

2nd Opinion: 'Tis the season of God's extravagance

December 2, 2005

Posted: 12/02/05

2nd Opinion: 'Tis the season of God's extravagance

By Lisa Price

The Christmas holidays tend to make us reflect on past years, and the most memorable celebrations seem to be indelibly printed on our minds like album snapshots with captions. If I had to choose a caption for the Christmas of 2004, I think it would be “extravagance.”

While the word “extravagance” often is associated with negatives such as materialism and waste, in this case it was not. The extravagance was not related to squandering resources or even to human generosity, but it was the extravagant love of God toward his children. Our family celebrated a Christmas where God's decorations and gifts far outshined anything we could do or even imagine.

DOWN HOME: He made parenting a 'bearable' task

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DOWN HOME: He made parenting a 'bearable' task

As if our family weren't traveling through enough transition already, I just learned Stan Berenstain died at age 82.

Our youngest daughter, Molly, is finishing her first semester of college, so Joanna and I still are trying to figure out how to live productively in our "empty nest." Our oldest daughter, Lindsay, is getting married in less than two weeks, and we're trying to learn how to be gracious and loving in-laws to Aaron. And our dog, Betsy, is declining by the week, and we're beginning to consider end-of-life issues for our beloved pet.

Up-side all that, the death of someone I never met might appear insignificant. Appearances would be deceiving.

EDITORIAL: Women of Kireka

set worthy example

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EDITORIAL:

Women of Kireka set worthy example

Before long, *Time* magazine will unveil its Person of the Year for 2005. The editors probably have made their selection already, or at least they have narrowed the field to a group of finalists. If not, they would do well to consider the women of Kireka, Uganda.

Reporter Bruce Nolan of *The Times-Picayune* in New Orleans told their story on Thanksgiving Day. The *Dallas Morning News* repeated it in an editorial last week.

Kireka is a slum overlooking Kampala, Uganda's capital city, in west-central Africa. It's a one-industry town: The men strip-mine boulders from quarries on the hillside. The women pound the boulders into stones the size of walnuts, which are used for construction. They work by hand, pulverizing stone by stone. They earn \$1.20 per day.



Falls Creek encampment cancels Texas Week after 2006

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Falls Creek encampment cancels Texas Week after 2006

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

The 2006 Texas Week at Falls Creek Baptist Conference Center marks the end of a tradition spanning more than four decades.

International Mission Board seeks to tie tongues

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International Mission Board seeks to tie tongues

By Robert Marus

Associated Baptist Press

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. (ABP)-The International Mission Board no longer will appoint Southern Baptist missionaries who use a “private prayer language”-a controversial practice related to speaking in tongues and previously practiced by board President Jerry Rankin.

Lower Jordan River is open sewage canal, environmentalists say

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In an event called the "Big Jump," mayors and members of local governments from Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Authority join hands to call for the rehabilitation of the polluted Jordan River. Friends of the Earth Middle East-a partnership between Israelis, Palestinians and Jordans-has recently stepped up efforts to bring the Jordan River's pollution to world attention. (Photo by Itamar Grinberg, courtesy of Friends of the Earth Middle East/RNS)

Lower Jordan River is open sewage canal, environmentalists say

By Michele Chabin

Religion News Service

DEGANYA, Israel-At the Alumot Dam on the edge of Kibbutz Deganya, a cooperative community located a couple of miles south of the Sea of Galilee, visitors can smell the Jordan River long before they see it.

Kansas school board at center of intelligent design debate

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Kansas school board at center of intelligent design debate

By Bobby Ross Jr.

Religion News Service

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (RNS)-At the Sirloin Stockade, the state school board chairman leading an assault on “neo-Darwinian biological evolution” bowed his head and prayed aloud before eating his buffet lunch.

Texas Baptist Forum

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Texas Baptist Forum

Get with the program

I have followed this dispute between the two Baptist groups in Texas since its inception. The fact of the matter is that both groups are right but do not have the right to insist the other accept their point of view.

Letters are welcomed. Send them to marvknox@baptiststandard.com ; 250 words maximum.
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"The people of China want more freedom to express themselves, to worship without state control, to print Bibles and other sacred texts without fear of punishment. ... By meeting the legitimate demands of its citizens for freedom and openness, China's leaders can help their country grow into a modern, prosperous and confident nation."

President Bush

Speaking during his recent trip to Asia (RNS)

"Ruth and I have enjoyed our time together these last few months, and we both feel at peace about the decision to have the New York meetings be our last. We know that God can still use us to reach people with the gospel message in other ways, and we look forward to seeing how he will do so."

Billy Graham

The famed evangelist, who recently turned 87 and suffers from Parkinson's disease, held his last crusade this June in New York. (RNS)

"I woke up one day and thought, 'My God, I'm about to have a baby; how am I going to teach my child what the meaning of life is when I don't know myself?' If she asks why she's here and who is God or why are people suffering, I want to have answers. And I want to ask those questions, too."

Madonna

Pop singer, discussing how the birth of her daughter affected her thinking about spiritual matters (RNS/USA Today)

The Baptist General Convention of Texas is social in context and views Scripture from that point of view, whereas the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention is evangelistic and sees its mission and interpretation of Scripture from that point of view.

Texas Baptist professors teach at Nigerian seminary

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<p>Bill Carrell, dean of Christian studies at the University of Mary Hardin- Baylor, teaches at the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary.</p>
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Texas Baptist professors teach at Nigerian seminary

By **John Hall**

Texas Baptist Communications

Nigerian Baptists share the same theology and mission as Texas Baptists. They even sing the same hymns.

On the Move

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On the Move

Neil Adams to Bethlehem Church in Douglassville as pastor.

- ◆ **Jack Allen** to First Church in Tuleta as pastor.
 - ◆ **Bud Ammerman** has resigned as pastor of Choate Church in Kenedy.
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Port Neches youth choir shares the gospel in Spain

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First Baptist Church in Port Neches welcomed 47 youth and adults home from an 11-day mission trip to Denia, Spain.

The group partnered with The Alpha & Omega Christian School sponsored by the Holy Trinity Baptist Church in Denia to minister to children through a sports, music and art camp. Pastor David Mahfouz, Music Minister Tim Holder and Student Minister Adam Pardue were the group's leaders. While in Denia, the youth choir sang at an official meeting in the home of the mayor and at a nursing home and were warmly welcomed at various open-air venues around the city.

Port Neches youth choir shares the gospel in Spain

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

A group of young people from First Baptist Church in Port Neches recently discovered moving to their own beat can have a powerful impact on those around them.

Bumper crop of disasters ratchets up the 'Rapture index'

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Bumper crop of disasters ratchets up the 'Rapture index'

By Nancy Haught

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)-Whether you see earthquakes, hurricanes and tsunamis as natural disasters or acts of God, this has been a bad year for the world and a good one for the rapture index.