

# Baptist Briefs

December 20, 2005

Posted: 12/16/05

## Baptist Briefs

**CBF leader meets with secretary of state.** Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Coordinator Daniel Vestal and a dozen other religious leaders met in Washington, D.C., with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. They called on the United States to lead in global poverty reduction initiatives at a World Trade Organization meeting. The interfaith group challenged Rice to advance proposals that would open global markets to trade and boost economies of developing nations. The religious leaders also lobbied for a \$5 billion increase in poverty-focused development assistance in President Bush's 2007 budget request.

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**First Korean state convention president elected.** New England Baptists elected their first non-Anglo president and the first Korean president of a state convention. Messengers to the 23rd annual meeting of the Baptist Convention of New England in Londonderry, N.H., elected Paul Kim, founding pastor of Berkland Baptist Church in Cambridge, Mass., president without opposition. Kim, who was named a Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary distinguished alumnus in 2004 for his work in church planting, serves as a trustee of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board. Tommy Oliver, pastor of New Life Baptist Church in Stratham, N.H., was elected vice president. Messengers unanimously passed a \$2.8 million budget for 2006—a 5 percent increase and the first increase in more than five years.

**First ordained Southern Baptist woman pastor dies.** Addie Elizabeth Davis—whose 1964 ordination by Watts Street Baptist Church in Durham, N.C., to pastoral ministry marked a first among Southern Baptist churches—died Dec. 3 in Covington, Va., after a brief illness. She was 88. Davis, a graduate of Meredith College and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, both in North Carolina, served churches in Vermont, Rhode Island and Virginia. The Baptist Women in Ministry organization provides annual scholarships to female ministerial students through a fund established in Davis' honor.

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## **Mercer, Georgia convention agree to terms**

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**By Greg Warner**

*Associated Baptist Press*

ATLANTA (ABP)—Mercer University and the Georgia Baptist Convention have agreed to terms that will end their 172-year-old relationship.

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# **Fate of hostages in Iraq still unknown**

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## **Fate of hostages in Iraq still unknown**

**By Robert Marus**

*ABP Washington Bureau*

WASHINGTON (ABP)—Militants threatening to execute a British Baptist and three other Christian hostages by Dec. 10 had conveyed no word of their captives' fate as of Dec. 12, according to multiple news reports.

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## **Westmoreland nominated for Samford presidency**

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# Westmoreland nominated for Samford presidency

**By Greg Warner**

*Associated Baptist Press*

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP)—Andrew Westmoreland, president of Arkansas Baptists' Ouachita Baptist University, has been nominated to become president of Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.

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# Churches adopting Chrismon trees

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## Churches adopting Chrismon trees

**By Terri Jo Ryan**

*Special to the Baptist Standard*

The Chrismons (CHRISMONogramS) ornaments were first developed in 1957 by Frances Kipps Spencer of Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Va., when she set out to create decorations appropriate for a church Christmas tree.

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# **Cybercolumn by Brett Younger: Skipping Christmas**

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## **CYBER COLUMN: Skipping Christmas**

**By Brett Younger**

For centuries, Christians have celebrated the birth of Jesus by coming to church to sing, pray, remember, give thanks and recommit our lives to Christ. What were we thinking?

The front-page news is that many of the biggest churches in the United States have decided that the best way to celebrate the coming of Christ is to cancel worship.

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## **BaptistWay Bible Series for Jan.**

# **1: Jesus provides the model for talking with God**

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**BaptistWay Bible Series for Jan. 1**

## **Jesus provides the model for talking with God**

- Luke 11:1-13

**By Jeffrey Lee**

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## **Family Bible Series for Jan. 1: Work was a part of God's original plan**

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**Family Bible Series for Jan. 1**

# Work was a part of God's original plan

- Genesis 1:26-28, 31, 2:15; Proverbs 6:6-10; Colossians 3:22-4:1

**By Donald Raney**

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## Explore the Bible Series for Jan. 1: Christians are to lead lives of worship

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**Explore the Bible Series for Jan. 1**

## Christians are to lead lives of worship

- Romans 12:1-8

**By Trey Turner**

*Canyon Creek Baptist Church, Temple*

I am afraid worship is 'dumbed-down' more than we realize because of the consumer culture around us. Worship is limited to that which wells up in us because something profoundly affects our emotions and engages our feelings. For that matter, good movies have the ability (and budgets) to do

that more than most worship services. If we are limited to worshipping only when feeling grips us, we may be weaker spiritually than we need to be. Do we think worship can happen by an act of the will, but not before the emotions?

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## Around the State

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## Around the State

The Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas has presented its Horizon Award to **George Young**, who ministers to individuals older than 60 at Trinity Church in San Antonio. The award is given to someone who exemplifies excellence in aging adult leadership.

♦ **John Baugh**, founder of Sysco Corporation in Houston, was presented the Abner V. McCall Religious Liberty Award by the Baylor Alumni Association Dec. 17 during fall commencement. The award is given to Baylor alumni or friends who exemplify the dedication and commitment to religious liberty demonstrated by the former Baylor University president for whom the award is named. A Baylor regent emeritus, Baugh also is a founding trustee of Houston Baptist University and served as a director of the Baptist Foundation of Texas more than 25 years. He is the author of *The Battle for Baptist Integrity*. He and his wife, **Eula Mae**, are members of Tallowood Church in Houston.



A group of students from Howard Payne University took time from their studies for a mission trip to help flood victims in New Orleans reclaim their homes. From right to left are Shane Blackshear, Jared Renshaw, the New Orleans couple they helped, Vicente Richarte (background), Josh Houser, Joanna Brown, Aaron Brown (background), Jessica Oster and Brandon Wilson.

♦ **Virgil Grotfeldt**, assistant professor in art at Houston Baptist University, has been nominated for the Hunting Art Prize. Members of Houston's art community selected nominees who have made a long-term commitment to their career and have a five-year, post-graduate exhibition record reflecting national exposure. The competition has a \$50,000 first-place award.

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# **Vote tally dispute points to internal IMB disagreement**

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## **Vote tally dispute points to internal IMB disagreement**

**By Robert Marus**

*Associated Baptist Press*

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP)—Conflicting reports about the vote totals for a new International Mission Board policy on speaking in tongues are focusing public attention on what may be a deeper disagreement about the agency's leadership.

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## **Texas Baptist Forum**

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## **Texas Baptist Forum**

**Speak up for Christmas**

“Let the redeemed of the Lord say so” (Psalm 107:2).

This Christmas season has included many surprises. Some of us were surprised by the department stores that opted not to use the word “Christmas” in their ads this year.

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*"When you consider that 80 to 90 percent of the American public celebrates Christmas, that (retailers) actively solicit and advertise to ... make millions and millions of dollars, and they're not willing to mention the words 'Merry Christmas,' something is drastically wrong."*

**Manuel Zamorano**

Protester, who called off his boycott of Macy's department stores after the chain reinstituted "Merry Christmas" in its advertising (RNS)

*"When did it become the responsibility of department stores to preach the gospel? It is not the purpose of retail establishments to advance the cause of Christ. I do not recall Jesus ever saying, 'Why haven't you turned my marketplace into a house of prayer?' If Christ is missing from Christmas, don't blame department stores. The real reason is somewhere closer to home. ... No wonder Christ seems to be missing from Christmas-Christians keep looking for him in the mall."*

**James Evans**

Pastor of First Baptist Church in Auburn, Ala.  
(EthicsDaily.com)

*"The speaker believes a Christmas tree is a Christmas tree, and it is as simple as that."*

**Ron Bonjean**

Spokesman for House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., explaining Hastert's decision not to label the Capitol Christmas tree a "holiday tree"  
(Washington Times/RNS)

*"I think the 'Person' of the Year should be God. On the one hand, more people seem certain they know God's will on the social issues of the day. On the other, all of us feel the need to find answers as we confront the 'acts of God' dominating the news, like diseases and global catastrophes."*

**Coleen Rowley**

Former FBI agent and one of three "whistleblowers" honored as Time magazine's "Persons of the Year" in 2002 (RNS)