

The Tennessee Tribune

Volume 23, No. 18, 3 Sections

THURSDAY, May 3-9, 2012

\$1.00

Forever focused on the Father: Overcoming Obstacles to Kingdom Building

A Commentary by Jason Curry



The Reverend Dr. Jason Richard Curry is Dean of the Fisk Memorial Chapel at Fisk University. He can be reached at jcurry@fisk.edu or www.fiskmemorialchapel.com.

Bill Gates has a net worth of approximately \$60 billion. Even though he is a very successful businessman who has a heart for philanthropic giving, (I know Fisk University students who have received the Gates Millennium Scholarship), the Microsoft mogul does not intend to leave the majority of his fortune to his children. In fact, it has been widely reported that they will receive a relatively small portion of his wealth. Mr. Gates believes that giving his children a huge sum of money will neither be in society's best interest nor his children's best interest. His excessive gift to them may stifle their creativity, ruin their work-ethic, thwart their career ambitions, lead them on a path toward corruption or promote self-centered behavior. One can draw parallels between the wealth of Mr. Gates and the wealth of King Solomon in the Old Testament. Solomon was wealthy, wise and influential among many people. In 1 Kings 3:12-13, the Lord

said: "Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honor: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days." Solomon built a great temple for the Lord (9:1); however, his excessive wealth provided him with the resources and the opportunity to build buildings or "high places" for other gods (11:7). Solomon's wealth enabled him to be surrounded by people who were not in his best interest (11:1-7). Eventually, one of the greatest and wisest kings that this world had ever known lost his focus on the Father (God), and was unable to overcome the obstacles toward the building of his magnificent kingdom.

As a Christian community, we are called to be engaged in king-

dom building. Our actions on earth (e.g., loving God and loving our neighbors as we love ourselves – Matthew 22:37-39) should reflect the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 6:9-13). There are and there will always be many obstacles to kingdom building. We may be tempted to create idols with or from our financial resources, embrace hate instead of love, engage in the destructive nature of infighting (David and Saul – 1 Samuel 24), participate in unhealthy and non-productive relationships, neglect the fellowship of believers (church) and ignore the resources of the faith (prayer and studying the bible). However, if we remain forever focused on the Father (Our Father who art in heaven – Matthew 6:9), we can overcome both worldly and spiritual obstacles that are necessary for effective kingdom building. Remember Philip-
pians 4:13!