

Glad Tidings...to all people

December 1, 2006

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Baptist
missionary
Shirley
Smith
(right)
visits the
family of a
Futa Toro
man in
West
Africa who
has
recently
returned
from a
pilgrimage
to Mecca,
the center
of Islamic
life. (IMB
photo)

Glad tidings... to all people

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

Luke's Gospel account of Christ's birth describes how angels announced to shepherds good tidings of great joy for all people. But 2,000 years later, more than one-fourth—perhaps many more—of the world's people still haven't heard the good news or seen evidence of it.

Estimates vary widely regarding the number of least-evangelized people and unreached people groups.

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- Glad Tidings...to all people
- [Glad Tidings: What's your mission?](#)
- [Glad Tidings: BGCT offers multiple missions opportunities](#)

Glad Tidings: What's your mission?

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Glad Tidings:

What's your mission?

More than 4,000 people traveled on a Buckner mission trip in 2006, helping to share the gospel and show love to hundreds of orphan children and broken families in the Rio Grande Valley, Seattle and seven countries around the world.

“Your faith gets stretched in a way that we don’t allow it to stretch when we’re at home,” said Longview Baptist Church member Charles Risinger, a three-time Buckner mission trip participant to Latvia. “You see how God makes things happen when you realize that it’s just not humanly possible for you to have done it yourself.”

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- [Glad Tidings: BGCT offers multiple missions opportunities](#)

Thousands of people find their calling in missions each year when they seek to comfort God’s children through Buckner mission trips.

For more information on upcoming missions opportunities with Buckner, contact the Buckner missions office at 1-877-7ORPHAN or email missions@buckner.org.

Glad Tidings: BGCT offers multiple missions opportunities

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Glad Tidings: BGCT offers multiple missions opportunities

By Barbara Bedrick

Texas Baptist Communications

DALLAS—As sparkling lights and Nativity scenes take center stage this season, a group of college students at First Baptist Church in Canyon hopes to bring light to nonbelievers a world away in Southeast Asia.

A youth musical mission team plans to travel to Japan where members will bear witness to their faith through caroling. Meanwhile, another group of college students will ring in the new year sharing the gospel in Russia.

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Houston Baptist University inaugurates president

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Houston Baptist University inaugurates president

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

HOUSTON—[Houston Baptist University](#) installed [Robert Sloan](#) as the school's third president Nov. 29, and the newly inaugurated president used the occasion to underscore his commitment to the integration of faith and learning—a recurring theme during his tenure as president of Baylor University.

Sloan told the diverse assembly—including the executive directors of the rival [Baptist General Convention of Texas](#) and [Southern Baptists of Texas Convention](#), as well as representatives from about 100 universities—his last two or three years at Baylor had been “difficult and challenging.”

Houston
Baptist
University
President
Robert Sloan
(center)
receives the
presidential
medallion and
words of
congratulations
from Jack
Carlson (left),
past chairman
of the HBU
board of
trustees and
interim
president, and
President
Emeritus Doug
Hodo.

Too many Christians fail to

recognize opportunities

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Too many Christians fail to recognize opportunities

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

BROWNWOOD—Christians miss divine appointments because too many churches fail to challenge members to recognize international contacts as missions opportunities, said Mary Carpenter, director of [cross-cultural studies](#) at [Howard Payne University](#).

“Christians are traveling and doing business globally, but too often we, as churches, are not training them to think globally,” she said.

Stop inflammatory rhetoric about gays, theologian urges

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Stop inflammatory rhetoric about gays, theologian urges

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

WASHINGTON (ABP)—An evangelical theologian told her colleagues recently they must “cease and desist” publishing materials with “inflammatory language” about homosexuals.

Linda Belleville made the comments in an address to fellow members of the [Evangelical Theological Society](#) during the group’s annual conference in Washington.

Star Wars Force followers claim more Jedi than Jews in Great Britain

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Star Wars Force followers claim

more Jedi than Jews in Great Britain

By Al Webb

Religion News Service

LONDON (RNS)—A pair of London science fiction enthusiasts are petitioning the United Nations to formally recognize the Jedi Knights of *Star Wars* fame as a legitimate religion.

Umada and Yun-yun—known in real life as John Wilkinson and Charlotte Law—base their case on the results of [Britain's 2001 census](#) in which some 395,000 followers of the *Star Wars* cult recorded their faith as “Jedi.”

Laredo church prays for release of kidnapped members

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Laredo church prays for release of kidnapped members

By George Henson

Staff Writer

LAREDO—At press time, members of United Baptist Church in Laredo continued to pray for the safe return of the congregation's treasurer and his son, along with another man.

Librado Pina Jr., United's treasurer and a Laredo businessman, [was kidnapped](#) along with his son, Librado Pina III, two hunters and a cook from a ranch owned by Pina in Mexico near the border. The ranch is leased for deer hunting.

MySpace lets youth ministers peek into teenagers' lives

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MySpace lets youth ministers peek into teenagers' lives

By Chansin Bird

Religion News Service

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. (RNS)—Youth minister Lara Blackwood starts her day the same way most of the young people at her church do. She signs on at MySpace.com.

"Any time they post a new blog, I get a message in my e-mail and cell

phone that such and such has posted a new blog,” said Blackwood, youth minister at First Christian Church of Fayetteville, Ark., and a regional youth minister for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana.

On the Move

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On the Move

- **Harvey Abke** to First Church in Fresno as pastor.
 - **Steve Akin** to First Church in Athens as minister of missions, where he was minister of music and missions.
 - **John Barnard** to First Church in Brenham as student minister.
 - **David Beirne** to Travis Church in Corpus Christi as pastor from Fox Avenue Church in Lewisville.
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Fisherman finds letters sent to God

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Fisherman finds letters sent to God

By Wayne Parry

Religion News Service

NEWARK, N.J. (RNS)—A fisherman who found a bag of 300 letters to God floating in the ocean off Atlantic City will give most of them to the daughter of the dead minister for whom they were intended.

Bill Lacovara, an insurance adjuster, said he plans to give the letters to Vanessa Cooper, the daughter of Grady Cooper, a former associate pastor of the Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Jersey City who died nearly two years ago.

Studies shed light on religion's role in American

life

December 1, 2006

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Studies shed light on religion's role in American life

By David Briggs

Religion News Service

PORTLAND, Ore. (RNS)—Who's speaking in tongues? Do chastity pledges work? What do religious consumers buy?

Exploring a world immersed in faith and mystery, religious research scholars provide hard sociological data to give some practical answers about the role of religion in American life.