

Church guides visitors through interactive journey to Bethlehem_122004

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Jim
Vickroy, a
member of
Western
Oaks
Baptist
Church of
Springfield,
Ill.,
portrays
Zechariah
in the
church's
interactive
Christmas
drama.

Church guides visitors through interactive journey to Bethlehem

By Michael Leathers

Associated Baptist Press

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (ABP)-With just a portable heater as defense against the cool night, Kendra Jackson waits for the next group of Christmas celebrants to arrive. The 30-something mother of two daughters is portraying Anna in the interactive Christmas drama produced by Western Oaks Baptist Church.

Governance committee named to draft new bylaws for Baptist General Convention of Texas_122004

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Governance committee named to draft new bylaws for Baptist General Convention of Texas

By Ferrell Foster

Texas Baptist Communications

DALLAS-Twenty-one Texas Baptists have agreed to serve on a governance committee to develop new bylaws for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Baptist Briefs_122004

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Baptist Briefs

Mercer president announces retirement plans. Kirby Godsey, Mercer University's longest-serving president, announced he will retire in 18 months, and trustees expect to start the search for his successor as early as spring. At a recent trustee meeting, Godsey, 68, revealed his plans to step down June 30, 2006. Mercer trustee and Augusta attorney David Hudson will head the search committee, which will begin work in the spring. Godsey went to work for the historically Baptist university in 1977 as executive vice president and dean of the College of Liberal Arts. Previously he was vice president and dean of the college at Averett College in Danville, Va. When Godsey became president in 1979, Mercer had an enrollment of 3,800 students, an endowment of \$16.5 million and a budget of \$21.3 million. It grew under his leadership to become Georgia's second-largest private university, with an enrollment of 7,300 students, an endowment of more than \$176 million, a budget of \$173.8 million and 665 faculty members.

BGCT president to address CBF assembly. Baptist General Convention of Texas President Albert Reyes has been added to the list of keynote speakers at the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship general assembly, June 29-July 2 at Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center in Grapevine. Reyes, who also is president of Baptist University of the Americas in San Antonio, will speak during the Thursday evening session. Online registration and hotel reservations for the general assembly can be made at the Fellowship's website, www.thefellowship.info.

Baptist chaplain honored. The Chapel of the Four Chaplains recently presented its Legion of Honor award to Cooperative Baptist Fellowship-endorsed chaplain Keith Ethridge. Ethridge is acting deputy director for the National Chaplains Center for the Department of Veterans Affairs. A former U.S. Navy chaplain, Ethridge has been a clinical pastoral education supervisor 17 years. The Chapel of the Four Chaplains, a national nonprofit organization established to encourage cooperation and promote unity without uniformity, annually recognizes individuals from all walks of life who render selfless service. Dedicated by President Truman in 1951, the chapel was inspired by the courageous acts of four U.S. Army chaplains serving aboard the U.S. troop carrier Dorchester, which was sunk by a torpedo off the coast of Greenland in 1943. The chaplains-Catholic, Dutch Reformed, Jewish and Methodist-went down with the ship after surrendering their own lifejackets to servicemen aboard.

Pastor launches support network for other military families_122004

December 17, 2004

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Pastor launches support network for other military families

By George Henson

Staff Writer

BROADDUS-Aaron Barth always has had his dream firmly in sight. From his earliest days, his mother and father can remember Aaron and his brother, William, playing army with sticks they found in the yard.

Buckner seeks hosts for 'angels from abroad'_122004

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Buckner seeks hosts for 'angels from abroad'

DALLAS—Angels from Abroad, a Buckner International Adoption program to expose American families to international adoption, will be offered again in 2005.

The program allows adoption-minded families to host orphan children ages 7 to 14 when they visit the United States during their summer vacation June 4-20.

“Angels from Abroad offers host families the opportunity to make a difference in the life of a Russian child visiting the United States,” said Mary Ann Hamby, community relations coordinator for Buckner International Adoption. “Hosting is a great way for potentially adoptive families to participate in the experience of having a child from Russia living in their home as they consider international adoption as an option for parenting.”

Advocates for BWA look for ways to rebuild group's financial support_122004

December 17, 2004

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Advocates for BWA look for ways to rebuild group's financial support

By Greg Warner

Associated Baptist Press

ATLANTA (ABP)-About 20 former Southern Baptist leaders met in Atlanta this month to seek ways to rebuild financial support for the Baptist World Alliance, which lost its largest member and funding source in October.

Texas Baptist students devote Christmas break to missions, ministries_122004

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Texas Baptist students devote Christmas break to missions, ministries

By Ferrell Foster

Texas Baptist Communication

Texas Baptist college students are not just going home for the holidays; they're spreading out around the world to tell others about Christ.

Colleyville church feeds 2,800, leads 138 to faith in Christ_122004

December 17, 2004

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Colleyville church feeds 2,800, leads 138 to faith in Christ

By Gregory Tomlin

Baptist Press

COLLEYVILLE (BP)-It wasn't quite comparable to the New Testament feeding of the 5,000, but an army of volunteers served hot meals and passed out sacks of groceries to more than 2,800 people.

ANOTHER VIEW: There'll always be a Christmas_122004

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ANOTHER VIEW: There'll always be a Christmas

As one grows older, the valuables of life become more treasured. Friendships are rooted more deeply in the soil of human need. Homes are marked within and without with meaningful "hand-me-downs," pictures of the children and grandchildren, reminders of visits by joy-bringers, gracious serendipities that have added so much to the journey.

We would be hard-pressed to place pricetags on the presence of special individuals, who at trying times have felt voicemail was hardly sufficient. They knew that we needed broad shoulders to lean upon and how to adjust in the crowded world we live in.

BO Baker

There have been the constant pressures to downgrade our moral values; plus a mindset equipped to deal with the gray climate brought upon us by the terrorist who cannot have the priceless gift of peace, nor properly evaluate hope for international brothering.

DBU offers master's-level credit for participants at Epicenter conference_122004

December 17, 2004

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DBU offers master's-level credit for participants at Epicenter conference

Dallas Baptist University is offering master's-level credit for participants in Epicenter, the Baptist General Convention of Texas' annual evangelism and missions conference.

DBU students in the Gary Cook Graduate School of Leadership and Christian Education can earn three hours of course credit for attending all Epicenter sessions, making reports and creating plans to implement ideas learned during the conference.

Students must enroll in the "Local Church on Mission" class and pay the standard DBU tuition. Matching grants for tuition assistance are available. Class assignments will be submitted online.

DOWN HOME: He's pathetic or just blessed_122004

December 17, 2004

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DOWN HOME: He's pathetic or just blessed

Every year about this time, I wind up in the same ol' doghouse. Or, considering the season, maybe it's the reindeer house.

That's because I never can come up with a Christmas wish-list of sufficient length to satisfy my wife.

"Marv," she said the other day. (Come to think of it, about the only time Joanna calls me by my name is when I'm in trouble.) "You haven't given me a single idea about what to get you for Christmas."

EDITORIAL: Avoid shepherds' temptation: Leaving baby in a manger_122004

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EDITORIAL:

Avoid shepherds' temptation: Leaving baby in a manger

Whatever happened to the shepherds?

The Gospel of Luke describes how they became eyewitnesses to the birth of Jesus. The evening started like any other. They camped “out in the fields” of the Judean hillside, herding their flock. Then all heaven started breaking loose: An angel popped up, scaring them out of their sandals. Realizing their fear, the angel told them to calm down and announced that the long-awaited Messiah—“a Savior who is Christ the Lord”—had just been born in Bethlehem. As proof, the angel said, in effect: “If you don't believe me, go see for yourself. He's a baby, bundled up, bedded down in a feed trough.” Next, they heard the best concert ever, sung by an angel choir that proclaimed glory to God and promised peace. And then, when the angels sang their last note, the shepherds ran to Bethlehem, where everything the first angel told them came true. They hovered over the manger, ogling the Baby, amazed that the angel described everything to a T. After that, of course, they hurried back to their sheep, all the while “glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.”

That's it. The shepherds get 13 brief-but-beautiful verses in Luke 2. And then they pass off the scene as fast as fifth-grade “shepherds” sling off their bathrobes after a church Christmas pageant. We never hear from the shepherds again.