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SOUTHEASTERN BAPTIST

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The Resurrection

Luke 24

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened that while they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling apparel; and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen.



President Dr. Howard W. Parker

Happy Easter



Congratulations to the Lady Bears, Winners of the 2014 CCAA Women's Championship for the Fourth Year in a Row!

MINISTERIAL ALLIANCES - Clergy, Pastors, seminarians, and laypersons from across North Carolina attended the 41st Annual Alexander / Pegues Ministers' Conference held March 10-13 on the campus of Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. The 2014 theme was "Resurrecting the Dream: Reconnecting Christ, the Church, and Humanity" and featured speakers in the chapel services and lectures were the Reverend Dr. William Curtis, Pastor of Mount Ararat Baptist Church in Pittsburg, PA. and the Reverend Dr. Renita Weems, Vice President of Academic Affairs at American Baptist College in Nashville, TN. Dr. Weems is pictured with Dr. Bruce T. Grady, EdD, Dean and Associate Professor of Religious Education at Shaw University Divinity School.



Osteen illustrates non-denominationalizing of U.S. religion, says church historian

WIRE REPORTS

Megachurch Pastor Joel Osteen and Lakewood Church in Houston offer a high-profile case study in the "nondenominationalizing" of 21st century evangelical American religion, says church historian Bill Leonard. Osteen manages to be "modern and postmodern, traditional

and experimental, in his approach to the church and the gospel itself," and his congregation may represent a bridge between how American evangelicalism has reached one generation and what it may become as it attempts to reach the next, said Leonard, the James and Marilynn Dunn Professor of Baptist Studies and professor of church history at Wake Forest University.

(continued on page 9)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE : **P3** From the Desk of the Vice President-at-large, Dr. Avery : **P8** Maundy Thursday celebrations: How Churches can help : **Renew!** TODAY! See Page 7 Baptist Informer Subscription Form

Chicago-based Educator, ^{HQS 5} ^{39A} Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu at Fayetteville Conference

PRESS REPORTS

Author Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu destroyed myths and debunked racial misconceptions during the Trayvon Martin Black Men and Boys Conference held recently at First Baptist Church in Fayetteville.

"No!" he said. "There are not more black men in prison than in college." The Chicago-based educator told about 350 men and youth that there are an estimated 900,000 black men in prison today and 1.4 million black men in college.

Focusing his first hour on about 100 black male youth present, Dr. Kunjufu said, on the average, Asians spend 12 hours per week studying; whites spend about eight hours; Hispanics three; and black students average only one hour per week studying.

"Whatever you do the most you will do best," he said. "So spend your time wisely."

He said black students can learn as well as any other group, but there's too much time going into TV, video games, sports, and [party] music. For every hour you spend doing these things, spend the same time in study, he said.

"And if you want to be great, you have to have a positive attitude," he added, citing former NBA player Magic Johnson's positive attitude after getting AIDS. Johnson remained positive and became a successful

businessman.

"Over the past 40 years, I've learned to respect the young people I've met," Kunjufu said. "But there are a lot of messages out there, and they [many messengers] don't care about you. They lead you where they want you to go, not to what's in your best interest."

Kunjufu, the author of 38 books, has spent years focusing on education and African-American youth, particularly strategies to teach black male youth and prevent them from dropping out of school.

"About 90 percent of black males in prison went there illiterate, 80 percent dropped out of high school, and 75 percent stayed on the corners at night," he said. "So if you want to go to prison...those are the three things to work on. Life is about choices and attitude. Good choices and positive attitudes overcome even the hardest circumstances. Everyone in this life has the same 24 hours a day. What you do with them determines who you are."

After addressing the youth, Dr. Kunjufu spoke for 90 minutes to about 250 men in attendance. He told them that if the child in the home goes to church, maybe some-

one else in the house goes; if the mother goes to church, a few may go; but if the man goes to church and loves the Lord, "everybody in the home goes to church."

The Conference, held the weekend before the second anniversary of Trayvon Martin's death (February 26), was sponsored by the Laymen of First Baptist Church who have a youth mentoring ministry called Imani (Swahili for "faith"), which has celebrated since the year 2000.



Black Men & Boys Conference leaders (LtoR) Mrs. Edith McLean, board chair WBH&FMC; Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu, presenter; Mrs. Lena Johnson, 3rd V-P WBH&FMC; and Pastor Cureton Johnson, FBC Fayetteville, NC.

The 2014 Al Fullwood
Preaching Conference
for
Women
"These Preaching Women"
MAY 17TH, 2014
9AM — 1PM
Riley Hill Baptist Church
6101 RILEY HILL RD. WENDELL, NC 27591
919-365-5277
WWW.RILEYHILLBAPTISTCHURCH.ORG

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

The Annual GBSC
Laymen League's
**Men and Boys
Retreat**
July 11- 12, 2014

Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church where Dr.
Matthew Rouse Jr. serves as Pastor.

The event will be held at the
Mathew Rouse Community Resource Center,
373 Pittman Grove Church Road, Raeford, NC 28376.

For details, please contact:
GBSC Laymen League Youth Coordinator
Samuel Teague at 919-426-4489
or via email at Samuel_teague2000@yahoo.com

From the Desk of the Vice President-at-large ...

The Promise of Resurrection: Unconditional love and New Opportunities

"Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, but look – I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave" (Revelation 1:17-18).

These words from our Lord Jesus the Christ to Saint John the Divine while in exile on the isle of Patmos resonate through time and eternity.

The commemoration of Jesus' crucifixion and celebration of His resurrection reminds us of God's unconditional love and unending promise for new life. It witnesses to the immense power of God and serves as a testimony to the resurrection of those (1) who trust in God, (2) whose faith is in God, and (3) whose destiny is promised by God through Jesus the Christ!

With the newness of spring-time and the reality and power of the Resurrection come new opportunities for new commitments, new goals, new objectives, new lessons, new experiences, new challenges, and new victories. It reminds us that the same God who created life and can resurrect life after death IS the power and HAS the power to resurrect, renew, revive, refresh, and restore dead things, dead people, dead lives, dead churches,



dead communities, and dead hopes.

In resurrecting Jesus from the grave, God reminds us that God and only God can reverse the hideousness of death, and only God can remove the sting that is death's and the victory that is the grave's (1 Corinthians 15:54-55). In resurrecting Jesus from the grave, God reminds us that we serve a risen Savior!

Other faiths and religions were founded by humans whose end was the grave. Unlike other faiths and religions, Christian believers possess and profess faith in a founder who transcends death and promises that His followers will do the same. Without the Resurrection, our preaching would be senseless, our faith would be useless, our lives would be hopeless, our world would be helpless, and our ministry would be fruitless.

But Jesus the Christ has indeed risen from the dead and "has become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20). Betrayal could not deter Him, a false conviction could not disrupt Him, death could not destroy Him, and the grave could not defeat Him! Jesus is alive, Jesus lives, and today, Jesus sits at the right hand of God intervening on our behalf and preparing to return for His

second coming.

The resurrection is the triumphant and glorious victory for every believer. Jesus the Christ was born, He lived, He died, was buried, and rose the third day. And because

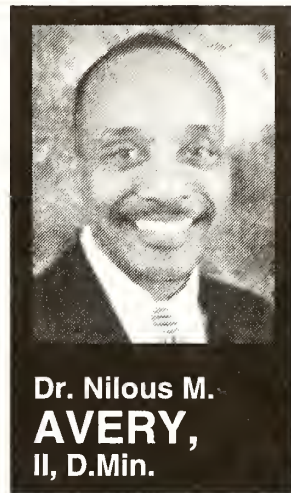
He lives, we too can live and shall live in the blessed hope that encourages us to know we can turn our minor SETBACKS into major COMEBACKS!

General Baptists, let us celebrate our victory in the resurrected Lord with renewed energy, enthusiasm, excitement, and enlightenment. The writer in 2 Corinthians 9:8 puts it this way: "God can bless you with everything you need, and you will always have more than enough to do all kinds of good things for others" (CEV).

Beloved, let us faithfully pledge to celebrate the Lord's resurrection and the promise of our resurrection with a generous spiritual and financial support to the General Baptist State Convention objectives. Let us not be weary laborers, but willing workers in kingdom building.

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14, NIV). Amen.

Contact Dr. Avery at: averyrevkin@aol.com



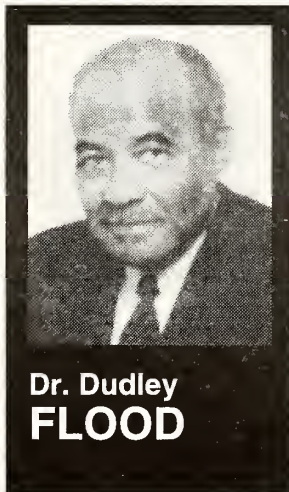
Dr. Nilous M. AVERY, II, D.Min.

Some Compassionate Advice for Widowers

I have had conversations with several men who have recently lost their wives and who are suffering from what I have characterized as "Widower's Grief Syndrome." Having been afflicted with the same disorder, I hope that my insights might be helpful to others who are experiencing similar reactions.

Widower's Grief is something for which few of us were prepared. Most of us men spend our entire married life preparing for our spouse to be comfortable when we depart this life. Hardly any of us expected to live longer than our wives. When she passes, our first reaction is one of guilt that I am still here and she is gone.

This may be followed by a subconscious questioning of why God took her rather than me. The answer to this question is that she belonged to God long before



Dr. Dudley FLOOD

she belonged to you, and He has the authority to take whomever He may at any time that He may. If you truly believe this, it can give you some badly needed relief and can also restore your weakened faith in God's sovereignty.

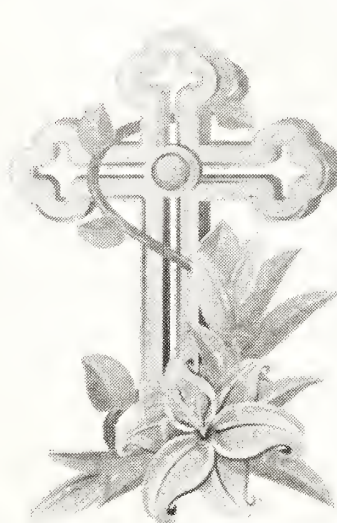
In the first few days of your loss, you will likely be overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and support from friends and family. In about a week or ten days, that will subside, and you will be ill-prepared for the first feeling of loneliness that you have ever experienced. You will be brought into the realization that you know little about the things that she had handled so effortlessly that you had hardly noticed and had certainly not equipped yourself to handle. You will find that nothing makes you truly happy and that if you experience any tinge of joy, you will feel guilty in having done so.

Your choice at this point is to learn to be comfortable in your solitude or to become a seeker of social activity which is very likely to make you feel

out of place. For me, I was led by Paul's declaration that "I have learned in whatever state I find myself to be content". I have replaced the search for happiness with the pursuit of contentment which with God's help, I have found.

Finally, if you can turn your focus to the great blessings that your marriage afforded you and move away from any of the negatives if they existed, you can have the joy of remembering how blessed you were to have had such a wonderful life with such a wonderful person for whatever time you had. Forgive yourself for all the flaws that prevented you from having been all that you might have been, and ask God to forgive you. Since Jesus is pleading for you to the Father, you most likely have already been forgiven.

Dr. Dudley Flood, is a retired Assistant Superintendent with the NC State Department of Public Instruction, and serves on the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina. Reach him at: floodspeaker@bellsouth.net.



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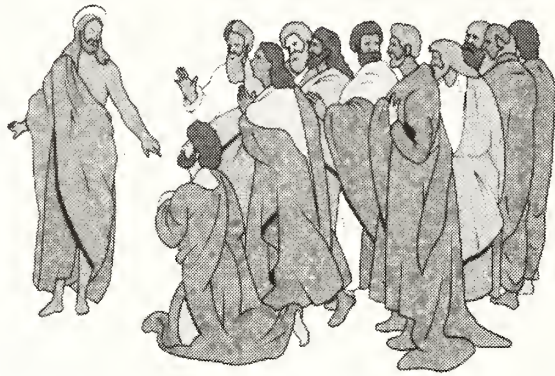
- To receive breaking news about GBSC
- To receive updates on events, meetings, etc.
- To be in the know about Baptist life in NC

Remembering the Poor

As we introduced the 3rd strand of the Great Commission, it was mentioned that the “poor” is somewhat of a misnomer, for it includes a wide range of personalities. Pondering the connection of this strand to the Great Commission, the conclusion was drawn that character makes the difference. One virtue of grave significance for the disciple of Christ is humility.

A great challenge in our churches today is spiritual poverty. The partially surrendered life may be Christian in spirit, but it is secular in practice, it may save one’s soul, but it hardly leaves a wrinkle in one’s lifestyle or the world and culture in which we live. Of what earthly value is Christianity if it leaves no indelible mark on one’s lifestyle? It is of no value to be Christian if you do not think Christianity- if you

do not have a Christian life view. We live in a broken generation. Why? It is disobedience. How can we learn to be obedient? We must learn to surrender, to submit to Christ in the details of daily life. Many of us started off on the wrong foot with Jesus Christ.



It is the proposition that Jesus can be Savior without being Lord. It is the idea that one can add Christ, but not subtract sin. Many of us have merely added Christ to our lives as another interest in an already busy and otherwise over crowded schedule. This kind of thinking has watered down the meaning of a personal relationship with Christ. The problem is that

we often seek the God we want, but do not know the God who is. Many person’s utter frustration about leading this kind of defeated, partially surrendered life-the life of a cultural Christian. The low demands of cultural Christianity have led to a low response- it has become the norm.

Becoming a Great Commission Christian calls men and women to a turning point, to a radical, life-transforming change.

This is why the 3rd strand of the Great commission: “Remembering the Poor” is important. The first of the Beatitudes begin by addressing the challenge of the poverty of spirit.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3). What did He

mean? According to John Redhead, author of FINDING MEANING IN THE BEATITUDES.

There is one thing He did not mean, “Blessed are the poor spirited.” This is a misconception of the Christian life which sometimes gets hold of us. We think of someone who is helpless and dejected, who seems to think crawling is the Christian’s proper gait. He allow circumstances to get the better of him and wears his defeat in his face. That is the kind of man we usually think of as being “poor in spirit”. But that is not Christianity; it is only creeping paralysis.

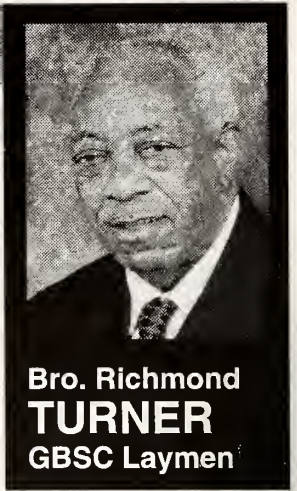
“Poor in spirit” does not mean, poor-spirited. We get closer to our Lord’s meaning if we substitute for the word “spirit” our modern word “ego.” Ego means self, and to be rich in ego is to have too much of self.

To be “poor in spirit” means we have to learn to become humble.

The only way to get rid of self is to make room for God.

Poverty of spirit will continue next article. Stay tune-God Bless.

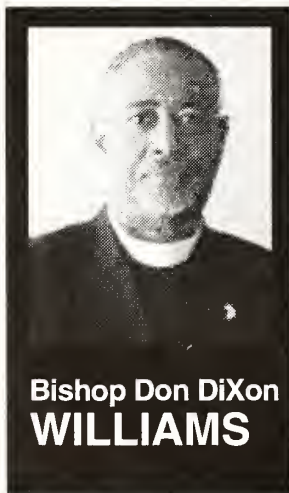
Reach Bro. Turner at: Iturn60@aol.com.



Bro. Richmond
TURNER
GBSC Laymen

Hunger Grows in Our Community

Bread for Life



Bishop Don Dixon
WILLIAMS

Brothers and sisters, it is with a heavy heart that I have to report that food insecurity remains extremely high, particularly in our community, due to a slow economic recovery. We at Bread for the World have released a new fact sheet that sadly shows the return of income inequality on a scale that hasn’t been witnessed since the Great Depression.

Unemployment in the United States is 6.7 percent. African-American unemployment is at 12.0 percent, almost double that of the U.S. population. The best anti-hunger and anti-poverty program is employment. We must urge our government to focus on investing in jobs and not on cutting programs that help those in need.

A government investing in creating jobs is also investing in human capital. We must bring back dignity to those jobs. It is unjust for someone to work two or even three jobs and still not be able to provide for a family. We cannot allow jobs to pay only poverty-level wages especially when productivity in the United States has increased.

As Scripture tells us, woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice, and who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing and does not give him his wages.

We all need to remember that workers are human beings and not commodities. It should not be a privilege to take time off when you are not feeling well. If an immediate family member passes, you should not fear asking for time off to mourn the loss. As a society, we say that the family unit is our most important foundation, yet we make parents choose between keeping their jobs and raising their infants. If we truly believe in the dignity of a person, these things should not be benefits but rather the norm.

God reminds us to not withhold good from those to whom it is due when it is in your power to do it. Employers have an obligation to their workers just as workers have an obligation to their employers. We do not stand for someone cheating and stealing from



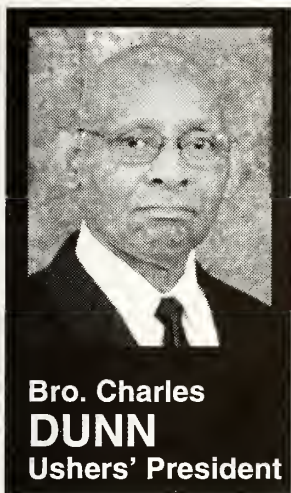
their employer. Why do we allow some employers to cheat and steal from their employees?

As a community, we must tell Congress that we want a fair deal for workers. We want to work and want our brothers and sisters to be able to be able to provide for their families. I pray for the day that we no longer have to create these fact sheets about hunger, the day when hunger is something from the past. As we all pray, act, and give, that day comes closer.

Bishop Don Dixon Williams is racial-ethnic outreach at Bread for the World and sits on the Board of Bishops of the United Church of Jesus Christ, Baltimore, Md.

Highlights from The North Carolina Baptist Usher's Convention One Day Session held February 22, 2014

Highlights of the North Carolina Baptist Usher's Convention One Day Session included workshops, youth presentations, sermons and other events on February 22, 2014 at St. Paul's Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, with President Charles Dunn presiding.



Bro. Charles DUNN
Ushers' President

The Adult Workshop was led by Dean Marvin T. Clowney and his topic was Nothing To Prove Nothing To Lose.

"We have to change how we think about who we are," he said during his presentation. "An internal change has to start within the mind so we can give the best of our service. God created us with a purpose in mind.

"When we think of passion, it is love intensified beyond your ability and this will motivate you

to move. This will lead to a life of promotion but if God didn't promote you and you will show up late or not come at all. God only called you to be a witness not an usher. Don't allow failure to hold you back and keep on living by faith."

The President's class was led by Assistant Dean Rodney McCormick. His topic, "The Shepherd's President - What I Must Do." The scripture was taken from the Psalm 23. "As a shepherd, God cares for, nurtures, and directs the flock. The flock is the shepherd's responsibility and not his hobby and the shepherd understand he has been placed in a position of authority and accountability to ensure the maintenance, growth and development of the flock," he said.

The Youth Advisor's were Sister Hazel Kennedy

and Sister Chiquita Douglas. New youth officers are President Brianna Smith; Vice President Millennia Mungo and Assistant Secretary Maurice Smith.

Other highlights included Dr. James E. Cook whose reference text was taken from I Cor. 12:1-7. His subject was "Grace Gifts." "We should remember who gave us our gifts. When you take grace out of the gift, you are outside of the arc of safety."

A health seminar led by Sis. Delores Blue, RN. focused on the proper way to prepare first aid kits,

which should be included in every church. Please email Sis. Delores Blues at: (dblue919@gmail.com) for a complete list of the items.

Other participants included Bro. Benjamin Hooker, St. Paul's Praise Team, Bro. Leroy Watkins, Sis. Sabrina Barfield, President Saylor L. Mattison, Bro. John Barber, and Dr. Gregory Moss, Pastor of St. Paul's and former GBSC President.

- Submitted by Viola N. Thornton

"Youth in Action" Presentations included:

Angelica Pendergrass
Brianna Alford
Chris Hailey
Miracle Doster
Taylor McCormick
Malachi Rennix
Myrakle Clark
Matthew Petterson
Lanngston Hines
Alvin Mack
Zayla Fleming
Lauren Tate
Jaylon Alexander
R. J. Chisholm
Vaquan Davis
Elaina White
Cameron Witherspoon
Mason Wallace
Alex Tobias
Brianna Smith
Mia Foxworth
Emani Sledge

"The Battle is Not Mine, It's The Lord's"
"To Be Used By God"
"I Need You Now"
"I Come This Far By Faith"
"Why I Choose Ushering"
"Christians in the 21st Century"
"Does God Answer Prayers?"
"O When The Saints" Instrumental
"To Be Used By God"
"The Wow Factor in The Ushers Ministry"
"I Only Image"
"To Be Used By God"
"Why I Choose Ushering"

"Mime Presentation"
"I Walk By Faith"
"Mime Presentation"
"Liturgical Dance"
"Why I Choose Ushering"
"I'm just a Prayer Away"

Saint Paul
Mount Moriah
Saint Paul
Ebenezer
Reeder Memorial
Friendship
Greater Providence
Friendship
Silver Mount
Saint Paul
Silver Mount
Greater Providence
Mount Vernon

Reeder Memorial
Ebenezer
Mount Moriah
Greater Providence
Friendship
Saint Paul

"A Messianic Celebration" – Matthew 21:8-11

Imagine this scene: When the disciples brought the animal to Jesus, they placed their garments on it. The example of the Disciples stirred the enthusiastic crowd into action. Some of the people stripped off their outer garments and spread them on the road to make a carpet for Jesus to ride over. Others cut branches from nearby trees and placed them on the road. Both of these gestures were acts of homage.



Dr. Ricky L. BANKS
Second VP, GBSC

John's gospel tells us that the crowd met Jesus with palm branches. We assume that the people waved them as they did in the religious ceremonies at the feasts of tabernacles and of dedication.

The Disciples and pilgrims who marched before and behind Jesus were ecstatic with religious emotion.

Their exclamations of praise and welcome came from some of the verses in Psalm 118. It was the last song that the people sang at the feast.

"Hosanna" in verse 9 means "save now."

In Matthew the meaning of the word is an utterance of praise or a cry of greeting like our expressions "hail or "welcome." Matthew also added to the Son of David, which is further proof that he used "Hosanna" as an acclamation.

All of the excitement up to this point took place outside Jerusalem. When Jesus entered the city and the people inside heard the shouting they wanted to know who He was. In Luke's gospel some of the Pharisees approached Jesus before He entered Jerusalem and asked him to silence His disciples. Jesus said, I tell you, if these keep silent, the very stones would cry out. (Luke 19:40).



Jesus came into His created order, and the Jewish people as a whole rejected Him. He is still trying to come into His own created order, and He confronts people today with the reality of God's grace. He presses for a decision. The most important choice that we can make is confessing that Jesus is Lord. There are many decisions that we must make about particular issues on the basis of our primary loyalty to Christ.

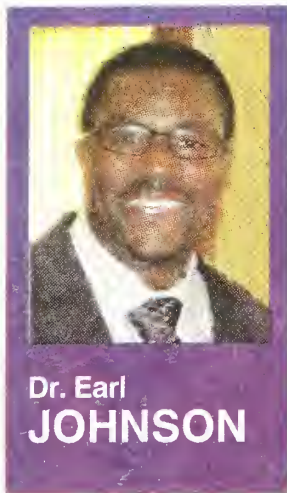
When we are too tolerant or suspend judgment in issues vitally affecting the welfare of humanity, we betray the Christian pattern. When we set up our own advantage as the point of view from which we determine conduct, our consciences

cease to be sensitive to right and wrong.

Many Blessings as we celebrate our living Christ.

Reach Dr. Banks at: pastorrickybanks@yahoo.com.

Maundy Thursday: How Churches Can Help a Polarized Society



Dr. Earl
JOHNSON

Text: John 13.1-17

Maundy Thursday commemorates the Last Supper, an event when Jesus the Christ shared a Passover meal with his disciples. It is usually observed with events such as foot-washing, Communion or other humbling acts that signify our Lord's work with His disciples. Some churches even ceremoniously cover

or remove religious symbols, and these items are not restored until Easter Sunday.

Maundy Thursday is more solemn than celebratory because it's associated with a night marked by be-

trayal, denial, and desertion. On this fateful night, evil and wickedness would dominate and our Lord Jesus Christ was falsely accused of treason and condemned. Afterwards, His body was nailed to an old rugged cross, and He was humiliated, pierced in His side and eventually died between two thieves.

As Christians, there's no cause for joy of this event, but the reality is that without Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, there would be no Easter Sunday. Often in life, we want the crown before the cross. We want victory without defeat. We want progress without sacrifice. Our society has been lulled into adopting a winner's only mentality where nobody wants to lose. Could this explain why many churches are filled on Easter Sunday, but empty on Good Friday?

As Christians, we must "ride" with Jesus into Jerusalem on Monday and "walk" with him in the Temple on Tuesday to turn over the money tables. We should "pray" with Him on Wednesday in the garden, "face" his accusers on Thursday, die with Him on Friday, descend into Hell on Saturday, and arise victori-

ously with Him on Sunday.

Maundy Thursday begins with a tragedy, but it does not end there.

One of the greatest problems facing America today is political anger. What can we as Christians contribute to a society that is often bitterly divided on so many issues? Some claim that we are so deeply divided that scholars and community leaders worry that violence may become the order of the day. However, Jesus shows us that this can be a time of great opportunity for the church to witness.

Churches are called to a higher standard to serve the community. Greatness is arbitrary, and it is not found in possessions, power, prestige, and position, but it is found in service. So, what do we offer a polarized world? We offer them service and humility and demonstrate that the way to true greatness is ministry and the way to power is humility.

Reach Dr. Johnson at: drecj56@aol.com.

Can 'Noah' film engage unchurched?

WIRE REPORTS

Baptist pastors say Christian audiences must remember they do not own the Bible and cannot expect Hollywood to adhere literally to biblical passages when making religious films.

The new film Noah has yet to hit big screens nationwide, but that hasn't kept some critics – namely conservative Christian and Muslim ones – from blasting the film for deviating from the strict scriptural text that inspired it.

Some evangelicals sounded the alarm against the portrayal that even its director, Darren Aronofsky, reportedly described the \$150 million project as "the least biblical film ever made." Several Middle Eastern

nations have said they would ban its showing.

As a result, Paramount Pictures agreed to add a disclaimer that the action-packed blockbuster takes artistic license with the story and that the full version can be read in the book of Genesis.

No one 'owns the Bible'

But there are other critics, including two Baptist film experts interviewed by ABPnews/Herald, who say the controversy surrounding the film illustrates a long-standing tension between Hollywood and Christian audiences.

A source of that tension is those who believe a particular sacred text belongs to them, said Kathryn Palen, pastor of Central Baptist Church in Jamestown, R.I., and film lover who regularly uses movies as sermon topics and material.

So if Noah or any other film deviates from the text – or from one group's particular understanding of the text – protests ensue. Movies, then, can become the battleground where different religious ideologies clash – either with each or with secular, profit-driven filmmakers.

"But the truth is there is not a small group of us who own the Bible or dictate how anyone reads the text and portrays the text," Palen said.

Literal 'gets in the way'

Actors in the film have responded in a variety of ways to the criticism of religious conservatives. Noah star Russell Crowe told the Associated Press he felt some of the claims of inaccuracy were off the mark. "We have endured 12 to 14 months of irrational criticism and now people are starting to see it and to realize how respectful it is" he said.

Respectful can be another matter that is in the eye of the beholder, said Mike Parnell, pastor of Beth Car Baptist Church in Halifax, Va. That's why it's possible to faithfully tell a biblical story in film without adhering literally to the text, he added.

"The thing about movies is they are trying to tell a story, they are not trying to recount whatever the source material is," said Parnell, who reviews movies for ABPnews/Herald. "To be literal, you have to make so many interpretations of what 'literal' means that it gets in the way of the storytelling."

Besides, films that take poetic license with scripture often are able to communicate concepts such as redemption and forgiveness more effectively through imagery and narrative than they can by having actors read word-for-word lines from the Bible, he said.

Engaging young audiences

It's why films like Noah can be important in a post-Christian society: They may be the only biblical stories the so-called "nones" may ever see or hear.

"These are opportunities for Christians to learn the language of movies to speak to the nones, the unaligned and the under-churched," Parnell continued. "It's an opportunity for us to say the God we say is locked up in these buildings, he is up on the screen trying to talk to you."

And that's a point Paramount has been making on its Noah website, where it posted a Christian Post article praising the film.

The article points out that the film depicts a man with a strong relationship with God, that Noah follows God's directions despite being imperfect, that Noah admits his sinfulness and Noah values his family.

The review also debunks rumors that the film assumes global warming.

These and other facets of the film make it useful for engaging 20-somethings who are disengaged from their faith, the article said.

"It will engage a young, secular audience who will be thinking about the great flood with or without us," the article said.

- By Jeff Brumley/ABP



••• MINISTRY BRIEFS •••

With Deepest Sympathy



GBSC mourns the loss of Dr. Nilous M. Avery, Sr., Pastor Emeritus of the Hill Street Baptist Church in Asheville, NC and father of Vice President-at-Large Dr. Nilous M. Avery, II.

Services for Dr. Avery Sr. were held on Saturday, March 15 at Hill Street Baptist Church, and on Monday, March 17 at Wake Baptist Grove Church in Garner. Internment was at Montlawn Memorial Park on South Wilmington Street in Raleigh.

Woman's Baptist Home & Foreign Missionary Convention of North Carolina Announces Upcoming Events

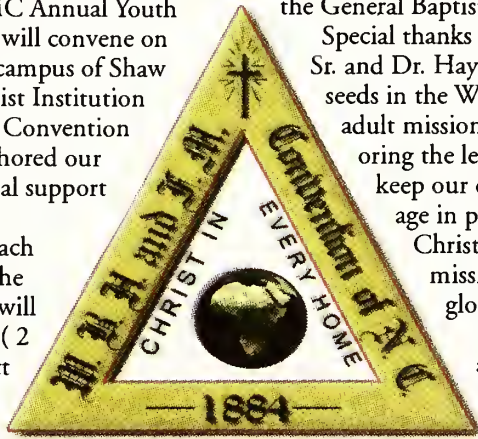


Dr. Sherry Graham-Arnold

The WBHFMC Annual Youth Bible Camp will convene on the historic campus of Shaw University; the Baptist Institution where our Woman's Convention has consistently anchored our spiritual and financial support for 130 years.

From Shaw we reach across the water all the way to Jamaica! We will send 4 young ambassadors for Christ (2 youth and 2 young adults) on the Lott Carey Short-Term Mission Trip to Jamaica!

Thanks be to God two participants received full sponsorships (\$1850.00 each) from _____ presently gearing up for our 130th Annual Session at



the General Baptist State Convention! Special thanks to President Howard Parker, Sr. and Dr. Haywood T. Gray for planting seeds in the WBHFMC youth and young adult missionary efforts. Yes, we are honoring the legacy of our foremothers to keep our charge by serving the present age in promoting the Gospel of Jesus Christ, at home...and on foreign mission fields. To God be the glory!

I could go on and on, but allow me to close with our plans for the close of summer. For it is with great anticipation that we are

Mark Your Calendars



the Raleigh Convention Center July 28-31, 2014. More information will be forthcoming soon, but please plan to join us at the outset for the Johnnie Blunt McLester Pre-Convention Banquet, Monday, July 28th. The dynamic Dr. Hugh Dell Gatewood, President, Woman's Auxiliary, The National Baptist Convention, U.S.A, Inc., will be our banquet speaker as she comes to connect us with all 50 states and beyond.

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What Makes the Difference in Our Preaching Is Use of Voice

In the last article we discussed the importance of communicating with your eyes during the actual delivery of the sermon. We concluded that during the delivery of the sermon establishing credibility is crucial. In order for the preacher to establish credibility, he/she should use their eyes as nonverbal channels of communication. Remember, when communicating to your audience your eyes function as the “headquarters” or the “oval office” of conveying thoughts, feelings, and ultimately the impact of the message. In short, your audience will believe your eyes (non-verbal) over your words (verbal). At the end, it is not necessarily what your words say but what your eyes communicate that makes the difference when it comes to impacting your audience.

Now, let’s discuss the preacher’s use of voice in the delivery of the sermon. This is such an important topic because like channels of nonverbal communication our voice quality says something about our “personality and character.” For instance, voice quality reveals factors such as education and knowledge, confidence, sincerity, dishonesty or trust worthiness. Like it or not people use our sound of voice as a way to draw certain conclusions about us. What a difference your voice makes in producing the sweet music of preaching in the ears of listeners.

Your voice is an instrument that produces an assortment of sound. The immediate proof of such a conclusion is evidenced in listening to the melody and lyrics of a song. The language of music is universally understood and appreciated. The melody of music makes a person smile. While it is true that your voice is a wonderful instrument that serves and performs important functions, the greatest is conveying the gospel of Christ. Preaching Christ is a sweet melody

that makes the audience smile. Therefore, it is important to discuss this subject beyond mechanical speech production. That is to say, we will not focus on the four stages of speech production relative to breathing, phonation, resonance and articulation. Rather, we will focus on the idea of voice as a stylistic feature and a tool of persuasion, which are both a rhetorical device and a theological matter.

For several reasons, voice takes on added significance because communication is both an oral and aural event. Highest among these reasons is based on the notion that “faith is an acoustical (hearing) affair.” Paul says, “How then shall they call on him whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher (Romans 10: 14). Thus, we preach with the intent to maximize hearing or “hearability,” with an aim to produce faith. With this said, we might argue that our voice can help or hinder. Similarly, our voice has the potential to appeal or repeal.

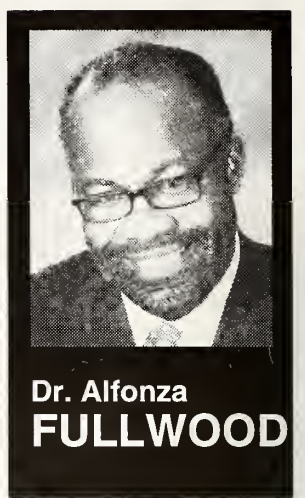
It would be a mistake to assume that your voice shapes or articulates words only. To do so, limits its (voice) possibilities. Haddon Robinson who is no stranger in the field of preaching says that your voice conveys meaning “beyond the bare dictionary meaning of the words.” In this sense we are able to not only shape words but meaning through the right use of our voice. In other words the right use of our voice “conveys ideas and feelings apart from words.”

In doing so, our listeners are affected based not only upon the impact those words make but even more importantly the sound that accompany those words.” Gardner C. Taylor a preacher of immense contribution helps us understand the importance of the sound of words. He views the use of voice as a

factor beyond the issues of vocal production in preaching. For sure, he holds that words not only have power but also their sound affects the listeners. In his own thoughts he asserts, “Words must make a definite suggestion, not only in their definition but in their sound. There are words that caress, words that lash and cut, words that lift, and words that have a glow in them.” In this regard, Taylor argues not only for right word choice but right sound choice relative to persuasion as a part of the delivery technique. For this reason, some believe that “what we say cannot be separated from how we say it.” Therefore, what we conclude is this: On the one hand voice is the vehicle that carries the message. In doing so it conveys meaning and purpose.

Carrying the message does not happen on the force of the actual words altogether. On the other hand voice is not simply the servant of content. But the manner of how we say our sermon is just as important as what the sermon says. (Although there are some in the field of preaching who disagree with such a claim). In either case, it is critical to remember that issues relative to the shaping of words and sound of voice while important in persuasion; should not claim prominence or authority over the role of the Holy Spirit. In our next article we will explore how we dress as a factor that makes the difference in our preaching.

Dr. Fullwood is Professor of Preaching and Pastor of Riley Hill Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C. Reach him at: RHBC@bellsouth.net.



Dr. Alfonza FULLWOOD



• • • The Arts • • •

Stage Play

Professor Kenneth Hinton, assistant professor of theatre in the Department of Visual and Performing Arts, directed the stage play “Anatomy of a Woman Abused” at the Raleigh Little Theatre last fall. The play, which starred Schelle Holloway Purcell and Roffini Whidbee in the lead roles, discussed the very serious issue of domestic violence.

Based on a novel by playwright Jaisun McMillian, the play received rave reviews from the Raleigh community:

“Not only well conceived, well written and well directed, but the acting and supporting cast was stellar!” – Michael L. Buie

“Overall, this production proved to be a must see. Great job to the director Mr. Kenneth Hinton Sr. and the playwright and producer Ms. Jaisun McMillian.” – James A. House

“Schelle Holloway Purcell as always you did a FANTASTIC job, it was an outstanding performance.” – Tanya Adams Barrett

Professor Hinton has recently completed writing the full length play “You Ain’t My Daddy.” The play is currently scheduled to open on May 1st and 2nd at the Burning Coal Theatre in Raleigh, NC and will feature performances by the Shaw Players.



What Jesus Taught About Prayer

Prayer is offering to God petitions for mercies desired and thanksgiving and praise for blessings received. Faith has been quickened by prayer, and it may be said that prayer is an indication of the spiritual condition of the soul; it being to the soul what breath is to the body.

Prayer is the foundation of all spiritual disciplines. It is the central component of worship, the atmosphere surrounding effective Bible study and the power behind witnessing.

Prayer is founded in the nature of God. Because He is love, God created for Himself creatures who would communicate with Him. In the Old Testament, Israel's control of Canaan depended on their prayer.

In Acts 6:6 of the New Testament, prayer was carried out during the selection of the first deacons.

They presented these men to the apostles who prayed

and laid hands on them. On many occasions in the New Testament, Jesus took the occasion to drive home His observations on prayer.

In Matthew 6:5-11, Jesus admonishes His disciples on the art of praying:

- Prayer is not an act of showing off.
- One should avoid hypocrisy in prayer.
- Prayer is to be thoughtful, not wordy or babbling.
- Jesus' own example was to pray alone.

In Luke 18:9, Jesus spoke this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself - 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men - robbers, evil doers, adulterers or even like the tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'"

But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'"

Praying for the ears of men gets the reward of men.

Pride prevents prayer from achieving its purpose.

Humility is the way to open communication with a merciful God.

Matthew 21:22 states, "And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

Jesus teaches us to submit our souls to God, leaving no reservation and know that ultimately the destiny of our lives is in God's hand. God's Word is a blueprint for not only prayer, but also all of our needs. We are challenged to be doers of His Word.

Mrs. Logan, a retired educator from Raleigh, North Carolina, writes frequently on the power of prayer and other sacred topics.

Osteen illustrates non-denominationalizing of U.S. religion

(continued from page 1)

sity School of Divinity.

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Texas sponsored a lecture by Leonard at Texas Christian University's Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, Texas.

Joel Osteen preaches at the 40,000-member Lakewood Church in Houston. (Joel Osteen website) "Joel Osteen is an ecclesiastical phenomenon — an American, evangelical, charismatic, postmodern, megachurch, media-savvy, health/wealth motivational speaker, gospel preacher phenomenon," he said.

Leonard characterized the 40,000-member Lakewood Church as "one of the most mega" of American megachurches, as well as one of the most racially diverse congregations in the nation. Osteen inherited the mantle of leadership at the church from his father, John Osteen, but he grew it exponentially through a combination of marketing techniques, motivational entrepreneurship, charismatic worship and positive-thinking preaching, he said.

"Osteen himself seems made for the media, a new generation of televised, Twittered preachers — razor-thin, self-effacing, pragmatic and guileless to a fault. I call him 'Tom Sawyer with mousse,'" he said.

Osteen typically begins his sermons by holding up the Bible and affirming its full authority, he said, but his motivational messages focus on personal improvement and positive thinking.

Leonard noted Osteen's 2005 interview on CNN with Larry King, in which he affirmed repentance and faith in Christ as the basis for salvation. However, Osteen insisted he does not dwell on sin and guilt because the people at his church arrive already feeling burdened and broken by failure, and he wants to encourage them to discover their God-given potential. Furthermore, when pressed to answer questions about the eternal destiny of people who follow other religions, Osteen said he could not presume to "know the mind of God."

"Joel Osteen is either the future of one powerful segment of American evangelicalism or an illustration of the captivity of evangelicalism to a form of popular religion more akin to American enterprise than Christian theology — a motivational speaker for Jesus," Leonard said.

"Yet, his influence is so widespread and his national reputation so significant that he and his church cannot be overlooked by students of contemporary religion. ... Osteen represents something of a bridge between the second-generation megachurch and the relatively new emerging-church movement. He is at once modern and postmodern, traditional and experimental, in his approach to the church and the gospel itself.

"Because of that, Lakewood Church clearly reflects the nondenominational tendencies of much of American Protestantism — a phenomenon in which congregations distance themselves implicitly or explicitly from traditional denominational alliances, with some even creating in one church a mini-denomination that incorporates many of the services once provided by denominational



Joel Osteen the future of American evangelicalism or an illustration of its captivity to a form of religion more akin to American enterprise than Christian theology, says Bill Leonard.

networks."

Denominations in the United States find themselves "in a state of permanent transition — realigning, re-assessing, reconfiguring and coming apart in a variety of ways," Leonard noted.

In light of the changing landscape, Leonard offered several suggestions for congregations and the ministers who serve them:

- Reaffirm identity. Rather than adopting generic Christianity, congregations should find a place to stand theologically. He suggested a "hospitable traditionalism" that helps people develop their Christian identity but that turns outward to the world rather than inward.
- Be shaped by localism. Nurture identity and spirituality in the context of a specific community.
- Reclaim rituals. These include local rituals that mark a congregation's distinctive identity, as well as global rituals — the Lord's Supper and baptism, observance of Advent, Lent and Easter — that unite Christians around the world and connect them to the past. Regular affirmation of church covenant offers a starting point for creating congregational identity and cultivating community, he suggested.
- Reconsider the importance of dissent. "Congregations might rethink the role of dissent and conscience as a source for its voice in the public square," he said.
- Affirm pluralism and particularism. Faith communities can celebrate a pluralism that gives voice to everyone but does not demand that one particular approach to faith and practice be granted privilege in society, Leonard said.
- Develop signature ministries. Congregations should discover or reaffirm those ministries they do best or that their communities need most, while being willing to "let go" of those that have ceased to serve any purpose, he said.

- By Ken Camp/ABP

SAVE THE DATE ... 117th Lott Carey Annual Session to be held in Louisville, KY

Registration is now open for the 117th Annual Session of the Lott Carey Global Christian Missional Community. This session will be held on August 10-15, 2014 at the Galt House Hotel, Louisville, Kentucky.

More than 2,000 church leaders and laypersons are expected for the 117th Lott Carey Annual Session. The goal is to help extend the Christian witness around the world - in your community, your country, and throughout the earth. Join Believers from the United States and leaders from around the world to inform, inspire, and invest in ministries of evangelism, compassion, empowerment, and advocacy.



Become as a child: It's all you need to know

"Then he said: I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:3)"

Robert Fulghum's book, "All I Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten," seemed to simplify the world? A New York Times No. 1 best-seller, the book was popular about 25 years ago, but still holds a lot of truths today. Even though it was called "kindergarten," the book actually referred to what Fulghum learned "there in the sand pile of Sunday School." His, were lessons the general public understood:

- Play fair
- Clean up your own mess
- Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody
- Live a balanced life – learn some and think

some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some."

Lately, I've been thinking it would be nice to add a

few of my own lessons to Mr. Fulghum's book, but I would use what I suspect was actually the original title: Everything I really need to know I learned in Sunday School. Here are some lessons:

God is great: Ask any preschooler to offer a grace before the snack, and he or she is likely to start out with, "God is great, God is good. Let us thank Him for our food." Once we are clear in our hearts and minds that God truly is great, we can overcome doubt, because we are able to do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

Jesus loves me: This I know, for the Bible tells me so. When in despair, so many people forget these simple words. Because the church serves as our extended family, we also learn social skills in Sunday School.

Here are some to remember:

Follow the rules: I recall, from my early years, that our Sunday School classes held joint quarterly business meetings and even the youngest among us was expected to know the basics of the book, Robert's



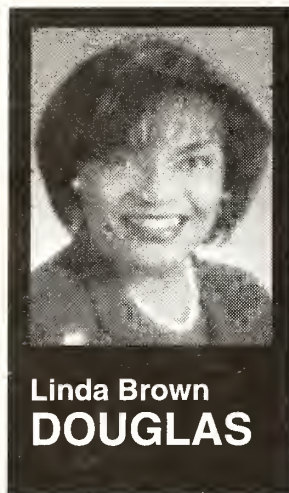
Rules of Order. The book gave us details on how to conduct our meetings.

Eat good things: In the old church schools, the snacks, if available, were an apple or orange. Christmas and Easter plays were usually followed by brown bags that consisted of fruit and nuts – food our bodies could actually digest. As someone who keeps a candy container on my desk at work, I am in no position to act as the food police. However, I can attest that spiritual food lasts

longer and digests better than any earthly food.

And so it goes that instead of searching lofty directories for answers, maybe we could simply return to those early days of Sunday School, because chances are that everything we needed to know was right there all along.

Linda Brown Douglas is Director of Community Relations at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Reach her at: Linda_Douglas@unc-edu.



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