in 1965. He also helped organize the Million Man March in Washington in 1995.

Bevel was trained as a Baptist minister and later became pastor of the Hebraic-Christian-Islamic Assembly in Chicago. At the time of his arrest, he was living in Eutaw, Ala., according to court documents.

If convicted of the incest charge, Bevel could face up to 20 years in prison.



Bevel



Winfred Cross

## Sounds

Trin-I-Tee 5:7  
Holla: The Best  
Of Trin-I-Tee 5:7  
Various producers  
GospoCentric Records



Trin-I-Tee 5:7 has always come across as a girl group that sings gospel, not a gospel girl group.

That's probably because the group has always produced songs that sound more club than church friendly. The group got its start with "God's Grace," written by the mercurial and controversial R. Kelly.

There's never been anything controversial about Trin-I-Tee 5:7's talent. The girls can sing the life out of something when they get the feeling. Conspicuously absent is "Lord," the group's take on Musiq Soul Child's hit "Love." It's the group's best vocal performance but it isn't included. Go figure.

There are songs of merit on this greatest hits package. The viewpoint of "With A Kiss" is that of Christ talking to Judas. "People Get Ready" is sweetly done but there are so many better versions. The group's pairing with Trinae Hawkins on "Highway" is great. "Mary, Don't You Weep" isn't great but it is good.

The rest of this CD is just more R&B gospel gone wrong. "Dance Like Sunday," "Holla" and "Put Your Hands" could all make the daily Top 10 on any urban radio station, which is part of the problem. Where's the gospel spark, the passion in these songs?

If you missed the group's first three CDs, this collection may be worth purchasing. That is if you like this kind of pop gospel. If not, the group's got a new CD due next month. Maybe that will be better.

## Prisons ban certain religious books and inmates file lawsuit

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Inmates at the federal prison camp in Otisville, N.Y., were stunned at what they saw at the chapel library on Memorial Day: Hundreds of books disappeared from the shelves.

The removal of the books is occurring nationwide—part of a long-delayed post-Sept. 11 federal directive designed to prevent radical religious texts, specifically Islamic ones, from falling into the hands of violent inmates.

Three inmates from Otisville filed a lawsuit over the policy, saying their Constitutional rights were violated. They say all religions were affected—Islamic prayer books, Christian books, and ancient Jewish texts were among those removed.

"The set of books that have been taken out have been ones that we used to minister to new converts when they come in here," inmate John Okon, speaking on behalf of the prison's Christian population, told a judge last week.

Okon said it was unfortunate because "I have really seen religion turn around the life of some of these men, especially in the Christian community."

But the government stressed that the new rules don't entirely clear the shelves of prison chapel libraries.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Brian Feldman told U.S. District Judge Laura Taylor Swain that prison libraries limited the number of books for each religion to between 100 and 150 books under the new rules. But he said officials would expand the number after a second look at the list of permitted books.

Feldman said the order to remove books stems from an April 2004 Department of Justice review of how prisons choose Muslim religious services providers. It is not exactly

Please see PRISONS/7B

## CHURCH NEWS

The deadline for announcements is noon on Fridays. Fax your announcements to (704) 342-2160 or e-mail to [cheris.hodges@thecharlottepost.com](mailto:cheris.hodges@thecharlottepost.com). Put "religion news" in the subject line and do not send attachments.

### 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 AME Zion Church, 1500 Shopton Road, will have noon day Bible study from 12p.m. to 1 p.m.

Join Scouting at Steele Creek AME 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.

New Life Outreach is seeking donations for its residential training center in Concord.

The program's services are provided at no cost and helps men with addiction problems. The residence is located at 2216 Kanapolis Highway. The home is in need of appliances, cooking utensils, linens, china, flatware, clothing and cash donations.

Donations can be dropped off at Olive Branch Furniture, 2603 S. Cannon Blvd. For more information, call (704) 701-8783.

### June 15

Restoration Apostolic Church of Jesus

Christ, 220 East Peterson Drive, will host its first Men's Conference with the theme, "Made By Fire." The event runs through Sunday. For more information, call (704) 523-1441.

### June 16

Tabernacle Baptist Church will host its annual health fair and community fellowship event, beginning at 11 a.m.

There will be free health screening pro-

Please see TEMPLE/7B

